



Fundamentals and Geographic Situation

The cultural and social diversity of Europe as a result of history is reflected in a multitude of nationally different systems, structures and legal conditions. The border regions are immediately involved in this development.

Since the end of the eightieth Europe has lived to see increased efforts taken to take down the borders within the European Union and to intensify contacts beyond the borders of the EU. Consequently, co-operation of regions beyond state borders is ever growing in importance for the European development, as it serves directly for mutual understanding and rapprochement of the populations, institutions and enterprises concerned. This development aims at creating areas of border-crossing economy and services, converting state borders into administrative borders, and transforming the nationally marginal situation of the border areas into a situation in the interior of Europe. To achieve this aim, the border-crossing co-operation will have to extend to all areas of life.

EUROREGION POMERANIA is a border region of particular importance. It links German and Polish regions and, since February 1998, also Swedish regions to each other. Owing to its geographic situation, EUROREGION POMERANIA is not only a link between Central Europe and Eastern Europe but also between these regions and Scandinavia. The West-East ties, as well as the North-South ties historically developed on the territory of POMERANIA are being revived in the light of the developing European integration. Step by step, the harmonisation of the conditions of living aimed at by the EU shall be achieved also with the members of the EUROREGION POMERANIA.

Members and Statistics

EUROREGION POMERANIA was established on 15 December 1995 in Szczecin, Poland. Since 26 February 1998, the day of signing the agreement in Lund, Sweden, it has four parties:

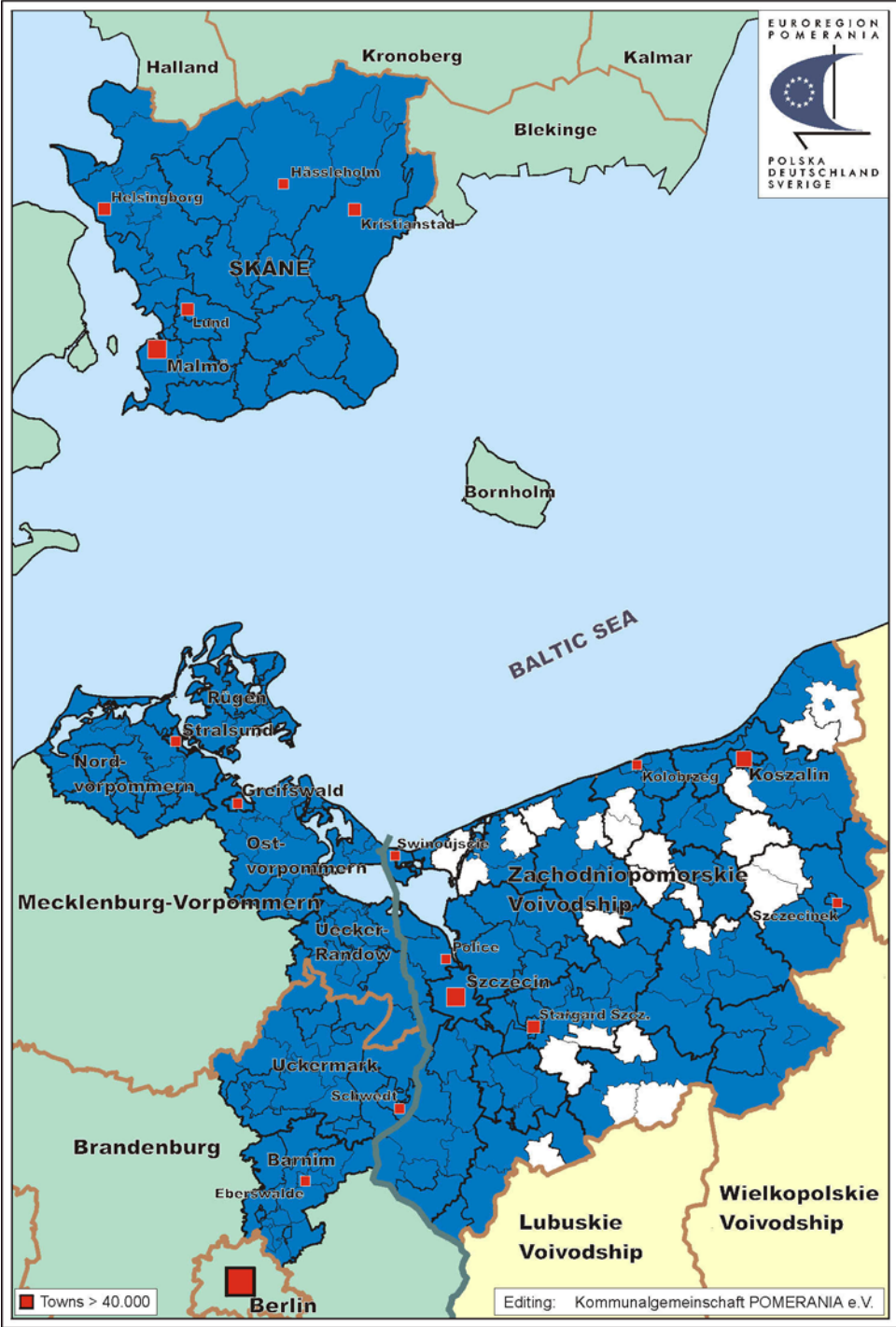
- The ***town of Szczecin***
- ***POMERANIA***, the ***Purpose Association of Local Authorities of Western Pomerania*** (with currently 92 Polish local authorities in the Western Pomerania voivodship)
- The ***Association of Local Authorities Euroregion POMERANIA e.V.*** (a association of two self-administrated towns and six rural districts in the Land Mecklenburg-Western Pomerania and in the Land Brandenburg)
- The ***Scania Association of Local Authorities*** (with 33 communes in Sweden)

The EUROREGION POMERANIA – a brief presentation

The entire region covers a territory 41,000 km² with a population of more than 3.5 millions.

12 - 2000

EUROREGION POMERANIA



Aims, Tasks and Organisational Structure

Co-operation in the EUROREGION POMERANIA aims at initiating joint activities for developing the region evenly and in a well-balanced manner and at bringing people and institutions of the territories concerned closer together.

Principal ways to achieve these aims are:

1. Raising the standard of living of the people living in these territories, particularly by mutual assistance in economic investments and programmes, vocational education and training schemes, and programmes for fighting unemployment;
2. Supporting the ideals of European unity and international understanding;
3. Co-operation and exchange, between associations, scientists, trade associations, cultural ensembles and youth groups, particularly by encouraging those forms of co-operation and exchange that will serve for better mutual understanding between the populations of the border regions;
4. Maintenance and improvement of the protection of the environment; development of the rural areas;
5. Development and adaptation of the infrastructure to the needs of border-crossing and regional traffic;
6. Development of economic co-operation; exchange of know-how and transfer of technology;
7. Establishment of a complex information system for the exchange of data in the Euroregion;
8. Development of co-ordinated border-crossing regional planning;
9. Co-operation in fighting fires and natural disasters and in responding to averages;
10. Assistance in finding solutions to problems with border crossers.

One of the important concerns of border-crossing co-operation is, for instance, creating better conditions for small-size and medium-size enterprises in the region. To this end, joint exhibitions, business fairs, achievements shows, border-crossing workshops and seminars, exchange of economy-relevant scientific findings, and measures of joint market analyses and marketing strategies shall be organised. In this context, rendering assistance in joint regional planning and promoting infrastructural projects are important fields of activity.

In the field of protecting the environment, co-operation aims at extending co-ordination and harmonising measures taken for the conservation of nature. Proposals concerning the protection of the environment shall also help developing tourism by linking conservation of nature, protection of the environment, and tourism to each other in the interest of conserving the natural potentials of the region.

In the field of education, German Polish grammar schools have been established, for instance. This helped setting up contacts between youth either side of the border, organising joint study and, a matter of particular importance, learning the language from each other and understanding the mentality of each other.

In the EUROREGION POMERANIA there are regular meetings on a communal level. Representatives from the Polish, German and Swedish side work together in governmental and regional committees and working groups. One of the aims of priority is initiating and co-ordinating projects and actions in the areas adjacent to the border. There is a considerable number of towns and communes twinned in the EUROREGION POMERANIA.

Economy and Infrastructure

The EUROREGION POMERANIA has the function of an international region for transit and communication. It is a turntable of important routes of transport extending beyond its own limits, between Scandinavia and Southern Europe, as well as between Western and Eastern Europe. The situation of the EUROREGION POMERANIA with respect to the flows of traffic in the region of the Baltic Sea is favourable for the economic development of the region.

The regional sea ports and inland ports, as Helsingborg (S), Malmö (S), Trelleborg (S), Ystad (S), Åhus (S), Szczecin (PL), Swinoujście (PL), Police (PL), Sassnitz/Mukran (D), Stralsund (D), Schwedt/Oder (D) and Eberswalde (D) are of major importance in this context. Passengers and goods are chiefly transported via combination ferry links.

There are also some regional airports, as Szczecin-Goleniów (PL) and Malmö (S), mainly for passenger transport.

Border-crossing overland transport of goods is mainly effected by road transport. Contrary to the well developed road and railway network in Skåne, the German and Polish parts of the EUROREGION POMERANIA are considerably lagging behind in the development of infrastructure, because of decades of neglect of the economic development of the German Polish border region.

The international exchange of goods of the regional economy takes place to a considerable extent between German, Swedish and Polish regions of the EUROREGION POMERANIA. This has become manifest by Swedish investments in Germany or German and Swedish investments in Poland.

There are good prospects of developing co-operation, particularly in the fields of economy, traffic, regional planning, regional marketing and border-crossing points. Important branches of the economy of the region are maritime industries, particularly ship building, e. g., in Szczecin (PL) or in Stralsund (D), agriculture and food industry, pharmaceutical industry, timber and paper industry, e. g., in Åstorp (S), in Bromölla (S) or in Schwedt/Oder (D), chemical industry, e. g. in Police (PL), electrical engineering industry, and car industry.

Tourism is of particular importance in the EUROREGION POMERANIA. Owing the scenic beauty, little environmental burdens and common aspects of history and culture. e. g., the history of the Hanse, a large number of palaces and castles, the region is very attractive for tourists. This is reflected in two-digit growth rates in the turnover of the tourist trade. However, the rate of benefiting from the capacities offered to the tourists greatly depends on the season. For this reason, the regional tourist trade needs joint solutions for ways to extend the main season and for opportunities to practise leisure time activities independently on the weather conditions.

Three universities, in Greifswald (D), Szczecin (PL), and in Lund (S), as well as a number of advanced technical colleges are evidence the high economy-related potential of knowledge in the EUROREGION POMERANIA. The universities are both important carriers of know-how and employers.

The infrastructure of communication in the region is relatively well developed, thus providing favourable conditions for modern services to be offered.

The development of the economy and of the economy-related infrastructure, but also of the fields of ecologie, education and culture, is supported by a number of European and national development programmes, e. g., the European development programmes INTERREG II and PHARE-CBC.

Potentials of the EUROREGION POMERANIA

The region disposes of a considerable development potential, e. g.,

- an elevated percentage of the younger age groups of the population
- the existing educational institutions, particularly those of closer relationship to the economy
- the potential of qualified employable people
- a relatively unused natural potential and low environmental burden
- favourable conditions for tourism
- existing infrastructure and possibilities of developing the infrastructure for industry and tourism
- agricultural and forestry production, including processing and converting of agricultural and forest products
- the geographical situation of the region favourable for the traffic from North to South and East to West and vice versa. It will help accelerating development, particularly after constructing new traffic routes, e. g., the motorway along the Baltic sea coast with feeder roads and combination ferry connections.

An improved infrastructure will give a boost to the economic development. Conceivable projects could be, for instance, trans-national development of innovative, ecology-oriented technologies and services.

Apart from the favourable geographical situation of the region on an European scale, the relatively low ecological burden is one of the most important attractive factors of the EUROREGION. The development of economy and tourism should therefor be oriented to the environmental structures and take these structures into consideration with a view to conserve intact nature. In addition to that, the cultural opportunities offered in the major cities should be enlarged.