

# **LACE PHARE CBC**

Draft

## **Assessment Report**

### **Estonia**

December 1999

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8 pages + 1 annex page

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### **1. Profile of the cross-border region**

#### **1.1. Definition of the border region**

Estonia has following border lengths:

-Land border towards Russian Federation	294 kms.
-Land border towards Republic of Latvia	339 kms.
-Sea coast length	3 794 kms.

Of the 15 Estonian regions, only Järva and Rapla are not border regions. See map in annex 1. That brings a structural problem into CBC: all the 15 regions want and should be with in CBC-activities.

The amount of border crossings for international road transport is 11 (see annex 1). The largest volume (312 615 vehicles in 1997) was in Ikla on Via Baltica towards Latvia, second largest in Tallinn (283 159) with its four harbours. Narva (163 680) with road and rail to Russia and Valga (174 200) with road and rail to Latvia were the following in ranking.

#### **1.2 Political-administrative structures**

Estonia in present political structure is an independent republic named Eesti Vabariik since 1991. The republic was originally founded 24.2.1918, but was a part of the Soviet Union 1945-1991.

Political conditions are stabilizing after turbulent first decade in 1990ies. Lennart Meri is the second term President of the Republic from 1992, re-elected for five years in 1997.

Estonia's state administration is divided into 15 regions (Maakond). The amount of municipalities is 255. Besides of the state regional administration, the regional unions of municipalities form the second regional actor on bottom-up principle.

#### **1.3 Socio-economic characteristics**

Estonia has an area of 45 227 km<sup>2</sup> and a population of 1,46 millions (1996). The capital city Tallinn is relatively great with 420 000 inhabitants. The next biggest towns are Tartu 102 000 and Narva 75 000 inhabitants. Of the total population, 65 % are Estonian and 28 % Russian original (post-colonial minority). Official language is Estonian. GDP is about 3 080 US\$ (1996). Economic growth is steady.

Private sector employs 78 % of the total labour force. Service sector employs 65, industries 28 and farming 7 %. Unemployment rate was 3,9 % in 1998.

Generally, Estonia is a modern democracy in a rapid growth and development stage.

#### **1.4 Degree of cross-border cooperation**

AEBR arranged in 1996 two seminars for getting the first view on CBC-situation of Estonia. Results were summarized in two reports. The Evaluation of Questionnaire to Participants of the first seminar gave a good overall presentation of situation three years ago.

The questionnaire was answered by regions Harju, Ida-Viru, Lääne-Viru, Polva and Pärnu. Tourism, economics and environment were important topics of cooperation in all regions.

At that time in 1996, cross border cooperation connections were following:

- \*Western islands Saare and Hiiu with coastal regions of Denmark, Finland and Sweden
- \*State capitals Tallinn and Helsinki with each other
- \*Harju with Åkershus in Norway and Stockholm in Sweden
- \*Ida-Viru with Itä-Uusimaa, Kymenlaako and Päijät-Häme in Finland
- \*Lääne-Viru with Gävleborg in Sweden and same three in Finland as Ida-Viru
- \*Polva with Pihkva, Petseri and Palkino in Russia and Alukse and Balvi in Latvia
- \*Twin towns Valga-Valka and Narva-Ivangorod between Estonia, Latvia and Russia
- \*Pärnu with Västmanland in Sweden and Vaasa in Finland.

In 1996, the cooperation consisted mainly of joint projects and regular meetings. The main problem was the lack of money and technical resources. The City of St Petersburg and surrounding Region Leningradskij Oblast were seen to be the most important future CBC-partners.

During the years 1996-1999, these forms of cooperation have strengthened and also new forms like Euregio Helsinki-Tallinn, Peipsi Lake project and cooperation axle Voru-Karlstadt in Sweden are established. The general atmosphere is enthusiastic and many results are already clearly seen.

In this report, a closer description is given over the three most important CBC-structures of Estonia in 1999: Helsinki-Tallinn, 3 + 3 and PskovLivonia. In these, seven Estonian Border Regions and the City of Tallinn are deeply involved. A description of Via Baltica is also included.

In future, the enlarging of 3 + 3 CBC to Russian Federation (Narva-Ivangorod, Vyborg-St Peterburg) after the model of PskovLivonia would still be most desirable.

#### **1.4 Barriers to cross-border cooperation**

The border between Estonia and Russian federation has been one the worst in Europe. Since the era of Carl XII of Sweden and Peter the Great of Russia, there has been fight and extension over that border. Even the name of the key border town Narva has a "sound of destiny". At that space, huge mass fights welled as late as 1944. Nowadays, i.g. the negotiations between states of final border justification there have been really difficult. Also the situation of big Russian-origin minority population in Estonia causes difficulties in cross-border cooperation.

On the Russian side, a bottom-up type local self government still waits its coming. Only some pilot projects are in operation.

In Estonia, during last years several members in political bodies have been changed in elections into new ones. That affects negatively to long term policies. The main interest of Estonia has been directed towards west where only over-sea borders exist. This weakens the activities of cross-border cooperation over land borders eastwards.

## **2. Structures**

### **2.1 Cross-border structures**

#### **a. Helsinki-Tallinn Euregio**

After multiple contacts between capital cities and their regions for years, the Euregio of Helsinki and Tallinn was founded officially 22th June, 1999 in Helsinki. The agreement was signed by five partners, cities of Helsinki and Tallinn, regions Uusimaa and Harju and the union of municipalities in Harju. In Estonia the regions belong to the state administration; thus the partner based on local self government is essential.

The activities consist of three main forms:

1. Helsinki-Tallinn Euregio Forum of politicians of each of the partners. The Forum deals with general topics and goals. Next Forum conference is planned for April 2000 in Tallinn.
2. Steering Group calls the Forum and takes care of administrative and economy affairs. Group consists of one member with deputy from each partner's side, these are leading officials.
3. The Secretariat under the Steering Group of the Euregio puts the general policies into action and rises initiatives. One member from each Partner's side.

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#### **b. Three plus three (3 + 3)**

The cross-border co-operation 3 + 3 began from an agreement between Regional Council of Päijät-Häme in Finland and the Ida-Viru County in Estonia 11<sup>th</sup> April in 1994. This agreement contained cooperation in development of

- Local and regional administration
- Local business policies
- Tourism.

In 1996-97, two other regions joined this cooperation net, namely Itä-Uusimaa and Kymenlaakso on the Finnish and Lääne-Viru and Jõgeva on the Estonian side. In 1999, the three main activities of co-operation are:

- Blue Corridor cooperation in tourism
- Development of Vocational Education

-Local Agenda Environmental cooperation.

The cooperation forms are seminars, exchange of specialists and school projects. Good results are i.g. from environmental topics at schools and in business.

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### c. PskovLivonia

"PskovLivonia" is a familiar name for Cooperation Council of border regions between Estonia, Latvia and Russian Federation. Three regional districts belong to the Council from each side:

\*Polva, Valga and Voru from Estonia

\*Alüksne, Balvi and Luda from Latvia

\*Palkino, Pechory and Pskov from Russian Federation.

The idea of this cooperation was initiated in a workshop for Baltic countries in Karlskrona 27-28<sup>th</sup> March in 1996. Already on 7<sup>th</sup> June in 1996, the statutes and regulations were signed in Polva, Estonia.

The main goals of cooperation are:

-Joint regional programs and projects

-Representation of common interest both at local and international levels

-Creation of a participatory network for partners.

The main cooperation activities up to 1999 have been:

-Promotion of tourism (maps and routes, 18 projects)

-River ecology, with the Norwegian Association of Municipalities (rivers flow to directions of all three states from this area) as a partner.

-Logistics and transport centres of the three-state area.

Border crossing problems still exist between Russian Federation and the others. Visas are needed. The only exceptions are 80 yearly overpasses for local people during the regional jubilee periods.

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## **2.2. Other structures/authorities/partners engaged in cross-border cooperations**

### **a. Valga-Valka**

The towns of Valga in Estonia and Valka in Latvia are in fact one city. In history, the border between Estonia and Latvia has been very slight and flexible (Old Livonia), and the situation continued during the short era of Soviet Union (1945-1991). After the re-establishment of independent states Estonia and Latvia, the border situation changed. To day, both of the twin towns develop towards added independency in technical and other services. The cooperation forms are same type as in Torne River valley between Finland and Sweden, i.g. rescue services.

### **b. Narva-Ivangorod**

The towns of Narva and Ivangorod form a twin towns complex very much like Valga and Valka. An important difference are the border crossings as the visas are needed. Only local people who have summer cottages left on the other side and who pass the border for everyday shopping have it easier. Cooperation exists in some forms of technical service.

### **c. Via Baltica**

The Road Via Baltica from Helsinki to Warsaw (about 1 000 kms) is developed as a part of Trans-European Crete Corridor nro 1. Traffic volumes vary from 3 000 to 10 000 vehicles per day with annual growth of 13-14 %. Border crossing facilities have been constructed anew.

Each of the five countries is actively developing the road corridor in its own area. By the end of 1998, the following was achieved:

- 28 km of new road has been built
- 215 km of existing roads have been rehabilitated or resurfaced
- 12 bridges have been reconstructed or strengthened
- signing of Via Baltica as E 67 has been arranged in all countries.

Also private investments are encouraged where possible.

### **2.3. Activities/services**

The priorities in CBC activities and services of Estonia are

- education and training
- small and medium size enterprise (SME) development
- infrastructure and environment
- tourism
- culture tradition revitalization
- Via Baltica Corridor.

### **2.4 Awareness of cross-border cooperation issues/knowledge of CBC-programmes**

Awareness of CBC issues and programmes is relatively good in Estonia. The progress between years 1996-1999 has been very positive.

## **3. Programme related activities**

### **3.1 Strategy development**

Strategy development is essential task in newly organized CBC-activities Euregio Helsinki-Tallinn. Euregio is inventing the existing contacts and forms of cooperation, obtaining information of experiences from other corresponding organizations and compiling the activities plans for next years.

### **3.2 Programming for PHARE/CBC/Interreg**

Programming for new projects within PHARE has developed to a fluent routine with new phenomena which the future accession to EU has brought with (i.g. ISPA-funding).

### **3.3 Management of Programme Implementation**

See Chapter 2 Structures; each of them has an implementation management unit.

### **3.4 Project development and implementation**

The key organizations for project development are the CBC-councils. The implementation usually runs by secretaries or coordinators of the programs.

## **4. Specific/Sectoral actions**

### **4.1 Economic Development**

SME education and training, business days end forums

### **4.2 Tourism**

Maps, signing recreational areas and routes, tourist road promotion

### **4.3 Training, Education and Labour market**

Local self-government training, school class exchange, special courses

### **4.4 Environment**

Environmental education, green enterprise campaigns

### **4.5 Socio-cultural**

Short visits of chors, local associations and religious congregations

### **4.6 Transport**

Via Baltica project, border overpass development

### **4.7 Other infrastructures**

Water and energy supply

### **4.8 Other**

Rescue services

## **Regions (Maakond) of Estonia**