

# Cross-border Cooperation



**in the Baltic Countries and North-West Russia**



norden



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## **Cross-border Cooperation in the Baltic Countries and North-West Russia and the Work of the Nordic Council of Ministers**

Nordic Council of Ministers (NCM) is an institution of intergovernmental cooperation of five Nordic countries (Denmark, Iceland, Finland, Norway, and Sweden) and three autonomous regions (Greenland, Faeroe Islands and Aland) established in 1971. Regional policy has been one of its cooperation areas since 1972, when the Nordic Committee of Senior Officials on Regional Policy (NERP) was set up. Cross-border cooperation soon became central part of NERP's activities. Since the late 1970-ies NCM has provided financial support to Nordic CBC regions, and today coordinates a network consisting of eight such regions.

Since the beginning of the 1990-ies NCM has been actively working in the so-called adjacent areas: the Baltic countries (NCM Information offices were established in Riga, Tallinn and Vilnius in 1991) and North-West Russia (St. Petersburg office established in 1995). Gradually regional policy became one of the cooperation areas between Nordic countries and the adjacent areas. In May 2001 NCM organized a conference on cross-border cooperation, where representatives from the CBC regions in the Nordic and Baltic countries and North-West Russia gathered. During this conference the idea of a project coordinating existing CBC regions / Euroregions in the adjacent areas was formulated. As a result of these discussions the Nordic Council of Ministers in spring 2002 launched a new project called "Regional cross-border cooperation in the adjacent areas".

**The main goals** of the project are:

- 1) In the framework of EU enlargement to strengthen cross-border cooperation in the Baltic countries and North-West Russia;
- 2) To facilitate creation of a network of CBC regions (Euroregions) in adjacent areas, which can be linked with the existing CBC network in the Nordic countries.

The coordinator of the project is placed in the premises of the NCM Information office in Vilnius, and overall coordination of the project is subordinated to the NCM secretariat in Copenhagen.

During the first part of the project **12 CBC regions/Euroregions** were identified in the Baltic countries and North-West Russia, which expressed the wish to participate in the new network.

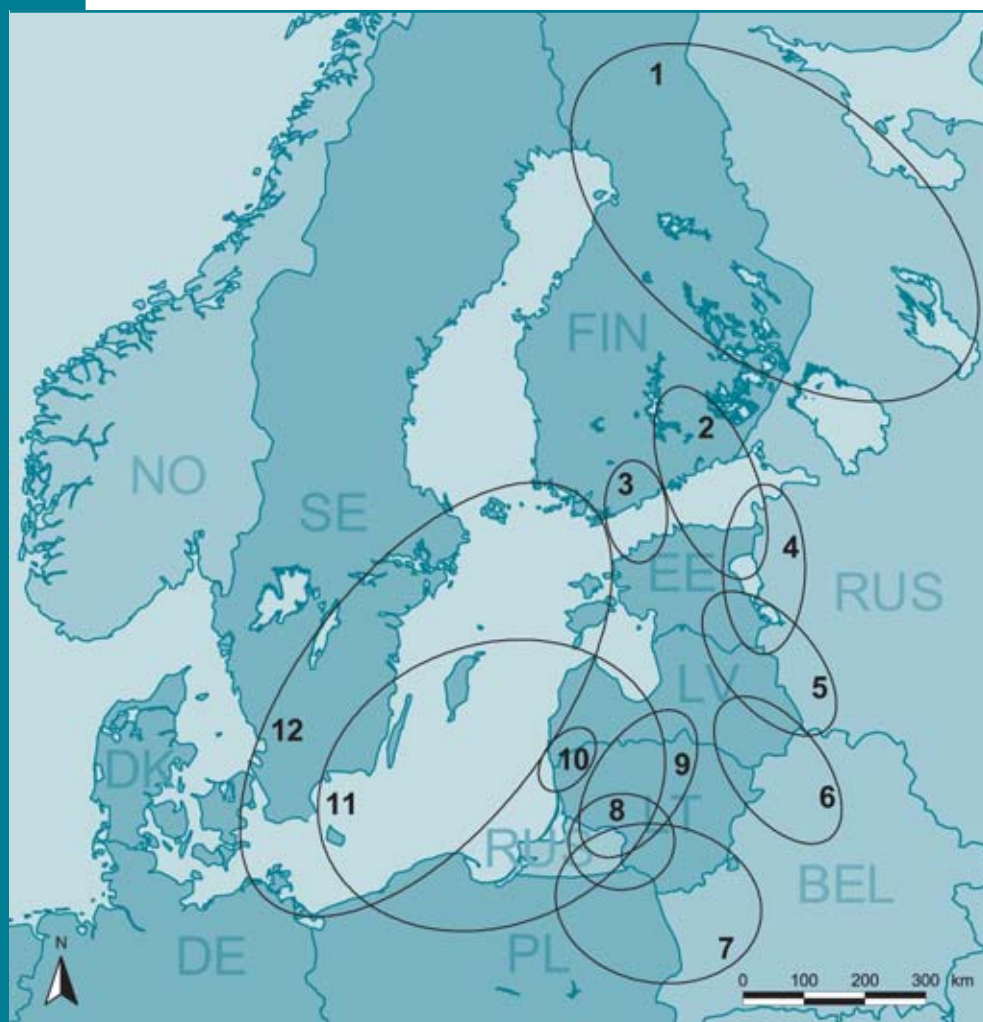
During the years 2002-2004 **the main activities** of the project were:

- Exchange of information (mailing list, website, newsletters, joint meetings);
- Spreading information about Euroregions (preparation of maps);
- Training seminars for representatives of Euroregions;
- Linking CBC networks in the adjacent areas and in the Nordic countries (joint conference, twinning projects).

This brochure is one of the results of the project, presenting all 12 CBC regions/Euroregions participating in the network. We hope that this publication in English and Russian will spread the information about the comparatively young CBC regions in the Baltic countries and North-West Russia to a wider public, and thereby contribute to the exchange of experience and the initiation of new successful cross-border cooperation projects.

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■ European Union  
— National boundary

# Euregio Karelia

- **Members:** Regional Councils of Pohjois-Pohjanmaa (Northern Ostrobothnia), Kainuu and Pohjois-Karjala (North Karelia) (FIN); Republic of Karelia (RUS)
- **Population:** 1.4 million
- **Area (km<sup>2</sup>):** 263,667
- **Year of establishment:** 2000
- **Contacts:** <http://www.karjala-interreg.fi/euregio/>



- CBC area (EU)
- CBC area outside the EU
- National boundary
- Boundary of region



## Background

The border between Finland and Russia, some 1,300 km in length, has marked the divide between east and west. Throughout the history there has been tension on the border involving wars, changes of the border and integrity of these areas. Border areas have been remote and have thus lagged behind the nations as a whole in their economic development and in the evolution of their contact networks.

Border area cooperation has been pursued between Finland and Russia since the termination of the Cold War era and even when the Russian border remained closed for almost 70 years. It was in the 1990s that the border was opened and lively cooperation pursued under several agreements concluded between Finland and Russia.

Finland's joining the European Union at the beginning of 1995 changed the international status of its border with Russia – it became an external EU border. A number of financial instruments exist at the border such as TACIS and Interreg Karelia. Due to the different rules and practices the coordination has been difficult. This was a problem that was going to be solved by Euregio Karelia.

Euregio Karelia was set up in February 2000. It is based on the deep historical and cultural roots of bilateral Finnish-Karelian links and cooperation. Euregio Karelia is a form of cross-border cooperation based on the regions' own requirements and the European model. It provides a venue that brings in to being the desire of equal partners to launch cross-border cooperation, and provides a suitable administration and programme for such collaboration. Its work is based on the document titled "Our Common Border".

## Goals of the cooperation

The objective of the Euregio Karelia is to create a new model for cross-border cooperation between EU and Russia at the regional level.

The aim of its work is to ensure economic welfare and social equality, and to increase cross border interaction between people. One of the main aims of Euregio Karelia, which was to combine EU funding on the EU outer borders (Interreg and TACIS programs), seems now to become realized via New Neighbourhood programme. In future Euregio Karelia will act as a strategic and political forum, where the priorities of the cooperation between regions are discussed and chosen. It is an example of partnership of EU and Russia at the regional level.

## Organization

The highest decision-making body in the Euregio Karelia cooperation area is the Euregio Karelia **administrative committee**.

Composition:

Actual **Members:**

- 6 regional representatives  
(two representatives nominated by each of the regional councils)
- 6 representatives from the Karelian Republic

Expert advisors:

- An expert from the Finnish Ministry of the Interior
- An expert from the Finnish Ministry of Foreign Affairs
- An EU expert
- Representative of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation

There are two chairmen – Finnish and Russian - in the administrative committee of Euregio Karelia.

The Euregio Karelia administrative committee is responsible for:

- steering the preparation of parts of the joint program and the joint border area cooperation program;
- approving projects to be financed from the Euregio Karelia fund and monitoring project implementation;
- coordinating INTERREG, TACIS (later New Neighborhood Program) and neighboring area cooperation projects;
- presenting projects within the joint program to be funded through the Interreg and TACIS programs or through the scheme for coordination with neighboring areas.

The Euregio Karelia administrative committee is assisted by the **secretariat**. The secretariat is composed of representatives of the Karelian Republic and the individual regions, one from each. The secretariat of Euregio Karelia has two secretary generals, Finnish and Russian. Finnish secretary general and Finnish chairman represent the same area.

The languages used in the Euregio Karelia administrative committee are Finnish and Russian. Administrative committee is convened at least twice a year. All decisions are made in compliance with the consensus principle, so that no decisions will be put to a vote.

## Financing

The prioritized projects of Euregio Karelia are financed via other program, like Interreg Karelia.

The administration costs of Euregio Karelia are covered via the project called "Euregio Karelia - New Challenges in realizing the Northern Dimension" which is a project under Interreg III A Karelia program.

## Prioritized projects and top priorities

Almost all prioritized projects selected in 2000 had started out well or already been realized by 2003. *"Development of the border-crossing point of Kortessalmi-Suopera to an international border-crossing point"* and *"Social-medical rehabilitation of drug users and prevention of addiction due to psycho-active substances in the Karelian Republic"* are examples of those projects.

In 2003 Steering Committee of Euregio Karelia defined **top priorities**, the selected topics for which are:

### Promoting economic cooperation

- forestry and timber collaboration, bio-energy;
- nature and cultural tourism;
- entrepreneurship among women;

### Developing the information society

- telecommunications;
- civic information society;
- electronic libraries;
- telemedicine;

### Supporting the civil society

- experience exchange;
- cooperation between young people;
- role of mass media;

### Improving connections

- developing forms of public transit;
- making the function of international border-crossing points more flexible;
- extending the use of temporary border-crossing points.





# Finnish-Estonian cooperation 3+3

- **Members:** Associations of Local Authorities of Ida-Viru, Laane-Viru and Jõgeva counties (EE); Regional Councils of Pajjat-Hame, Ita-Uusimaa and Kymenlaakso (FIN).
- **Population:** 780,000
- **Area (km<sup>2</sup>):** 24,028
- **Year of establishment:** September 15, 1995
- **Contacts:** teave@teave.ee



- CBC area (EU)
- National boundary
- Boundary of region



## Background

3+3 is cooperation between three counties of the north-east Estonia and three counties of the south-east Finland in the eastern part of the Gulf of Finland of the Baltic Sea. Particularity of the region could be described from different aspects:

- geographical: both in Finland and Estonia the counties are located in the eastern part of the country – far from the sphere of influence of the capital city; common sea border; common border with the north-west Russia and proximity to the large city of St. Petersburg;
- environmental: the large water bodies (sea, lakes, and rivers) have an important role in tourism, vacation planning, as well as in environmental protection;
- cultural: similarity of Estonian and Finnish languages and cultures;
- economic: the need for industrial restructuring; unemployment level above the state average;
- national structure: Russian speaking inhabitants amount to 82% of the population of Ida-Viru county in Estonia, and in Ita-Uusimaa county in Finland the amount of Swedish speaking people is 40% of the population.

Cooperation is based on principles of equal partnership, creation of multilevel cooperation network and flexible functioning mechanisms involving local citizens and organizations through the establishment of contacts, joint events and exchange of experiences.

Short history of cooperation:

1991 – cooperation was started between Lahti Adult Training Centre and Adult Training Centre TEAVE.

1993 – the first region development projects were created.

1994 – cooperation contract was concluded between Finnish Pajjat-Hame and Estonian Ida-Viru counties. A joint education project for the leaders of local governments and educational institutions was started.

1995 – Finland joined the European Union. Cross-border cooperation of the three Estonian and the three Finnish counties and realization of new joint projects under EU programs were started.

## Goals of the cooperation:

- The usage of geographical position, human-, natural- and economic resources, historical-cultural connections and cooperation skills in order to develop the economic region of the Gulf of Finland;
- Creation of broad international cooperation network in the area of the north-east Estonia, south-east Finland and north-west Russia;
- Versatile cooperation of sectors – especially in the field of education, economy, environmental protection and administration;
- Arrangement of education with practical output to different target groups, which relates the interests of sectors and regions;
- Collecting and disseminating information, and exchanging experience in several important regional development areas.

## Organization

The highest decisive body is the council of the leaders of the local governments associations of the 3+3 counties. The associations of local governments of the counties administer composition, presentation and implementation of joint projects. According to the agreement, operative administrative work is carried out by Adult Training Centre TEAVE. Cooperation is implemented through regular joint meetings and seminars, development of functioning cooperation network, planning and realization of joint projects, composition of informative materials and extensive events in order to involve different organizations and citizens.

## Financing

Composition and realization of the projects of common topics under different EU programs are financed in Finland and Estonia separately. There is a lack of constant joint financing to cooperation arrangement and coordination.

## Projects

Joint projects, which encompass Estonian and Finnish 3+3 region, coordinate the content and activities and create prerequisites for development of smaller partner projects and single contacts, are being realized in 2002-2004.

Interreg IIIA 3+3 educational project is being realized in 2002-2004 and Phare CBC SPF 2001 3+3 educational project in 2003/2004. Content – development of regional cooperation and syllabuses in general and vocational educational institutions teaching e-study methods, as well as development of working skill teaching system in companies for students of vocational schools.

Interreg IIIA 3+3 water project is being implemented in 2002-2004 and Phare CBC SPF 2001 3+3 water project in 2003/2004. Content – maintenance of waters in pilot areas, development of water supply, environmentally educating activity in educational institutions to follow the frame directive of the EU water policy.

Interreg IIIA Gulf II project is being implemented in 2002-2004 and Phare CBC SPF 2001 3+3 regional cooperation project Gulf in 2003/2004. Content – creation and development of cooperation between local governments at different levels (local, counties, regional and international); preparation for drafting the regional development plans and establishing cooperation between local governments in the areas of entrepreneurship development, environmental protection, education, tourism and the social field.

# Helsinki-Tallinn Euregio

- **Members:** City of Helsinki, Uusimaa Regional Council (FIN); City of Tallinn, Republic of Estonia represented by Harju County Government, Union of Harju County Municipalities (EE).
- **Population:** 1,840,000
- **Area (km<sup>2</sup>):** 10,699
- **Year of establishment:** Network – in 1999, non-profit association – in 2003
- **Contacts:** <http://www.euregio-heltal.org>



- CBC area (EU)
- National boundary
- Boundary of region



## Background

The twin-region of Helsinki-Uusimaa and Tallinn-Harjumaa functionally already exists, and further integration takes place through social and economic interaction. Euregio acts as a catalyst – initiates activities in the areas of mutual interest of the partners. Euregio will also act as the mediator and facilitator – one who brings interested parties together and creates pre-conditions for further cooperation inside the region.

Helsinki-Tallinn Euregio is part of the strengthening Baltic Sea economic area, and gains from its location both on the internal and external border area of the EU.

The region enjoys balanced economic development reflected in the well being of its people and the sustainability of its environment. Euregio has a great potential for synergy born from effective cooperation based on the use of each other's strengths.

The mutual interest on both sides of the border is to make this process smooth and to fully exploit potentials for economic and social development.

## Goals of the cooperation

The task of the Euregio network is to promote cooperation inside the region and enhance positive regional integration. Helsinki-Tallinn Euregio is a common forum for local and regional politicians, experts, business leaders and NGOs to come together for a dialogue and for designing common future for the twin-region of Helsinki-Uusimaa and Tallinn-Harjumaa. The vision is that Helsinki-Tallinn Euregio is a compact, stable and effective legal entity, a trusted catalyst, facilitator and a mediator of cooperation. It is well known among its partners and in the wider Baltic Sea Area.

## Organization

Helsinki-Tallinn Euregio is a non-profit association. It consists of the general meeting, the management board, and the manager.

The general meeting is the highest body that is competent to amend the articles of association, change objectives, appoint the members of the management board, decide on the membership, manage strategic activities, guide and supervise the management board.

The management board manages and represents H-T Euregio. Each partner names one representative and one deputy representative to the management board. The members of the management board appoint the chairman of the board from among themselves. The management board is competent to select the manager, manage the NPO, call the general meeting, implement the decisions of the general meeting, and present the activity report, financial report and the budget to the general meeting. The management board convenes at least 3 times a year.

The manager manages every day activities and economic activities, prepares and presents issues to the board and makes proposals for the development of the NPO.





## Financing

Funding comes from the membership fees, target allocations, and funding to projects.

It can also be received from endowments, revenues from organization of events, publication of materials and activities on their dissemination.

## Projects

### "Helsinki-Tallinn Science Twin-City Program"

The core of the project is to foster cooperation between players in science park environment in Helsinki region (Uusimaa) and Tallinn region (Harju). Potential activities of the program can be divided into three categories: 1) common curricula, graduate schools and research facilities; 2) exchange/mobility of undergraduate and graduate students and scientists; and 3) high-tech business development. Focus of the project is on the following business areas: ICT (incl. software business), biomedicine and biotechnology, and material sciences and related new technologies. It consists of various fact-finding activities and e.g. organizing sector-specific (ICT, Bio, Material) brokerage events. The fact finding activities include, among other things, an Internet inquiry and a large number of company interviews. The objective is to find out about the interest of Finnish/Estonian companies and other high-tech business actors to establish contacts and collaborate with Estonian/Finnish companies, technology parks, universities or research institutes. There are many potential forms of cooperation. These include e.g. cooperation of science and technology parks and incubators in the supply of office space and "soft" services (e.g. business development and mentoring programs, training, IPR, sales, marketing services etc.), subcontracting, joint-ventures, R&D and so forth. Based on the information gathered in the fact-finding part of the project, brokerage events take place. The target groups of the events consist of Finnish (Helsinki region) and Estonian (primarily Tallinn region) companies (start-up companies, SMEs and large enterprises), RTD organizations and experts, potential investors and mentors, representatives of regional development organizations and cities etc. The brokerage events offer great opportunities for participants to meet and make cross-border contacts.

The project aims at enhancing cooperation within higher education, research and development activities. Existing cooperation activities, interest groups, preconditions of university administrations, relevant faculties and departments to intensify cooperation, readiness and preconditions of pilot disciplines are mapped. The cooperation potentials of municipalities, enterprises and universities are investigated.

The project is supported by Interreg IIIA, Urban Program for the Helsinki Metropolitan Region, Helsinki-Tallinn Euregio, Tallinn City (mobility grants for the students and scientists from Tallinn and Harjumaa in 2002). The leading partner of the project is Culminatum Ltd Oy.

# Peipsi Center for Transboundary Cooperation

- **Members:** Cooperation in Peipsi CTC does not have a formal membership. Territory, where Peipsi CTC implements its activities: Counties of Ida-Viru, Jõgeva, Tartu, Põlva (EE); municipalities of Kingisepp, Gdov, Pskov, Pechory districts (RUS).
- **Population:** ~800,000
- **Area (km<sup>2</sup>):** Lake Peipsi /Chudskoe territory is 3,555
- **Year of establishment:** 1993
- **Contacts:** <http://www.ctc.ee>; <http://www.peipsi.org>



- CBC area (EU)
- CBC area outside the EU
- National boundary
- Boundary of region



## Background

The total length of the Estonian - Russian border is about 338 km, where approximately two thirds of the border runs through Lake Peipsi/Chudskoe and the Narva River. Lake Peipsi is the biggest transboundary lake in Europe. Of the total Lake Peipsi area, 44% belongs to Estonia and 56% - to Russia.

Estonian-Russian border and visa regime was established in 1991, after the re-independence of Estonian Republic. Demarcation of the frontier, long queues to cross the border, expensive visas etc. were a totally new and rather shocking experience for the local inhabitants, when introduced at the beginning of 1990s. However certain groups of local inhabitants in Narva and Ivangorod, and in Setu land could enjoy simplified border crossing until the year 2000, when the full visa regime was established. In 2002, two governments agreed to issue 4,000 one-year multiple entry visas free of charge, for the people living in the border territory and having the vital needs to cross the border.

Estonian-Russian border region is the meeting point of different cultures and religions: Estonians, Russians, Setu and the so called Russian old-believers sharing the territory.

Today, the region has remained peripheral and isolated with high rate of unemployment, depopulation etc.

Actual situation of cross-border cooperation is strongly affected by the atmosphere of interstate relations and problems unresolved at the intergovernmental level, such as the absent state border treaty.

## Goals of the cooperation:

Peipsi CTC is an international non-profit institute, which works to promote sustainable development and cross-border cooperation in the Estonian-Russian border area, Lake Peipsi international water basin. Peipsi CTC has a significant experience participating in and coordinating multi-institutional international scientific projects. We work close together with the research institutes and universities from Estonia, Russia, Sweden, Netherlands, Germany, Hungary etc.

Peipsi CTC is involved in the following areas: 1) transboundary water management and public participation, 2) community development and civil society; 3) cross-border cooperation and border research.

## Organization

Peipsi CTC has its office in Tartu, Estonia with the staff of 15 people. Our sister office on the Russian side is Chudskoye Project in Pskov. Most of the projects are implemented together.

## Financing

Peipsi CTC activities are financed by: EU 5th RTD Program, The European Commission, Nordic Council of Ministers, UNDP/GEF; The Regional Environmental Center for Central and Eastern Europe (REC), British and US Embassy in Estonia, US EPA and several other institutions.

## Projects

1. EXLINEA: Lines of Exclusion as Arenas of Cooperation: Reconfiguring the External Boundaries of Europe – Policies, Practices, Perceptions ([www.exlinea.org](http://www.exlinea.org))

Peipsi CTC is participating in the project together with 8 universities and research institutes from 7 European countries. The project studies cross-border interaction processes and patterns and tries to find answers to research questions: 1) How do EU and national policies, regulating the permeability of borders, influence local cross-border cooperation patterns? 2) What specific formal and informal cooperation practices have developed and why? 3) What have been the national, regional and local responses to EU border policies in specific border region contexts?

The core focus of this research is to study cross-border interaction processes and patterns as a result of 1) policies at various levels and 2) established forms of cooperation practices, conditioned by the perceptions of various public and private actors. The case studies (Estonian-Russian, Finnish-Russian, Polish-Ukrainian, Hungarian-Ukrainian-Romanian, Moldavian-Romanian and NE Greek border areas) will serve to illustrate the conflicting challenges, which the EU border policies will face as enlargement proceeds.

2. Estonian-Russian border area pupils collaboration

In 2002 four Estonian-Russian border region schools from Rapina, Varska and Pechory were running a joint project, focusing on regional cultural history and learning about customs and traditions of the local groups. A children's competition of research and creative works was launched and participants could take a part on the excursion to Russia and on the cultural festival. In summer, children had an opportunity to participate in one-week-long joint summer camp and in winter 4 days long winter camp was followed on the topics of cultural heritage of the region.

3. Bicycle tour in the future EU border area

In summer 2002 35 Estonian and Russian students rode bicycles along the route Tartu-Kallaste-Kolkja-Mehikoorma-Rapina-Mikitamae-Varska and conducted public debates on the topic "The development of border areas in the light of EU enlargement". The trip continued by bus in Russia following the route Pechory-Izborsk-Pskov-Gdov-Kingisepp-St. Petersburg. The one-week bicycle trip was organized by Peipsi CTC and the Estonian Debating Society.

Within the framework of this trip, students from Tartu, Tallinn, Pskov and St. Petersburg travelled through municipalities along Lake Peipsi both in Estonia and Russia and arranged debates on their way on various topics related with the EU.

The aim of the project was to raise the interest of people in the Estonian eastern border area in topics concerning the EU, encouraging them to discuss these and link the issue of EU enlargement more closely with local problems. We aimed to bring the topic of the EU closer to ordinary people. Together with the dissemination of information about the EU, the students also researched the opinion of the local people regarding the EU enlargement process and the border region's outlook for cooperation and development. At the end of the project the research results were published.



# Euregio Pskov-Livonia

■ **Members:** Associations of Local Authorities of Polva, Valga and Voru counties (EE); Associations of Local Authorities of Aluksne, Balvi, Ludza and Valka districts (LV); Municipalities of Palkino, Pechory, Pskov, Pytalovo, Sebezh districts and Pskov city (RUS).

■ **Population:** 556,440

■ **Area (km<sup>2</sup>):** 26,276

■ **Year of establishment:** 1996

■ **Contacts:** <http://www.aluksne.lv/cbc>



- CBC area (EU)
- CBC area outside the EU
- National boundary
- Boundary of region



## Background

During the conference of the Baltic Sea States "Cross-border Cooperation Region in Baltic Sea Region" held on March 27 - 28, 1996 in Karlskrona (Sweden), the representatives of Pskov, Aluksne, Voru and Polva regional delegations signed a letter of intent to promote border region development and cooperation according to a Euroregion model. It can be noticed as start point for creation of cross-border body – Council for Cooperation of Border Regions of Latvia, Russia and Estonia.

Reasons for cooperation:

- organization of interaction of border regions from Estonia, Latvia and Russia for development and implementation common programs and projects;
- representation of border regions' interests in the institutes of central government in each country;
- effective utilization of benefits of border situation for further development.

On 25 November, 2003 in the Council meeting in Sebezh (Russia) the name of Euroregion and the structure were changed and new name is: Euregio Pskov-Livonia.

## Goals of the cooperation

The Euregio aims in its activities at:

- organization of cooperation in order to implement joint programs and projects;
- representation of common interests in state authorities and international organizations;
- effective use of opportunities related to the location close to border.

This means cooperation projects in the fields of economics, environment, strategic planning, education and culture in the context of EU enlargement.

## Financing

For administrative costs every of the three member associations have there own membership fees. Also some additional finances are provided by national regional development programs if they exist. Participating municipalities guarantee co-financing for certain projects. Financing of other events (meetings, annual conferences etc.) is provided from different sources.

## Projects

"Pskov-Livonia Info", financed by Phare CREDO program

The main objectives of the project were the development of communication channels, database creation and development, elaboration of long-term strategy of tourism, introducing region's economical potential through mass media in the Baltic and EU countries, tourism potential mapping in the region.





During the project a GIS-database was created which includes at that time the following information on every participating country: general information, 159 accommodation institutions, 175 catering establishments, 184 providers of holiday activities, sightseeing, and transport.

"Pskov-Livonia VISION 2010", financed by Phare CREDO program  
The main objectives of the project activities were:

- Maintain a regional environment of cooperation that fosters the exchange of ideas, methods, practices and experiences to help promote sustainable economic development and improve relationships between regional authorities for mutual understanding and coordination of efforts on regional issues.
- To specify the possibilities and obstacles for a successful cooperation by analyzing current national plans of all participating parties.
- Develop communication channels of border regions and optimize the use of joint resources for the solution of regional issues.
- Utilize cross- border cooperation to strengthen development of democratic institutions in the region and promote further integration into European economic and social structures
- Transfer of know-how in the field of modern spatial planning, the activation of local authorities in the peripheral sub-regions and cooperation with existing partnership networks from Western and Eastern Europe.

"3 rivers, 3 tasks, 3 countries", financed by Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs and US Environmental Protection Agency

Project for pre-feasibility study at first on the three bigger river-sheds - Gauja, Daugava and Velikaya - turned to whole program at 2001 with several subprojects:

- start information, methodology and pre-feasibility works in geoinfosystems (GIS) for management plans of river watersheds
- organization of volunteer lake monitoring on the basis of school participation
- one-year surface water monitoring program on rivers with cross-border influence
- control and adaptation of new monitoring technology (portative multi-purpose spectrophotometer)





# Euroregion Country of Lakes

- **Members:** Municipalities of Daugavpils, Kraslava, Preili, Rezekne districts and Daugavpils and Rezekne cities (LV); municipalities of Ignalina, Svencionys, Utena, Zarasai, Visaginas (LT); municipalities of Braslav, Glubokoje, Miori, Postavi, Verhnedvinsk (BY).
- **Population:** 595,000
- **Area (km<sup>2</sup>):** 21,916
- **Year of establishment:** 1998
- **Contacts:** <http://www.cit.org.by/tour/>



- CBC area (EU)
- CBC area outside the EU
- National boundary
- Boundary of region



## Background

Cross-border cooperation in border regions of Latvia, Lithuania and Belarus has strong historic traditions in different levels and spheres.

May 16, 1998, based on "European Outline Convention on Transfrontier Cooperation between Territorial Communities or Authorities", as well as taking into consideration that cross-border cooperation will contribute to establishing closer links between Republic of Latvia and Republic of Belarus, and achievement of higher economic and social regional progress in both countries, the Cooperation agreement of basic cooperation principles has been signed by governments of Latvia and Republic of Belarus.

May 21, 1998, soon after signing of the mentioned agreement the first cross-border cooperation conference "Latvia – Belarus, possibilities for cooperation of municipalities in border area" is organized in Kraslava. Its participants – representatives from Consulates, Ministries and local authorities.

Conference has been successful and one of the final decisions taken was to offer participation in the work group also to local authorities in the Lithuanian border area and Vitebsk Regional Executive Committee in Belarus.

In 1998 in Braslav, Belarus, the first documents – Reglament and Regulations of Council cross-border cooperation in border areas of Latvia, Lithuania and Republic of Belarus are signed setting that Council, Secretariat and Directorate with national offices are established for operation in Latvian-Lithuanian-Belarusian border area territories.

Municipalities founded national offices of the Euroregion Country of Lakes Directorate as official representative bodies of Latvian, Lithuanian and Belarusian border areas.

## Goals of the cooperation

1. To manage and develop staff as a key organizational resource.
2. Cooperation in the Euroregion is a long-term partnership based on internal recourses.
3. To ensure and stimulate cooperation of Euroregion's partners and other European regions.
4. To contribute to further promotion of cultural and historical identity of each region within Euroregion Country of Lakes.
5. To put common efforts to ensure sustainable balance between tourism development, business and environment protection.

Areas of cooperation: education, NGO sector, sport, social sphere, tourism and environment protection sector, entrepreneurship and infrastructure development sector, culture and the sector of border crossing problem solving.

## Organization

Basing on its history Euroregion Country of Lakes has worked out its own structure, logo, vision and strategic goals, defined roles for members and established cross-border cooperation network not only among Euroregion's municipalities but also with other Euroregions and cooperation regions.

The highest governing body is the **Council** that meets not less than 3 times per year. **Secretariats** are the coordinating structures in all the participating countries. The responsibility of **Directorates'** offices in corresponding countries, as executive institution of the Euroregion, is the day-to-day management of the affairs of the Euroregion between the meetings of Council and Secretariats.

To ensure successful cross-border cooperation joint working groups were formed, involving relevant specialists from Latvia, Lithuania and Belarus.

## Financing

Individual projects are usually financed from EU programs, and Euroregion's authorities finance national offices and small CBC projects (mostly cultural).

## Projects

The first cross-border cooperation project was implemented in the framework of EU Phare CREDO program - "Formation of Latvian-Belarusian information centre". It was a project elaborated by Kraslava Town Council in cooperation with Verkhnedvinsk District Executive Committee, and lasted from October 1, 1999 till August 1, 2000. In the framework of the project it was planned to equip an office that was first planned to be Latvian-Belarusian information centre, but later on it served as a positive argument for establishing the Latvian office of Euroregion in Kraslava.

June 2001 Latvian Directorate of Euroregion Country of Lakes submitted to Norwegian Association of Local Authorities a project "Strategy elaboration for Euroregion Country of Lakes". In the framework of the project there have been 14 working group meetings organized, as well as a tour for Norwegian experts to Latvian, Lithuanian and Belarusian municipalities in August 2001, study tour for Directorate staff to Norway in October 2001, 3 Council meetings, as well as regular day-to-date work in Directorate offices and municipalities.

In June 2002, the project "Promotion of SME development in the territory of Euroregion Country of Lakes through cross-border cooperation activities" has been elaborated by Latvian office of Directorate in cooperation with Zarasai business information centre and confirmed by Phare CBC program. The main activities of the project are collecting/ updating information and publishing Directory of Euroregion Country of Lakes enterprises, organizing exhibition for enterprises interested in cross-border cooperation, organizing training, information days and a

study trip for the key staff, organizing contact days and individual consultations between SMEs from Latvian, Lithuanian and Belarusian border area. The project has already been successfully implemented.

September 3, 2003, Euroregion Country of Lakes started a new project "Culinary Service Improvement NEt in Latgale (Latgale CUISINE) based on Culinary Heritage concept" implementation. The project aim is to improve culinary service in Latgale region, to promote the development of gastronomic tourism, to promote cross-border cooperation in culinary business (SME) sector, to maximize existing business potential in the culinary sector, to contribute to region's future economic growth and creation of new jobs in the whole area of Euroregion Country of Lakes – Rzekne, Daugavpils, Preili, Kraslava districts and Ludza district.

Main activities carried out during the project will be: organization of Culinary Heritage activities, activities connected with preparation of Latgale Menu and improvement of training aid basis in Latgale culinary vocational schools with investment component in Daugavpils trade school preparing culinary specialists.



# Euroregion Nemunas-Niemen-Neman

- **Members:** Alytus County: municipalities of Alytus town, Alytus district, Druskininkai, Lazdijai, Varena. Marijampole County: municipalities of Marijampole, Kalvarija, Kazlu Ruda, Sakiai, Vilkaviskis. Vilnius County: municipalities of Vilnius district, Svencionys, Salcininkai and Trakai (LT); Association of Local Authorities of Euroregion Neman (PL); Grodno region (BY); Kaliningrad region: municipalities of Tchernyachovsk, Krasnoznamensk, Gusev, Oziersk, Nesterov (RUS).

- **Population:** 4,842,300

- **Area (km<sup>2</sup>):** 89,085

- **Year of establishment:** June 6, 1997

- **Contacts:** [www.nemunas-euroreg.lt](http://www.nemunas-euroreg.lt)



- CBC area (EU)
- CBC area outside the EU
- National boundary
- Boundary of region



## Background

On June 6, 1997 cross-border regions of Lithuania, Poland and Belarus Republics established the union of cross-border regions, named Euroregion Nemunas-Niemen-Neman (hereinafter – Neman). Later on the municipalities of Vilnius and Balystok Counties and then, in 2002, the eastern districts of Kaliningrad region joined this union.

The main assumption for the formation of the Euroregion Neman was raising the living standards in the borderland local society through exploitation of the advantageous social, political and geographical situation, i.e. the area, where the four countries – Lithuania, Poland, Belarus, Russia (Kaliningrad region) – come together. The river Neman geographically and historically unites these lands and their nations. Nowadays its location on the exterior borders of the European Union, as well as the developed network of transport infrastructure and business relations in the East, let the region gain a valuable advantage of joining the north of Europe with the south and the west with the east.

## Goals of the cooperation

The main aim is the establishment of better conditions for socio-economic development of the regions in order the cooperation among the cross-border regions and institutions could be improved.

Coordinating Bureaus of this Euroregion prepare and implement the projects of strategic planning, business, tourism, human resources, cultural exchange, and environmental development, which encompass Euroregion Neman area; they also consult local authorities and other organizations, existing in Euroregion Neman area, on project preparation, implementation and international cooperation issues.

## Organization

Six representatives from each of the member countries are delegated to the Council of the Euroregion, 3 to the Presidium and 3 representatives to each of the 6 Working groups (on economy, tourism, environmental protection, social affairs and health, culture and sport, spatial planning).

Every country of the Euroregion has established a coordinating Bureau, the directors of which make up the Secretariat of Euroregion Neman.

Grodno Regional Executive Committee functions as such Bureau in Belarus. In Kaliningrad region it is the administration of Tchernyakhovsk municipality. In Poland – Association of Polish municipalities in Euroregion Neman. Lithuanian municipalities have established Nemunas Euroregion Marijampole Bureau, which joins administrations of 14 municipalities and 3 counties.

## Financing

Every member-country bodies finance the activities being implemented in its area, which are coordinated by the national coordinating Bureau. For example, in the year 2003 almost 6% of the Nemunas Euroregion Marijampole Bureau budget was compiled of municipalities' contributions. The rest was from implementation of the projects and other activities.



## Projects

At the present time Nemunas Euroregion Marijampole Bureau implements 2 projects partly supported by Phare, 2 – by Interreg, and 1 project partly financed by Global Environment Facility:

- The support of GEF to the project “Cycling Tourism development in Lithuanian-Polish cross-border” comprises USD 50,917,57. In its 18-month duration the project is foreseen to: prepare and develop the cycling route “The Suvalkija Ring”; to establish 5 camping sites, 5 “natural camping sites” and 300 informative road signs along this route; organize training courses for the local communities; prepare and issue 2,000 copies of the specialized guide on this route in two languages; participate in the international tourism fair in Vilnius, VIVATOUR.
- Phare CBC program devoted EUR 49,000 to the project “Tourism information network and cooperation development in Euroregion Neman”. During 12 months of its implementation it is planned to: prepare Tourism development strategy of Euroregion Neman; prepare and issue 5,000 copies of the catalogue “Rural tourism in Euroregion Neman” in two languages; present the Euroregion at international tourism fairs; organize training courses to the tourism business representatives.
- Phare CBC program’s support to the project “A Developing Region in the Centre of the Enlarged Europe: Socio-Economic Cooperation of Cross-border Regions” makes up EUR 48,700. During 12 months of the project duration it is foreseen to: analyse socio-economic changes in the cross-border regions with the change of external borders of EU; present the results of the analysis, the regions and their socio-economic potential on CD-ROMs (5,000 copies); organize 7 joint seminars and study visits together with the “Country of Lakes” and “Four Corners” Euroregions in the fields of business, youth, tourism and cultural exchange, as well as political cooperation.
- The programme Interreg III C has supported project “Exchange of know-how and transferring experience among border regions in Europe” by EUR 5 mln. During the 4 years of its implementation it is foreseen to: name the problems of the European cross-border regions and project participants, and help their project preparation, in order these problems could be solved in 3 main aspects: environmental protection/business, tourism and labour market mobility/social and culture affairs; exchange of the experience, while developing cross-border cooperation; as well as develop cooperation network all over the Europe.



# Euroregion Sesupe

- **Members:** Municipalities of Jurbarkas, Kalvarija, Kazlu Ruda, Marijampole, Pajegiai, Sakiai, Vilkaviskis (LT). Gusev, Krasnoznamensk, Nesterov, Oziersk districts (Kaliningrad region, RUS). Goldap and Kovale Oletske local authorities (PL). Eksjö municipality (SE).
- **Population:** 368,585
- **Area (km<sup>2</sup>):** 12,006
- **Year of establishment:** 2003
- **Contacts:** [www.sesupe.lt](http://www.sesupe.lt)



- CBC area (EU)
- CBC area outside the EU
- National boundary
- Boundary of region



## Background

Continuing the deep-rooted traditions of international transboundary cooperation the municipality of the Sakiai district stepped up the initiative of creating Euroregion Sesupe. On April 24, 2003 self-governments from Lithuania, Russia, Poland and Sweden signed the agreement on establishing Euroregion Sesupe.

Euroregion Sesupe unites the self-governments located in the Sesupe river catchment area, as well as their foreign partners, for joint activities on improving the situation in social, economic, environmental, cultural, educational and other spheres. The Euroregion will join the efforts of the self-governments and NGOs, which will enable solving crucial problems of the regions and guarantee efficiency of the EU integration, as well as to maximally utilize the capacities granted by the EU funds and programs.

## Goals of cooperation

The main goals of cooperation in Euroregion Sesupe are:

1. Improving the living standards of residents of the Euroregion;
2. Stimulating, planning and organizing activities to provide for omni-lateral well-balanced progressive development of the entire region;
3. Developing the established good-neighbor relations further;
4. Easing up mutual contacts for physical and juridical bodies;
5. Bringing local communities together;
6. Assisting activities aimed at setting up cooperation between the regional and local authorities, as well as public organizations on both sides of the border.

Major spheres: environmental protection, economy, entrepreneurship, youth and sport, culture, social welfare and separation, tourism.

## Organization

Euroregion bodies are: Council of the Euroregion, Euroregion Executive Board, working groups. Legal status – international agreement.

Major working methods:

1. Developing and implementing joint transboundary projects primarily in the fields of: environmental protection, economy, entrepreneurship, youth and sport, culture, social welfare and separation, tourism.
2. Cooperating in the realization of joint communal projects in border areas (e.g.: water treatment plants, deposition and utilization of wastes etc.).
3. Cooperating in the spheres of education and healthcare;
4. Exchanging delegations from the abovementioned sectors;
5. Organizing joint seminars, conferences, camps, contests and other activities;
6. Developing border check points infrastructure;
7. Supporting studies of the neighbors' languages;
8. Preserving the common cultural heritage;
9. Disseminating information on the Euroregion;



10. Cooperating in the fields of information dissemination and IT development;
11. Solving environmental problems together;
12. Cooperating otherwise in other spheres, interesting for the cross-border partners;

### Financing

The sources of financing for Euroregion Sesupe activities may be:

1. The programs and projects implemented;
2. Target financial inputs from the Agreement Parties;
3. Target subsidies;
4. Donations;
5. Other legal sources.

### Projects

#### 1. "GOLDAP-KRASNOZNAMENSK-ILGUVA Cycling Route"

The goal of the project is to intensify international cooperation in border areas between Lithuania, Russia and Poland, and to stimulate economic development motivating cycling sport development. The project is oriented to the expansion of environmental and cultural tourism.

Within the project span the tourist information in the area of 250 km is collected and analyzed. There will be 4,000 copies of maps and a detailed guide published in Russian, Lithuanian, Polish and English. The main activities will be focused on the Goldap – Krasnoznamensk – Ilguva 25-kilometer part of the route, where the old and disused road will be repaired and adjusted for cycling.

On the completion of the project, when all the works, road reconstruction and publication of the route guide will be implemented, in September 2004 a week-long cycling tourist trip along the Goldap – Krasnoznamensk – Ilguva will take place. It will be participated by 40-50 cyclists.

The project is financed by the Baltic Sea Region Special Action Program of the SPF EU PHARE 2001.

The overall project cost is EUR 364,740, where EUR 291,280 of that sum is coming from the program and EUR 73,460 is the input of the Sakiai municipality.

#### 2. „Water-Supply and Sewers in Smaller Settlements"

The goal of the project is to solve problems in the self-governments of Euroregion Sesupe, which are connected to water-supply and sewers in smaller settlements. This Euroregion Sesupe project is taken part in by 7 self-governments from 3 countries, and the opportunity-study is being already prepared. The project suggests that in all 7 self-governments for 3 of smaller settlements water-supply and sewers systems in accordance with the European standards will be introduced.

#### 3. „Alternative Energy Sources in Euroregion Sesupe "

The goal of this project is to analyze alternative energy sources and develop concrete smaller project in this field. It encompasses 9 self-governments from 3 countries of Sesupe Euroregion. The project will be implemented together with the German company GERTEC, international organization ITUT, Russian project financing company and universities: Kaliningrad Technical and Kaunas Technological Universities.

# Euroregion Saule

- **Members:** Taurage County: municipalities of Taurage, Pagegiai, Silale, Jurbarkas; Siauliai County: municipalities of Akmenė, Joniskis, Pakruojis, Radviliskis, Kelme, city of Siauliai and Siauliai district (LT); Zemgale planning region including Dobeļe, Bauska, Aizkraukle, Jekabpils and Jelgava districts and city of Jelgava (LV). Kaliningrad region: districts of Neman and Slavsk, city of Sovietsk (RUS).

- **Population:** 900,000

- **Area (km<sup>2</sup>):** 25,000

- **Year of establishment:** 1999

- **Contacts:** <http://www.siauliai.aps.lt/saule>  
<http://www.eureg-saule.jrp.lv>  
[saule@siauliai.aps.lt](mailto:saule@siauliai.aps.lt)



- CBC area (EU)
- CBC area outside the EU
- National boundary
- Boundary of region



## Background

By the initiative of the Administration of Siauliai Country Governor, Euroregion Saule has been established on the 2<sup>nd</sup> of July in 1999. The name of Euroregion means "sun" in Lithuanian. Euroregion is the member of Association of European Border Regions (AEBR). The strengths of Euroregion Saule are that Saule is located on the border between EU and Russia, and also that the old Hanseatic road unify all the members of Euroregion.

## Goals of cooperation

The cooperation within the frameworks of Euroregion Saule is conducted to:

- improve the living standards of the residents;
- ease mutual contacts;
- bring the local communities together;
- overcome possible historical and other prejudice;
- plan activities aimed at providing for the omni-lateral progressive development of the Parties to the Agreement considering their economic conditions;
- assist activities aimed at adjusting cooperation between the regional and local authorities.

The goals will be reached through:

1. Assistance to joint transboundary projects of economic development in the fields of:
  - industry;
  - agriculture and forestry;
  - transport;
  - communications;
  - know-how exchange;
  - environmental protection;
  - crime combating;
2. Cooperation in realizing common community projects in the border areas (e.g.: water treatment plants, depositing and utilizing wastes etc.).
3. Cooperation in the sphere of spatial planning.
4. Development of the BCP infrastructure.
5. Development of vocational education, re-qualification and re-training of personnel to decrease the unemployment rate, primarily among the youngsters.
6. Cooperation in the fields of education, culture and tourism, including group exchange of scientists, sportsmen, cultural and tourism workers.
7. Assistance in learning the neighbors' languages.
8. Conservation of the common cultural heritage.
9. Dissemination of information on the Euroregion.
10. Cooperation in the field of combating natural and ecological disasters, fires as well as other emergency situations. Information exchange on the said threats.

## Organization

The Euroregion bodies are:

- President of the Euroregion;
- Vice-President of the Euroregion;
- Council of the Euroregion;
- Executive Board of the Euroregion;
- Secretariat of the Euroregion;
- Working groups.
- Audit group.

## Financing

1. The President of the Euroregion creates the Secretariat of the Euroregion and establishes its working procedure.
2. The work of the Secretariat is financed by the Party to the Agreement currently presiding in the Euroregion.
3. The location of the Secretariat is shifted turn by turn when the President changes. The Secretariat is formed by the Party to the Agreement currently presiding in the Euroregion. The staff number for the Secretariat is determined by the President of the Euroregion. Currently the national secretariats are being established in each member country.

## Projects

- “Developing the Strategy for Euroregion Saule.” Project coordinator – Jelgava City Council (Latvia). The project is financed by Phare 2001 CBC. The main goal of the project is to develop the strategy for the Euroregion’s activities until 2010. To achieve this goal a meeting was held, where politicians, entrepreneurs from the entire Euroregion, and the Euroregion Council members exchanged their experiences with the Danish colleagues. On the completion of the project the strategy (document) will be developed, which will then serve basis for the activities of Euroregion Saule. SWOT analysis will be used to prioritize activities.
- The development of Baltic tourism network alongside VIA Hanseatica, INTERREG IIIB.
- Environment-friendly farming in the Inner-Baltic zone, PHARE SPF 2001.
- South Baltic development zone - South Baltic Arc, PHARE CBC.
- High-speed railroad RAIL BALTICA, INTERREG IIIB.
- Creation of cycle-track route in the territory of Euroregion “Saule”, PHARE CBC.
- The development of tourism facilities, following the old tracks of Zemgalians, PHARE SPF 2001.
- Creation of Euroregion’s collaboration network, MP of the Nordic countries
- The creation of programs for the development of Euroregion “Saule”, (the fund of Lithuania, 2001-2002)
- Bridge Saule – Kvarken, 2004. (The Nordic Council of Ministers).



# Euroregion Bartuva

- **Members:** Association of municipalities "Bartuva" including municipalities of Virga, Barta, Dunika, Kaleti, Nica, Otanki and Rucava (LV); municipalities of Skuodas, Kretinga and Palanga (LT).
- **Population:** about 120,000
- **Area (km<sup>2</sup>):** about 3,000
- **Year of establishment:** 2000
- **Contacts:** e-mail: pletra@palanga.lt



- CBC area (EU)
- National boundary
- Boundary of region



## Background

The starting point for cooperation was one joint ecological project between Kretinga, Palanga and Rucava municipalities. There has traditionally been strong cooperation between officials and politicians of Lithuanian municipalities of Palanga, Skuodas and Kretinga. This border region between Lithuania and Latvia has historically had a common name *Bartuva*, and this gave the idea for the name of the Euroregion. Today about 11,000 Lithuanians live in Liepaja region (Latvia) and a few thousands of Latvians live in Palanga and Skuodas regions (Lithuania). All these factors provided the background for establishment of the Euroregion "Bartuva" 15 September 2000.

## Goals of the cooperation

- To improve the quality of life for people inhabiting the area of the Euroregion,
- To promote mutual contacts,
- To tighten bonds among local communities,
- To eliminate historical prejudices,
- To plan activities aimed at providing sustainable development among the members of the agreement, with respect to their economic status,
- To develop activities enabling cooperation between regional and local authorities.

## Organization

Management bodies:

- Council (up to 4 representatives of each Party of the Agreement);
- Executive Council (from members of the Council, 1 representative of each Party of Agreement);
- President /Secretariat;
- Working groups (temporary, for development of joint projects);
- Audit group.

The Presidency rotates. The president appoints the secretariat of the Euroregion. The party of the agreement, which holds the presidency, covers the costs of the Secretariat.

## Financing

Membership fees. 50% of the total annual budget goes as a financial contribution to joint projects, 50% to finance cultural, sports and other events.

## Projects

The main areas of activities: cooperation in tourism, cultural events and sports, delegations, development common projects.

The projects aim at the development of tourism and IT in the territory of the euroregion. Cultural and sports events are organised every year.



# Euroregion Baltic

- **Members:** Region Blekinge, Association of Local Authorities and the Council of Kronoberg county, Regional Council of Kalmar county (SE); Regional Municipality of Bornholm (DK); Association of Gminas of Poland in Euroregion Baltic (PL); Association of Local Authorities, Administration and Parliament of Kaliningrad region (RUS); Klaipeda County; municipalities of Klaipeda city, Klaipeda district, Palanga, Neringa, Kretinga, Silute, Skuodas (LT); Kurzeme Planning Region including municipalities of Liepaja and Ventspils cities, Liepaja, Ventspils, Kuldiga, Talsi and Saldus districts (LV).
- **Population:** 5,939,970
- **Area (km²):** 101,034
- **Year of establishment:** 1998
- **Contacts:** [www.eurobalt.org](http://www.eurobalt.org)



## Background

The end of 80's and beginning of 90's are marked by positive democratic renovations in the European area, the fall of the "iron curtain" and an opportunity of a more open international cooperation. Due to dynamic process within the framework of cross-border cooperation in the south-eastern Baltic there was a transition made from bilateral sister-city relations to the establishment of the Euroregion Baltic, the highest form of cross-border cooperation.

The agreement on the establishment of the Euroregion Baltic (ERB) was signed in February 22, 1998 in Malbork by the representatives of regional and local authorities of border areas of the 6 countries: Denmark, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, Russia, and Sweden. This was the first Euroregion with the participation of the Russian side.

Representatives of the regions work together on the creation of the network of constantly cooperating organizations, institutions, local self-government bodies. The major goal of these actions is increase of the level of living standards for the residents of south-eastern Baltic, adjusting the difference between our regions in different spheres of life, raising the level of regional self-awareness. The Baltic Sea is a common border for all of us and at the same time it is an element unifying our regions.

Euroregion Baltic is a political platform on the trans-regional level – i.e. between regions of different countries. The purpose of the joint work in the framework of the Euroregion is to establish regional transboundary political cooperation, which also creates an opportunity to promote joint projects and, primarily, given the mutual interaction and support of 6 mln inhabitants of the Euroregion Baltic, contributes to the weight and strength, of e.g. larger investment proposals aimed at positive regional development. That allows improving the living standards, strengthening connections between the regions and overcoming the historical and cultural prejudice.

## Goals of cooperation

1. Improving living standards for the inhabitants of Euroregion Baltic
2. Contributing to establishing mutual contacts
3. Adjusting more intense relations between municipalities
4. Eliminating historic prejudice
5. Stimulating actions, aimed at cooperation between regional and local authorities

## Organization

The ERB Council is the highest administrative and coordinating body of the organization. It consists of eight 8 persons appointed by each of the Agreement Parties, totaling to the maximum of 48 persons. The work of the Council is headed by the president.

Council tasks: to initiate and adopt decisions on the administrative structure of the Euroregion Baltic; to adopt the action plan and other long-term programs; to initiate and adopt decisions on reviewing of the



Statutes and the Agreement; to adopt the financial plans for joint projects, the annual report of the presiding party, and annual reports from the working groups; to make decisions on enlarging the ERB territory, as well as on dismissal or temporary withdrawal of parties; to appoint the ERB President and Vice-President for the one-year term, to award the title of 'Honorable Member'.

The ERB Executive Board nominated from the Council members consists of one representative from each side of the Agreement. The ERB Presidium tasks: to prepare and present resolutions for the consideration and approval of the Council; to implement the resolutions of the Council; to adopt the annual reports of the Presiding party and the working groups, and to present them to the Council for approval;

The Presidium may appoint **working groups**. At present there are three permanent working groups in ERB: 1) group on spatial planning and regional development; 2) group on environmental protection; 3) social group.

After the Council meeting in Poland on the 4<sup>th</sup> of May, 2004 the new version of ERB Statutes was approved, and a new body of ERB – a permanent ERB Secretariat - was established on the 1<sup>st</sup> of July 2004 in Elbląg, Poland. The main functions of the ERB IPS are: service current financial obligations and provide accounting and book-keeping services, preparing of annual financial reports, submitting of annual presidency report, arrangement of meetings of the National Secretariats in preparation for ERB Council and Board meetings and their draft decisions. Providing the National Secretariats with ERB internal and external correspondence, preparing meetings for ERB bodies, agendas, draft resolutions and decisions; dealing with ERB promotion and information dissemination, making use of previous experience of ERB Parties and new guidelines from ERB Communication and Information Strategy; taking minutes of ERB Council and Executive Board meetings; gathering and providing with requested information all the interested persons and organisations.

## Financing

Each party provides financing for its activities, with the exception of project activities, where co-financing comes from the structural funds of the European Commission, such as Interreg, Tacis, and Phare. The majority of the Polish-side initiated projects are financed by the special Micro-project Euroregional Fund. The International secretariat is financed from the membership fee collected from all members of the euroregion.

## Projects

The projects implemented within the framework of Euroregion Baltic are aimed at:

- Support joint transboundary projects of social and economic development in various spheres;
- Cooperation in realizing joint municipal projects in cross-border areas;
- Cooperation in the field of spatial planning of cross-border areas;
- Development of the border check points infrastructure;
- Improvement of professional qualifications and reorganization of re-training system to decrease the unemployment rate, specifically among youngsters;
- Group exchange of scientists, sportsmen and people dealing with culture, or working with children and teenagers etc.
- Cooperation in the field of tourism development;
- Stimulation of studying the languages of the neighboring countries;
- Conservation and development of the common cultural heritage;
- Organization of ERB informational channels and support of mass media development to provide the Parties with relevant information.
- Cooperation in the field of combating natural and ecological disasters, fires or, in case of occurrence, other critical situations. Information exchange on the said threats.

Among the largest projects there are the international fairs in Gdynia and Klaipėda, international children and youth camps, "From Sea to Us" annual children resource contest, "Good Governance" project aimed at increasing the positive managerial experience, "Green School" environmental project. Currently the largest Seagull-Dev ERB project is being realized – the strategy of ERB development, which gained co-financing from the Interreg/Phare/Tacis programs, and is aimed at drafting the joint development strategy and the joint plan for the ERB transnational development. This is the basic document encompassing all spheres of socio-economic relations, which will define our mission and objectives for the coming years, as well as help intensify our cooperation. All the information on the projects may be found on the website of ERB.

# Baltic Sea Seven Islands Cooperation Network (B7)

- **Members:** Åland's Government and Administrative Board (FIN); Regional Municipality of Bornholm (DK); Municipality of Gotland and Association of Local Authorities of Öland (SE); County Governments of Hiiumaa and Saaremaa (EE); Rügen County Administration (DE).
- **Population:** 277,800
- **Area (km²):** 11,511
- **Year of establishment:** 1989
- **Contacts:** <http://www.b7.org>



## Background

The B7 is a cooperation of the 7 largest islands in the Baltic Sea from 5 different countries that started in 1989. The B7 believes that as a cooperation unit they can influence developments for their common good.

Benefits and opportunities of the B7 cooperation:

- An organization that can lobby to promote island issues at the national and international level.
- A cooperation to exchange experiences and ideas.
- An organization that works at the political, public official and grassroots level.
- A cooperation to develop interregional programs, projects and focus groups.
- The framework for an extensive network

B7 – principles of membership:

- Each member is a Baltic Sea island.
- Each island contributes to the cooperation basing on its population size.
- The B7 cooperation is a partnership of equals.
- An understanding that the B7 can better serve the interests of our islanders and achieve more in cooperation than alone.

## Goals of the cooperation

The 4 B7 Objectives:

- Organized to serve the interests of its islanders.
- Developing the Islands through projects, large and small.
- Lobbying to achieve our vision for the islands.
- Learning through exchange of experiences and ideas.

The priorities of the B7 islands:

1. Transport
2. Education
3. Tourism
4. Environment and Energy
5. Business Development
6. ICT (Information & Communication Technologies)
7. Democracy, inter-regional understanding, networking
8. Rural and Agro-business Development
9. Healthcare
10. Public Service Effectiveness.
11. Common History

## Organization

Legal status:

- The Charter governs the operations of the B7 Cooperation.
- The Charter can be modified by the approval of the B7 Steering Committee.



- The B7 Cooperation is not registered as a legal entity.
- A member island can, as required, and with the agreement of the B7 Steering Committee, appoint one of the member islands to represent it in a legal capacity.
- Differences in understanding and interpretation of the B7 Charter and Annexes can be decided by a majority vote of the B7 Board or referred to the B7 Steering Committee for a decision.

The B7 has a structure that includes the following:

- Annual Conference;
- B7 Steering Committee;
- B7 Board;
- Chairmanship;
- Secretariat;
- Workgroups;
- Focus Groups;
- B7 Facilitator;
- Brussels Representation;
- B7 Accounts.

Euroregion's activities are financed by membership fees and from projects.

## Projects

- Successfully completed two Interreg IIC/Phare projects: SUSWAT and BEST 1998-2001
- Currently implementing Interreg IIIB project – Medieval History
- The Brussels office is a key link to the institutions of the EU
- Many cooperation projects implemented between islands of the B7 in the areas of culture, EU accession, environment, energy, public service effectiveness, project management, health and welfare, tourism, education etc.
- Every second year B7 Youth Games (2002 Bornholm, 2004 Gotland...)
- Large Conferences (in 2003 – EU Enlargement, Healthy Islands, B7 Business Forum – Hiiumaa, 2004 – Maritime Safety – in Trelleborg in May, 2004 – environment – in Rugen in September)



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**The Nordic Council of Ministers** was established in 1971. It submits proposals on cooperation between the governments of the five Nordic countries to the Nordic Council, implements the Council's recommendations and reports on results, while directing the work carried out in the targeted areas. The Prime Ministers of the five Nordic countries assume overall responsibility for the cooperation measures, which are coordinated by the ministers for cooperation and the Nordic Cooperation committee. The composition of the Council of Ministers varies, depending on the nature of the issue to be treated.

**The Nordic Council** was formed in 1952 to promote cooperation between the parliaments and governments of Denmark, Iceland, Norway and Sweden. Finland joined in 1955. At the sessions held by the Council, representatives from the Faroe Islands and Greenland form part of the Danish delegation, while Åland is represented on the Finnish delegation. The Council consists of 87 elected members - all of whom are members of parliament. The Nordic Council takes initiatives, acts in a consultative capacity and monitors cooperation measures. The Council operates via its institutions: the Plenary Assembly, the Presidium and standing committees.



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