

Management Committee 15.10.2002

Olli Keinänen
chairman of the secretariat
1999-2001

ACTIVITY REPORT 1999-2001

Part 1. Helsinki-Tallinn Euregio: Conclusions from the first term of presidency 1999-2001

Cross-border co-operation, in a sense of Helsinki-Tallinn Euregio, was something very new for all partners of Euregio in 1999. It was new thing to combine local and regional actors, especially across the border. It was also quite new in international co-operation to be goal oriented.

The motives in founding the Euregio were a general idea of enhancing co-operation between the regions in a co-ordinated way. And more specifically the motive was to prepare for Estonian EU-membership. Stimulus also came from EU Commission, who encouraged border regions in building of "genuine cross-border structures". By following examples from Central Europe, it was hoped that Euregio could be developed into an administrator of Interreg III A –programme for its own area. After all, this was not possible. Interreg IIIA programme area was defined to cover the whole of Southern Finland and the whole Estonia. Secondly, Euregio did not develop proper administrative capacities to meet that challenge.

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What was done during the first two active years of Euregio? This can be summarised:

- 1. Studying the operating environment.** Euregio initiated and helped to carry out several studies and research in order to build a common understanding on what is going on between the two regions. This work has been useful and needed in the still unfinished discussion on a common future vision. In future this unofficial partnership of Helsinki-Tallinn interaction research should be strengthened by involving also academic and research institutions, not only individuals.
- 2. Mapping and surveying possible fields of co-operation.** The first Action Programme presented 27 objectives in seven fields of activity. In addition seven priority projects were adopted as being the key projects for Euregio to support.

Much has happened towards those 27 objectives, but none of the original seven priority projects has been realised as such. Reasons for this were basically two: lack of commitment and lack of resources. In too many cases the project initiative have not gained active support from other Euregio partners. The key projects also were not successful in raising outside funding, because in too many cases not even the initiator was ready to allocate resources. Although in several key projects something was done, but Euregio did not have organisational skills to pool small

3. **Learning to the work culture of your neighbour.** In effective co-operation you should know your partner and how people and organisations operate, and this knowledge we did not have in the beginning. Adapting to different work cultures might be happened now among the secretariat. The secretariat had 21 meetings altogether until Dec. 2001. It took some time until the secretariat members started to understand how partner organisations operate, what are their priorities and capacities. The meetings were very long, took usually the whole day. But the result is that the core group of representatives of the partners now know each other very well.
4. **Learning from international experiences.** Members of the MC and the secretariat made a very useful study trip to Euregio Pomerania and to Öresundskomiteet. This and other contacts with cross-border co-operation in Europe, although not very systematic, have given lot of ideas and understanding to our own work. In future these activities should be continued, especially useful would be exchange of experiences with other urbanised border regions, and new inner borders after EU enlargement.
5. **Building of the co-operation network.** During the first two years there has been lot of connections under Euregio umbrella, in Euregio working groups, at two Forum conferences, in research projects and in informal meetings. Several project initiatives and partnerships have been created. These contacts have been mainly between Euregio partner organisations. Especially departments of Helsinki and Tallinn are now better connected than before. But concrete co-operation, project work has not developed as positively. And co-operation between smaller municipalities in Harjumaa and Uusimaa has not developed so much. Another difficulty has been involving other partners, businesses, NGO's and public institutions. So far Euregio has not been really convincing in project initiation, because of missing organising capacities, and also because of weak public image, or a non-image.

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It is worth mentioning things, which have restricted the operating capacity of Euregio, at least occasionally.

1. **Change of representatives**, especially during the first two years meant that it took so long time for the core group of officials to become effective. On the other hand, there are now, especially in Tallinn city organisation, more people who are well aware on Euregio.
2. **Differences in levels of resources available for partners** have played some role. In general the Finnish partner organisations have been able to allocate much more funding for Euregio co-operation. In early times this meant for instance that most of the meetings took place in Tallinn. This factor also have resulted that Finnish ideas might have been more successful than Estonian. This was the case especially in the beginning when Euregio's own budget was very small.
3. **Poor co-ordination of practical activities** has been the problem all too often. This is due to previous problems, and due to applied decentralisation of organisational duties and tasks. Co-ordination will improve when Euregio develops its own internal work culture.

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In October 2001 the MC made decisions to meet below-mentioned challenges:

- Euregio hires a full-time manager in Tallinn,
- To change Euregio into a legal person,
- Budget for year 2002 to appropriate level.

In future the strengthening of Euregio requires more outside funding and project activities. Also visibility of Euregio inside the operating area should be better. Euregio as a NGO and administrative capacities of its own, make these goals realistic. But a key thing also in future will be commitment and long term perspective among the representatives of Euregio partners.

In future widening the membership of Euregio could be considered, in order to strengthen the partnership. When Estonia joins the EU and the border becomes an internal border, it also becomes relevant to work for an own Interreg programme area. Then, for instance it might be useful to discuss on involving state agencies as members of Euregio.

Part 2. Activities 1999 – 2001

The Euregio was founded in June 22nd 1999. Since then the network organisation has worked in laying foundations for closer co-operation between the cities and the regions. In short, the activities have included:

Surveys

- Present state of co-operation between Uusimaa and Harjumaa (Tomi Ranta, Jan/2000)
- Two regions today and their common perspectives, a background material (Estonian Institute for Future Studies, Apr./2000)
- Growing Business Interaction across the Gulf of Finland (research programme conducted by Helsinki Urban Research, Nov./2001)

Exchange of experiences, surveying funding sources

- Study trip to Poland, Denmark and Sweden, to Euregio Pomerania and to Östersundskomitee (Nov. 2000)
- Meetings with DG Regio, Ministries of Interior, AEBR, Eurocities EWC

Policy development and promotion of project activities

- Action Programme 1999-2001
- Defining the list of priority projects
- Working groups aiming to generate project co-operation
 - Vocational education (2 seminars)
 - Business development (1 seminar)
 - Integration of minorities (in preparatory phase)
 - Inter-regional Information Society (1 seminar)
- Common Future Vision Project (Nov 2001)

Information and communication

- web site www.euregio-helta.org
- brochure
- presentations on Euregio in several conferences and seminars

Meetings

- Secretariat 4 in 1999, 8 in 2000 and 9 in 2001
- Management committee Jan/00, May/00, Jan/01, May/01 and Oct/01
- Opening Conference in Tallinn in May 2000
- Euregio Forum 2001, Nov 2001

Part 3. Management Committee 1999-2001

City of Helsinki:	<i>Pekka Korpinen</i> , deputy mayor (6/1999-)
deputy member:	<i>Martin Meinander</i> , deputy mayor (6/1999-)
Uusimaa Regional Council:	<i>Aimo Lampinen</i> , executive director (6/1999-5/2000) <i>Ulla Kapanen-Grönfors</i> , director (5/2000-)
deputy member	<i>Kaj Lindholm</i> , deputy director (6/1999-5/2000) <i>Aimo Lempinen</i> (5/2000-)
City of Tallinn:	<i>Toomas Sepp</i> , city secretary (6/1999-5/2000) <i>Ivar Virkus</i> , deputy mayor (5/2000-1/2001) <i>Rein Voog</i> , chairman of the city council (1/2001-12/2001) <i>Maret Maripuu</i> , chairman of the city council (12/2001-)
deputy member	<i>Merle Krigul</i> , head of foreign relations and protocol department (6/1999-1/2001) <i>Ivar Virkus</i> , deputy mayor (1/2001-12/2001) <i>Toomas Vitsut</i> , deputy mayor (12/2001-)
Harju County Government:	<i>Jaan Mark</i> , in power of county governor(6/1999-1/2001 <i>Orm Valtson</i> , governor (1/2001-)
deputy member	<i>Heino Alaniit</i> , deputy head of the department of development and planning(6/1999-1/2001 <i>Aare Ets</i> , director at Harju county government (1/2001-)
Union of Harju County Municipals	<i>Anne Taklaja</i> , chairperson of the Paldiski Town Council and member of the Board of HOL (6/1999-11/2001) <i>Andre Sepp</i> , Raasiku Parish Government and chairman of the Board of HOL(11/ 2001 -)
deputy member	<i>Enn Kirsman</i> , the Mayor of Kuusalu Municipality and member of the Board of HOL (6/1999-5/2001); <i>Andre Sepp</i> , Raasiku Parish Government and member of the Board of HOL(5/2001- 11/ 2001); <i>Juhan Särgava</i> , Nissi Parish Government and member of the Board of HOL(11/2001-)

Secretariat

City of Helsinki	<i>Olli Keinänen</i> , adviser of Baltic cooperation (6/1999 -)
Uusimaa Regional Council	<i>Laine Valkama</i> , EU coordinator (6/1999 -)
City of Tallinn	<i>Taave Vahermägi</i> , project manager (6/1999-1/2001) <i>Tõnu Karu</i> , project manager (1/2001-)
Harju County Government	<i>Aare Ets</i> , councillor of EU issues (6/1999-1/2001)

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Merle Laager, deputy director of department of economic affairs (1/2001-)

Union of Harju County Municipals

Toomas Välimäe, director of bureau (6/1999-)

