



Closing speech by Mr Jan Kozlowski Gdansk Conference 2004-12-02--03

Ladies and gentlemen,

We are just reaching a conclusion of hard two days' work on the future of Euroregion Baltic. The number of people involved in these discussions on the most important issues for the Region was impressive, amounting to 130 regional and local politicians, specialists in our areas of interest, including those from the outside of ERB, local activists and the youth. We held a total of eight workshops, summaries of which we have just heard.

As we had assumed beforehand, a draft Joint Transnational Development Programme, prepared within ERB, became a basis of our debates. This document outlines the preconditions for the intensification of economic exchange and cooperation, as well as for the development of common strategies in support of regional industries, especially those cultivated by small and medium enterprises. Other documents employed in the discussions included the Third Cohesion Report with proposals for the future structural funds, European Employment Strategy and European Spatial Planning Programme, which define the directions which ERB should follow, and choices ERB should make in order to facilitate further progress within the region.

Not least important in our debate are the reports drawn up as a result of the activities carried out within the Seagull work packages. One of them, included in the conference materials, concerned the role that regional industrial platforms and clusters can play in the growth of ERB. It proposed some areas common for the whole region and bearing a lot of development potential: timber industry, tourism and related services, logistics, power industry and environmental technologies, maritime industry, and health care sector. This conference's workshops were devoted to a large extent to most of these areas.

Let me now, for the sake of comparison, present some of the areas considered to be of importance for potential development activities, as presented during the debate initiated by the Baltic Development Forum. These are:

- telecommunications;

- nanotechnologies;
- software;
- public administration electronic services;
- information technologies in the health care sector;
- pharmaceuticals and diagnosis;
- biotechnology;
- biomedical engineering;
- innovation in the agriculture and food industries;
- timber industry;
- design;
- innovative solutions in transport systems.

It will be very interesting to compare these two sets of priorities, as well as to propose concrete steps that would enable using this identified potential. I hope this will happen within the scope of work due to be done in the Seagull project.

Ladies and gentlemen!

I believe one clear observation is worth noting here, the observation that the participants in this conference obviously realise. Regional cooperation is not a panaceum, though it can be an effective response to the problems and challenges we are facing. However, such effective cooperation involves a strategy: a clear aim and direction, as well as the plan of action. I can see that the first two elements are close to being precisely defined; I have referred to the vision in my opening speech yesterday. Currently, we are working on a proposal of concrete action. We must though be aware of one serious difficulty: in order to be successful, we must need to make sure that on the one hand the involved decision makers, i.e. politicians in the whole Euroregion Baltic accept these developed visions, aims and directions as our own visions, aims and directions and become their owners, and on the other hand, following the selection of proper activities they will find sufficient human and financial resources to implement them. Another crucial condition for success is to reach concordance between ourselves and

local communities who will share our views of specific goals and join in the implementation process.

We do hope to continue with the project and prepare its next phase: moving on to concrete action by, e.g:

- creating joint R&D centres;
- establishing joint competence centres, e.g. in the area of environment protection;
- improving entrepreneurship in rural areas;
- building joint effective transport infrastructure that is no risk to environment;
- setting up a joint Rural Development Academy;
- increasing tourism through e.g. theme tourism;
- creating a common market without barriers, and thus stimulating small and medium businesses to become more internationally mobile and active.

As you have noticed, the above mentioned examples originate from our basic conference document and seem to be fairly obvious.

Ladies and gentlemen!

I have not attempted to sum up our conference. This has already been done to some extent by the speakers reporting on the workshops, and the final conference report will be formulated at a later time. I have, though, endeavoured to draw your attention to a few key issues requiring our time and the problems that need solving so as we will not reduce our opportunities.

Before we say goodbye I would like to extend my kindest gratitude to all the guests who have come to Gdansk, but also to the inhabitants of Pomerania present here. My special thanks go to those who have worked the hardest: moderators and experts, for the time they devoted to our matters. May I also thank the speakers from the outside of ERB: Mr Janusz Gałęziak from the Permanent Polish Representation to Brussels, and Ms Joanna Przedzimirska from the Interreg III B Joint Secretariat. I would also like to thank the Department of Economic and International Cooperation in my Office, which together with the Seagull project management and the ERB Secretariat prepared

this successful, in my opinion, conference. Finally, let me thank the interpreters without whose work our debates would have proved impossible. I hope you have had not only a fruitful but also a nice time here in Pomerania. See you again!