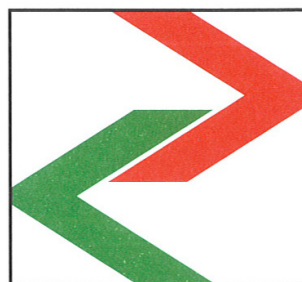


Arbeitsgemeinschaft Europäischer Grenzregionen (AGEG)
Asociación de Regiones Fronterizas Europeas (ARFE)
Association des régions frontalières européennes (ARFE)
Association of European Border Regions (AEBR)
Comunità di lavoro delle regioni europee di confine (AGEG)
Europæiske grænseregioners Arbejdsfællesskab (AGEG)
Werkgemeinschaft van Europese grensgebieden (WVEG)
Associação das Regiões Fronteiriças Europeias (ARFE)
Σύνδεσμος Ευρωπαϊκών Συνοριακών Περιφερειών (ΣΕΣΠ)
Stowarzyszenie Europejskich Regionów Granicznych (SERG)
Ассоциация Европейских приграничных регионов (АЕПР)

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AEBR Newsflash – January 2010

A NEW STRATEGY FOR THE EU: EU-2020

AEBR's contribution to the EU Consultation (http://ec.europa.eu/eu2020/index_en.htm)

AEBR always tries to contribute to the development of major European dossiers affecting border areas. So we did with the Lisbon Strategy, through direct communication and using the Structured Dialogue with the EU Commission promoted by the Committee of the Regions. So we are doing with the ongoing debates on Cohesion Policy and Territorial Cohesion. Actually, we have always considered Territorial Cooperation in general and Cross-Border Cooperation in particular as a key-stone for European Cohesion. Already in several of our contributions we have underlined some gaps in the so-called Lisbon Strategy, to be implemented by 2010. Now, a Post-Lisbon Strategy, the "EU 2020 Strategy", is under preparation. AEBR has elaborated a Position Paper on the EU 2020 Strategy, and has submitted to the European Commission a Summary with key issues from the viewpoint of the border regions. This paper has also been sent to Commissioner Paweł Samecki, to Commissioner-designated Johannes Hahn, the European Parliament's Committee on Regional Development, the Committee of the Regions, the European Economic and Social Committee, the Ministries in charge of Territorial Development in the EU Member States, and many European regional governments. The position paper as well as our letter to Commission President Barroso can be found on our website:

http://www.aebr.net/news/news_aebr.php?lc=en&nid=250#250

Some AEBR members have also contributed to the consultation (e.g. Regional Council of Ostrobothnia), see section "News from European Border and Cross-Border Regions".

CROSS-BORDER TRANSPORT LINKS

AEBR Forum on "Transport as an Instrument for Territorial Cohesion and Cooperation", 4th and 5th February 2010, Huesca, Aragón

The President of the Regional Government of Aragón, **Mr. Marcelino Iglesias Ricou** will open this Forum in the city of Huesca, at the Southern side of the Pyrenees. The AEBR will be represented in this meeting by **First Vice-President Jean-Paul Heider** (Région Alsace) and **Secretary General Martín Guillermo Ramírez**. Other high-ranking guest speakers will be the Regional Minister of Transport and Infrastructure of the Government of Extremadura, **Mr. José Luis Quintana**, as well as representatives from the European Commission and the European Parliament. Updated Information on this event, organised in cooperation with the regional government of Aragón and the Trans-Pyrenean Foundation, can be found on AEBR's website:

http://www.aebr.net/termine/termine_ageg.php?period=&onedate_day=&onedate_month=&onedate_year=&group=&lc=en&did=138#138

CROSS-BORDER HEALTHCARE

Conference "European Cooperation in the Health Sector III", 10 December 2009

Around 150 participants attended this conference in Lörrach (Baden-Württemberg), organized by the Swiss Cantons of Basel-City and Basel-Landscape, the Regional Government of Baden-Württemberg, Regio Basiliensis and AEBR. This was the third of a series of Conferences launched by AEBR's Task Force on Cross-Border Health, under the coordination of Regio Basiliensis, in order to follow European developments on that topic, present the best practise available from European regions, and promote wider inter-institutional cooperation in this regard. Information on this event can be found on:

http://www.aebr.net/news/news_aebr.php?lc=en&nid=251#251

Joint declaration of AEBR and EPECS on European Cross-Border Healthcare and Patients' Rights

On 10th December 2009, AEBR and EPECS (European Patients Empowerment for Customised Solutions) met in Lörrach on occasion of the Conference "European Cooperation in the Health Sector III". The European Council's

failure to agree on the Draft Directive on Patients' Rights and Cross-Border Healthcare influenced very much the Lörrach Conference. EPECS and AEBR referred especially to the need of constructing an open, transparent, safe, and high quality Health Care System in the EU. On the other hand, there is a gap which is not certainly covered: more than one third of European population lives in border areas. And in many cases, they do not have the same healthcare possibilities than other citizens living more "central", unless effective cooperation takes place across national borders. Cross-Border Health Care can solve this problem in many European borders, combining services and staff to take care of cross-border populations without overlapping, in a very effective manner. Therefore, AEBR and EPECS have concluded a common statement, which is available for download on http://www.aebr.net/news/news_aebr.php?lc=en&nid=252#252

2nd EUREGIO II "Solutions for improving health care cooperation in border regions" meeting, Lodz/Poland, 25th November 2009

In the 2nd meeting of the EUREGIO II Project, its status and the work packages were discussed and decisions on next steps were taken. The new project coordinator, Mr. Chibuzo Opara, successor to Mr. Kai Michelsen, was introduced as well. Information was also given on the current activities with regard to the elaboration of the work package 4: **Handbook "Making effective use of INTERREG-funding in cross-border health care"**. In this regard, a literature review concerning health related cross-border activities has been started, and a questionnaire has been distributed to all the border and cross-border regions in the EU (for more information on the invitation to contribute to the survey, please see http://www.aebr.net/news/news_aebr.php?lc=en&nid=233#233). This questionnaire, including questions on the experiences, possibilities and problems in cross-border activities and in the utilisation of the EU structural funds, still can be filled in and returned as soon as possible. PLEASE TAKE PART IN THE SURVEY. Some in-depth interviews with key stakeholders/regions are currently being carried out. Based on this information, case studies will be elaborated, which will be used for articles to be published as a special edition for the European Journal of Public Health.

The Handbook: These case studies and articles will also be taken into account in the handbook "Making effective use of INTERREG-funding in cross-border health care", which is planned to be published in the year 2011 to support the development of cross-border health care projects in border regions. In the introduction of this handbook, a short description as well as some explanations on the EUREGIO I and II projects will be given. Furthermore, it will contain a section on INTERREG with explanations on relevant regulations. Another chapter will deal with cross-border health care in Europe, containing a detailed description of 2 or 3 regions. It will also include a wide range of issues from the history of cross-border health projects to models of good practice, and the reasons for the failure of certain projects. This section will focus on highlighting different development stages of cross-border health care, problems and challenges as well as the peculiarities in various regions. Different indicators and criteria needed for effective cross-border health care projects will be described as well.

Web 2.0 Tools: The analysis and the summary of the results of the survey and the in-depth questionnaires will identify criteria for models of good practice and demonstrate barriers to effective cross-border cooperation and funding programmes within Europe. In the coming weeks a number of web 2.0 tools (blogs and wikipages) will be introduced on the project's web page to make it more interactive. Moderated discussions on topics related to the project will be hosted with these tools. Furthermore the EUREGIO II project will develop a support system for local decision makers in the way of a guideline for local HTA (Health Technology Assessment). This will be done by interviewing them about their information needs and the decision-making process in the cross border regions. More information on the EUREGIO II project can be found on <http://inthehealth.eu/research/euregio-ii/>

EU'S EXTERNAL BORDERS

Task Force External Borders meeting and seminar on 18 February 2010, and AEBR Executive Committee meeting on 19 – 20 February 2010, Oulu (Tornedalsrådet/Bothnian Arc, Finland)

The draft agenda of the **Executive Committee meeting** as well as practical information are available in the special section of the AEBR forum page, which can be accessed by the AEBR Executive Committee members with their special password. The day before, a **meeting of the AEBR Task Force "External Borders"**, followed by an **open seminar on external border issues**, will be held in Oulu. Information for the public will soon be available on AEBR's website:

http://www.aebr.net/termine/termine_ageg.php?period=&onedate_day=&onedate_month=&onedate_year=&group=&lc=en&did=141#141

ARLEM Meeting on 21 January 2010

On Thursday 21 January, the Committee of the Regions brings together some 70 local and regional representatives from 30 partner countries in the Union for the Mediterranean for the first meeting of the **Euro-Mediterranean Regional and Local Assembly (ARLEM)**, taking place at the Palace of Pedralbes (Barcelona), the seat of the Union for the Mediterranean. Guest speakers include the European Commissioner for regional policy, **Pawel Samecki**, Spanish State Secretary for Foreign Affairs, **Ángel Lossada Torres-Quevedo**, and

Deputy Foreign Minister of Egypt, **Hamdi Sanad Loza**, the President of the Generalitat of Catalonia, **José Montilla**, as well as CoR President, **Luc Van den Brande**. The AEBR is represented in the ARLEM by the President of the Region of Andalusia, **Mr José Antonio Griñán Martínez**. Read the full CoR press release on: <http://www.cor.europa.eu/pages/PressTemplate.aspx?view=detail&id=b333ac44-04be-4932-8247-a84621b830b6>

HEARING OF REGIONAL POLICY COMMISSIONER-DESIGNATE JOHANNES HAHN:

In the hearing at the European Parliament on Thursday, 14 January 2010, Mr. Hahn said that "Regional Policy is a success story of European integration", and that there would be no alternative to continuing it. Being asked if cross-border policy was one of his priorities, the Commissioner-designate stated he would support any kind of policy that transcends any kinds of borders, that that kind of policy would create a real added value, and he therefore would strongly support better co-operation between regions. Read the full press release on: http://www.europarl.europa.eu/news/expert/infopress_page/008-67219-013-01-03-901-20100113IPR67218-13-01-2010-2010-false/default_en.htm


Van den Brande asks Commissioner-designate Hahn to believe more in the real importance of multi-level governance and to consider regions and cities as real partners. Read the full CoR press release on: <http://www.cor.europa.eu/pages/PressTemplate.aspx?view=detail&id=4202dbeb-7ebc-4145-a411-bd6cf57655ef>

RECENT NEWS FROM THE EU:

Launch of the INTERREG IVC third call for proposals for capitalisation networks

The third call for proposals; specifically for projects that plan to capitalise by transferring existing good practices, was launched at the IVC Capitalisation Conference "Building on Regional policy good practice" in Gothenburg under the auspices of the Swedish presidency. The deadline is 5 March 2010. Successful projects would also be eligible for a fast track label and support from the Commission in particular under Priority 2 of the programme - "sustainable development". More information can be found on the [INTERREG IVC](#) website.

New working paper of the European Commission's Regional Policy department (DG REGIO) on "Future of cohesion policy in richer regions"

DG REGIO has published the third in the series of working papers on regional research and indicators. This document focuses on the future of cohesion policy in richer regions. It also reviews the arguments around this contentious issue. This paper aims at setting out the arguments on both sides of the debate. Furthermore, certain steps forward are suggested. [The Future of Cohesion Policy in Richer Regions](#) 

On **20 and 21 May 2010**, the "Regions for Economic Change" initiative hosts its annual conference in Brussels. This year, the conference will have three main themes: a) sustainable energy; b) sustainable ICT solutions; and c) greening Europe's cities. Political discussions of key priorities, as well as in-depth exchanges of policy challenges and good practice, will be included. More information is available on: http://ec.europa.eu/regional_policy/cooperation/interregional/ecochange/events_en.cfm?nmenu=6

EU Strategy for the Danube Region

The European Commission was requested by the European Council to draw up a strategy for the Danube Region by the end of 2010. As with the Baltic region, pressing challenges also exist here, not least in the need to improve transport and energy networks, reduce pollution and tackle flooding. Detailed information on covered topics, approach and timing, as well as a list of frequently asked questions and answers can be found on http://ec.europa.eu/regional_policy/cooperation/danube/index_en.htm

The first stakeholder event, organised in the framework of the preparation of the EU Strategy for the Danube Region, will take place in Ulm (Germany) on 1 and 2 February 2010. There will be a series of conferences and debates following, in which opportunity for interested parties to feed in views will be given http://ec.europa.eu/regional_policy/cooperation/danube/conference/ulm_en.htm

On 25 and 26 February 2010, a conference on the EU Strategy for the Danube Region will take place in Budapest/Hungary. The focus will be on the socio-economical and environmental pillars of the EU Strategy for the Danube Region. For more information, please get in contact with the European Commission, Directorate-General for Regional Policy, Territorial cooperation Unit (Regio-territorial-cooperation@ec.europa.eu).

Strategic Reporting: promoting an EU debate on cohesion

National strategic reports were required from the 27 Member States to answer questions such as: What progress are Member States and their regions making in delivering agreed objectives in the period 2007 – 2009, including high level EU objectives? How has cohesion policy contributed to reducing the economic and social disparities

across Europe? What has been the impact of the on-going economic crisis on implementing cohesion policy programmes? Once all reports have been analysed, a synthesis report will be elaborated, which will also identify examples of good practices in the Member States. Links to the national reports that have been published by the Member States can be found on: http://ec.europa.eu/regional_policy/policy/reporting/index_en.htm

CoR report "The European Economic Recovery Plan in Regions and Cities: One Year On"

On the occasion of the 5th Territorial Dialogue for Sustainable Growth and Jobs, which took place in Palma de Mallorca (Spain) on 18 January 2010, the Committee of the Regions published its final report with results from the online survey "The European Economic Recovery Plan in Regions and Cities: One Year On". The survey - conducted by the CoR Lisbon Monitoring Platform between October and November 2009 - assessed how the European Economic Recovery Plan is being implemented at grass roots level, as perceived by the EU local and regional authorities. 74 questionnaires were submitted by local and regional authorities from 19 EU Member States. The report as well as further information is available on:

<http://portal.cor.europa.eu/lisbon/news/Pages/EERPSurvey.aspx>

Finalists of "RegioStars 2010" announced

There have been 87 applications for the RegioStars 2010. Six awards are on offer this year: two "CityStar" awards, three awards in ICT themes and one "Information and Communication" award. The RegioStars Jury, chaired by Dr Jan OLBRYCHT MEP, has now chosen 24 finalists across the six categories. Information on the finalists as well as on the programme of the RegioStars 2010 presentation on 27 January 2010 in Brussels can be found on http://ec.europa.eu/regional_policy/cooperation/interregional/ecochange/regiostars_en.cfm

SPANISH PRESIDENCY 2010

On 1 January 2010, Spain took over the rotating Presidency of the EU for 6 months. The full programme of the Spanish Presidency is available on:

http://www.eu2010.es/export/sites/presidencia/comun/descargas/Spanish_Presidency_Program.pdf

Spanish EU Presidency and regional and local leaders discuss CoR report about the implementation of the European recovery plan. Read the full press release on:

<http://www.cor.europa.eu/pages/PressTemplate.aspx?view=detail&id=b341ffa1-43a3-4df4-afe6-e31f6571e6db>

The **main cohesion policy events during the Spanish Presidency** include:

- 19 February 2010 (Madrid) - Informal ministerial Meeting on Cohesion Policy: Main issues to be discussed: (i) future of Cohesion Policy in the context of the budget review, (ii) follow-up of the work of the high-level group, (iii) integration of territorial cohesion in cohesion policy and (iv) simplification.
- 15-18 March 2010 (Granada) - High-level meeting on innovation
- 16-18 March 2010 (Málaga) - Informal ministerial meeting on Territorial Cooperation
- 3rd May 2010, Cáceres (Extremadura), Conference "European Territorial Cooperation: EGTCs and Cross-Border Cooperation" (organised in cooperation with AEBR)
- 27-28 May 2010 (Brussels) - Forum for the Outermost Europe (organised by DG REGIO in liaison with the Spanish Presidency)
- 21-22 June 2010 (Toledo) - Informal ministerial meeting on Housing and Urban Development

News from European Border and Cross-Border Regions:

(This section is based on information that AEBR members announce via the AEBR website).

Statement of the Regional Council of Ostrobothnia on the EU2020 strategy

The Regional Council of Ostrobothnia, full member of AEBR since the year 1995, has also submitted a contribution to EU consultation concerning the EU2020 strategy. The text is available for download on http://www.aebr.net/news/news_regions.php?lc=en&nid=248.

EUREGIO bid farewell to Frans Willeme

On 15 January 2010, EUREGIO bid farewell to its long-standing President Frans Willeme, thanking him for his commitment as well as his contribution to the cross-border cooperation at the Dutch/German border. His successor is Mr. Günter Alsmeier, former mayor of Bad Bentheim (DE). Mr. Willeme could not run for President again, as he is not anymore a member of the EUREGIO council. He will, however, fulfil his duty as Treasurer of AEBR until the elections in the next AEBR General Assembly, which will take place on 21 October 2010. Photos and further information is available on: http://www.aebr.net/news/news_regions.php?lc=en&nid=254. EUREGIO at the German/Dutch border is host of the AEBR head office and was also one of the founding members of AEBR in the year 1971.

First EU-Russia Forum, 25 – 27 May 2010

Lappeenranta (South Karelia, Finland), will be hosting the first EU-Russia Innovation Forum from 25 – 27 May 2010. This will be the first high level Innovation Event between the EU and Russia, strongly supported by the Prime Minister of Finland and the key innovation policy makers and actors in the EU and Russia. South Karelia joined the AEBR as full member in the year 1998, and is currently chairing the AEBR Task Force “External Borders”. http://www.aebr.net/news/news_regions.php?lc=en&nid=249 .

Please take note of main AEBR events expected in 2010:

4-5 February 2010, AEBR Forum on CB Transport Networks, Huesca (Aragón, ES)

18 February 2010, AEBR Task Force External Borders and External Borders Seminar, Oulu, Tornedalsrådet/Bothnian Arc (FI/SE)

19-20 February 2010, AEBR Executive Committee in Oulu, Tornedalsrådet/Bothnian Arc (FI/SE)

3 May 2010, Cross-Border Cooperation meeting in the framework of the Spanish Presidency, Cáceres (Extremadura)

28-29 May 2010 (tbc), Executive Committee in Évora (Alentejo, PT): Please take note of the new date!

Summer 2010: AEBR Youth Forum in Friuli Venezia Giulia, IT

16 September 2010, AEBR Forum (Friuli-Venezia-Giulia, IT)

17-18 September 2010, AEBR Executive Committee in Udine (Friuli-Venezia Giulia, IT)

26-29 September 2010, Helsinki-Vyborg-St Petersburg-Narva-Tallin-Helsinki CBC Round Conference

21-23 October 2010, AEBR Executive Committee, General Assembly and Annual Conference, Dundalk-Newry (Ireland-Northern Ireland), proposed topic "CBC Tourism", possible "Case of the Host": CBC in Health Care. A follow up of the European Territorial Cooperation will be presented, as well as a draft review of the European Charter for Border and Cross-Border Regions.

December, AEBR Forum in Prague (CZ)

December 2010, Executive Committee meeting, Tabor, Silva Nortica (CZ)

The AEBR Newsflash is sent to everyone on the AEBR “members and friends” e-mail list. If you have friends or colleagues who would like to be added to the mailing list, please send their details to: Cordula Pandary, c.pandary@aebr.eu, or call +49 (0)2562 70219.

Please think twice before printing this Newsletter. Perhaps you can enjoy and share it by electronic means!

A PDF-Version of this Newsflash is available on:

http://www.aebr.net/news/news_aebr.php?lc=en&nid=255#255

*The “**Association of European Border Regions**” (AEBR) is the oldest independent association of regions in Europe, founded in 1971, and the only one dealing with Cross-Border Cooperation (CBC). AEBR has almost forty years of extensive theoretical and practical experience in all aspects related to CBC, but also in the field of inter-regional and transnational co-operation. With one hundred members (border and cross-border European regions), the AEBR is a forum for cross-border cooperation and makes the voice of the border and cross-border regions heard at European level.*

*L’**Association des régions frontalières européennes (ARFE)**, fondée en 1971, est la plus ancienne association indépendante de régions en Europe. Elle est aussi la seule à traiter la coopération transfrontalière. L’ARFE a presque quarante ans d’expérience théorique et pratique extensive dans tous les domaines de la coopération transfrontalière, mais également en coopération interrégionale et transnationale. Avec ses cent membres (zones frontalières et transfrontalières européennes) l’ARFE est un forum de la coopération transfrontalière et représente la voix des régions frontalières et transfrontalières à l’échelle européenne.*

*Die “**Arbeitsgemeinschaft Europäischer Grenzregionen**” (AGEG) ist die älteste unabhängige Regionalorganisation in Europa. Sie wurde im Jahr 1971 gegründet und ist die einzige Regionalorganisation, die sich mit grenzüberschreitender Zusammenarbeit beschäftigt. Die AGEG verfügt über eine fast 40jährige Erfahrung in allen Bereichen der grenzüberschreitenden Zusammenarbeit, aber auch auf dem Gebiet der interregionalen sowie der transnationalen Kooperation. Mit ihren einhundert Mitgliedern (Grenz- und*

grenzübergreifende Regionen Europas) bildet die AGEg ein Forum für grenzüberschreitende Kooperation und vertritt die Interessen der Grenz- und grenzübergreifenden Regionen auf europäischer Ebene.

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