



*Ulf Andersson*

## **Notes from the NGO seminar in Kaliningrad, 2004-04-27**

**Place:** Kaliningrad State University

**Participants:** About 30 persons from different Non Governmental Organisations (NGO: s) of the Kaliningrad Region.

**Mr Klemeshev**, Rector of the Kaliningrad State University welcomed the seminar participants, and **Mr Tregubov**, representative of the Russian Federation Government Office of the Kaliningrad Region made a positive statement of the value of Russian participation in projects like the Seagull one.

**Mr Rolf A Karlson**, Project Manager of the Seagull DevERB project, welcomed the participants on behalf of the Seagull DevERB project and underlined that this seminar is a first attempt to inform about and engage representatives of NGOs in the ERB and Seagull activities and to start a dialogue about input to the further work about e.g. the strategy and Joint Transnational Development Programme of ERB from NGOs.

**Mr Victor Koshelev**, Deputy Head of Baltijsk Municipal District and Project Leader of the Seagull Russian Component project, addressed the seminar through underlining the importance for the Kaliningrad Region of the cooperation within Euroregion Baltic. He stated that the Kaliningrad Oblast is an important part of ERB. Now when e.g. the organisation Union of Baltic Cities no longer is so active, the importance of a good cooperation within ERB has increased.

He stressed that the transportation/communication issues have to be prioritised in the Joint Transnational Development Programme (JTDP) for ERB. He also mentioned tourism and environmental issues as important ones, especially connected to the Baltic Sea.

**Mr Ulf Andersson**, Project Leader of WP 5 (Information and dissemination) of the Seagull DevERB project, informed about the background and the aims of the ERB organisation and cooperation. He stressed that it is a political steered cooperation, and that it depends on the political will in the member regions how strong the cooperation will be in the future. He also informed about the Seagull project and the work so far in the different work packages.

**Mr Karlson** informed about the work with the main objective of the Seagull project – the Joint Transnational Development Programme (JTDP). So far there is only a draft strategy developed – a frame for the coming JTDP, and there is still plenty of time to give input to the JTDP. Mr Karlson then went through the headlines of the draft strategy and commented them with concrete examples.



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## **Comments on the Strategy and the ERB cooperation from the participants**

There are a lot of information problems in Kaliningrad Region. E-mail cannot be used as in Sweden for example. The Website for ERB, [www.eurobalt.org](http://www.eurobalt.org), is not used as it could be. There is a lot of information available, but people do not visit this kind of websites. But in the end of May there will be an information seminar in Kaliningrad where the questions can be discussed. According to this, Mr Koshelev mentioned that there will be sent information about the Seagull project in all municipalities in the oblast.

It is important that also the social issues are a part of the cooperation. For example disabled people and the care of elderly people are a huge problem in Kaliningrad. Cooperation within ERB between different kinds of NGOs dealing with social issues would be a good initiative from ERB.

Many participants highlighted the environmental problems in the Kaliningrad Region and in the Baltic Sea. One problem with a JTDP is to face and coop with different legislations in the member countries. The final JTDP must consider this.

Imported old cars is a huge environmental problem in especially the Kaliningrad City, and at the bottom of the Baltic Sea there are many bombs and vessels from the Second World War still there as a threat for the region and its inhabitants (and for the whole Baltic Sea Region).. What can ERB do about that?

Also poisoned fish and transport of oil are a danger for the people in the ERB area.

As a summary, the participants seemed to accept the idea of a JTDP for ERB, with the presented main contents, but with possibly more emphasis on environmental issues that are common for all ERB member regions.