



B7

Gotland

2005

Dear friend of B7,

Gotland has the honour of holding the B7 Chairmanship for 2005. We present in this brochure some background to the B7 and Gotland's ideas for its Chairmanship year. More information will be put on our website www.b7.org or be available from the B7 Gotland Secretariat (details on the back page).

We look forward to a year marked with innovation, lively discussion and learning from ours and others experiences in developing our islands.



Jan Lundgren, County Mayor, Gotland



KEY ISSUES FOR THE B7 ISLANDS IN 2005

The Islands Dimension

Islands have permanent constraints that put them at a comparative and competitive disadvantage to the mainland.

Islands have potential and need to develop win-win strategies with their neighbouring regions.

Baltic Islands have a small population base, face geographic constraints but must still be able to offer their citizens the basic range of services and quality of life compared to the mainland.

Islands and peripheral areas have to devise and implement strategies and plans to help ourselves. On the basis of the quality of these we can compete for investment funds with other regions.

Typical B7 Island Issues.

- Transport limiting development.
- Comparative disparities with major city regions in the country.
- Limited markets.
- Limited tertiary education and training opportunities.
- State commitment for lagging regions.
- Tighter budgets.
- Total population and population in employment decreasing.
- Younger citizens moving to the mainland and a greater proportion of elderly.

The B7 works to assist the islands achieve solutions.

THEMES FOR CHAIRMANSHIP YEAR 2005

- Developing strengths through education
- Regional development in the Baltic Sea region
- Promoting youth and culture
- Benefiting from political strengths and partnerships

B7 PROGRAMME FOR 2005

POLITICAL FOCUS

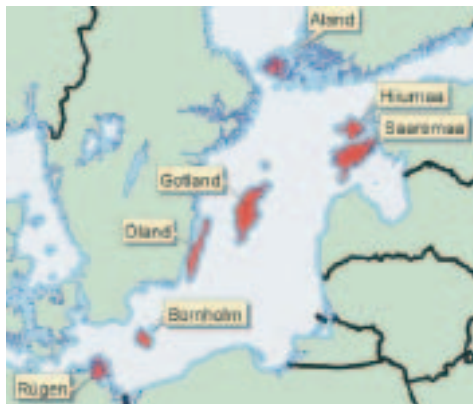
- **Meeting the new MEPs in Brussels** March 15-16
B7 Islands' political leaders plan to meet newly elected members of the European Parliament, some with direct connections to our islands, and the Commission to promote the islands and island issues.
- **Development Conference Gotland** Dec 1- 2
What kind of development do we need for our islands and how will it be delivered? During this year there will be many questions relating to the development of peripheral regions. This is an ideal opportunity to discuss with key EU and national experts.

CONFERENCES & EVENTS

- **Tallinn - Estonia developing as an EU member** Jan 20-21
How is Estonia progressing as a member of the EU? B7 Board looks forward to meeting with some of the key actors.
- **Education Conference on Gotland** June 9-11
How can a peripheral region use education to develop clusters of competence and be a driving force in job development?
- **Youth Camp on Gotland** Aug week 32
Bringing together the youth of the islands. It is planned to take place during the Medieval Week.
- **Board meeting in Gdansk** Sept 8-9
How can the B7 gain a better perspective of the whole Baltic Sea region? We look forward to meeting in other regions.



Baltic Islands Network



WHAT IS THE B7?

The B7 Baltic Islands Network or the B7 is a co-operation of the 7 largest islands in the Baltic Sea from 5 different countries that began in 1989. The partners of the co-operation are, Bornholm (Denmark), Gotland (Sweden), Hiiumaa (Estonia), Rügen (Germany), Saaremaa (Estonia), Åland (autonomous region of Finland), Öland (Sweden).

The B7 has an annual rotating Chairmanship and Secretariat. In 2005 Gotland holds the Chairmanship and is responsible for the Secretariat and developing and implementing B7's plans for the year.

The principles of membership are:

- Each member is a Baltic Sea island.
- Each island contributes to the co-operation based on population size.
- The B7 Co-operation is a partnership of equals.

The B7 aims to use its strengths as a co-operation network to promote the strategic goals of the islands.

The B7 islands believe that they can better serve the interests of the islanders and achieve more as a co-operation than alone.

See more at www.b7.org

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