

RELIABLE MAP DATA BASE FOR THE BALTIC SEA REGION

Important areas where geographic information technology is providing new opportunities include critical trans-national areas, such as the Baltic Sea region, which require different kinds of information to be brought together.

Essential for the joint use of information in the Baltic Sea Region is a reliable base map. The National Mapping Agencies of the countries around the Baltic Sea have recognised this need and therefore launched the MapBSR Project.

The aim of the project is to provide basic map data sets for the Baltic Sea drainage area and the countries in its sphere of influence in the nominal scale of 1:1 million. The elements included in the database are administrative

boundaries, hydrography, transport, settlements, geographical names, elevation, nature and land use.

GIS database being formed

When completed, the MapBSR database will form a base map for geographic information systems (GIS), in which any kind of data item can be located and represented, as long its coordinates are known.

The database enables the user to do many kinds of analysis for the whole Baltic Sea Region or for smaller areas. Different kinds of thematic information can be added to the database, such as statistics on population density or data on water quality.

The participants of the project are the National Mapping Agencies of the 14

countries around the Baltic Sea (The Russian Federation, Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Belarus, Ukraine, Poland, the Czech Republic, the Slovak Republic, Germany, Denmark, Norway, Sweden and Finland). The coordinator of the project is National Land Survey of Finland. Each of the participating countries will produce the map elements for the areas of their respective countries.

More information:

<http://www.nls.fi/maa/projektit/neargis/>

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EUROCITIES ANNUAL MEETING

80 Mayors, leaders and political representatives from major metropolitan cities gathered in Rotterdam on 24 October 1997 at the EUROCITIES Annual General Meeting and Conference to call for an integrated approach to European urban policy.

In the conclusions, EUROCITIES members welcomed the Commission's Communication "Towards an Urban Agenda in the European Union", the proposals for European regional policy for 1999-2006 put forward in AGENDA 2000, and the Commission's initiative to hold a European Urban Forum in 1998.

They reiterate the need for the acknowledgement of cities as growth poles for regional development and call upon European, national, regional and local authorities to work towards a

balanced urban system in Europe. Particular attention, they say, should be given to the urban dimension in the reform of European regional policies and the Structural Funds.

Commitment to urban development

EUROCITIES, the major association of European cities representing 40 to 50 million citizens, has reiterated its commitment to play an active role in this

process by:

- maximising the potential of its member cities, committees, networks, and academic and economic partners in the pursuit of urban policy objectives;
- further developing and urban environment with a better quality of life for citizens;
- organising seminars on urban issues;
- intensifying co-operation with the European Parliament, the Committee of the Region and the Economic and Social Committee;
- contributing to the European Urban Forum, to be organised by the Commission in 1998, by providing expertise and case-studies.

Mr Tomasz Posadzki, Mayor of Gdańsk and member of the UBC Executive Board participated in the EUROCITIES conference as a speaker at the working session „Cities as regional centres: an East-West perspective” presenting Gdańsk as a case study.