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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)  
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## AEBR Newsflash February 2010

### NEW PRESIDENT OF THE ASSOCIATION OF EUROPEAN BORDER REGIONS

**Mr. Karl-Heinz Lambertz**, Minister-President of the German-speaking Community of Belgium, was **elected President of the Association of European Border Regions** on the occasion of the AEBR Executive Committee meeting on 19 February 2010 in Oulu (Tornedalsrådet/Bothnian Arc, FI). Karl-Heinz Lambertz is member of the Committee of the Regions and general reporter of the Council of Europe's Congress of Local and Regional Authorities on cross-border cooperation. He has a long experience in the field of territorial cohesion.

You can find our new President's greeting message as well as his CV and photo in: [http://www.aebr.net/news/news\\_aebr.php?lc=en&nid=261#261](http://www.aebr.net/news/news_aebr.php?lc=en&nid=261#261)

### CROSS-BORDER TRANSPORT LINKS

#### **AEBR Forum "Transport as an Instrument for Territorial Cohesion and Cooperation", 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> February 2010, Huesca, Aragón**

Some 150 participants gathered on 4 February in Huesca (Aragón, ES) in order to follow the discussions and presentations of the main topic "Transport as an Instrument for Territorial Cohesion and Cooperation".

**Mr. Javier Velasco Rodríguez**, Minister of the Presidency in the Regional Government of Aragón, opened this forum presenting the "Pyrenean Central Crossing" as a strong incentive for the term of the Spanish Presidency in the first half of 2010. He furthermore underlined that the summit of the Ministers responsible for Transport, which will take place in Zaragoza, "might be a commitment of the whole EU to support this demand".

The AEBR was represented by **First Vice-President Jean-Paul Heider** (Région Alsace, FR) and **Secretary General Martín Guillermo Ramírez**. With the opening of **Fernando Elboj Broto**, **Mayor of Huesca**, a strong representation of the **Government of Aragón**, **MEP Inés Ayala** (ES), **DG REGIO**, and representatives of the regions **Carinthia** (AT), **Extremadura** (ES), **Midi-Pyrénées** (FR) and **Norte** (PT), the French Department of **Hautes-Pyrénées**, **Switzerland** and the **Spanish Federation of Entrepreneurs CEOE** gathered at the foot of the Pyrenees to discuss on the framework and practices of Cross-Border Transport. An online connection through videoconference was organized with the event INTERMODES 2010 (<http://www.intermodes.com>).

Detailed information on this event (organised in cooperation with the regional government of Aragón and the Trans-Pyrenean Foundation), declarations, presentations, photos, and press releases can be found on AEBR's website: [http://www.aebr.net/news/news\\_aebr.php?lc=en&nid=257#257](http://www.aebr.net/news/news_aebr.php?lc=en&nid=257#257)

### EU'S EXTERNAL BORDERS

#### **AEBR Task Force External Borders meeting and seminar on 18 February 2010, Oulu (Tornedalsrådet/Bothnian Arc, Finland)**

Some 15 participants attended the **meeting of the AEBR Task Force "External Borders"**, and around 50 participants gathered at the open seminar on **CROSS-BORDER RESPONSE TO CURRENT REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT CHALLENGES ACROSS EUROPE - Cross-Border Cooperation (CBC) at the EU External Borders**.

The Task Force dealt with the current developments at the external borders of the EU, stressing the need to open new communication channels with border regions in the Balkans and the Black Sea. Information was also provided on the constitution of the Euro-Mediterranean Assembly of Regional and Local Authorities (ARLEM). It was proposed to check the members' interest to organize a Task Force dealing with International Cooperation (CBC far beyond Europe). Programmed events for 2010 were presented as well: a Task Force meeting in Seville on 27 May 2010 (to deal especially with the Mediterranean Cooperation) and a Seminar in Istria (HR) on 16

September 2010 to focus on CBC in the Balkans. Information was delivered on the preparation of several projects, including the second edition of the Task Force's Summer School.

Some 50 participants gathered at the seminar opened by **Kalervo Ukkola**, Secretary General of the City of Oulu. The Secretary General of the AEBR gave a general overview of CBC at the EU External Borders. **Heikki Aalto** (Bothnian Arc) and **Peter Hagström** (Tornedalsrådet) presented the host CB structures. The representatives of the Nordic Council of Ministers **Harry Ekestam**, Ministry of Employment and Economy (FI), and **Larserik Häggman**, *Pohjola-Norden*, member of the *Gränshinderforum*, showed the strong commitment of the NCM in supporting CBC in the Nordic countries. The Kvarken Council was represented by its Director **Christina Knookala**. It followed a round table with best practices and recommendations composed by **Alexei Kiryukhin**, Euroregion Slovozhanschina (RU-UA); **Urpo Moisio**, South Karelia (FI), Chairman of the AEBR Task Force on External Borders; the scientist **Anaïs Marin** offered her presentation „CBC as a cornerstone of good neighbourhood“; and **Marc de Buck**, First Deputy of the Province of East Flanders (BE), Euregio Scheldemond (BE/NL) and AEBR Vice-President presented “Interregional cooperation in a globalising world: a case-study on cooperation between a Belgian Province and two Asian countries”

Presentations of these events will soon be available on:

[http://www.aebr.net/news/news\\_aebr.php?lc=en&nid=259#259](http://www.aebr.net/news/news_aebr.php?lc=en&nid=259#259)

## **Inaugural meeting of the Euro-Mediterranean Assembly of Local and Regional Authorities (ARLEM)**

On 21 January 2010, more than seventy local and regional representatives from thirty countries around the three shores of the Mediterranean met in Barcelona for the inaugural meeting of the Euro-Mediterranean Assembly of Local and Regional Authorities (ARLEM). They called on EU Commissioner, **Paweł Samecki**, and Spanish State Secretary, **Ángel Losada Torres-Quevedo**, to ensure an "inclusive process" and to give "priority to tangible actions". As Co-Presidents were elected **Mohamed Boudra**, Mayor of Al Hoceima (MA) and the President of the Committee of the Regions in office (at that time **Luc van den Brande** (BE), today **Mercedes Bresso** (President of Piedmont, IT)). The six members of the Bureau were also elected, and the host region of Catalonia was assigned the Secretariat. The President of the Region of Andalusia, **José Antonio Griñán Martínez**, is the representative of the Association of European Border Regions in ARLEM. The full CoR press release, speeches as well as detailed information on ARLEM can be found on:

<http://www.cor.europa.eu/pages/PressTemplate.aspx?view=detail&id=568606ae-a4f1-4267-b512-25fa60a8867b>

## **MEETING WITH DIRECTOR GENERAL DIRK AHNER, DG REGIO**

The AEBR Secretary General Martín Guillermo Ramírez and the Chairman of the AEBR Advisory Committee, Jens Gabbe, kept the last of their regular meetings with Director General Dirk Ahner in Brussels on 10<sup>th</sup> February. A very rich and stimulating conversation focused on the need to keep territorial cohesion approaches and the future of the Territorial Cooperation Objective. The impact of the EU 2020 consultation, the debate between the territorial or the mere sectorial approach of the EU, and territorial cooperation at the external borders of the EU were other main topics discussed.

## **NETWORK OF CROSS-BORDER RAMSAR SITES**

The region of Alsace (FR) launched a Network of Cross-Border Ramsar sites in Strasbourg last 29 January. A working session with the participation of the 12 European CB Ramsar sites was organized with the aims of discussing their activities and expectations, promoting the declaration of more CB Ramsar sites (only 10% are formally declared as such) as well as providing joint management plans and finding good systematics to implement cross-border agreements. The Ramsar Convention on Internationally Important Wetlands was signed in that Iranian city in 1971, to protect and rationally use wetlands and their resources:

[http://www.ramsar.org/cda/en/ramsar-home/main/ramsar/1%5e7715\\_4000\\_0](http://www.ramsar.org/cda/en/ramsar-home/main/ramsar/1%5e7715_4000_0)

## **BORDER LANGUAGES**

After the AEBR Annual Conference on 5 November 2009, a group of interested participants informally gathered to talk about the situation of languages in border regions. Efforts to launch a Languages and Borders Platform are being implemented at several institutional levels. You will find a brief report about this meeting on:

[http://www.aebr.net/news/news\\_regions.php?lc=en&nid=262](http://www.aebr.net/news/news_regions.php?lc=en&nid=262)

## **RECENT NEWS FROM THE EU:**

### **NEW EUROPEAN COMMISSION APPROVED**

On 10 February 2010, the European Parliament elected the new European Commission by 488 votes to 137, with

72 abstentions. The vote took the form of a single ballot on the whole College of Commissioners, consisting of one Commissioner from each of the 27 EU Member States.

Read more about this election on: [http://www.europarl.europa.eu/news/expert/infopress\\_page/008-68681-039-02-07-901-20100209IPR68680-08-02-2010-2010-false/default\\_en.htm](http://www.europarl.europa.eu/news/expert/infopress_page/008-68681-039-02-07-901-20100209IPR68680-08-02-2010-2010-false/default_en.htm)

Following the approval by the European Parliament, the European Council has appointed the new European Commission for the period from 10 February 2010 to 31 October 2014:

[http://www.consilium.europa.eu/uedocs/cms\\_data/docs/pressdata/en/misc/112851.pdf](http://www.consilium.europa.eu/uedocs/cms_data/docs/pressdata/en/misc/112851.pdf)

The new Commission comprises 27 members, one from each EU country. Fourteen, including the president, served in the previous executive. Detailed information, including photos and CVs of the new Commissioners, can be found on:

[http://ec.europa.eu/commission\\_2010-2014/index\\_en.htm](http://ec.europa.eu/commission_2010-2014/index_en.htm)

<http://ec.europa.eu/publications/posters/EC-2010-14/en.pdf>

[http://ec.europa.eu/news/eu\\_explained/100209\\_2\\_en.htm](http://ec.europa.eu/news/eu_explained/100209_2_en.htm)

**Website of Johannes Hahn, Commissioner for Regional Policy:** [http://ec.europa.eu/commission\\_2010-2014/hahn/index\\_en.htm](http://ec.europa.eu/commission_2010-2014/hahn/index_en.htm)

### **New leadership of the Committee of the Regions (CoR): Mercedes Bresso new President of the CoR**

On 9 and 10 February 2010, 344 regional presidents, parliamentarians, mayors and county councillors from across Europe met in Brussels to elect their new leadership, debate the political priorities of regions and local authorities in Europe for the next five years. **Mercedes Bresso** (IT/PES), President of the Italian region of Piedmont, was elected **CoR President**:

<http://www.cor.europa.eu/pages/PressTemplate.aspx?view=detail&id=cdd1e5b8-1848-4a95-8e1f-a0999c9ae7a1>

On the occasion, **Manuel Chaves**, Third Vice-President of the Spanish government and Minister for Regional Policy, outlined the highlights of the coming six-month period to the CoR:

<http://www.cor.europa.eu/pages/PressTemplate.aspx?view=detail&id=0e2be046-8d2d-48ff-82fd-ed0cc03b4ce1>

### **Presentation of the EU 2020 Strategy**

On 3 March 2010, Commission President Barroso presented the Europe 2020 proposal, which has been adopted by the European Commission after a wide consultation process, where the AEBR has taken part. The Text of the Communication, press release, video and the speech of President Barroso are available on:

[http://ec.europa.eu/commission\\_2010-2014/president/news/documents/2010/03/20100303\\_1\\_en.htm](http://ec.europa.eu/commission_2010-2014/president/news/documents/2010/03/20100303_1_en.htm)

### **Public consultation on the EU 2020 strategy – Results available**

Two documents have recently been published in the context of the preparation for the Europe 2020 strategy:

- [The Lisbon strategy evaluation](#): The Europe 2020 strategy will build on the successes and results obtained by the Lisbon strategy since its 2005 re-launch. Some of its shortcomings will be addressed as well.

- [Europe 2020 – Public consultation – First overview of responses](#): The Commission's public consultation on the EU 2020 strategy was open from November 2009 to 15th January 2010. Some 1500 contributions have been submitted by a wide range of interested parties. All contributions will be available soon on the [consultation website](#).

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 is available for download on:**

[http://www.aebr.net/news/news\\_aebr.php?lc=en&nid=250#250](http://www.aebr.net/news/news_aebr.php?lc=en&nid=250#250)

### **Consultation on the CoR's White Paper on Multilevel Governance**

Following the consultation, which was closed on 31 December 2009, a *Consultation Report* has been produced.

This report is available in several languages on [www.cor.europa.eu/governance](http://www.cor.europa.eu/governance).

## Public consultation on European Strategy for the Danube Region now on-line

The public consultation on the European Strategy for the Danube is open until 31 March 2010. All interested parties are invited to take part in this consultation, which is designed to provide opportunity for stakeholders to feed in views to help shape the Commission's plans on the Strategy. This initiative seeks to develop the huge economic potential of Europe's longest river, the Danube, and to improve environmental conditions in and around the wider Danube region.

The consultation was launched in Ulm (Germany) on 2 February. An Action Plan and a governance system will be proposed by the European Commission in December 2010. Read more about this consultation on: [http://ec.europa.eu/regional\\_policy/consultation/danube/consultation\\_en.htm](http://ec.europa.eu/regional_policy/consultation/danube/consultation_en.htm)  
<http://europa.eu/rapid/pressReleasesAction.do?reference=IP/10/110&format=HTML&aged=0&language=EN&guiLanguage=en>

## CoR - Award of the European Entrepreneurial Region (EER) label presented

The EER 2011 label was awarded to the regions of **Brandenburg** (DE), **Kerry** (IE) and **Murcia** (ES).

The European Entrepreneurial Region label was launched in October 2009 during the week of Open Days and is intended to stimulate the implementation of innovative and creative regional economic development plans throughout Europe.

Find out more on: <http://www.cor.europa.eu/pages/PressTemplate.aspx?view=detail&id=da0a2779-3f90-4658-8590-0ed887fcb4ff>

## DG REGIO "Regional Focus" – Short Paper focusing on Public Investment in Spain

Regional and local authorities play an increasingly key role in the expenditure decisions of the public sector. In the context of the multi-level governance system, many decisions regarding Cohesion Policy and national equivalent expenditure take place at sub-national level. As a consequence, information about the expenditure of the different government levels is essential to understand the impact of public expenditure decisions in the economy.

Read more in : [http://ec.europa.eu/regional\\_policy/sources/docgener/focus/2009\\_02\\_spain.pdf](http://ec.europa.eu/regional_policy/sources/docgener/focus/2009_02_spain.pdf)

## Informal Ministerial Meeting on Regional Policy

Zaragoza, 19<sup>th</sup> February. Discussion on territorial cohesion and how does it fit in the EU 2020 Strategy, the road map for European development within the next ten years. And this, in the context of the budget review. Full agreement on the simplification of procedures.

Press releases / reports can be found in:

Spanish: <http://www.eu2010.es/export/sites/presidencia/comun/descargas/tudela.pdf>

Commissioner Hahn's speech:

<http://europa.eu/rapid/pressReleasesAction.do?reference=SPEECH/10/34&format=HTML&aged=0&language=EN&guiLanguage=en>

## European Summit of Local Governments

From 22 – 24 February 2010, Barcelona hosted the European Summit of Local Governments. Main issue was how local governments need to go about strengthening the cohesion of cities and Europe in general.

More information about this summit can be found on: [www.europeansummit2010.eu](http://www.europeansummit2010.eu)

## European Parliament - Committee on Regional Development

The latest newsletter of the Regional Development Committee is available on:

<http://www.europarl.europa.eu/document/activities/cont/201002/20100215ATT69048/20100215ATT69048EN.pdf>

## IMPORTANT EVENTS IN THE SCOPE OF THE SPANISH PRESIDENCY

- 16-18 March 2010, Informal meeting of Regional Policy Ministers, Málaga

- 3 May 2010, Conference European Territorial Cooperation: EGTCs and Cross-Border Cooperation, Cáceres

## News from European Border and Cross-Border Regions:

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

This Newsflash marks the beginning of a series of presentations of AEBR member regions. The presentations contain information on main achievements up to now and planned activities for the future. Furthermore, maps showing the location of the organisations as well as photos with cross-border character are available as well.

In this issue:

- **East Border Region Ltd (Republic of Ireland / Northern Ireland)**

- **Euroregion Yaroslavna (Russia/Ukraine)**

**East Border Region Ltd (R.O.I./N.I.)** became member of AEBR in 1990 and will host the AEBR General Assembly and Annual Conference 2010. Find out more about this cross-border organisation by clicking [http://www.aebr.net/news/news\\_regions.php?lc=en&nid=265](http://www.aebr.net/news/news_regions.php?lc=en&nid=265)

**Euroregion Yaroslavna (RU/UA)**, newly admitted member in 2009, host of the AEBR General Assembly and Annual Conference 2011. Find out more about Euroregion Yaroslavna by clicking [http://www.aebr.net/news/news\\_regions.php?lc=en&nid=264](http://www.aebr.net/news/news_regions.php?lc=en&nid=264)

**International Forum on Young Talented People & Sport in the EU 2020 Strategy on 9 March 2010 in Brussels**, organised by Extremadura/Spain. In this forum the participants will have the opportunity to learn about, exchange and network with young international leaders, entrepreneurs and sport policy-makers and researchers. Read more about the aims of this forum on [http://www.aebr.net/termine/termine\\_regions.php?period=&onedate\\_day=&onedate\\_month=&onedate\\_year=&group=&lc=en&did=144](http://www.aebr.net/termine/termine_regions.php?period=&onedate_day=&onedate_month=&onedate_year=&group=&lc=en&did=144)

The **East-West Municipal Association of Thrace-Trakya-Kent (Turkey)**, member of our Association since the year 2000, is searching for partners to exchange knowledge and best practices on planning and implementation of EU policies and promoting dialogue amongst civil societies. More info on: [http://www.aebr.net/news/news\\_regions.php?lc=en&nid=263](http://www.aebr.net/news/news_regions.php?lc=en&nid=263)

### **Please take note of main AEBR events expected in 2010:**

13 April 2010, AEBR Task Force Cross-Border Health, Essen

3 May 2010, Conference of the Spanish Presidency in Cáceres (Extremadura) "European Territorial Cooperation: EGTCs and Cross-Border Cooperation"

27 May 2010, Task Force External Borders meeting, Seville (Andalusia, ES)

28-29 May 2010 (tbc), Executive Committee in Évora (Alentejo, PT)

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

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

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

4-7 October, Open Days 2010

21-23 October 2010, AEBR Executive Committee, General Assembly and Annual Conference, Dundalk-Newry (Ireland-Northern Ireland).

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](mailto: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=266#266](http://www.aebr.net/news/news_aebr.php?lc=en&nid=266#266)

*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.*

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