



Seagull-DevERB

The Institute for Local and
Regional Democracy

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124 voices around the Baltic Sea

Good Governance and Gender Equality in Euroregion Baltic

A quantitative survey reflecting the current conditions in the nine
member region



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Preface

Euroregion Baltic (ERB) was founded in 1998 as a cooperation between the nine regions Pomorskie and Warmia Mazury in Poland, Kaliningrad in Russia, Klaipeda in Lithuania, Kurzeme in Latvia, Bornholm in Denmark and Kronoberg, Kalmar and Blekinge in Sweden. Since 2002 the cooperating partners have implemented an EU part financed project called “Seagull DevERB”. The main task of the project is to develop a Joint Transnational Development Programme (JTDP) containing a strategy and activity plan for activities which will provide with added values in the perspective of the member regions development.

In accordance with the strategy proposed as a basis for the JTDP activities, improvements regarding good governance in public affairs and gender equality will have to play a forefront role as horizontal objectives in relation to which prioritized activities should be measured. That is why early in the Seagull project surveys were made concerning the status of these aspects and how they were perceived and implemented in politics and development processes.

As a follow up activity to get up to date indications concerning tendencies in attitudes and concrete implementation activities regarding good governance and gender equality, the Seagull project management have commissioned Daniel Folkesson, The Institute for Local and Regional Democracy, to conduct a new study, based on a comprehensive questionnaire directed to the respective ERB regions. He has followed and participated in project activities regarding these issues from the beginning of the project as an external expert. He has made his study in close contact with the respective regional secretariats for ERB issues.

The study does not claim a scientific status. It mirrors the views of persons considered by the ERB secretariats to have relatively good insights regarding good governance respectively gender equality aspects. All conclusions belong to the author and are based on his expert knowledge, insights and experiences obtained by participating in the project.

The results of the study confirm the importance of a continued political dialogue within ERB regarding good governance and gender equality issues.

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Introduction

Background and objective of the study

The Interreg IIIB project Seagull DevERB started up in 2002. The project aims to establish a Joint Transnational Development Programme (JTDP) in the south-eastern part of the Baltic Sea region. The JTDP is worked out around a number of prioritised goals, areas and political ambitions, and will be implemented with an objective to support long-term growth and development in the nine cooperating regions. Six countries - Denmark, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, Russia and Sweden - are involved in the actual project, all members of the political body Euroregion Baltic (ERB) striving to improve social, political, economical and ecological life in the region. Seagull DevERB will be finalised by the end of 2005.

In the new JTDP two concepts are paid specific attention as important horizontal objectives that are to be respected and followed when political decisions are made within the future ERB. The two concepts *good governance* and *gender equality* reflect important components of democracy and include essential values such as human rights and respect, openness, tolerance, equity, public participation, efficiency and transparency. Both concepts have been dedicated specific analyses within the implementation of Seagull DevERB¹ along with arranged seminars and workshops on the highlighted themes.

The main objective of this new study is to follow up some of those results that were introduced in the earlier stages of the Seagull DevERB project and to present how issues of good governance and gender equality...

- ...have developed over the last years
- ...appear today
- ...are envisioned for tomorrow

...in the nine cooperating ERB regions. The new report should be seen as an overview mapping major and most evident characteristics of the two concepts. It is important to emphasise that the aim is *not* to point out that one ERB member is “better” or “more democratic” than another! Instead, the study should be seen as a general attempt to mirror the status of good governance and gender equality in the nine regions, as it is understood/perceived by 124 selectively picked key-persons around the Baltic Sea.

Good governance and gender equality - a short description of the two concepts

In this study the two concepts good governance and gender equality are focused and paid much attention. Below, a short description is made of how the concepts are treated and defined within frames of the report.

¹ See for example the two reports (1) “Democracy in Euroregion Baltic - an overview of the current conditions in the nine member regions” by Mr Daniel Folkesson, and (2) “Gender equality in Euroregion Baltic - an overview of the current conditions in the nine member regions” by Ms Ylva Hallberg and Mr Daniel Sköld.

Good governance is treated in a very general way and is about both achieving desired political results and achieving them in a democratic way. Since the “democratic way” is largely shaped by cultural norms and values of each country there can be no universal template for good governance. Each country must tailor their own definition of good governance to suit their specific needs and prerequisites. All is however *not* relative! One could easily distinguish certain values and requests that apply across cultural boundaries. For example, United Nations have presented a list of eight characteristics of good governance and its realisation; participation, transparency, responsiveness, consensus orientation, equity, efficiency, accountability and strategic vision. In this sense good governance should be perceived as a process - or a set of methods - promoting development, sustainable growth and strengthened democracy.

Gender equality has to do with the relation between men and women and their interaction with the surrounding society. In this sense norms, traditions and social structures are of utmost significance. Within the report issues of gender equality are to great extent related to conditions on the political arena but also to values and social life.

A study implemented through the quantitative method

The results of the study are based on how selectively picked key-persons around the Baltic Sea have answered a comprehensive questionnaire reflecting good governance and gender equality. Thus, the study has been implemented through the quantitative method where the aim is to collect general information or “little information about much” rather than focus on a limited number of parameters in order to achieve qualitative answers. In contradiction to the traditional quantitative study this report does however not intend to process significant statistical data or make scientific comparisons between the nine ERB regions. The aim is rather, as stated above, to mirror the status of good governance and gender equality as it is understood/perceived by selectively picked respondents. (See further discussion under “What conclusions and comparisons are possible to make?”)

The respondents and the used questionnaire

The results of the study are built upon views, opinions and future visions presented by 124 respondents from the nine member regions of ERB. The total number of respondents is spread as follows: Regional Municipality of Bornholm 10; Kurzeme Region 21; Klaipeda County 10; Pomeranian Region 12; Warmia-Masurian Region 12; Kaliningrad Region 15; Blekinge County 17; Kalmar County 12; Kronoberg County 15. Altogether, 50 men and 74 women are taking part in the study.

The investigated population of each region is closely described in next part of the report (“The respondents of the study”). About half of the entire group of respondents are representatives for local municipalities, while the remaining share represents political bodies on regional level, universities, non-governmental organisations (NGOs) and other organisations. Most of the respondents are politicians or civil servants. The respondents have been picked selectively by the ERB secretariats, as persons with great knowledge, insight and experience of the concepts good governance and gender equality.

The used questionnaire is presented in appendix I and consists of 32 questions; six general questions about the respondent, 14 questions about good governance and 12 questions about gender equality. Some of the questions are reflecting conditions on the national level, some are reflecting local or regional prerequisites linked to the nine ERB regions. All 32 questions

are displayed together with structured answers, which the respondents could choose from and mark via made crosses.

Anonymity

All respondents have throughout the whole study been granted anonymity. Names have been used or mentioned neither in questionnaires nor in this summary report, and it is therefore impossible to link a specific answer or opinion to a specific individual.

Practical implementation of the study

The practical implementation of the study started in March 2005. A great number of possible questions were put together and altogether four initiated persons took part in the process of forming the final questionnaire with 32 specified questions. The questionnaire was then translated into five languages; English, Swedish, Latvian, Lithuanian and Russian. The coordinator of the study took responsibility for the two first languages, a hired translation bureau administered the Latvian and Lithuanian translation while the ERB secretariat in the Kaliningrad Region took responsibility for the translation and collecting of data on the Russian side. In the end of March/beginning of April a comprehensive instruction was sent to all ERB secretariats and oral information was given about the actual study during the ERB secretariat meeting in Elblag, Poland, the 11-12th of April.

The 18th of April all questionnaires together with practical information were sent to the appointed ERB contacts within the secretariats of the nine member regions. The contact persons were asked to forward the material to 15-20 key-persons within the region they were situated. The questionnaires were to be spread both to men and women positioned on local as well as regional level with great knowledge and experience of good governance and gender equality.

The collection of data persisted until the 10th of June. After this date results were put together and finally analysed.

What conclusions and comparisons are possible to make?

As stated above, the results of this study have been achieved through the quantitative method with engaged key-persons reflecting on issues of good governance and gender equality in frames of a structured questionnaire. Two major problems prevent us from attaining significant statistical data enabling scientific comparisons between the nine regions:

1. The number of respondents from each region is too small.
2. The respondents have not been chosen by random but picked selectively as persons with great knowledge, insight and experience of the focused concepts.

These two problems make it impossible to draw conclusions such as “region X has worked more efficiently around good governance than region Y during the last five years” or “the debate around gender issues is much more lively in region Y than in region Z”. On the whole, formulations such as “greater than” or “smaller than” are dangerous to use and when they are actually used they must be perceived as indication of opinions that no other persons stand for but the selectively picked respondents of the study. In lines with this discussion, all results and data are as a main rule presented in *real figures/numbers*. Presentation in percentage or quotas is in this case regarded as risky and misleading, and is therefore hardly used at all.

Instead, the study should be seen as an overview mapping major and most evident

characteristics of good governance and gender equality and their status of yesterday, today and tomorrow. The results should be regarded as much more than just a gamble from a group of anonymous individuals. Instead, the results should be seen as pointers or important benchmarks indicated by central key-persons with great knowledge and understanding of the two concepts. The study, thus, aims to explore the status and significance of good governance and gender equality around the Baltic Sea as it is perceived today, 2005.

Structure of the report

The report is structured in four separate parts. With starting from next page the parts are the following:

1. *The respondents of the study*

This part shortly portrays the participating respondents of the study. A presentation is made for each and every of the nine ERB regions.

2. *Good governance in ERB*

This section presents all the obtained results that are related to issues of good governance (question numbers 7-20 within the questionnaire). The findings are presented in logical order with views, visions and reflections displayed for each of the nine ERB regions. In addition, brief comments are made in order to point out the most interesting features and conclusions.

3. *Gender equality in ERB*

This section presents all the obtained results that are related to issues of gender equality (question numbers 21-32 within the questionnaire). The findings are presented in logical order with views, visions and reflections displayed for each of the nine ERB regions. In addition, brief comments are made in order to point out the most interesting features and conclusions.

4. *Some concluding remarks*

In this final part of the study the aim is to shortly make some summarised comments and concluding remarks regarding the status of good governance and gender equality in ERB. The remarks are made upon the results that were presented in the previous section two and three.

The respondents of the study

This part shortly portrays the participating respondents of the study². First, a total picture is presented mirroring the total population - 124 persons - who took part from the ERB regions. The presentation is made with respect to number of respondents, division of sex, organisational representation, working position, knowledge of and own activeness within the actual Seagull-DevERB project.

After this overall presentation has been made the total group of respondents is divided into regional localities. A comprehensive sketch is shown visualising the representatives for each of the nine ERB regions with respect to the parameters mentioned above. The aim is - of course - to depict the 124 key-persons of the study and closely describe what individuals are bringing forward views, opinions and judgements about good governance and gender equality of the Baltic Sea region.

The total population - 124 respondents - from the Baltic Sea region

124 individuals from the nine ERB regions responded to the used questionnaire and are thus treated as the total population that is studied/investigated within this summary report. Below, data is presented for this entire group aiming to briefly portray personal characteristics, political position and relation to the Seagull-DevERB project.

Total population of study		Representation/Working position	
All nine ERB regions			
Number of respondents:	124	Politician:	40
		Civil servant:	44
		Expert or researcher at university:	11
		Other expert:	6
		Other:	23
Sex		Knowledge of the project "Seagull"	
Males:	50	None:	27
Females:	74	Little:	57
		Relatively much:	21
Represented organisation		Much:	10
Municipality:	57	Very much:	9
Political body on regional level:	29		
University:	11	Own activeness within the project "Seagull"	
Non-governmental organisation (NGO):	12	Yes:	37
Other organisation:	15	No:	87

The first thing to notice is that there are a few more females than males participating with their views and perspectives in the actual study. 74 of the respondents - or 60 % - are females, while the remaining 50 respondents - or 40 % - are males.

² This part of the study is covered by question numbers 1-6 in the used questionnaire (see appendix I).

The majority of the total group of respondents represents the local administrative level. 57 individuals (46 %) of the entire group are representatives for single municipalities, while 29 individuals (23 %) represent a political body on the regional level. About one person out of ten participates in the study as a representative for a non-governmental organisation (NGO) and this is also the situation for the respondents representing universities. A group of 15 individuals are representing “other organisations” than the actors mentioned above. This could for example mean interest organisations or research institutes that in no direct ways are tied to a university.

The greatest share of the total population is today working as civil servants, while just as many of the respondents are functioning as elected politicians. About two thirds of the entire group present themselves as one of these two categories - 44 individuals (35 %) as civil servants and 40 individuals (32 %) as politicians. The remaining one third is divided into experts or researchers at university, other experts or other.

It could also be interesting to study what relation the total group of respondents has to the actual Seagull project. No specific knowledge of or own activeness within the Seagull project has been needed/required for the respondents in order to take part in the present study, but it could still be relevant to just briefly reflect on how the 124 views and perspectives have been transferred into the actual project with its five work packages. Just above one fifth (27 individuals) of the entire group claim they have no knowledge or understanding of the Seagull project. 57 individuals (46 %) argue they have little knowledge, while about one third (40 individuals) of the population claim they have relatively much, much or even very much knowledge of the project.

Three respondents out of ten have in a practical manner been active or engaged in the concrete implementation of the Seagull project, while the remaining 70 % claim they have not been involved at all.

The respondents from each of the nine ERB regions

In order to further depict and describe the group of 124 respondents, a brief presentation is made of the selectively hand picked key-persons divided into their nine regional ERB localities (see below). In the comprehensive sketch the same parameters are visualised as previously - relating to personal characteristics, political position and relation to the Seagull-DevERB project - and it facilitates some broad comparisons between the nine regional populations.

The nine ERB regions are represented by ten to 21 respondents each. All regions consist of both male and female interviewees. The division between males and females appears a bit different from region to region and in most cases the latter is better represented than the former. The Warmia-Masurian Region and Blekinge County are represented by respondents from all organisational institutions categorised in the study, while Kronoberg County and Klaipeda County consist of representatives from only two organisational structures. As stated above, a majority of the respondents - 46 % of the total group - represents a single municipality.

The respondents from the nine ERB regions ³	Born (Den)	Kurz (Lat)	Klai (Lit)	Pome (Pol)	W-M (Pol)	Kali (Rus)	Blek (Swe)	Kalm (Swe)	Kron (Swe)
Number of respondents	10	21	10	12	12	15	17	12	15
Sex									
- Males	3	5	1	7	5	6	9	7	7
- Females	7	16	9	5	7	9	8	5	8
Represented organisation									
- Municipality	4	12	7	0	2	11	5	6	10
- Political body on regional level	3	0	0	8	4	0	4	5	5
- University	0	0	3	2	1	2	2	1	0
- Non-governmental organisation (NGO)	1	4	0	1	4	1	1	0	0
- Other organisation	2	5	0	1	1	1	5	0	0
Representation/Working position									
- Politician	3	4	0	6	0	0	4	8	15
- Civil servant	4	4	6	2	8	7	10	3	0
- Expert or researcher at university	1	0	3	3	1	1	1	1	0
- Other expert	2	0	0	1	0	2	1	0	0
- Other	0	13	1	0	3	5	1	0	0
Knowledge of the project “Seagull”									
- None	0	9	4	2	5	2	3	0	2
- Little	2	9	4	6	6	7	10	5	8
- Relatively much	5	1	2	2	1	2	2	2	4
- Much	3	2	0	0	0	0	1	3	1
- Very much	0	0	0	2	0	4	1	2	0
Own activeness within the project “Seagull”									
- Yes	6	5	0	3	1	5	6	7	4

³ Born = Regional Municipality of Bornholm in Denmark; Kurz = Kurzeme Region in Latvia; Klai = Klaipeda County in Lithuania; Pome = Pomeranian Region in Poland; W-M = Warmia-Masurian Region in Poland; Kali = Kaliningrad Region in Russia; Blek = Blekinge County in Sweden; Kalm = Kalmar County in Sweden; Kron = Kronoberg County in Sweden.

- No	4	16	10	9	11	10	11	5	11
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As already mentioned, civil servants and elected politicians are well represented in this study. All regional populations but one consist of a number of civil servants, while three regions lack representation from politicians. Among the categories experts or researchers at university, other expert and other, the picture is scattered. Kurzeme Region is very well represented by the category other, which is a group that is not defined any closer within this study. Taken together, just about all of the nine ERB regions have got a satisfying spread of politicians, civil servants, researchers, experts etc. Kronoberg County is, however, represented a bit too monotonously since all of the 15 respondents are elected politicians.

The knowledge of the Seagull project is relatively mixed. The respondents from Kalmar County and the Regional Municipality of Bornholm seem to be the regional populations with greatest knowledge, and these two groups could also be said to have been most active and engaged in the practical implementation of the project. In most of the other seven regions the knowledge of Seagull is relatively limited among the respondents of the study. A clear majority has no or just a little knowledge of the project. Very important to underline, this does to no extent mean that the respondents from these seven regions are “poorer interviewees” or less competent to reflect over issues of good governance and gender equality! As discussed earlier, the 124 selectively picked individuals should all be regarded as initiated key-persons on the two fields, and this has really nothing to do with possible engagement in the Seagull project!

Good governance in ERB

This second part of the report presents views, opinions and judgements about the conditions for good governance in the nine member regions of ERB⁴. The perspectives are given by the 124 respondents of the study and all results are displayed and discussed region by region. The overall aim is to depict how features of good governance are perceived and judged, such as status of local self-government, political representation, climate of cooperation, political legitimacy, efficiency, level of corruption and visions for the future etc. In order to discuss and better understand the prerequisites for good governance, some very basic comparisons are made between the responses/results indicated by the representatives from the different ERB regions.

Local self-government of today

Most of the respondents seem to think in positive terms regarding the state of today's local government in their respective countries (see below). 94 individuals out of 124 judge the local self-government as relatively strong, strong or even very strong. Just eight persons judge the local self-government as weak, while no respondents estimate the current state as very weak. The representatives from the Regional Municipality of Bornholm are seen as the most positive regional population, while the Russian respondents are much more negative about their local independence. In the Russian case, eleven out of totally 15 respondents are judging the local self-government as weak or relatively weak.

Question # 7: How would you assess/valuate the state of today's local self-government in your country?

Answers (Registered by number of respondents)	Born (Den)	Kurz (Lat)	Klai (Lit)	Pome (Pol)	W-M (Pol)	Kali (Rus)	Blek (Swe)	Kalm (Swe)	Kron (Swe)
The local self-government is very strong.	2	1	0	1	1	0	0	1	1
Strong.	5	0	3	2	2	0	3	4	6
Relatively strong.	3	14	6	8	6	4	10	5	6
Relatively weak.	0	5	1	0	2	8	4	1	1
Weak.	0	1	0	1	1	3	0	1	1
The local self-government is very weak.	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Total number of respondents:	10	21	10	12	12	15	17	12	15

What could be said about question number 7 and the table above? Well, the first thing to be emphasised is that the respondents from the nine regions have all used different gauges and benchmarks when they have made their judgements about the current status of the local self-

⁴ This part of the study is covered by question numbers 7-20 in the used questionnaire (see appendix I).

government. All regional localities and countries have their own unique values, histories and traditions, which the estimations are based upon. No so-called international standard is available in this case! The assessments are thus *personal assessments*, which theoretically means that respondents from region X could provide a much more positive picture than the respondents from region Y *even if* region Y de facto possesses a more legitimate democracy with strong political institutions, independent financial resources and management, efficient decision-making etc.

In order to further study the development of local self-government in the nine ERB countries, the below table is presented indicating all views and opinions related to question number 8 in the survey.

Question # 8: How would you describe the development of the local self-government in your country over the last five years?

Answers <i>(Registered by number of respondents)</i>	Born (Den)	Kurz (Lat)	Klai (Lit)	Pome (Pol)	W-M (Pol)	Kali (Rus)	Blek (Swe)	Kalm (Swe)	Kron (Swe)
The local self-government has developed stronger.	3	14	7	11	9	6	6	7	1
The local self-government is just about on the same level today as five years ago.	5	6	2	1	1	2	9	4	6
The local self-government has developed weaker.	2	1	0	0	2	7	2	1	8
Total number of respondents:	10	21	9	12	12	15	17	12	15

The respondents from Kurzeme Region, Klaipeda County, Pomeranian Region and Warmia-Masurian Region have witnessed a positive trend during the last five years leading to a stronger and more developed local self-government. Just three individuals from these regions are indicating the opposite. Within frames of the actual study this means that the four regions judge the local independence as relatively strong or strong (question 7), and that the past years have been favourable and strengthen the local conditions in positive ways. The situation seems to be a bit different on the Russian side. Here, a majority judges the local self-government as relatively weak or weak (question 7) and perceives the last five years as years that have rather strengthened the state than the local institutions. In Sweden the prerequisites for the local self-government is seen as relatively mixed. A clear majority of the Swedish representatives recognises the local independence as rather strong (question 7). At the same time 30 individuals out of totally 44 Swedish representatives claim that the status of the local self-government has weakened or is just about on the same level today as five years ago.

Cooperation, transparency and social representation

According to the entire group of respondents, the climate of overall cooperation between municipalities is perceived as rather good within the six ERB countries (see table below). In order to trying to characterise this local cooperation one could imagine that public institutions have developed fruitful contacts with each other, are taking part in joint projects and are working together around the distribution of welfare needs and services. In Klaipeda County and Kalmar County none of the respondents have bad experiences, and the situation is almost the same in the cases for the Regional Municipality of Bornholm and Kronoberg County.

Question # 9: How would you assess/valuate the climate of overall cooperation between municipalities within your country today?

Answers (Registered by number of respondents)	Born (Den)	Kurz (Lat)	Klai (Lit)	Pome (Pol)	W-M (Pol)	Kali (Rus)	Blek (Swe)	Kalm (Swe)	Kron (Swe)
The climate of cooperation is very good.	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	2	1
Good.	7	6	5	2	1	2	7	8	6
Relatively good.	2	12	5	4	9	6	6	2	7
Relatively bad.	1	3	0	4	0	3	3	0	1
Bad.	0	0	0	1	2	4	1	0	0
The climate of cooperation is very bad.	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Total number of respondents:	10	21	10	12	12	15	17	12	15

The situation appears to be almost as positive when it comes to issues of public openness and transparency. In the table below almost six individuals out of ten claim that municipalities and political actors on the regional level have reached relatively far, far or even very far in order to become transparent entities with shared knowledge and free flow of information. What a so-called transparent actor is and should be could of course be discussed! The regional representatives have been able to make their own definitions and relate their views and opinions to conditions and trends that they themselves have witnessed in their respective countries. As stated above, no international standards are available or of specific interest in this case.

Question # 10: According to you, how far have municipalities and political actors on the regional level in your country reached in order to become transparent entities/actors with open meetings, free communication, shared knowledge and free flow of information etc?

Answers (Registered by number of respondents)	Born (Den)	Kurz (Lat)	Klai (Lit)	Pome (Pol)	W-M (Pol)	Kali (Rus)	Blek (Swe)	Kalm (Swe)	Kron (Swe)
Not far at all!	0	4	0	1	1	0	1	0	0
A little bit.	1	6	4	6	6	7	9	3	3
Relatively far.	4	6	4	4	3	7	2	3	8
Far.	3	3	2	1	2	1	4	4	4
They have reached very far!	2	1	0	0	0	0	1	2	0
Total number of respondents:	10	20	10	12	12	15	17	12	15

If we study the political institutions on local and regional level in the nine ERB regions the question raises to what extent these assemblies have been able to integrate all kinds of social groups as participating political members. From a democratic perspective there is a symbolic but still very essential demand stressing the importance of municipal councils and regional parliaments with broad representation of males, females, young members, older members,

representatives with different ethnic origins etc. According to this view the even representation with no or few underrepresented groups renders a fair democracy with better prerequisites for sharp and successful political decisions. In other words, the variety of represented backgrounds and perspectives creates a dynamic environment in which all kinds of interests are identified, discussed and considered. Without this kind of even political representation certain interests risk to be lost while specific social clusters in society become more and more politically segregated with no efficient tools to participate and bring forward own opinions and demands. All respondents of this study do necessarily not have to share this kind of interpretation of today's representative democracy! On the contrary, persons may share parts of the above discussion but would instead emphasise the political commission as an *overall assignment*. According to this view it is of less significance whether the single politician is a man or a women, if he or she is young or old etc. The single politician is commissioned to represent *all* kinds of groups, clusters and interests in society, which means that the discussion about socially even political assemblies is considered a bit exaggerated.

In the table below, the answers from the 124 respondents are presented regarding to what extent the political assemblies in the ERB regions have been able to integrate all kinds of social groups as fully participating members/political representatives.

Question # 11: According to you, to what extent have political assemblies in your region been able to integrate all kinds of social groups (sex, age, ethnic background etc) as fully participating members/political representatives?

Answers (Registered by number of respondents)	Born (Den)	Kurz (Lat)	Klai (Lit)	Pome (Pol)	W-M (Pol)	Kali (Rus)	Blek (Swe)	Kalm (Swe)	Kron (Swe)
To a great extent!	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	1	0
Satisfactory.	1	9	4	1	1	3	1	1	1
Relatively satisfactory.	7	6	4	4	6	8	5	2	7
Relatively unsatisfactory.	1	2	2	4	2	3	4	7	6
To a minor extent.	1	3	0	3	1	0	6	1	1
Not at all!	0	1	0	0	1	1	1	0	0
Total number of respondents:	10	21	10	12	12	15	17	12	15

The results indicate that six respondents out of ten are relatively satisfied or satisfied, while the rest - four individuals out of ten - perceive the situation as unsatisfactory. Just two persons claim that the political assemblies have been able to integrate all kinds of social groups to a great extent, while four respondents chose the most negative category; not at all. The representatives from the Kaliningrad Region, Klaipeda County and the Regional Municipality of Bornholm are indicating satisfying views, while the picture is very scattered for Kurzeme Region. As many as 59 % of the representatives from the three Swedish counties are more unsatisfied than satisfied with the conditions in their regions. This result is very interesting since Sweden traditionally is perceived as a country where issues of social representation - equality between men and women, political representation of ethnic minorities etc - have been paid a lot attention. But once again, one should not draw the conclusion that the conditions are actually worse in Sweden than in, for example, Lithuania, Denmark or Russia! Instead, the conditions *could* in fact be better in Sweden than elsewhere. We just know that the 44 respondents from Sweden are *less satisfied* with the current situation than the rest of the 80 individuals of the study.

Efficiency of the political process

Politics is much more than just talking! In order to create confidence and legitimacy, political decisions must be made and implemented in a practical manner without big losses of time, energy and financial resources. In this sense, politics must be perceived as efficient and lead to concrete and visible outputs for the citizens to identify. In question number 12 (see below) the respondents were to estimate how they look upon the efficiency of the political process in the ERB regions.

Question # 12: On a general basis, how do you look upon the process from political decision-making to practical implementation of the made decisions (in your region)?

Answers (Registered by number of respondents)	Born (Den)	Kurz (Lat)	Klai (Lit)	Pome (Pol)	W-M (Pol)	Kali (Rus)	Blek (Swe)	Kalm (Swe)	Kron (Swe)
The process from decision-making to practical implementation runs efficiently.	0	1	0	1	1	0	0	0	0
The process runs relatively efficiently.	9	8	8	6	6	10	9	9	12
The process runs relatively inefficiently.	1	10	2	5	4	3	8	3	3
The process from decision-making to practical implementation runs inefficiently.	0	2	0	0	1	2	0	0	0
Total number of respondents:	10	21	10	12	12	15	17	12	15

The question renders relatively interesting results and possible comparisons between the nine regions. In the Regional Municipality of Bornholm, Klaipeda County, Kalmar County and Kronoberg County the clear majority of the respondents look upon the process as (relatively) efficient. Among the other five regions the results are much more ambiguous, but only in one case - Kurzeme Region - the views and opinions indicate a rather inefficient political process.

Related to the efficiency of the political system, the 124 respondents of the study were asked to assess/evaluate the public services that today are carried out within the fields of (a) education for children and youth, (b) care of young children, (c) care of elderly people, (d) care of disabled/handicapped people, (e) physical planning and infrastructure, (f) environmental care-taking. The multifaceted question were presented as follows:

Question # 13: On a general basis, how would you assess/evaluate the public services and initiatives that today are carried out in your region within the fields of (a) education for children and youth, (b) care of young children, (c) care of elderly people, (d) care of disabled/handicapped people, (e) physical planning and infrastructure, (f) environmental care-taking?

(Each of the six sectors - a to f - were judged via four possible alternative answers: "Good quality", "Relatively good quality", "Relatively bad quality" and/or "Bad quality".)

The answers to parameters a-f make possible a broad categorising of the nine ERB regions. The categorising could be said to indicate a relatively obvious east-west dimension. In the *first category*, the respondents declare that public services and initiatives are carried out with

good quality or, in some cases, with relatively good quality. This is the case for all the six parameters; a-f. The education for children and youth is regarded as good, the care of young children, elderly people and disabled is seen as good too. The respondents in this category are satisfied with physical planning and infrastructure, but also with the care-taking of the environment. Two regions are present in this category; Kalmar County and Kronoberg County.

In the *second category*, the respondents are generally satisfied with services and initiatives related to parameters a-f, but the satisfaction is less than it was for the first category of regions. Within this second category a clear majority of the answers signal relatively good quality but some responses are more negative. Three regions make up this category; Blekinge County, the Regional Municipality of Bornholm and Klaipeda County.

The *third category* consists of only one region, Kurzeme Region. The respondents from Latvia seem to be a bit ambivalent when judging parameters a-f. About half of the group thinks the quality is relatively good - the other half thinks it is relatively bad.

In the *fourth category*, the respondents claim they are generally unsatisfied with the public services and initiatives that are carried out. With a few exceptions half or more than half of the respondents of each region state that the quality of parameters a-f is relatively bad or even bad. This means that education and social care-taking are regarded as problematic, and so are planning of physical infrastructure and environmental care. Three regions are represented in this fourth category; Pomeranian Region, Warmia-Masurian Region and Kaliningrad Region.

Civil interest and participation in the political system

In order to study the current status of good governance around the Baltic Sea we also need to look closer at the civil engagement within the political systems of the six ERB countries. The first question to ask is whether the 124 respondents have perceived a positive or negative trend when it comes to interest and engagement for political issues/matters among the citizen group. The question reflects a ten-year perspective and the views from the respondents are presented in the table below.

Question # 14: What trend have you seen the last ten years in your country when it comes to interest and engagement for political issues/matters among the citizen group?

Answers (Registered by number of respondents)	Born (Den)	Kurz (Lat)	Klai (Lit)	Pome (Pol)	W-M (Pol)	Kali (Rus)	Blek (Swe)	Kalm (Swe)	Kron (Swe)
A positive trend = more and more people are interested in political issues!	2	4	0	0	2	2	0	1	0
A relatively positive trend.	5	6	7	0	4	4	1	2	4
A relatively negative trend.	3	4	2	7	4	8	12	7	9
A negative trend = less and less people are interested in political issues!	0	7	1	5	2	1	4	2	2
Total number of respondents:	10	21	10	12	12	15	17	12	15

The reading is not very nice from a democratic perspective. 80 respondents (65 %) out of 124 claim they have seen a relatively negative or negative trend over the last ten years in which

less and less people are interested or taking notice of political issues. The representatives from the Pomeranian Region are the most negative with the respondents from the three Swedish counties just after. In only two of the nine ERB regions - Regional Municipality of Bornholm and Klaipeda County - the representatives have witnessed a rather positive trend. Here, a slight majority claims that more and more people have been interested of political matters over the last ten years.

When studying the results above one must ask: “Can this really be true?” Of course, we know that the political parties in most of the regions have problems recruiting new members and that this leads to severe problems for the parties and their ambitions to act as legitimate entities representing the people. The problems for the political parties must however *not* mean that citizens lack interest for overall political issues and the development of society. Instead, recent trends tend to indicate that there exists a widespread political interest but that this interest is channelled through many other kinds of actors and organisations than the traditional parties. We are also well aware of the development of democracy in the former Communist states of Eastern Europe and the essential role of political engagement. Still a clear majority of the 124 respondents signal a negative trend with less and less citizens interested of political matters!

Could one of the reasons behind the stated unwillingness to engage in political issues be connected to negative expectations of succeeding or “making a difference” when taking part in the political process? Well yes, but only if we talk about the conditions in Poland, Russia, Latvia and Lithuania. In all of these four countries (five ERB regions) a majority of the respondents clarify that the possibilities for a regular citizen to influence the political agenda are relatively bad, bad or even very bad. For the cases of Denmark and Sweden (four ERB regions) we must find our answers elsewhere. Here, a majority states that the civil opportunities should be regarded as relatively good, good or even very good. The best prerequisites are indicated from Kronoberg County. Could this possibly has to do with the fact that all 15 respondents from this county participate as elected politicians (see discussion in the first part/section) within the study?!

Question # 15: How would you describe today’s possibilities for a regular citizen in your country to influence and efficiently take part in the political process?

Answers <i>(Registered by number of respondents)</i>	Born (Den)	Kurz (Lat)	Klai (Lit)	Pome (Pol)	W-M (Pol)	Kali (Rus)	Blek (Swe)	Kalm (Swe)	Kron (Swe)
Very good possibilities!	2	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	3
Good possibilities.	2	2	1	1	0	1	4	3	6
Relatively good possibilities.	4	6	3	2	2	3	7	8	6
Relatively bad possibilities.	1	6	3	6	3	5	5	1	0
Bad possibilities.	1	4	3	3	2	5	0	0	0
Very bad possibilities!	0	2	0	0	5	1	1	0	0
Total number of respondents:	10	21	10	12	12	15	17	12	15

We now know that the civil interest and engagement for political issues is said to be quite poor in most of the nine ERB regions (question 14), while the possibilities to efficiently take part in the political life are seen as relatively bad in five of the regions and relatively good in

the rest (question 15). Next question deals with the general opinions about the current political system as such. In this case it is not the respondents of the study that are judging the system with its institutions. Instead, the 124 respondents describe the general views and opinions as they are expressed and perceived by regular citizens in society.

As seen in the table below, only three respondents describe the general assessment of today’s political system as positive. 44 individuals point out that the general judgment is relatively positive. The rest - 77 respondents or 62 % - describe the views and opinions among regular citizens as relatively negative, negative or in some cases very negative. According to the presented results below, it is almost impossible to put one region before another. Instead, the conclusion must be that all nine ERB regions suffer from lacking legitimacy connected to the political system and its institutions. The regular citizens within ERB seem to give the politicians “thumb down”, which of course indicates a real threat to democracy and good governance around the Baltic Sea!

Question # 16: How would you describe the general view/opinion among regular citizens in your country regarding the current political system with its political institutions?

Answers <i>(Registered by number of respondents)</i>	Born (Den)	Kurz (Lat)	Klai (Lit)	Pome (Pol)	W-M (Pol)	Kali (Rus)	Blek (Swe)	Kalm (Swe)	Kron (Swe)
Very positive!	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Positive.	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1
Relatively positive.	6	5	2	1	1	9	8	5	7
Relatively negative.	3	10	6	4	2	3	5	6	6
Negative.	0	4	2	6	5	3	4	0	1
Very negative!	0	2	0	1	4	0	0	0	0
Total number of respondents:	10	21	10	12	12	15	17	12	15

The prerequisites to efficiently influence the political system affect the general judgement about the political system. We should dare to draw this conclusion by now. One possible way to influence or “make a difference” as a regular citizen could go through the voluntary sector and the NGOs (non-governmental organisations) operating within different fields of society. Some NGOs are focusing care of elderly people or disabled children, some are focusing sports and culture activities. Some NGOs are taking great responsibility for the development of democracy, some other do not have this intention at all. Next question focus the general role for NGOs and voluntary actors in realising local and regional democracy in today’s society. Just as before, it is the 124 respondents and their views and opinions that are highlighted (see below).

Question # 17: What role would you say that NGOs (non-governmental organisations) and voluntary actors play in the realisation of local and regional democracy in your region?

Answers (Registered by number of respondents)	Born (Den)	Kurz (Lat)	Klai (Lit)	Pome (Pol)	W-M (Pol)	Kali (Rus)	Blek (Swe)	Kalm (Swe)	Kron (Swe)
They play an important role!	1	5	0	0	2	0	1	1	4
Relatively important role.	5	8	5	5	5	3	7	5	4
A minor role.	4	8	5	7	5	12	8	4	6
They play no important role in this!	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	2	1
Total number of respondents:	10	21	10	12	12	15	17	12	15

Most regions seem to agree on the fact that NGOs tend to play *some kind* of role in the realisation of local and regional democracy. Their role should definitely not be over emphasised but it is interesting to see that almost half of the entire population (61 individuals) claims NGOs to play a relatively important or important role in society. Engagement through voluntary organisations should probably not be regarded as a highly efficient way to influence the political agenda, but without doubt the NGOs make up vital and dynamic ingredients in the everyday democracy. If operating professionally, the NGOs could probably constitute proper platforms for citizens to speak their minds and force through specific interests and processes.

Level of corruption

Two vital parts of the concept good governance deal with equity and accountability (see the definition of good governance in the beginning of the study). Citizens must be 100 percent ensured that public finances are treated and spent in the most efficient ways all the time. Public funds should benefit the citizens, not the politicians or civil servants that are in charge of handling the finances. Therefore, bribes and corruption constitute a severe problem for the modern democratic state. When corruption occurs equity and accountability lost relevance, the political system is met with anger and contempt, and the democracy as such loses a severe defeat.

Question # 18: How would you assess the level of corruption within the political life/society in your region?

Answers (Registered by number of respondents)	Born (Den)	Kurz (Lat)	Klai (Lit)	Pome (Pol)	W-M (Pol)	Kali (Rus)	Blek (Swe)	Kalm (Swe)	Kron (Swe)
No corruption exists at all!	4	1	0	0	0	0	3	4	3
Corruption exists only in rare cases.	6	6	4	2	1	3	13	8	12
Corruption constitutes a relatively big problem!	0	11	6	7	6	8	0	0	0
Corruption constitutes a big or even very big problem!	0	3	0	3	5	4	0	0	0
Total number of respondents:	10	21	10	12	12	15	16	12	15

When studying the table above one can easily draw the conclusion that something is very wrong. In many aspects the democracy around the Baltic Sea is vital, new and successful. In other aspects it is nasty, unfair and narrow-minded. The answers from the group of respondents tell us that corruption still is a big and difficult problem to handle for the political institutions. The situation is however not the same for the whole Baltic Sea area! In the Swedish and Danish regions none of the respondents identify any severe threats with existing

corruption. 14 Swedish and Danish representatives out of 53 argue that no corruption exists at all. The rest - 39 individuals - declare that corruption exists only in rare cases. The situation is entirely another if we instead turn the focus towards Latvia, Lithuania, Poland and Russia. Among the 70 respondents from these four countries (five ERB regions) just *one person(!)* claims that corruption does not exist at all! 38 individuals (54 %) of the group instead claim that corruption constitutes a relatively big problem, while 15 individuals (21 %) clarify that it constitutes a big or even very big problem to the democratic society. In these results we are able to distinguish an enormous gap between the so-called old democracies and the new democracies. When talking about bribing, corruption and “feather one’s own nest”, the political institutions in Kurzeme Region, Klaipeda County, Pomeranian Region, Warmia-Masurian Region and Kaliningrad Region still have a very long way to go in order to become transparent, accountable and democratic actors!

International learning and democratic visions for the future

From the table below one can draw the conclusion that almost all of the 124 respondents are eager to lay emphasis on international exchange and learning in order to strengthen democracy and develop democratic working methods in the ERB regions. Only a few of the representatives claim that international exchange of knowledge and experience is unimportant or relatively unimportant. The respondents were not asked to indicate what kind of actions or thematic projects that are specifically needed or required. One good idea might be to focus financial management and the prevention of corrupt political decision-making...!?!

Question # 19: According to you, how important are international exchange and learning in order to strengthen today’s democracy and develop democratic working methods in your region?

Answers (Registered by number of respondents)	Born (Den)	Kurz (Lat)	Klai (Lit)	Pome (Pol)	W-M (Pol)	Kali (Rus)	Blek (Swe)	Kalm (Swe)	Kron (Swe)
Very important!	6	6	2	4	9	8	7	6	3
Important.	3	1	5	7	2	2	8	4	9
Relatively important.	0	6	3	0	1	4	1	2	2
Relatively unimportant.	1	6	0	0	0	1	0	0	1
Unimportant.	0	2	0	1	0	0	1	0	0
Not important at all!	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Total number of respondents:	10	21	10	12	12	15	17	12	15

Taken all these issues and questions focusing good governance together, what hopes, wishes and perspectives do the respondents have for the future when it comes to the democratic development of the nine ERB regions? Well, the visions for the forthcoming ten-year period seem to be relatively positive! 94 respondents - or three representatives out of four - declare a relative positive or positive view. 25 individuals have a neither positive nor negative view, while just a few respondents - five individuals - meet the future with negative expectations.

Question # 20: How do you look upon the democratic development in your region for the coming ten years?

Answers <i>(Registered by number of respondents)</i>	Born (Den)	Kurz (Lat)	Klai (Lit)	Pome (Pol)	W-M (Pol)	Kali (Rus)	Blek (Swe)	Kalm (Swe)	Kron (Swe)
I have a positive view!	2	3	0	2	3	3	4	3	4
I have a relatively positive view.	7	13	9	6	6	7	7	8	7
Neither positive nor negative.	1	3	1	2	2	5	6	1	4
I have a relatively negative view.	0	2	0	0	1	0	0	0	0
I have a negative view.	0	0	0	2	0	0	0	0	0
Total number of respondents:	10	21	10	12	12	15	17	12	15

These figures complete the second section of the report. The 124 local and regional representatives of ERB seem to meet future with positive minds and visions, which assure promising forecasts for the democratic development around the Baltic Sea.

Gender equality in ERB

This third part of the report presents views, opinions and judgements about the conditions for

gender equality in the nine member regions of ERB⁵. The perspectives are given by the 124 respondents of the study and all results are displayed and discussed region by region. The overall aim is to depict how features of gender equality are perceived and judged, such as current status/political importance, public attention, fundamental views upon men and women, traditions, social structures, political representation divided by sex, visions for the future etc. In order to discuss and better understand the prerequisites for gender equality, some very basic comparisons are made between the responses/results indicated by the representatives from the different ERB regions.

Public attention for gender equality

Human equality with fundamental freedom and rights is something very important in today's democracy. The democracy never rests, all the time it changes and develops, and we therefore have to discuss it and give priority to it in order to preserve its essential values and principles. The same is the case for issues of gender equality. Hardly anyone today claims that men are more valuable than women or that women are more intelligent than men. We know from birth that both men and women are valuable and intelligent, and that they *should* be treated with equal respect, rights and responsibilities. But the word "should" sometimes makes it problematic! Just because the law says men and women are equal we can not draw the conclusion that all individuals in fact are treated the same, meet the same prerequisites, are facing the same labour market, are equally free to challenge traditions and social structures etc. We all the time have to discuss gender equality and give priority to these issues - otherwise we will not be able to recognise inequalities and develop sharp measures to fight discrimination.

In the table below, results are presented mirroring the 124 respondents and how they chose to describe today's debate about gender equality within the six ERB countries.

Question # 21: How would you describe today's debate about gender equality (between men and women) in your country?

Answers (Registered by number of respondents)	Born (Den)	Kurz (Lat)	Klai (Lit)	Pome (Pol)	W-M (Pol)	Kali (Rus)	Blek (Swe)	Kalm (Swe)	Kron (Swe)
The debate is lively!	0	0	0	1	2	0	7	4	4
Relatively lively.	3	3	5	3	3	1	6	7	10
Not very lively but it exists.	6	15	5	7	7	10	4	1	1
The debate does not or hardly exists at all!	1	3	0	1	0	4	0	0	0
Total number of respondents:	10	21	10	12	12	15	17	12	15

Most of the regional representatives with the exception of the three Swedish counties tend to indicate that a current debate exists but that it is not very lively. In some cases respondents clarify that the debate is relatively lively and in three rare cases representatives claim the debate to be lively. All in all, gender equality does not seem to be a very frequent or prioritised matter of discussion in Denmark, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland and Russia. Not if we are to believe our hand picked key-persons from these countries. The conditions seem to be different in Sweden and in the three ERB regions. 38 individuals out of 44 Swedish

⁵ This part of the study is covered by question numbers 21-32 in the used questionnaire (see appendix I).

respondents declare that the current debate about gender issues is relatively lively or lively. None of these representatives indicate that a debate does not or hardly exists at all. These results are not very surprising since Sweden has relatively long traditions of concrete work and policy-making around gender issues. If anything is surprising in all this, it must be the much poorer results from the rest of the ERB partners.

What has happened during the last five years if we continue to focus the debate around gender issues? Has the debate grown stronger, has it developed weaker or is it positioned on the same level as year 2000? The figures in the below table show a positive trend for the actual debate in society. The gender issues seem to have strengthened their status in Latvia, Lithuania, Poland and Sweden. The situation is however more uncertain when it comes to Denmark and Russia. In these two countries both men and women are treated with respect and have both rights and responses stipulated by law. But the debate about gender issues and equality between men and women seems to be relatively weak (question 21) and the trend has over the past five years been going in the “wrong” direction (question 22).

Question # 22: How would you describe the debate about gender equality in your country over the last five years?

Answers <i>(Registered by number of respondents)</i>	Born (Den)	Kurz (Lat)	Klai (Lit)	Pome (Pol)	W-M (Pol)	Kali (Rus)	Blek (Swe)	Kalm (Swe)	Kron (Swe)
The debate has developed stronger.	1	9	6	9	10	2	11	9	9
The debate is just about on the same level today as five years ago.	6	10	4	0	1	5	6	3	5
The debate has developed weaker.	3	2	0	2	1	8	0	0	1
Total number of respondents:	10	21	10	11	12	15	17	12	15

Related to the discussion about gender equality and its status in the ERB countries, the 124 respondents of the study were asked to assess the attention that gender issues have been given over the last two-three years (a) in mass media, (b) in education for children and youth, (c) in conditions on the labour-market, (d) when it comes to wages/salaries. The multifaceted question were presented as follows:

Question # 23: According to you, what attention have gender issues been given in your country over the last two-three years (a) in mass media, (b) in education for children and youth, (c) in conditions on the labour-market, (d) when it comes to wages/salaries?

(Each of the four sectors - a to d - were judged via four possible alternative answers: “Much attention”, “Relatively much attention”, “Relatively little attention” and/or “No or little attention”.)

The results to parameters a-d does not enable the same kind of categorising as in question 13 with altogether four observable groups of regions. This time the pattern of given answers is more complex. From the results we can tell that gender issues tend to have been given much attention in mass media (*parameter a*) in the cases of two of the six countries; Sweden and Poland. The respondents from Denmark, Latvia and Lithuania are indicating that the subject has been given relatively much attention in media, while the Russian representatives argue that gender equality has been given relatively little attention. When it comes to the attention

for gender issues in education for children and youth (*parameter b*) we find Sweden at the top of the list once again. Most of the respondents from Sweden indicate that the actual issues have been given relatively much attention in this field, while all the other countries/regions can be said to be represented via the answer relatively little attention. Respondents from four countries - Denmark, Latvia, Poland and Sweden - argue that the subject gender equality has been given relatively much attention in the conditions on labour-market (*parameter c*). The answers from Lithuania and Russia are a bit more sceptical - most of the representatives chose to describe the attention as relatively poor. When it comes to the last parameter - the attention for gender equality in relation to set wages/salaries (*parameter d*) - we once more establish that Sweden has given higher priority to these issues than most of the other ERB countries. Sweden is however considered just ahead of Denmark and Poland. The respondents from Latvia, Lithuania and Russia indicate that gender issues have been given relatively little attention when it comes to wages/salaries.

Representation of female politicians

Earlier in this study we have discussed groups, clusters, individuals and their representation within the political assemblies in the nine ERB regions. This time we narrow the perspective and focus the presence of female politicians on local and regional level. We find the following picture:

Question # 24: Generally speaking, how is the situation in your region when it comes to representation of female politicians in today's political assemblies?

Answers (Registered by number of respondents)	Born (Den)	Kurz (Lat)	Klai (Lit)	Pome (Pol)	W-M (Pol)	Kali (Rus)	Blek (Swe)	Kalm (Swe)	Kron (Swe)
There are hardly no female politicians in the political assemblies at all.	0	0	1	0	7	1	0	0	0
There are a few female politicians.	5	2	1	7	5	9	1	1	0
There are several female politicians but there are still more men.	5	18	8	5	0	2	15	9	11
There are just as many women as men in the political assemblies.	0	1	0	0	0	3	1	2	3
There are more women than men.	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Total number of respondents:	10	21	10	12	12	15	17	12	14

The first notice is that none of the representatives indicate that there are more women than men represented in today's politics. Just a few respondents - altogether ten individuals - state that there are just as many women as men present, which already now entitles us to draw our first conclusion: Women are underrepresented within the political life around the Baltic Sea. That is, if we are to believe the responses from our group of representatives of course. A clear majority of the respondents - 113 individuals or 92 % - claim that there are hardly any female politicians, just a few or several female politicians but still more men. The three counties of Sweden seem to be the regions with the highest degree of female politicians, together with Kurzeme Region and Klaipeda County. Conditions seem to be the worst (or less good) in the Warmia-Masurian Region of Poland.

If we continue the discussion about the political representation of females it would be

interesting to study the trend over the last five years. Has the proportion of women increased, decreased or is it positioned on the same level as the year 2000? The representatives provide us with the responses below.

Question # 25: How do you look upon the representation of female politicians in political assemblies in your region over the last five years?

Answers <i>(Registered by number of respondents)</i>	Born (Den)	Kurz (Lat)	Klai (Lit)	Pome (Pol)	W-M (Pol)	Kali (Rus)	Blek (Swe)	Kalm (Swe)	Kron (Swe)
The proportion of women has decreased over the last five years.	2	0	0	0	0	1	1	0	0
The proportion is just about on the same level today as five years ago.	7	4	3	10	7	9	7	4	5
The proportion of women has increased over the last five years.	1	17	5	2	5	5	8	8	10
Total number of respondents:	10	21	8	12	12	15	16	12	15

All ERB regions but the Regional Municipality of Bornholm seem to have witnessed a (relatively) positive trend over the last five years. Many responses indicate that the proportion of female politicians is just about on the same level today as 2000, but a lot of the answers also clarify that the representation of women has increased heavily (see for example Kurzeme Region, Kalmar County and Kronoberg County).

Next step will be to leave the actual “counting of female politicians” and instead put focus on the proportion of men and women when it comes to the highest and most powerful positions within the political life. We know by now that women are underrepresented on the political scene and it would therefore be a big surprise if this was not the case also connected to the next question; number 26 (see below). Already at the first glance at the results we find a lot of “zeros” on lines one and two, indicating that women certainly not are more evident than men on these higher political posts. 14 respondents argue that the proportion is even between men and women but since these 14 views are spread over seven of the ERB regions we are not able to highlight one or two regions as better or more equal than the rest. 71 individuals (57 %) claim that men are more evident on the most powerful political positions, while 38 individuals (31 %) argue that men are even much more represented.

Question # 26: How would you describe the proportion of men and women when it comes to the highest political positions (the greatest political responsibilities) in your region?

Answers <i>(Registered by number of respondents)</i>	Born (Den)	Kurz (Lat)	Klai (Lit)	Pome (Pol)	W-M (Pol)	Kali (Rus)	Blek (Swe)	Kalm (Swe)	Kron (Swe)
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Women are much more evident than men on these positions.	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Women are more evident on these positions.	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
Just as many women as men are evident on these positions.	1	3	0	1	0	2	2	2	3
Men are more evident on these positions.	9	15	5	8	4	4	10	8	8
Men are much more evident than women on these positions.	0	3	5	3	8	9	5	2	3
Total number of respondents:	10	21	10	12	12	15	17	12	15

If we in question 24 were able to establish that women are underrepresented in the political life of today, this fact was even harder underlined when studying the responses linked to question number 26. Without doubt, women are to great extent lacking in the rooms where the political decisions are being discussed and finally made. This means that values, perspectives, knowledge and experiences are being lost, which of course renders a weaker democracy with poorer opportunities to make good decisions!

Political interest and attempts to support gender equality

We continue the search for reasons and causes behind the female under-representation within the political life. Could we possibly find causes that are not directly linked to a discriminating gathering of men? Could it be that women are simply not that eager to participate in the political decision-making or lack interest in running for political commissions? Let us find out what the group of respondents think.

In the table below we can see that very few of the political representatives - just four persons - perceive women to be more interested than men in making own political careers. 45 % of the population see no big difference between the two sexes, while just above half of the entire group perceive men to be more interested - or dedicated - than women.

Question # 27: How would you describe the overall interest among men and women in your country when it comes to running for political commissions and making own political careers?

Answers <i>(Registered by number of respondents)</i>	Born (Den)	Kurz (Lat)	Klai (Lit)	Pome (Pol)	W-M (Pol)	Kali (Rus)	Blek (Swe)	Kalm (Swe)	Kron (Swe)
Men are more interested than women are.	3	11	9	9	8	6	9	3	5
There are no big difference between men and women.	7	8	1	2	4	8	7	9	9
Women are more interested than men are.	0	2	0	0	0	1	0	0	1
Total number of respondents:	10	21	10	11	12	15	16	12	15

Could this really be the case? Are all men blessed with a “political gene” already from birth? Well, we know that the population of respondents consists of 50 males and 74 females and that a slight majority perceives men to be more interested than women in running for political commissions. The answers could therefore not be interpreted as “pro-male” derived from a group of representatives consisting of only men. On the contrary, the picture is painted by a total group with more women than men.

However, *if* men are really more eager to run for political commissions and make own political careers, do this mean that men are more interested in politics and in the development of the joint society? Absolutely not! Every person’s interest could be channelled through a lot of possible ways and maybe the political structure/organising of today suits men better than women.

If we leave political interest and instead focus social structures and traditions that might hinder even and equal political participation from the two sexes we find the below result.

Question # 28: Do you see that women in your country are entirely free to make own political careers or are they tied to traditions and social structures that prevent them from doing this?

Answers <i>(Registered by number of respondents)</i>	Born (Den)	Kurz (Lat)	Klai (Lit)	Pome (Pol)	W-M (Pol)	Kali (Rus)	Blek (Swe)	Kalm (Swe)	Kron (Swe)
Women are entirely free to make own political careers.	4	5	2	3	2	1	3	2	7
Women are relatively free to make own political careers.	4	14	7	5	2	4	5	6	6
Traditions and structures are to some extent preventing women.	2	2	1	4	7	8	9	3	2
Traditions and structures are to great extent preventing women.	0	0	0	0	1	2	0	1	0
Total number of respondents:	10	21	10	12	12	15	17	12	15

A majority of the nine ERB regions see no big threats in these social structures and traditions. Women are in most cases regarded as entirely or relatively free to make own political careers and thus not held back by norms and social customs. Two out of three respondents argue like this. The picture differs however a bit from region to region. We can for example see that the thinking is a whole different in Warmia-Masurian Region and in Kaliningrad Region, but also in Blekinge County. In these three regions the respondents are more negative towards preventing effects that hinder women from fully taking part in the political life in their respective countries. The respondents were not asked to define what kinds of specific structures and traditions that constitute the greatest problems but one can probably point out traditional roles in the family, underlying conceptions of what men and women are and should do, and of course thinking like “this is what we know” together with “it has always been like this”.

Next step in this report will be to study if there have been any far-reaching political attempts to highlight gender issues and to support greater equality between men and women. We have identified the need for such initiatives by now but are much more uncertain about the energy and eagerness to deal with these issues from the ERB regions’ side.

Question # 29: As you see it, have there over the last five years been any far-reaching political attempts to highlight gender equality and to support greater equality between men and women in your region?

Answers <i>(Registered by number of respondents)</i>	Born (Den)	Kurz (Lat)	Klai (Lit)	Pome (Pol)	W-M (Pol)	Kali (Rus)	Blek (Swe)	Kalm (Swe)	Kron (Swe)
No.	5	7	0	1	5	3	3	1	1
Yes, a few.	3	4	6	8	6	5	9	7	4
Yes, several or many.	0	0	0	2	0	2	3	3	10
I am not aware of this.	2	10	4	1	1	5	2	1	0
Total number of respondents:	10	21	10	12	12	15	17	12	15

In the table above we can see that the representatives from Kronoberg County identify several or many political attempts that during the last five years have been aiming to support greater equality between men and women. The situation in the two neighbouring Swedish counties also seems to be relatively satisfying, while no or just a few initiatives have been taken in four of the nine ERB regions. The general picture indicates that all regions have made some efforts on the field and probably been successful in several cases. The picture does however also indicate that very much is still to be done! The response “Yes, a few” is regarded as a positive answer in this respect. 26 respondents claim that no initiatives have been taken at all during the last five years and just as many - 26 persons - claim they have no knowledge on the field, which probably should be regarded as a negative answer.

Relation between gender equality and democracy

Within frames of this study, gender equality is defined and treated as an essential and fundamental ingredient of today’s modern democracy! Without any doubts! The structured dividing between good governance (section two) and gender equality (section three) should *not* be seen as a way to separate the concepts from each other. On the contrary, gender issues constitute a vital but sometimes underrated element of democracy - a vital element that deserves an own section within a summary report like this.

But how do the 124 respondents look upon the overall definition of gender equality and its links and relations to what the concept democracy is and should stand for? The figures in the table below show that all nine ERB regions agree on the fact that gender equality has a direct relation to the concept democracy. 90 individuals (or 73 %) respond that gender equality constitutes an important or very essential part of the concept democracy, while 24 respondents argue that it constitutes a relatively important element. The rest - only ten persons - see no direct links between the two concepts.

Question # 30: According to you, what significance does “gender equality” have in an overall definition of what the concept “democracy” is and should stand for?

Answers <i>(Registered by number of respondents)</i>	Born (Den)	Kurz (Lat)	Klai (Lit)	Pome (Pol)	W-M (Pol)	Kali (Rus)	Blek (Swe)	Kalm (Swe)	Kron (Swe)
Gender equality constitutes a very essential part of the concept democracy!	3	6	4	3	5	0	9	9	6

It constitutes an important part.	3	3	5	6	6	8	5	3	6
It constitutes a relatively important part.	3	8	1	2	0	4	3	0	3
It constitutes a relatively unimportant part.	1	4	0	0	0	3	0	0	0
It does not constitute an important part.	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0
Gender equality has nothing to do with the concept democracy!	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0
Total number of respondents:	10	21	10	12	12	15	17	12	15

These results are very satisfying from a democratic point of view. The selected key-persons around the Baltic Sea recognise a clear connection between gender equality and democracy. Let us now hope that this recognition starts to take practical expressions in forms of new political attempts (see results of question 29) favouring a livelier gender debate, more women into politics and female representatives on the higher political posts.

International learning and status of gender equality for tomorrow

From the table below we can draw the conclusion that a clear majority - 108 out of 124 - of the respondents are willing to stress and lay emphasis on international exchange and learning in order to develop and strengthen equality between men and women in the ERB regions. Already today gender issues constitute a vital component of all existing EU programmes and maybe new projects focusing gender aspects could be developed within frames of the ERB cooperation. As stated previously in this report, Sweden should be seen as a frontline in the comprehensive work with gender-related issues and should therefore be taking a special role in such new projects. Not as a teacher or “best student in class” but the Swedish winnings, setbacks and experiences should without doubt be studied and taken into close consideration in the future work on the field.

Question # 31: According to you, how important are international exchange and learning in order to develop and strengthen equality between men and women in your region?

Answers <i>(Registered by number of respondents)</i>	Born (Den)	Kurz (Lat)	Klai (Lit)	Pome (Pol)	W-M (Pol)	Kali (Rus)	Blek (Swe)	Kalm (Swe)	Kron (Swe)
Very important!	2	3	2	3	4	4	9	4	4
Important.	1	4	5	3	4	5	5	6	4
Relatively important.	4	6	3	5	3	5	3	2	5
Relatively unimportant.	3	5	0	1	0	1	0	0	1
Unimportant.	0	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
Not important at all!	0	1	0	0	1	0	0	0	0
Total number of respondents:	10	21	10	12	12	15	17	12	15

Taken all these issues and questions focusing gender equality together, how do the 124 representatives from the ERB regions look upon the future when it comes to the status and significance of gender issues? Well, the views for the forthcoming ten-year period are relatively positive! Not many of the representatives argue that gender issues will be of utmost importance but altogether 95 individuals (or 77 %) indicate that the issues will play an important or relatively important role. The rest of the total population - 29 individuals - do not see gender-related issues playing any significant roles in the practical work until 2015, but there is only one person claiming that gender issues will be of no importance what so ever.

Question # 32: In ten years from today, what status/importance do you see that gender issues (equality between men and women) have in your region?

Answers (Registered by number of respondents)	Born (Den)	Kurz (Lat)	Klai (Lit)	Pome (Pol)	W-M (Pol)	Kali (Rus)	Blek (Swe)	Kalm (Swe)	Kron (Swe)
Gender issues will be of outmost importance!	0	0	0	1	2	0	4	1	0
Important.	2	7	3	3	3	5	6	7	8
Relatively important.	7	7	6	5	1	4	6	2	5
Relatively unimportant.	1	6	1	2	5	5	1	2	2
Unimportant.	0	1	0	1	0	1	0	0	0
Gender issues will not be important at all!	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0
Total number of respondents:	10	21	10	12	12	15	17	12	15

This question number 32 completes the third section of the report. We now have a relatively good impression of how the 124 selected key-persons from the nine ERB regions perceive, understand and think of good governance (section two) as well as gender equality between men and women around the Baltic Sea. In the final part of the report the presented results are brought together into a brief summary with some concluding remarks. The aim is to point out the most interesting and relevant findings in the study and, thus, to round off the portrayal of the current status of good governance and gender equality in ERB.

Some concluding remarks

The study has been conducted within the EU funded Interreg IIIB project Seagull DevERB, containing altogether nine Baltic Sea regions from the six countries of Denmark, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, Russia and Sweden. The main purpose of the new study has been to focus the two concepts *good governance* and *gender equality*, which reflect essential aspects of

democracy and include values such as human rights and respect, openness, tolerance, equity, public participation, efficiency and accountability.

The overall objective of the report has had the ambition to explore how values of good governance and gender equality (a) have developed over the last years, (b) appear today, and (c) are envisioned for tomorrow. The objective is related to the nine members of Euroregion Baltic - ERB - and is realised through presented thoughts, opinions and visions collected from selectively hand picked key-persons around the Baltic Sea.

In order to collect the data, a comprehensive questionnaire containing 32 questions was used. During the late spring 2005 the questionnaire was forwarded via the appointed ERB secretariats in the nine regions to individuals, actors and organisations considered to have great knowledge and experience of the two highlighted concepts. The distribution was made to men and women on different positions within public, private and voluntary organisations represented on local as well as regional level. Altogether, 124 individuals answered the questionnaire and are thus forming the total population of so-called respondents of the study.

The report does not intend to process significant statistical data or make scientific comparisons between the nine ERB regions. In this way, the aim has not been to point out that one region is “better” or “more democratic” than another. However, the actual findings should be regarded as much more than just a gamble from a group of anonymous individuals! Instead, the results should be seen as pointers/important benchmarks indicated by central key-persons with significant understanding of good governance and gender equality and their current status in the Baltic Sea area.

The 124 respondents of the study

As mentioned above, 124 individuals are forming the total population of respondents in the actual study. The respondents are spread evenly between the nine ERB regions; from ten individuals from the Regional Municipality of Bornholm and Klaipeda County respectively, to 21 individuals from Kurzeme Region. Among the total group of respondents, 50 individuals (40 %) are males and 74 individuals (60 %) females. Most of the respondents - 57 persons - are representatives for single municipalities, while 29 persons represent political bodies on the regional level. Approximately one third of the total group of 124 respondents are working as civil servants, one third as elected politicians, while the remaining third acts as researchers, experts or other representatives with significant knowledge of good governance and gender equality. The knowledge of Seagull DevERB and possible activeness within the project is relatively limited among the group. A majority has none or just little knowledge, while 87 individuals claim they have not taken part in the project implementation.

Findings related to good governance in ERB

Throughout the study a vast number of results, findings and analyses related to the current status of good governance have been noticed and presented. Below, a summarised portrait is given concerning some of the most interesting and relevant views and opinions that were indicated by the 124 respondents from the nine ERB regions.

- Most of the 124 respondents seem to think in positive terms regarding the state of today's local self-government in their respective countries. 94 individuals judge the local self-government as relatively strong, strong or very strong. Nobody judges it as very weak.

- The development of the local self-government seems to have been quite different from region to region over the last five years. The respondents from Kurzeme Region, Klaipeda County, Pomeranian Region and Warmia-Masurian Region judge the current local self-government as relatively strong and have witnessed a favourable, strengthening trend over the last years. The situation seems to be a bit different on the Russian side. Here, a majority judges the local self-government as relatively weak or weak and interprets the last five years as years that have rather strengthened the state than the local level. In the three Swedish counties a clear majority of the representatives perceives the local independence as rather strong. At the same time, 30 Swedish respondents out of totally 44 claim that the local self-government is weaker or positioned just about on the same level today as five years ago.
- Most of the 124 respondents are indicating positive opinions concerning current municipal cooperation and political openness/transparency. Eight representatives out of ten assess the climate of overall cooperation between municipalities as relatively good, good or even very good, while six respondents out of ten claim the political institutions to have reached relatively far, far or very far in order to become transparent entities with open meetings, free communication, shared knowledge and free flow of information etc.
- A slight majority of the total population is rather satisfied than unsatisfied when it comes to the political assemblies' success in integrating all kinds of social groups (sex, age, ethnic background etc) as fully participating members in the rooms where political decisions are being discussed and finally made. Interestingly, six Swedish respondents out of ten are rather unsatisfied concerning the current conditions.
- Politics is much more than just talking! In order to create confidence and legitimacy, political decisions must be made and implemented in an efficient manner without big losses of time, energy and financial resources. The Swedish and Danish respondents argue that public services - such as education of children, care of elderly and disabled people, physical planning and infrastructure etc - are carried out with good or relatively good quality. The Polish and Russian representatives provide a much darker picture of the efficiency of their political systems, which give rise to a relatively obvious east-west divide between the regions.
- 80 respondents (65 %) out of totally 124 claim they have witnessed a negative or relative negative trend during the last ten years, in which less and less citizens are interested or taking notice of political issues. In only two of the nine ERB regions the representatives have noticed a rather positive trend.
- According to the respondents, the possibilities for a regular citizen to influence and efficiently take part in the political process are better in the so-called old democracies (Denmark and Sweden) than in the new democracies.
- All nine ERB regions suffer from lacking public support and legitimacy connected to the political systems, which constitutes a real threat to the democracy of today. 62 % of the respondents describe the general views among regular citizens as rather negative when it comes to the political arena with its institutions.
- Citizens must be ensured that public finances are treated and spent in the most efficient ways all the time. Public funds should benefit the citizens, not the politicians or civil servants that are in charge of handling the finances. Therefore, the occurrence of bribes and corruption constitutes a severe problem for the modern democratic state. When corruption occurs equity, accountability and good governance lost relevance, the political system is met with anger and contempt, and the democracy as such loses a severe defeat. The results in the study show that corruption still is a very big and difficult problem to handle for the political institutions around the Baltic Sea! The situation is however not the

same for all six countries. In the Swedish and Danish regions none of the respondents identify any severe threats with existing corruption, while the situation is entirely another if we instead turn the focus towards Latvia, Lithuania, Poland and Russia. Among the 70 respondents from these four countries (five ERB regions) just *one person(!)* claims that corruption does not exist at all! It is thus very easy to distinguish an enormous gap between the so-called old democracies and the new democracies. When talking about bribing, corruption and “feather one’s own nest”, the political institutions in Kurzeme Region, Klaipeda County, Pomeranian Region, Warmia-Masurian Region and Kaliningrad Region still have a very long way to go in order to become transparent, accountable and democratic actors!

- Almost all of the 124 respondents are eager to lay emphasis on international exchange and learning in order to strengthen democracy and develop democratic working methods in the ERB regions. One good idea might be to focus financial management and the prevention of corrupt political decision-making...!?!
- In many aspects the democracy around the Baltic Sea is vital, new and successful. In other aspects it is unfair and narrow-minded. The visions for the future democratic development could however be considered to be light among the respondents of the study. Three representatives out of four declare positive or relative positive views concerning the development for the forthcoming ten-year period.

Findings related to gender equality in ERB

In parallel to the focusing on good governance, a great number of results and observations have also been made and presented regarding the current status of gender equality around the Baltic Sea. Below, a summarised picture is portrayed regarding some of the most interesting and relevant views and opinions that were indicated by the 124 respondents from the nine ERB regions.

- According to the 124 respondents, gender equality does not seem to be a very frequent or prioritised matter of discussion in five of the six ERB countries; Denmark, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland and Russia. The actual debate exists in society, but it is not very lively. The conditions seem to be different in the three Swedish ERB regions, since 38 Swedish respondents out of 44 claim the public debate around gender issues to be lively or relatively lively. This result is not very surprising since Sweden has relatively long traditions of concrete work and policy-making around gender-related issues.
- Gender equality has improved and strengthened its status in Latvia, Lithuania, Poland and Sweden over the last five years. That is if we are to believe the hand picked key-persons from these countries. The situation is a bit more uncertain when it comes to Denmark and Russia. In these two countries today’s public debate seems to be relatively weak, and the trend has over the last years been developing in the “wrong” direction.
- Women are today underrepresented within the political life around the Baltic Sea! No doubt about that! 92 % of all the respondents claim that there are fewer female politicians than males represented within the political institutions. Conditions seem to be worst in the Warmia-Masurian Region and best - or least bad - in the three Swedish counties, Kurzeme Region and Klaipeda County.
- According to the respondents of the study, all ERB regions but the Regional Municipality of Bornholm seem to have witnessed a rather positive than negative trend over the last five years when it comes to females going into politics. Even if many responses indicate that the proportion of female politicians is just about on the same level today as it was 2000, one can without doubt draw the conclusion that the female representation has

increased heavily in some of the regions.

- Even if the trend has been rather positive for some of the ERB regions, we have already stated that women are underrepresented in the political life of today. This was even more emphasised when studying the proportion of men and women present at the highest and most powerful posts of the political system. 109 individuals - or 88 % - claim that men are more evident on these powerful positions, which even stronger underline the unfortunate lack of women in rooms where political decisions are being discussed and made. This means that values, perspectives, knowledge and experiences are being lost, which of course renders a weaker democracy with poorer opportunities to make good decisions!
- In order to trying to find answers for the female under-representation within the political life of today, a slight majority of the 124 respondents argue that women are just less interested than men in running for political posts and commissions. Only four representatives claim the opposite. Furthermore, a vast majority sees no big threats in social structures, norms or cultural traditions holding back women from participating on equal terms. On the contrary, two respondents out of three perceive women to be entirely or relatively free to make own political careers.
- All ERB regions have during the last five years taken *some* political initiatives to highlight gender issues and support greater equality between men and women. Some efforts have probably been efficient and far-reaching, the majority seems however to have been minor, less extensive or not very successful. As it seems, much is still to be done!
- The group of selected key-persons recognise a clear and natural connection between the two concepts democracy and gender equality. According to the result, one can not talk about democracy or democratic development without at the same time taking gender issues into direct and natural consideration.
- 108 respondents out of 124 are willing to stress and lay emphasis on international exchange and learning in order to strengthen equality between men and women.
- A great majority of the representatives of the study perceive gender issues to play a rather important role in the forthcoming ten-year period from today. Only one individual claims that these issues will be of no importance at all for the future. Let us now hope that this very positive recognition starts to take practical expressions in forms of sharp political attempts favouring a livelier gender debate, broken social stereotypes, more women into politics and female representation also on the most powerful political posts.

Some final reflections

Throughout the study we have been able to observe a great number of results, reflections and analysed conclusions. What do all these findings tell us, how should we interpret them and in what ways could we possibly bear them in mind when we continue to develop our societies within and outside the frames of the current ERB cooperation? Well, the first thing to notice is that the 124 respondents from the nine ERB regions have all used different measurements, gauges and benchmarks when they have formed their opinions and made their judgements about the status of good governance and gender equality in the Baltic Sea region. All the regional localities and countries possess their own unique values, norms, histories and traditions, which the estimations have been based upon. No so-called international standard has been available in this case! Opinions and judgments have thus been made upon comparisons with other countries, with other regions and/or with national conditions that were the case five or maybe 50 years ago. The assessments have been *personal assessments*, which theoretically means that respondents from region X could provide a much more positive picture than the respondents from region Y *even if* region Y de facto possesses a more legitimate democracy with established political institutions, participating voters,

efficient decision-making, transparency and - of course - without bribing and corruption.

With this taken into consideration, the final task of the report will be to introduce a number of initiatives, reminders and/or themes for new projects that could be launched and supported within the framework of the future ERB cooperation. A brief list of summarised proposals would highlight:

- New project initiatives to support international learning and exchange of knowledge and experience around issues of good governance and gender equality.
- Raised understanding for ERB as a joint arena for transregional cooperation supporting not only regional development and economic growth but also a “Baltic Sea identity” with feelings of reliance and understanding for the neighbouring regions.
- Actions to support municipal and regional cooperation around highlighted democratic issues in parallel with new methods of e-learning, transparent entities and free flow of communication/information.
- Actions to pedagogically visualise the political process from discussion and decision-making to practical implementation in order to raise public awareness, prevent corruption and - in the long perspective - strengthen legitimacy for the political system as such.
- Promotion of cooperation between political institutions and NGOs/civil society in order to support bottom up perspectives and make the political process more concrete and tangible.
- Initiatives to support and broaden citizen participation in the political process *without* the requirement of being a member of traditional political parties.
- Comprehensive, serious and far-reaching initiatives to stop political corruption and to raise the awareness of democratic alternatives gaining the whole society.
- Benchmarking activities to teach and study how good practices around concrete gender work could gain *both* men and women and thus the entire society.
- Actions to support women going into politics and running for political commissions.
- Actions to improve the prospects of women campaigning for and possessing the highest political positions.
- Segregation by sex (men and women) of all statistical data/comparisons that are made and presented on public matters.
- Strengthened safeguarding of the concept gender equality, which requires a continuous debate and discussion - not only formal law-making and stipulation of public policies.

Appendix I: Used questionnaire containing 32 questions

Below, the 32 questions of the used questionnaire are presented. The questions are displayed together with the alternative of answers the respondent could chose among. In the first part of the questionnaire, a basic instruction was presented to the interviewee.

* * *

A questionnaire reflecting good governance and gender equality

This questionnaire constitutes an important part of the on-going Interreg IIIB project “Seagull DevERB” in which six countries/nine regions (Denmark, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, Russia and Sweden) around the Baltic Sea are taking active part. The Seagull project aims to establish a new and comprehensive Joint Transnational Development Programme (JTDP) to support regional development, economical growth and closer cooperation between local and regional actors in the Baltic Sea area. Two essential areas of this new JTDP deal with (1) good governance and (2) gender equality between men and women. The questions within this questionnaire highlight these two areas.

The questionnaire is distributed to politicians, experts, civil servants, NGOs and university representatives (etc) in all nine regions of the Seagull project. The aim is to collect general information and opinions about good governance and gender equality in the nine regions. The respondents do not have to have specific knowledge or experience of the actual Seagull project in order to answer the questions.

Prerequisites for the respondent of the questionnaire

The questionnaire consists of 32 QUESTIONS. The questions are formulated in a general way with specified answers for the respondent to chose from and mark via made crosses. It is very important that you answer ALL the 32 questions and that only ONE answer is marked for each question!

The questionnaire will take approximately 10 MINUTES to fill in. The respondent will throughout the study remain ANONYMOUS. No names will be mentioned in the summary report and it will therefore be impossible to link a specific answer to a specific individual.

When you have filled in the entire questionnaire you are asked to send it to the coordinator of the actual study situated in the city of Växjö, Sweden. Please, use the address:

ID - The Institute for Local and Regional Democracy
Daniel Folkesson
Videum
351 96 VÄXJÖ
SWEDEN

E-mail: daniel.folkesson@id-vaxjo.com (if you have questions about the study!)

Your filled in questionnaire must be posted and sent to Sweden LATEST THE 25th OF MAY 2005! Thank you very much for your participation in this study, your answers are very valuable to us!

6 general questions about the respondent

1. Sex?

- Male
- Female

2. In what region/county are you situated?

- *Kurzeme Region*
- *Klaipeda County*
- *Kaliningrad Region*
- *Warmia Masurian Region*
- *Pomeranian Region*
- *Bornholm*
- *Blekinge County*
- *Kalmar County*
- *Kronoberg County*

3. What kind of actor/organisation are you representing?

- *Municipality*
- *Political body on the regional level*
- *University*
- *Non-governmental organisation (NGO)*
- *Other*

4. What are you working as (your position) within the organisation you are representing?

- *Politician*
- *Civil servant*
- *Expert or researcher at university*
- *Other expert*
- *Other*

5. What knowledge do you have of the on-going EU project “Seagull DevERB”?

- *None*
- *Little*
- *Relatively much*
- *Much*
- *Very much*

6. Have you yourself been active in the Seagull project (as contributing expert, participant in meetings or seminars, member of steering committee etc)?

- *Yes*
- *No*

14 questions about “good governance”

7. How would you assess/valuate the state of today’s local self-government in your country?

- *The local self-government is very strong.*

- *Strong.*
 - *Relatively strong.*
 - *Relatively weak.*
 - *Weak.*
 - *The local self-government is very weak.*
- 8. How would you describe the development of the local self-government in your country over the last five years?**
- *The local self-government has developed stronger.*
 - *The local self-government is just about on the same level today as five years ago.*
 - *The local self-government has developed weaker.*
- 9. How would you assess/valuate the climate of overall cooperation between municipalities within your country today?**
- *The climate of cooperation is very good.*
 - *Good.*
 - *Relatively good.*
 - *Relatively bad.*
 - *Bad.*
 - *The climate of cooperation is very bad.*
- 10. According to you, how far have municipalities and political actors on the regional level in your country reached in order to become transparent entities/actors with open meetings, free communication, shared knowledge and free flow of information etc?**
- *Not far at all!*
 - *A little bit.*
 - *Relatively far.*
 - *Far.*
 - *They have reached very far!*
- 11. According to you, to what extent have political assemblies in your region been able to integrate all kinds of social groups (sex, age, ethnic background etc) as fully participating members/political representatives?**
- *To a great extent!*
 - *Satisfactory.*
 - *Relatively satisfactory.*
 - *Relatively unsatisfactory.*
 - *To a minor extent.*
 - *Not at all!*
- 12. On a general basis, how do you look upon the process from political decision-making to practical implementation of the made decisions (in your region)?**
- *The process from decision-making to practical implementation runs efficiently.*
 - *The process runs relatively efficiently.*
 - *The process runs relatively inefficiently.*
 - *The process from decision-making to practical implementation runs inefficiently.*
- 13. On a general basis, how would you assess/valuate the public services and initiatives that today are carried out in your region within the fields of...**

...education for children and youth
 ...care of young children
 ...care of elderly people
 ...care of disabled/handicapped people
 ...physical planning and infrastructure
 ...environmental care-taking

<i>Good quality</i>	<i>Relatively good quality</i>	<i>Relatively bad quality</i>	<i>Bad quality</i>

14. What trend have you seen the last ten years in your country when it comes to interest and engagement for political issues/matters among the citizen group?

- *A positive trend = more and more people are interested in political issues!*
- *A relatively positive trend.*
- *A relatively negative trend.*
- *A negative trend = less and less people are interested in political issues!*

15. How would you describe today's possibilities for a regular citizen in your country to influence and efficiently take part in the political process?

- *Very good possibilities!*
- *Good possibilities.*
- *Relatively good possibilities.*
- *Relatively bad possibilities*
- *Bad possibilities*
- *Very bad possibilities!*

16. How would you describe the general view/opinion among regular citizens in your country regarding the current political system with its political institutions?

- *Very positive!*
- *Positive.*
- *Relatively positive.*
- *Relatively negative.*
- *Negative.*
- *Very negative!*

17. What role would you say that NGOs (non-governmental organisations) and voluntary actors play in the realisation of local and regional democracy in your region?

- *They play an important role!*
- *Relatively important role.*
- *A minor role.*
- *They play no important role in this!*

18. How would you assess the level of corruption within the political life/society in your region?

- *No corruption exists at all!*
- *Corruption exists only in rare cases.*
- *Corruption constitutes a relatively big problem!*
- *Corruption constitutes a big or even very big problem!*

19. According to you, how important are international exchange and learning in order to strengthen

today's democracy and develop democratic working methods in your region?

- *Very important!*
- *Important.*
- *Relatively important.*
- *Relatively unimportant.*
- *Unimportant.*
- *Not important at all!*

20. How do you look upon the democratic development in your region for the coming ten years?

- *I have a positive view!*
- *I have a relatively positive view.*
- *Neither positive nor negative.*
- *I have a relatively negative view.*
- *I have a negative view.*

12 questions about “gender equality” between men and women

21. How would you describe today's debate about gender equality (between men and women) in your country?

- *The debate is lively!*
- *Relatively lively.*
- *Not very lively but it exists.*
- *The debate does not or hardly exists at all!*

22. How would you describe the debate about gender equality in your country over the last five years?

- *The debate has developed stronger.*
- *The debate is just about on the same level today as five years ago.*
- *The debate has developed weaker.*

23. According to you, what attention have gender issues been given in your country over the last two-three years...

- ...in mass media*
- ...in education for children and youth*
- ...in conditions on the labour-market*
- ...when it comes to wages/salaries*

<i>Much attention</i>	<i>Relatively much attention</i>	<i>Relatively little attention</i>	<i>No or little attention</i>

24. Generally speaking, how is the situation in your region when it comes to representation of female politicians in today's political assemblies?

- *There are hardly no female politicians in the political assemblies at all.*
 - *There are a few female politicians.*
 - *There are several female politicians but there are still more men.*
 - *There are just as many women as men in the political assemblies.*
 - *There are more women than men.*
- 25. How do you look upon the representation of female politicians in political assemblies in your region over the last five years?**
- *The proportion of women has decreased over the last five years.*
 - *The proportion is just about on the same level today as five years ago.*
 - *The proportion of women has increased over the last five years.*
- 26. How would you describe the proportion of men and women when it comes to the highest political positions (the greatest political responsibilities) in your region?**
- *Women are much more evident than men on these positions.*
 - *Women are more evident on these positions.*
 - *Just as many women as men are evident on these positions.*
 - *Men are more evident on these positions.*
 - *Men are much more evident than women on these positions.*
- 27. How would you describe the overall interest among men and women in your country when it comes to running for political commissions and making own political careers?**
- *Men are more interested than women are.*
 - *There are no big difference between men and women.*
 - *Women are more interested than men are.*
- 28. Do you see that women in your country are entirely free to make own political careers or are they tied to traditions and social structures that prevent them from doing this?**
- *Women are entirely free to make own political careers.*
 - *Women are relatively free to make own political careers.*
 - *Traditions and structures are to some extent preventing women.*
 - *Traditions and structures are to great extent preventing women.*
- 29. As you see it, have there over the last five years been any far-reaching political attempts to highlight gender equality and to support greater equality between men and women in your region?**
- *No.*
 - *Yes, a few.*
 - *Yes, several or many.*
 - *I am not aware of this.*
- 30. According to you, what significance does “gender equality” have in an overall definition of what the concept “democracy” is and should stand for?**

- *Gender equality constitutes a very essential part of the concept democracy!*
- *It constitutes an important part.*
- *It constitutes a relatively important part.*
- *It constitutes a relatively unimportant part.*
- *It does not constitute an important part.*
- *Gender equality has nothing to do with the concept democracy!*

31. According to you, how important are international exchange and learning in order to develop and strengthen equality between men and women in your region?

- *Very important!*
- *Important.*
- *Relatively important.*
- *Relatively unimportant.*
- *Unimportant.*
- *Not important at all!*

32. In ten years from today, what status/importance do you see that gender issues (equality between men and women) have in your region?

- *Gender issues will be of outmost importance!*
- *Important.*
- *Relatively important.*
- *Relatively unimportant.*
- *Unimportant.*
- *Gender issues will not be important at all!*