



EUROPEAN COMMISSION

DIRECTORATE-GENERAL

REGIONAL POLICY

Conception and reform of cohesion policy, coordination, Solidarity Fund

The Acting Director

Wpłynęło dnia...26.01.2005

Brussels, 10 -01- 2005
REGIO B2/BN/nm D(2004) 12726

Dear Mr. Zaboklicki,

Thank you for your letter of 6 December 2004 to the president of the Commission, Mr Barroso, which he has passed to the Directorate General for Regional Policy for reply on his behalf.

In an attachment to your letter, you provide a statement from four Baltic sea organizations, expressing a favourable opinion on the proposed reform of cohesion policy, notably the strengthening of territorial cooperation, as well as the new European neighbourhood and partnership instrument (ENPI).

In its proposal, the Commission confirms the importance it attaches to the new cooperation objective, in line with the experience acquired under the INTERREG initiative. The NUTS level 3 should remain the management level for the cross-border strand, with the possibility of delegating the relevant tasks to the new European grouping for territorial cooperation (EGCT). For the transnational strand, specific management systems should be set up at the appropriate level.

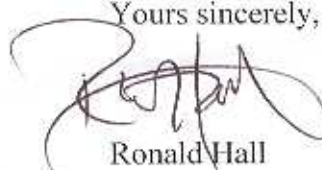
With regard to a possible increase in support for the larger projects, in order to promote more investment in infrastructure, national sectoral ministries responsible for such larger infrastructure probably need to be more involved, notably in the programming stage.

The organizations also point to the specificity of the Baltic sea regions, requesting a similar treatment between land and maritime borders. The Commission had introduced the indicative threshold of 150 kms for maritime borders, with a view to promoting bilateral maritime cooperation under this heading. We are aware of the importance of ensuring stronger cooperation throughout the Baltic Sea regions, but we consider that related multilateral maritime cooperation would make more sense if implemented under the transnational strand of the European territorial co-operation objective, similar to the current cooperation under INTERREG IIIB.

Mr. Pawel Zaboklici
Secretary General
Union of the Baltic Cities
Waly Jagiellorskie 1
80-863 Gdansk
POLAND

The Commission has proposed a significant increase in financial resources for this objective, and we are convinced that multilateral cooperation in this area can be successfully ensured under both of its strands. Moreover, the flexibility introduced for implementing actions outside Member States, as well as the future cross-border strand of the ENPI, would allow greater involvement of external partners such as Russia.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Ronald Hall', written over a horizontal line.

Ronald Hall