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## The SME Environment in the Strategic Transport Development Initiatives of InterBaltic and TransBaltic

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TransBaltic – Towards an Integrated Transport System in the Baltic Sea Region

The presentation positions sequenced transnational cooperation projects of InterBaltic and TransBaltic in the context of pan-Baltic initiatives, which were dedicated to overcoming an impact of national borders in the socio-economic performance of the Baltic Sea Region. It pays particular attention to measures worked out by those projects in order to connect the potential of SMEs across the national borders.

In global terms, the Baltic Sea Region retains the world export market position and strong export orientation as its share of world export is more than 50% higher than its share of world GDP. It is also a world centre of knowledge creation and one of the most prosperous regions internationally in terms of labour productivity and human capital.

Despite evident growth tendencies, territorial disparities in per capita production are among the highest across the continent. The Region has some of the wealthiest as well as some of the poorest areas of Europe, in many cases adjacent to each other.

Over the recent decades the cooperation between local, regional and national governments in the Baltic Sea Region has been growing rapidly and got additional momentum in effect of the EU enlargement. The fall of the iron curtain saw a boost of initiatives endeavouring to bridge over the impact of national borders and take actions at the cross-border, transnational and interregional scales.

In late 2005 the Steering Committee of the BSR Interreg IIIB Neighbourhood Programme granted funding to the “InterBaltic” project, initiated by the Baltic Sea Commission of the CPMR. The project gathered 43 partners from ten countries and was dedicated to provision of recommendations to private and public decision-makers at regional, national and international level - on building up efficient intermodal transport systems able to cope with the future cargo flows.

TransBaltic, initiated by the Swedish region of Skåne, is a direct follow-up to the regional level efforts towards pan-Baltic transport development staged in the period 2006-2008. It can also be regarded as a coordinated response from the regional authorities to the challenges posed by the transport chapter of the EU Strategy for the Baltic Sea Region.

The project, co-funded from the Baltic Sea Region Programme 2007-2013, gathers 21 financial partners (mostly regional authorities, universities, transport research institutes, and logistics associations) and 29 associated organisations from 11 countries around the Baltic Sea. The overall objective is to provide regional level incentives for the creation of a



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comprehensive multimodal transport system in the Region by means of joint transport development measures and jointly implemented business concepts.

Within the framework of strategic actions the two projects targeted also the environment of the SMEs. Not permitted to finance such enterprises directly, InterBaltic and TransBaltic conceptualised certain business support schemes, which aim at improving the competitive position of the SME sector on the Baltic arena and vis-à-vis large transport and logistics corporations.

### **Biographical information**

**Wiktor Szydarowski** Ph.D. in Geography by the University of Gdansk, Poland. 15 years' experience in international co-operation initiatives dedicated to local and regional development around the Baltic Sea, EU regional policy interventions (programming, implementation, evaluation), regional planning and socio-economic development in Europe. Strategic policy officer in Poland's local and regional administration. Research work on transport corridors and strategic development zones in the Baltic Sea Region, polycentric development, diffusion of innovation, and accessibility issues. Consultant in several projects commissioned by European Commission, World Bank and national, regional and local administrations across Europe.