The Spanish Presidency of the EU (first half of 2010) has included manifold meetings and promoted various levels of discussion on the future Cohesion Policy, stressing Territorial Cohesion as a main action to promote EU integration through a multi-level approach for European Governance. The AEBR is playing a major role in this process by getting in close contact with the Spanish Government during this period, taking part in the planning, design and implementation of several meetings.

The Spanish Government devotes a Vice-Presidency to deal with Territorial Cooperation, which shows the great interest paid by the Spanish Executive to this issue. Actually, it is well accepted that the State of the Autonomies, created by the 1978 Constitution, has promoted the longest period of democratic development in this Southern EU Member State. Spain operates de facto as a Federal State. The 17 Spanish Autonomous Communities possess full competences in fields like healthcare or education, having been involved very actively in one of the most successful processes of decentralisation in Europe. Mr Manuel Chaves González, former President of the Junta de Andalucía, is currently holding this Vice-presidency.

On the other hand, the AEBR has kept its regular contacts with EU institutions and other actors at European level, as well as with stakeholders at the border areas. This has been the focus of the AEBR in May 2010, where most of the attention has been put on the effects of the financial crisis, and the strong measures taken by national governments to avoid the serious consequences of wild speculation practices in the global market.

3rd May 2010 - Summit on European Territorial Cooperation: EGTC and Cross-Border Cooperation

Some 120 representatives from national governments, European institutions, border and cross-border regions and EGTCs participated in this summit, which was organised in the scope of the Spanish Presidency.

The President of the Junta de Extremadura, Guillermo Fernández Vara, and the Spanish Vice-President and Minister of Territorial Cooperation, Manuel Chaves González, opened the Summit in the presence of the Mayor of Cáceres, Ms Cármen Heras, and the President of the Diputación Provincial, Juan Andrés Tovar, the European Commission (DG Regio), the Committee of the Regions and the Congress of Local and Regional Authorities (Council of Europe). Mr Bernard Soulange, Vice-president of Rhône-Alps introduced the topic with a brilliant keynote speech on the different branches and scopes of territorial Cooperation. Several EGTCs, border regions and other cross-border structures debated on the current momentum of Territorial Cooperation in general and Cross-Border Cooperation in particular, the role of EGTCs, border regions and other cross-border structures debated on the current momentum of Territorial Cooperation in general and Cross-Border Cooperation in particular, the role of EGTCs, the perspectives for future European Cohesion Policy as well as the perspectives opened by the European Strategy EU2020.


Other activities on Territorial Cohesion in Spain in May-June 2010:

The launching of the Euro-Mediterranean Regional and Local Assembly (ARLEM) in Barcelona was the first main “territorial” issue in 2010. After that, Palma and Málaga hosted major events to deal mainly with territorial cohesion. In February, the AEBR co-organized with the Government of Aragón and the Trans-Pyrenean Foundation a seminar in Huesca. Also in February was presented the EGTC Galicia-Norte (ES-PT) and projects like “Euromobilitas” on CB Labour Market celebrated a major event in Cáceres, are worth to be mentioned.

But May has been a month of a strong bottom-up input to the topic. Please find in our website more information about the following events on Cross-Border Cooperation:

- COOPERA 2010, the third edition of this CB Forum organized by the Junta de Castilla y León in Zamora (31 may-3 June) - http://www.aebr.net/news/news_aebr.php?lc=en&nid=314


PLATFORMA, the platform of European local and regional authorities for development, met in Huelva focusing climate change as its main topic. The AER and the Junta de Andalucía provided an excellent framework to exchange views on this very important issue: http://www.aebr.net/news/news_aebr.php?lc=en&nid=308.

AAA – A NEW EUROREGION BETWEEN ANDALUCÍA, ALGARVE AND ALENTEJO

On the occasion of a meeting held in Faro on 5 May 2010, Mr. José Antonio Griñán, President of the Spanish Region of Andalucía, Mr. Joao Varejao Faria, President of the Portuguese Region of Algarve, and Mr. Joao de Deus Cordovil, President of the Portuguese Region of Alentejo, signed the convention for the creation of the new Spanish/Portuguese Euroregion “AAA”. The full Spanish press release is available on http://www.aebr.net/news/news_aebr.php?lc=en&nid=302.

FINAL CONFERENCE OF THE URBACT PROJECT ON 6 AND 7 MAY 2010 IN ESZTERGOM/HUNGARY

You will find a more detailed report in our website (http://www.aebr.net/news/news_aebr.php?lc=en&nid=305) on the final conference of the URBACT EGTC (Expertising Governance for Transfrontier Conurbations) project, held in Esztergom, Hungary, on 6 and 7 May 2010. This project, leaded by the MOT, has networked six cross-border conurbations in Europe since November 2008 on the topic of governance.

In liaison with European institutions, the participants were able to discuss the results of the project, judged very positive, and the follow-up that they would like to implement for it. A leaflet summarizing these results has been published and it is available on request from the MOT and on the project website. www.urbact.eu/egtc

Source: Cross-border news, No. 59, May 2010

The AEBR has been invited to this Conference and to be involved in the dissemination of the outputs of the project. The MOT and the AEBR keep contact to examine joint further steps to promote the knowledge and expertise on cross-border governance.

EUREGIO II MEETING ON 19 AND 20 MAY 2010, COLOGNE/GERMANY

You will find a more detailed report in our website on this project, aimed to increase skills to develop projects on cross-border health care: http://www.aebr.net/news/news_aebr.php?lc=en&nid=306
TFEB MEETING ON 27 MAY 2010 IN SEVILLA, SPAIN

The AEBR TFEB (Task Force External Borders) met on 27 May 2010 in Sevilla (Region of Andalucía, Spain). One of the main topics was a discussion on Mediterranean cooperation, and the especial case of Morocco. You will find a more detailed report in our website http://www.aebr.net/news/news_aebr.php?lc=en&nid=309#309.

AEBR EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MEETING, 28 – 29 May 2010, EVORA/PT

Executive Committee meeting of AEBR has taken place on 28 and 29 May 2010 in Évora (Alentejo/ Portugal). Main topics are i.a. the current state of the debates about the European Cohesion Policy and Territorial Development, including reports of the meetings kept with relevant European institutions about this. The AEBR Task Forces also provided some reports on their respective sectorial issues. The Executive Committee members were informed about projects development, and kept on exchanging experiences on the implementation of Interreg projects, following the process initiated in Oulu last February. Finally, updated information on the preparation of the AEBR General Assembly and Annual Conference in Dundalk-Newry (Ireland-Northern Ireland) next 21-23 October 2010 and other AEBR events was provided and the members had the chance to express their views on the Association main priorities.

AEBR YOUTH SUMMER SEMINAR, 19 – 23 July 2010 – DEADLINE FOR APPLICATIONS 18 JUNE 2010!

The AEBR Task Force of External Borders and the Autonomous Region of Friuli Venezia Giulia invite the youth from the border areas to participate in the 2nd Summer Seminar in Friuli Venezia Giulia from 19 to 23 July 2010. The application package is available for download, please note that the deadline for handing in applications is 18 June 2010: http://www.aebr.net/news/news_aebr.php?lc=en&nid=311#311.

9 MAY – EUROPE DAY

Numerous activities took place everywhere in Europe to mark that special day. Click http://www.aebr.net/news/news_aebr.php?lc=en&nid=289#289 for the updated overview on what some AEBR member regions have done on that day.

RECENT NEWS FROM EU INSTITUTIONS

Contribute to the CoR Consultation on EGTC!

A Europe-wide consultation on EU rules for cross-border cooperation was launched on 3 May 2010 on the occasion of the EGTC summit in Cáceres/Spain.

Results of this consultation will contribute to the own-initiative opinion "The review of the EGTC Regulation" that the Committee of the Regions will deliver at the beginning of 2011, and to the consequent legislative work of the institutions. According to regulation EC No. 1082/2006 on EGTC, the Commission shall forward by 1 August 2011 a report to the European Parliament and the Council on the application of the EGTC Regulation and proposals for amendments, where appropriate.

The consultation questionnaire as well as further information is available in all official EU languages at the EGTC portal www.cor.europa.eu/egtc. Contributions can be sent to egtc@cor.europa.eu by 20 July 2010.
CoR survey on „Sustainable energy policies by EU regions and cities: Good practices and challenges“

The purpose of this survey is to highlight the role of local and regional authorities in facing the challenge of climate change. Furthermore, this survey will be used to gather examples of good practice from EU regions and cities and to improve understanding of the policy options being implemented, the challenges facing local and regional authorities and the main areas of success. The results of this survey will contribute to the Committee of the Regions’ political message to the special session of the European Council devoted to energy policy in early 2011, thereby helping to define future EU action in this area. Regions and cities of the EU are invited to contribute, by filling in the online questionnaire available at http://portal.cor.europa.eu/europe2020/news/Pages/SustainableEnergySurvey.aspx. Deadline for contributions is 30 June 2010.

Results of the CoR consultation “Your voice on Europe 2020”

This consultation, which ended on 28 April 2010, met with great interest throughout Europe. The CoR received a total of more than 90 contributions. On the special website on this topic, http://cor.europa.eu/europe2020, you will find further information on current developments. It is planned that the CoR addresses EU and national leaders in mid May to brief them on the viewpoint of local and regional authorities, as expressed in the Consultation. The contribution of AEBR can be found on the above mentioned website, and also on http://www.aebr.net/news/news_aebr.php?lc=en&nid=287#287.

European Local Democracy Week

The next European Local Democracy Week is to be held around 15 October 2010 (15 October 1985 was the day on which the European Charter of Local Self-Government was opened for signature by the Council of Europe). The ELDW is an annual event, aiming to increase the knowledge of local democratic institutions and processes amongst citizens, and to strengthen links between populations and their local representatives. Responsible for the organisation of the ELDW is the Congress of Local and Regional Authorities of the Council of Europe. How to join the European Local Democracy Week? What kind of activities can be organised? These questions are answered on the ELDW website www.coe.int/demoweek, where you can also find the further details and the registration form for the ELDW 2010.

Public consultation on future of cultural and creative industries

On 27 April 2010, the European Commission has launched an online public consultation, which aims at unlocking the full potential of Europe’s cultural and creative industries. This consultation is linked to a new Green Paper which highlights the need to improve access to finance, especially for small businesses, as key to enabling the sector to flourish and to contribute to sustainable and inclusive growth.

Androulla Vassiliou, European Commissioner for Education, Culture, Multilingualism and Youth stated in the press conference: "Europe's cultural and creative industries are not only essential for cultural diversity in our continent; they are also one of our most dynamic economic sectors. They have an important role to play in helping to bring Europe out of the crisis."

The public consultation launched by the Green Paper runs until the end of July 2010. The Green Paper as well as further details on the consultation can be found on: http://ec.europa.eu/culture/our-policy-development/doc2577_en.htm
PROJECT EUROPE 2030

On 8 May 2010, Felipe González, chairman of the Reflection Group on the Future of Europe, handed over the report "Project Europe 2030 - Challenges and Opportunities" to Herman Van Rompuy, President of the European Council. This independent Reflection Group was set up by the European Council in order to identify, analyse and propose solutions to the challenges the EU will be facing at the horizon 2030. The Reflection Group is composed of 12 members with outstanding expertise in their field of activity, and they have also sought the opinion of experts from the academic and business worlds. A wide range of problems with which the EU and member states are confronted are listed in this report, for instance the global economic crisis and states coming to the rescue of banks, climate change and energy supply as well as the threats of terrorism and organised crime. For more information: http://www.consilium.europa.eu/showFocus.aspx?id=1&focusId=473&lang=en

Reflection Group on the Future of Europe - Background
Reflection Group website (en)
Webcast of the ceremony
Webcast of press conference with Felipe González

New publication: The State of the Congress 2009

The activity report of the Congress of Local and Regional Authorities with reports and interviews has recently been published and is available for download on www.coe.int/congress-report.

EVENTS OF EU INSTITUTIONS

- 7 June 2010, Brussels: "Effective Cooperation in Europe" Forum on EU-Russia relations, organised at the Committee of the Regions. For more information, please contact ecefdiric@gmail.com
- 8 June 2010, Brussels: CoR Forum „Local and regional responses to poverty and social exclusion“. Latest version of the programme and online registration: www.cor.europa.eu.
- 11 June 2010, Brussels: First meeting of the Committee of the Region’s Platform on Health – Venue: Committee of the Regions, Rue Belliard 99-101, Room JDE 52. For more information: betina.skibsted@cor.europa.eu
- 17 June 2010, Brussels: Meeting of the Secretaries General at the CoR
- 17 June 2010, Brussels: ‘Train the trainers’ seminar: managing the EU's structural funds. The seminar will focus on providing information on key topics in EU structural fund management that participants can use in their home countries to train colleagues in the national managing and certifying authorities and intermediate bodies. Registration is open until 7 June 2010. More information / Registration form
- 24 June 2010, Brussels: Meeting of the COTER commission, Committee of the Regions
PRESENTATIONS AND NEWS OF AEBR MEMBER REGIONS

In this edition, you will get to know Aragón (ES), Nordic Council of Ministers (DK/FI/IS/NO/SE), and Euregio Bayerischer Wald/Böhmerwald (DE/AU/CZ).

The Autonomous Community of Aragón, situated at the north-east of the Iberian Peninsula, is one of the 17 Autonomous Communities that form Spain. Aragon is situated at the border to France (136 km length of border). The presentation of Aragón is available in English, French and Spanish on: http://www.aebr.net/news/news_regions.php?lc=en&nid=300

The Nordic Council of Ministers (NCM), formed in 1971, is the forum for Nordic governmental cooperation, including Denmark, Finland, Iceland, Norway, Sweden and autonomous regions of Faroe Islands, Greenland and Åland. The presentation (English) is available on http://www.aebr.net/news/news_regions.php?lc=en&nid=304

Euregio Bayerischer Wald – Böhmerwald, situated at the German/Austrian/Czech Border, became member of AEBR in 1998. Find out more about this border region in the presentation, which is available in German on: http://www.aebr.net/news/news_regions.php?lc=en&nid=299

On 7 June 2010, the West Sweden and Extremadura Regional Offices in Brussels organise the SIRG Conference “New Job Markets for Inclusion”. This event takes place in the Committee of the Regions. Latest version of the programme and online registration: http://www.westsweden.se/index.php?id=4009&L=1

17 – 18 June 2010, Excursion of EuRegio Salzburg-Berchtesgadener Land-Traunstein to Karlsruhe (DE) in the scope of the discussions of a project „Regional Stadt Bahn“. The German text of the invitation is available on http://www.aebr.net/news/news_regions.php?lc=en&nid=301. For further information, please contact: office@euregio-salzburg.eu

MAIN AEBR EVENTS 2010

- 08 June 2010, Meeting of the AEBR Task Force Health, Vienna (AT)
- 19-23 July, II AEBR Youth Forum, Trieste (Friuli-Venezia-Giulia), TFEB
- 16 September 2010, AEBR Forum (Friuli-Venezia-Giulia, IT / Croatia)
- 17-18 September 2010, AEBR Executive Committee in Udine (Friuli-Venezia Giulia, IT)
- 20-25 September 2010, CBC Circle Conference Finland-Russia-Estonia
- 4-7 October, activities during the 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 “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 fields of inter-regional and transnational co-operation. With one hundred members (European border and cross-border 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.