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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)
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Stowarzyszenie Europejskich Regionów Granicznych (SERG)



„PARTNERSHIP IN A EUROPE WITHOUT BORDERS“

Electronic Newsletter of AEBR – June 2007

This Newsletter of the Association of European Border Regions (AEBR) will be published quarterly in order to inform the border regions and its friends about the latest news of AEBR, the cooperation in European border and cross-border regions as well as the cooperation with other European institutions and associations.

It is edited in English, French and German.

AEBR's Executive Committee meeting held on 3 March 2007 in Trujillo, Extremadura (ES)

AEBR President Lambert van Nistelrooij, MEP (NL), opened the meeting and thanked the regional government of Extremadura for the invitation and the warm hospitality. Ignacio



Ignacio Sánchez Amor

(Source: Junta de Extremadura)

Sánchez Amor, Vice-President of AEBR and Deputy President of the Regional Government of Extremadura, welcomed the participants, wishing a fruitful debate, and emphasized the presence of the Portuguese regions of Alentejo and Centro, as well as the representation of the Portuguese Ministry of Environment, Spatial Planning and Regional Development. He also explained the complexity of the relationship between Spanish and Portuguese regions, being at their best historical moment. Cross-border cooperation (CBC) has been included in the agendas of both national governments, and the border regions are

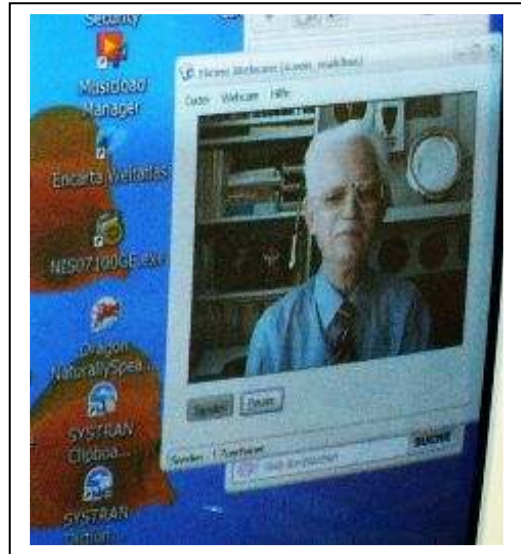
represented at the Spanish-Portuguese summits. CBC has achieved a desirable level for the whole of Europe.

AEBR's Secretary General Martín Guillermo-Ramírez also welcomed the participants of the Executive Committee to his former homeland. He addressed a special salutation to Mr. von Malchus, Chairman of AEBR's Advisory Committee, who was not able to attend the meeting

due to health problems, but who joined the Executive Committee meeting via video conference.



Martín Guillermo-Ramírez



Viktor von Malchus
joined the meeting via video conference

AEBR's Secretary General presented the most important items of the agenda:

1. Cross-border cooperation in the health sector.
2. Cooperation of AEBR with European Institutions.
3. Cooperation with Regional Organisations at European level.
4. New possibilities to cooperate with organisations in Europe.
5. AEBR and global cooperation.
6. AEBR General Assembly and Annual Conference 2007.
7. Cross-border cooperation of Universities/Higher Education Institutions.
8. Work programme of AEBR 2007.



Participants of the AEBR Executive Committee meeting in Trujillo, 3 March 2007

Conclusions of the German EU Council Presidency on the Informal Ministerial Meeting on Urban Development and Territorial Cohesion

Following an invitation of the German EU Council Presidency, the Informal Ministerial Meeting on Urban Development and Territorial Cohesion took place in Leipzig on 24 and 25 May 2007. Many representatives of European institutions and organisations attended this meeting. The following documents were adopted:

- Territorial Agenda of the EU,
- Leipzig Charta on Sustainable European Cities and
- Conclusions of the German EU Council Presidency.

AEBR thanks the European Ministers responsible for Urban Development and Territorial Cohesion and particularly the chairman of the "task force" that organised the Ministerial Meeting, Dr. Welf Selke, for taking into account AEBR's suggestions on cross-border cooperation, and also for processing the editing of AEBR's map "Crossborder Cooperation Areas 2007", which has been published in the background paper on the Territorial Agenda.

For further information please see: www.bmvbs.de/eu2007.



Group picture of the Ministers for Territorial Cohesion (source: deckbar.de)

German EU Council Presidency "Europe - Succeeding Together" – Presentation and Discussion of the draft Territorial Agenda of the EU (TAEU) on 24 and 25 May 2007 in Leipzig (DE)

"Strengthening European Cities and Regions – developing competition, social and territorial cohesion in Europe's cities and regions" was the motto of the Informal Ministerial meeting, which was held by the German EU Council Presidency in Leipzig on 24 and 25 May 2007. On that occasion, the background paper for the TAEU was adopted.

The background paper for the TAEU "Towards a Stronger European Territorial Cohesion in the Light of the Lisbon and Gothenburg Ambitions" consists of three parts:

- Part A defines the scope: territorial cohesion as added value of territorial development policies;
- Part B contains detailed explanations on the potentials of territorial diversity and the impact of EU policies on territorial development;
- Part C describes priorities for strengthening the European territorial structure and achieving a territorial coherence of European policies.

The document underlines the high importance of cross-border cooperation, which renders an important contribution to European integration and growth. "Cross-border" is recognized as a special level to be taken into account as well as the regional, national, transnational and European.

Chapter 1.4 on Governance Philosophy underlines this by referring to the redrawing of "mental maps" (especially in border areas)¹ as an impact of EU policies. Cross-border territorial development concepts and strategies can play an important role as they offer integrated scopes for development and create an added-value for cohesion policy and the Lisbon action plans.

The background paper for the TAEU is available on:

German Version (07.03.2007):

http://www.bmvbs.de/Anlage/original_988149/Evidenz-Dokument.pdf

English Version (07.03.2007):

http://www.bmvbs.de/Anlage/original_988203/The-Territorial-State-and-Perspectives-of-the-European-Union.pdf

Version française: (07.03.2007):

http://www.bmvbs.de/Anlage/original_988204/L-tat-et-les-perspectives-du-territoire-de-l-Union-europ-enne.pdf

¹ See AEBR's map "Crossborder Cooperation Areas 2007".

Informal EU Council of Ministers adopts "Leipzig Charta"

At their informal EU meeting on 14 May 2007, European building ministers signed the "Leipzig Charter". This charter aims at better using the approaches of integrated urban development policy and giving more attention to deprived neighbourhoods. Inner cities are strengthened. In this regard, the German EU Council President Wolfgang Tiefensee stated in Leipzig: "We have to strengthen inner cities, in particular. In Europe, cities are the engines of social and economic development. That is why, in the future, urban development will have to play a more important role in European policies. Urban development policy not only determines whether people can live in a good social environment. It also enables people to experience European integration at first hand." This also applies to the cities in European border regions!

More info on: <http://www.eu2007.de>

http://www.bmvbs.de/Anlage/orginal_989470/Leipzig-Charta-zur-nachhaltigen-europaischen-Stadt-Entwurf- Maerz-2007.pdf (deutsch)

http://www.bmvbs.de/Anlage/orginal_989468/Leipzig-Charter-on-Sustainable-European-Cities-Draft- March-2007.pdf (English)

http://www.bmvbs.de/Anlage/orginal_989469/Charte-de-Leipzig-sur-la-ville-europ-enne-durable-Projet- Mars-2007.pdf (français)

AEBR welcomes the adoption of the "Territorial Agenda of the European Union – Towards a more competitive and sustainable Europe of Diverse Regions".

The EU looks with confidence at the progress achieved in economic, social and ecological terms and develops three main theses in the „**Territorial Agenda**“:

- I. Strengthening Territorial Cohesion;
- II. Strengthening regional identities and territorial diversity;
- III. New territorial priorities for the development of the European Union.

Based on these three main theses, the "Informal Ministerial Meeting of European Ministers responsible for Urban Development and Territorial Cohesion" gave the five following recommendations:

1. We aim to strengthen networking of metropolitan regions, city regions, and regions.
2. We need new forms of partnership and territorial governance between urban and rural areas.
3. We support the strengthening and extension of Trans-European Networks.

4. We promote Trans-European risk management.
5. We require the strengthening of ecological structures and cultural resources as the added value for development.

In order to implement these recommendations, the Informal Ministerial Council suggested the following **actions for implementing the territorial agenda**:

1. Actions by the European Institutions.
2. Actions for close cooperation between the European Commission and EU Member States.
3. Actions for strengthening territorial cohesion in EU Member States.
4. Joint activities by ministries.

In chapter 2, paragraph 35 of the actions, the following is stated: "We consider the cooperation, including our neighbouring countries, in the context of EU programmes for European Territorial Cooperation (Objective 3) to be new and future-oriented funding instruments offering opportunities for strengthening European Networks of cities and regions as well as supporting new innovation-oriented European development corridors".

Due to its constructive cooperation during the development phase of the **Territorial Agenda**, e.g. by dealing with this subject during the AEBR Annual Conference 2006 in Pamplona (ES) as well as by expressing its opinion on the background paper for the TAEU and by developing the map "Crossborder Cooperation Areas 2007", **AEBR** has considerably contributed to the positive remarks on cross-border cooperation

More info on: www.aebr.eu

European Union – Fourth Report on Economic and Social Cohesion (4th Cohesion Report) adopted by the European Commission on 30 May 2007

Danuta Hübner, EU Commissioner responsible for Regional Policy, informed that the „Fourth Report on Economic and Social Cohesion“ was adopted on 30 May 2007. The Report provides an update on the progress made towards achieving economic, social and territorial cohesion, and on the manner in which Member States' and Community's policies have contributed to it. It also gives a first assessment of the preparation for 2007-2013, based on the programming documents submitted to the Commission by Member States by end of April 2007. Finally, it looks at the new challenges which will add up to the context for regional development in the next 20-30 years - such as demography, climate change, social exclusion or energy - and submits for a debate a series of questions on their combined impact on the

policy. The long-term purpose of this report is to launch the reflection on the future of Europe's policy to promote greater economic, social and territorial cohesion and to foster regional development and competitiveness.

On the occasion of the 4th Cohesion Forum on 27 and 28 September 2007 in Brussels, the European Commission would like to discuss this report, which also deals with many questions and problems of border regions, with as many interested participants as possible.



Danuta Hübner

(Source: European Commission)

A preliminary version of this report is available on:

http://ec.europa.eu/regional_policy/sources/docoffic/official/reports/cohesion4/index_en.htm

ECMT Reform: Launching of the new "International Transport Forum" (ITF)

During their meeting in Sofia on 31 May 2007, the European Ministers of Transport launched the new International Transport Forum (ITF). The ECMT, founded in 1953 and a good cooperation partner of AEBR so far, will be transformed into the ITF, the "International Transport Forum". Leipzig (Germany) was fixed as new permanent venue for the International Transport Forum. The changed name is closely connected to further changes as regards contents: Each forum will concentrate on a central topic of global relevance. Next year's topic will be „Transport and Energy: The Challenge of Climate Change“.

Information on history and structure of the ECMT, the Member States, and on the ITF:

<http://www.cemt.org> .

The Committee of the Regions (CoR) opens a call for an EGTC expert group

The Committee of the Regions has launched a call for expression of interest in the setting up of an EGTC Expert Group (Group), which is conceived as a pooling of expertise on the subject. Regional and local actors have been invited to take part in this group of experts, which aims at exchanging experiences and information on this new legal instrument for cross-border cooperation.

In the middle of 2007, AEBR will send its members a new survey with regard to the EGTC.

More info on: www.cor.europa.eu/egtc.htm

Cross-border health cooperation

In his introductory talk on this agenda item of the Executive Committee in Trujillo (ES), Mr Fernández Vara, Regional Minister of Health at the Junta de Extremadura Region, called for



Fernández Vara (Quelle: psoc.es)

the creation of a legal instrument for bilateral cross-border agreements between health institutions on both sides of the border. The following conclusions were drawn from his speech and the extensive and adjacent discussion: existing differences in competences between border regions and EU member states with regard to the health sector urgently call for an EU regulation for a „European Cross-border Framework for Cooperation“. AEBR will lobby for this by means of a „Big alliance of the border regions“. The exchange of experience is getting more important!

AEBR's Secretary General Martín Guillermo-Ramírez pointed out that there are already some 300 projects in this field. One of the most interesting EU - projects "Evaluation of Cross-Border Regions in the European Union (EUREGIO)" had already terminated.

In cooperation with RegioTriRhena (CH/DE/FR), AEBR plans to hold a further conference on "Cross-Border Health Services" in Basle in February 2008.

In Mai 2007, the "Institute for Social Work and Social Pedagogy e. V.", located in Frankfurt/Main (Germany), published the documentation of a meeting that took place in Berlin (Germany) on 28 September 2006 on "Cross-border services in the health and social sector". The documentation also contains a contribution of Mr. Von Malchus. The complete report can be ordered on: <http://www.soziale-dienste-in-europa.de>

More info on: www.aebr.eu

Border regions profit from the new EU regulation on roaming

Inhabitants of border regions are very often charged extra, because their phones switch automatically to an extremely expensive foreign network. In order to cut the exorbitant roaming tariffs, a new European regulation laying down maximal prices for roaming has been passed by the European Parliament in May 2007.

More info on: www.aebr.eu .

Cooperation of AEBR with European Institutions

On the occasion of AEBR's Executive Committee in Trujillo (ES), President Lambert van Nistelrooij, MEP, underlined AEBR's close cooperation with all European Institutions. In particular, he referred to the good relations with the European Parliament, with the German EU Council Presidency, and with the Committee of the Regions (CoR). Together with many other members of the Executive Committee, Vice-President Ignacio Sánchez Amor complained about the high bureaucratic effort. He pleaded for funding many small projects, as they would bring more profit to the border regions.



AEBR Secretary General Martín Guillermo-Ramírez emphasised that the contents of the cooperation between AEBR and CoR, which have been fixed in an annual agreement, need to be discussed further on. He furthermore recalled the European Economic and Social Committee's statement on Euregios and cross-border cooperation. AEBR was involved in the elaboration of this statement and placed some documents at the responsible rapporteur's disposal (e.g. statutes, White Paper, AEBR Position Papers). Mr. Guillermo-Ramírez also pointed out that there would be many common ideas on Euroregions, but also many different interpretations.

With regard to the various activities of the Council of Europe, the Secretary General gave some information on the St. Petersburg Centre, on the preliminary draft of the third protocol on the Madrid Outline Convention regarding euroregional cooperation groupings, and on the ratification status of legal instruments in the field of cross-border cooperation. He also pointed out that many EU countries have not yet expressed themselves with regard to the EGTC regulation.

More info on: www.aebr.eu

Cooperation of AEBR with Regional Organisations at European level

AEBR's Executive Committee attaches great importance on a close cooperation with the regional organisations at European level. The Secretary General of AEBR was requested to expand this, if possible, for instance with the "Association des Elus de Montagne" or with MOT = "Mission Opérationnelle Transfrontalière".

More info on: www.aebr.eu

Forum of the Committee of the Regions on Plan D

AEBR Secretary General Martín Guillermo Ramírez intervened in a new Forum on communicating Plan D, which took place parallel to the Plenary Session of the Committee of Regions. Commission Vice-President Margot Wallström and CoR President Michel Delebarre as well as other European institutions, regional and local governments and associations were present in that meeting. The debate focused on how to improve communication with the citizens regarding the European Union. Mr. Guillermo Ramírez stressed the importance of regional cooperation in order to fill the gap between European institutions and citizens, explaining the role of the AEBR and its members to this end. AEBR organized an information stand presenting its objectives, activities, and documents.



New possibilities of cooperation between AEBR and other organisations in Europe

In line with a decision taken by the Executive Committee, AEBR is checking new possibilities of cooperation, which are offered in particular by the INTERREG IVC programme during the programming period 2007-2013. An ESPON seminar is planned to take place in 2007/2008. The cooperation with INTERACT is to be intensified. Furthermore, AEBR will participate in EURISY activities.

More info on: www.aebr.eu

AEBR and global exchange of experience

The global support of border regions has a long tradition within AEBR. In the 70ies and 80ies, Dr. Briner and Dr. v. Malchus as representatives of AEBR have spread their experiences in the field of cross-border cooperation from Europe to every part of the world, e.g. to the USA and the USSR, in order to help there to solve border problems.

Today, there is a discussion going on within AEBR if, based on its experiences, assistance should be rendered to Africa regarding the solution of cross-border problems and the development of new strategies, like it is currently being practiced by the two border regions of Alsace (FR) and Extremadura (ES).

A lot of AEBR's members feel responsible for the developments in Africa and regard it as a moral duty to support peacemaking and development-supporting cross-border cooperation in

Africa on an advising basis. Cross-border cooperation brought freedom, peace, democracy, and wealth to Europe. AEBR should, if possible, impart this knowledge throughout the world.

More info on: www.aebr.eu

Publication of the AEBR map "Crossborder Cooperation Areas 2007"

The map "Crossborder Cooperation Areas 2007" was finalised and printed in April/May. The DIN A3 format can already be ordered from AEBR.

If required, the map will also be printed in DIN A1 format (as wall map). Please contact the AEBR Secretariat General in Gronau before 20 August 2007 if you would like to receive a wall map (e-Mail: info@aebr.eu, Tel. (0049) 2562 702 19).

AEBR General Assembly and Annual Conference 2007

On the occasion of the Executive Committee meeting in Trujillo, the draft programme of the next Annual Conference of AEBR, taking place from 13 to 15 September 2007 was discussed and adopted. The Annual Conference will consist of two subject areas:

- Day 1: European Neighbourhood and Partnership Instrument (ENPI),
- Day 2: Development of Rural Areas in Border Regions – Innovative solutions.

Remarks with regard to the topics of the Annual Conference:

In addition to the general aims (avoidance of new lines of separation with third countries, further development of the strategic partnership with Russia, balanced socio-economic development, multi-cultural dialogue, strengthening the regional ability for development), the „European Neighbourhood and Partnership Instrument (ENPI)“ also contains important forward-looking elements for cross-border cooperation, which should overcome the previous cooperation difficulties (between INTERREG/PHARE-CBC/TACIS-CBC/CARDS/MEDIA). Therefore, the subject is of high importance for AEBR's future work.

Within the scope of the German EU Presidency, AEBR and its partners from the Bavarian/Austrian border area held a forum on „Rural Development in European Border Regions 2007“ in the Cloister of Seon (close to Salzburg) on 12 March 2007. The documents as well as the final declaration of the forum are available on: www.euregio.sbg.at/euregio.asp?D=245

More info on: www.aebr.eu

AEBR Award "Sail of Papenburg" 2007 – Call issued on 22 May 2007

During the Executive Committee meeting in Trujillo, Dr. R. Kolck shortly elucidated the awarding procedure for the "Sail of Papenburg". This prize is the only cross-border one in

Europe, thus being a symbol for the best practice of aims, measures and projects as well as their added value in European border regions.

In future, the prize should no longer be a trophy that will be moved from one winner to the next. It should remain in the possession of the awarded person or institution. Additionally, individual persons should be awarded. This was for the first time the case when Elmar Brok, MEP, received the award on the occasion of the Annual Conference 2006 in Navarre (ES). The motto of the award should be in line with the Annual Conference. Thus, the 2007 motto will be:

“Innovative concepts and projects for the development of rural areas in Europe’s border regions 2006, 2007-2013”.

One or several outstanding measures in a border or cross-border region, which clearly show(s) how „Rural Areas in Border Regions“ can innovatively be developed and supported, will be awarded.

The deadline for handing in entries expires on 15 July 2007.

The “Sail of Papenburg 2007” award ceremony will be held during the Annual Conference of AEBR in Lappeenranta (FI) on Thursday, 13 September 2007.

More info on: www.aebr.eu

Cross-border cooperation between Universities/Higher Education Institutions 2007

Dr. von Malchus elaborated a tabular overview on “Cooperation between Universities/Higher Education Institutions in Europe’s border regions 2006/2007”. This overview is based on the results of several surveys carried out in the years 2003 and 2006 among border and cross-border regions, and on results of internet and literature research in 2006/2007. The evaluation of the tables and several maps are currently being prepared and will probably be finalised towards the end of the year 2007.

Information on the preliminary works related to Dr. v. Malchus’ report published in 2004 is available on: www.aebr.eu

Main focus of AEBR’s thematic work 2007

The Executive Committee decided during its meeting in Trujillo (ES) on 30 March 2007 to focus on the following concentrate on the following topics:

- Innovative, cross-border development of rural areas,
- Possibilities offered by the new EU Neighbourhood and Partnership Instrument,
- Implementation/Application of the EU regulation on the EGTC,
- Cross-border cooperation in the health sector,

- Cross-border cooperation of Universities/Higher education institutions.

AEBR'S AGENDA for 2007

Executive Committee Meetings:

- **29/30 June 2007:** Vilnius, Euroregion Nemunas (LT)
- **13 September 2007:** Lappeenranta, South Karelia (FI)
- **30 November 2007:** Carpathian Euroregion, Nyíregyháza (HU)

General Assembly and Annual Conference

- **13-15 September 2007 :** Lappeenranta, South Karelia (FI)

Fora on up-to-date political subjects - in planning

- AEBR forum "Daily Border Problems", EUREGIO (DE/NL),
- AEBR forum "Innovation and Research", Galicia (ES).

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