

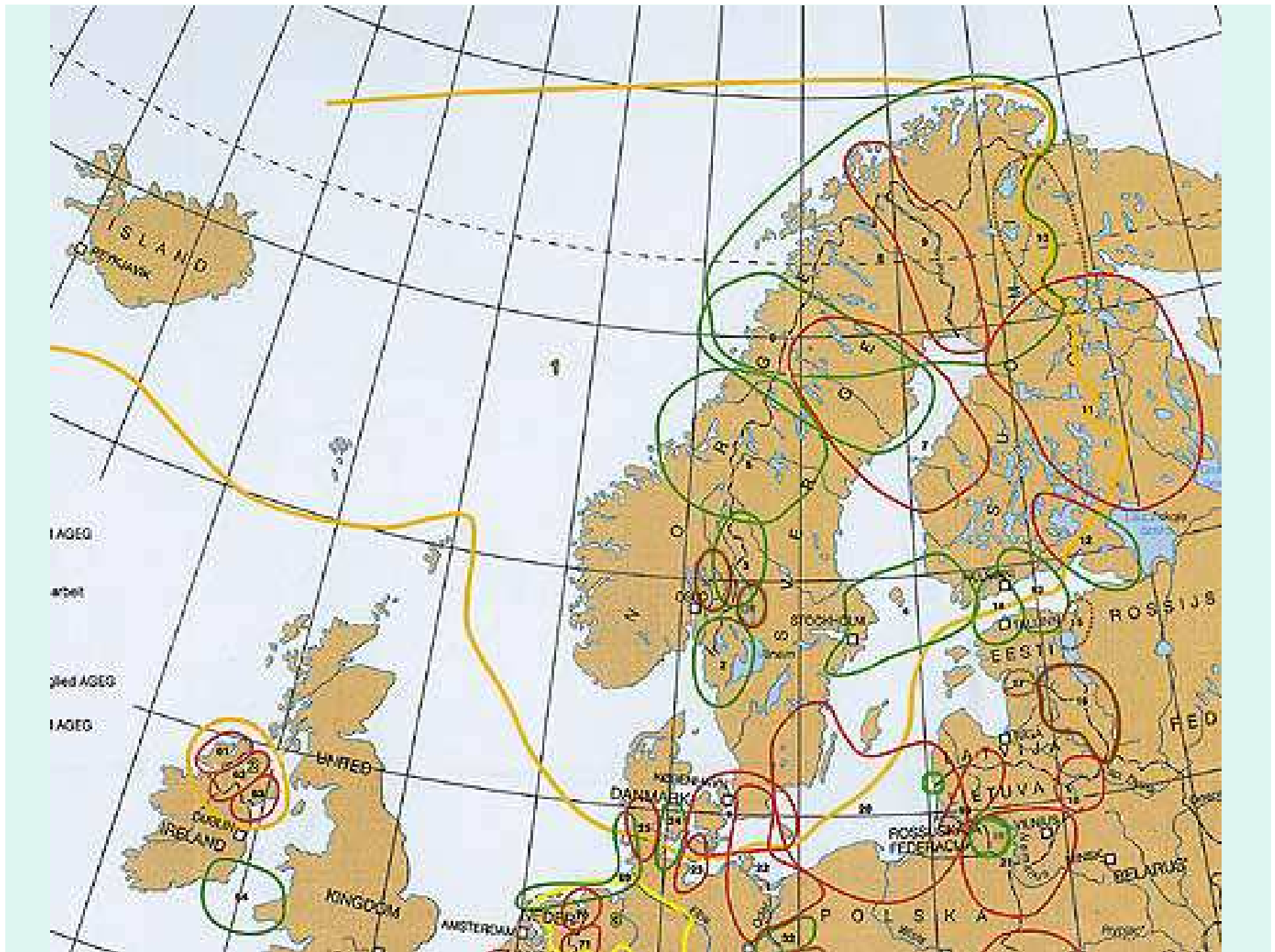
Euroregions as tools for cross- border cooperation in the Baltic Sea region

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St. Petersburg, 28 September 2009

Definition of Euroregions

- Formalized permanent cooperation between local or regional authorities;
- Joint political and administrative structures;
- Broad field of collective actions;
- Cross-border oriented activities.



General features

- About 27 structures (7 in RU);
- Different names (Euroregion, Euregio, Council etc.) and no copy right;
- Membership: NUTS II and III;
- Different size;
- Different legal status;
- Spheres of activities;
- Intensity of cooperation

BALTIC EUROREGIONAL NETWORK (BEN)

- **Duration:** 7/2005 - 1/2008;
- **Partners:** 35 partners from 9 countries around the BSR
- **15 Euroregions** from the BSR represented;
- **Lead Partner:** Nordic Council of Ministers Office in Lithuania;
- **Budget:** total budget about 1,2 mln EUR. Financed from the BSR INTERREG III B;

BEN-EAST

- **Duration:** 5/2007 – 12/2008
- **Partners:** 13 partners mainly from Russia and Belarus;
- **6 Euroregions** from RU and BY represented;
- **Lead Partner:** Information Office of the Nordic Council of Ministers Office in St. Petersburg;
- **Budget:** total budget about 0,5 mln EUR. Financed from the BSR INTERREG III B;

Objective: To strengthen Euroregions in the BSR as competent partners for national authorities and international institutions by creating a network of Euroregions for continuous capacity-building and sharing of experience.

Lessons learned-1

- Euroregions are among the most important actors responsible for the practical implementation of the CBC, and the only institutions established specifically for that purpose;
- CBC structures in BSR are different – but that is not necessary a problem;
- Euroregion is a highest form of CBC, and should be established when there is sufficient intensity of cooperation already. There are other forms of cooperation and sometimes they might be more suitable;
- Institutional capacity of CBC structures around the Baltic Sea varies a lot, that influences intensity of cooperation;
- Central governments express political support to CBC but not always support local and regional governments with resources and rights to perform it;

Lessons learned-2

- Central governments sometimes are afraid that CBC structures might have independent policies in relations with neighbouring countries;
- Local /regional authorities not always put sufficient efforts and resources into development of Euroregions;
- The issue of legal status of Euroregions is not solved; need for additional legislation in Russia?
- Euroregions: centers for project production or hubs for cross-regional development?
- Euroregions and the CBC/ENPI programs ?;
- Role of Euroregions in spatial and regional development still not sufficient;
- Unstable political relations between neighbouring countries - threat to CBC;

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