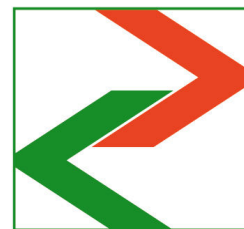




Gobierno de Navarra



**Association of
European Border
Regions (AEBR)**

***Annual Conference of AEBR
Pamplona / Navarra (ES)***

24 November 2006

***Territorial Agenda
- A glance into the future of our EU -***

FINAL DECLARATION

1. The Association of European Border Regions states that:

- The **basic aims of the Territorial Agenda** are supported, e.g.:
 - To improve the competitiveness of Europe in view of globalisation,
 - To prevent geographical concentration by means of a polycentric development with due regard to metropolitan regions and urban areas,
 - To make a better use of territorial resources (inclusively the regional diversity) for the aims of growth and employment,
 - To improve the consideration of the effects of EU enlargement and the relations at the external borders of the EU,
 - To mitigate challenges related to climate changes, energy and raw materials sources as well as aging and migration on the labour market.
- Moreover, the Territorial Agenda rightly underlines that all **endogenous potentials** (metropolitan regions, urban centres, towns, rural areas etc.) should be used, and a new understanding of the „territorial governance“ and co-operation, as well as mutual consideration of local, regional, national, and European policies is necessary.
- These territorial trends and challenges **influence in particular border regions**, due to e.g.:
 - the national and sometimes even European peripheral location,
 - cross-border effects related to climate and environment,
 - the risk of becoming solely a transit zone through Trans-European Networks,
 - the risk of aging and migration from rural areas,
 - increasing energy prices (in rural areas a car is often the sole and most important means of transport),
 - the effects of EU enlargement (former external borders and borders between new EU member states have become internal borders and new external borders have emerged).

2. Before finally adopting the Territorial Agenda, **the AEBR asks for substantial improvements** in order to better comply with the political context of this agenda and with its aims:

- The Territorial Agenda should lead to political added-value. Therefore, it is necessary to coordinate not solely the policies of member states, but also the policies of the EU.
- Political aims should be formulated more clearly in order to demonstrate a close connection between the territorial and cohesion policy. Regional policy contributes

primarily to a European territorial policy. Therefore, the Territorial Agenda should go deeper into the corner stones of regional policy 2007-2013 and their strategic orientation.

- In addition to territorial cooperation, which is certainly important, the other European policies, which have an even stronger macroeconomic and macro-territorial influence, have to be pointed out as well. In this sense competition policy should be considered, too.
- Territorial cohesion has been included as third dimension in the draft Treaty for a European Constitution, and is a politically accepted aim of the EU since then. It goes beyond the economic and social cohesion. It refers to the whole area of the EU, in particular to **all** border regions whilst the poorest areas have priority.
- Considering the global challenges and effects (e.g. closing down or relocation of many production facilities, buyout of / stake holding in European key companies by investors from non-EU member states, severe shortcomings in the energy transport networks) the priorities of the Territorial Agenda seem to be rather small-scale. Thus, a large-scale priority is necessary considering Europe as an integrated system. As important aspect of the territorial cohesion the spatial fragmentation in the EU should be surmounted and incoherencies resulting from national differences should be eliminated with the aim of an integrated Europe (see also the ESPON long-term scenarios till 2030). This refers to:
 - o raw materials supply and processing (energy sector, steel) in the EU,
 - o mergers on European level and not in accordance with the national antitrust legislation,
 - o national competitiveness in globally important technological developments,
 - o the necessity of a large-scale risk management (e.g. as regards arid regions or floods that often hit regions across borders).
- As the competence of neighbouring states for spatial development ends at the border, in the overall part the importance of cross-border relations is mentioned. However, in the sector-specific plans these relations are mostly missing and thus should be included in the future, e.g. crucial centres across borders (the possibility of a cross-border metropolitan region), potentials of universities and research facilities, health care facilities of supra-regional importance, risk sources (nuclear facilities, hazardous waste sites), potentials of cross-border networks of municipalities related to supply and a supra-regional cultural offer, etc.
- The experiences of INTERREG A-Programmes with cross-border development concepts and strategy papers should be taken into account (see the thematic ESPON/INTERACT study "Spatial visions and scenarios"). As regards the aims of the Territorial Agenda it is spoken about mutual consideration of local, regional, national and EU policies.

- According to ESDP and the „Territorial Agenda 2007“ from the EU member states should be demanded:
 - o Elaboration of cross-border approaches and concepts related to spatial development (spatial development concepts) as well as their consideration in national spatial development and sectoral planning,
 - o Cross-border co-operation on a regular basis with regard to spatial development planning and measures,
 - o Elaboration of joint cross-border regional – and if reasonable – land utilisation plans as the most far-reaching form of cross-border spatial development policy.
- While mentioning the obstructive effects of the border in the „Territorial Agenda“ it's necessary to better work out the optimal use of territorial potentials by means of cross-border co-operation as regards the priorities and actions for the future (it's spoken almost only about transnational co-operation):
 - o Cross-border co-operation is a corner stone of European integration and territorial cohesion.
 - o It creates a European, political, institutional, economic and socio-cultural added value (see the AEBR paper: Added value of cross-border co-operation).
 - o It has concretely contributed to the implementation of the Lisbon Strategy already (see the AEBR paper on Lisbon Strategy), as cross-border co-operation always adds value to national measures due to:
 - ❖ additionality of cross-border programmes and projects,
 - ❖ synergies through cross-border co-operation,
 - ❖ joint research and innovation,
 - ❖ cross-border networking,
 - ❖ exchange of best practice and know-how,
 - ❖ spin-off effects by overcoming borders,
 - ❖ efficient cross-border resource management.
- If obstructive effects of the border are as significant as indicated in the agenda, which demands an even more intensive cross-border and transnational co-operation, then it should be checked in the half-time of the programming period 2007-2013 if sufficient funds are available for that purpose.
- The dialogue with the European regional organisations on the “Territorial Agenda” that has been initiated on the occasion of the AEBR Annual Conference on 24th November 2006 in Pamplona should be continued and serve as integral element while further developing this important document.

3.- The **implementation of the Territorial Agenda in cross-border practice** requires the provision of appropriate European and national conditions.

- Thanks to the final adoption of EU regulations on European cohesion and regional policy as well as territorial co-operation (inclusively legal instrument) various instruments are available at the European level for the period 2007-2013.
- Nevertheless, the consideration of the political aims of territorial cohesion and Territorial Agenda in sectoral policies at European and national level must be improved in the future.
- At national level better conditions can be provided, e.g. through:
 - The application of the European grouping for territorial co-operation as soon as possible (EGTC),
 - Consideration of cross-border spatial development concepts (that are available in many cross-border regions already) in national spatial planning with the aim of a genuine region-specific planning across borders;
 - Inclusion of cross-border co-operation structures at regional / local level in this planning on a regular base,
 - Transfer of tasks to such cross-border co-operation structures (the responsible national bodies have further on the competence);
 - Facilitation of cross-border environment and risk management, e.g. joint water supply, sewage disposal, waste disposal, joint water management along rivers, cross-border disaster prevention and cross-border rescue (a fire engine can be seen as a dutiable good at the external borders!!!).

4.- It's necessary **to make people aware of daily border problems** over and over again.

Besides, opportunities resulting from the statements of development-oriented national spatial strategies should be used for individual sectoral policies of regional development, e.g. as regards infrastructure and transport, research and innovation, environment and tourism.

While implementing sectoral policies it's essential to demand future-oriented statements in national spatial strategies for cross-border co-operation. According to ESDP, that is based on national spatial strategies and the Territorial Agenda 2007 for the aim of a sustainable spatial development of border regions, particular attention should be paid to the following cross-border tasks:

- It is necessary to strengthen the endogenous regional potentials across the borders;
- The strength of the regions on both sides of the border, not in the sense of administrative and national borders, but in the sense of economic borders, has to be the initial point;
- The thinking in terms of „concentration, complementarity, competitiveness and creation of a critical mass“ is as important as thinking in terms of „knowledge, cognition and finances “ (e. g. public/private cooperation or cooperation between knowledge facilities/economy, specialised training facilities and SMEs);
- Thus, there can be a mutual cross-border enhancement. Good examples are in this case cross-border research sceneries or “life sciences” regions;
- Development of joint transport and telecommunication infrastructure;
- Provision of public and private services across borders;
- Organisation of cross-border labour markets;
- Preservation and sustainable use of natural resources (in particular in mountain regions, coastal areas, wetlands etc.),
- Preventive measures as regards the effects of pollution.

5.- In order to work more closely as regards sustainable spatial development, **cross-border co-operation between regional and local authorities should be necessarily intensified in the future**, through:

- Precise analysis of current and future problems related to spatial development;
- Analysis of legal obstacles affecting cross-border co-operation in planning;
- Cross-border co-ordination of all planning and measures related to spatial development on a regular base;
- Ongoing cross-border information and spatial monitoring supported by socio-economic spatial development analysis;
- Promotion of joint development concepts in all cross-border areas (in particular in South, Southwest, Central and Eastern Europe);
- Implementation of development programmes (e.g. INTERREG) on the basis of separate agreements adopted by all parties involved;
- Development of cross-border sectoral development plans (e.g. for transport, tourism, free space and settlement development);

- Identification of important urban regions (urban networks) up to cross-border European metropolitan regions in border areas;
- Co-operation at regional and local level in cross-border interdependent areas of larger centres and in fragmented urban centres;
- Analysis of fields of action in spatial planning policy in border areas;
- Identification of protected areas, habitat connectivities and cross-border nature parks as well as cross-border landscape architecture;
- Elaboration of rescue programmes in order to improve environment;
- Separate cross-border planning for regions, which are particularly affected by the planned expansion of (Trans-European) transport axes;
- Coordination of local planning in border municipalities;
- Moreover, it would be desirable for the medium-term future to elaborate joint cross-border regional plans directly binding for all public planning as the most far-reaching form of cross-border spatial development providing the base for cross-border local planning. All measures related to spatial development and regional policy should be included in “Regional cross-border development concepts” and “Operational Programmes” in the future in order to facilitate the enforceability. Good examples of such planning are given among others at the German-French-Swiss, the German-Dutch, the German-Polish and the German-Czech border within the framework of INTERREG IIIA. In these cases a future-oriented cross-border co-operation takes place at regional level between the spatial development and regional policy.

AEBR, Pamplona, 24 November 2006