

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)

AGEG c/o EUREGIO · Enscheder Str. 362 · D-48599 Gronau



AEBR Annual Conference, 11th-12th September 2014

“Innovation and Research – Cross-Border Regional Development through Public-Private Partnership”

Final Declaration

The Association of European Border Regions has organized its General Assembly and Annual Conference 2014 in Rzeszów, Podkarpackie Voivodship, Poland, hosted by the Polish Association of the Carpathian Euroregion.

The main topic of the AEBR Annual Conference 2014 has been “Innovation and Research – Cross-Border Regional Development through Public-Private Partnership”.

In the framework of the objectives of the Europe 2020 Strategy, Innovation and Research take an eminent position, taking into account that innovation does not mean only high-tech solutions and top research on computing, mechatronics, or a new focus on sustainable energy and so forth, but also a new approach of “traditional” fields, such as tourism or agro-food products.

In CB regions Innovation and Research offer a large scale of possibilities: creation of a larger market, new sources of employment, attraction of enterprises and business spin-off effects, which are a precondition for successful CBC, as the creation of good environmental and framework conditions for Innovation and Research. Innovation and Research at top level also need good international contacts (universities, research institutions, enterprises, etc.).

Cross-border regions should develop a joint strategy in this field, with concrete proposals for sustainable implementation and further development of CBC. Border regions can profit from Smart Specialization in both sides of the border, and should strengthen their participation in European networks dealing with CBC (the AEBR), but also with specialized networks such as ERRIN, and others.

It should be taken into account that not only territorial cooperation programmes will deal with innovation, but also Horizon 2020, Erasmus +, LIFE, ENI and IPA etc. And there are possibilities to combine funds from different programmes (multi-fund approach).

Mobilising and combining available knowledge on both sides of the border through cross-border networks with key stakeholders (universities, research and innovation centres, business sector, administration) and policy makers responsible for research, development and innovation will lead to the development of new possibilities for the development of cross-border regions and their readiness (and the EU's) to compete in the global arena.

Best examples show that, in the field of innovation and research, EU funding is used in the start-up phase in order to initiate cooperation and open new business opportunities. It is however necessary to reduce progressively EU support, so that the cooperation process keeps on existing after the end of external funding.

Public-Private Partnership could be a good instrument to foster CB Innovation and Research, but must be evaluated from a lifecycle perspective (not at short-term). On the other hand, public-private partnership projects are not suitable in every context. For each individual project an assessment should be made to check whether there will be an added value.

---0---

During the AEBR events in Rzeszów, the members of the AEBR decided to elaborate a resolution on the German proposal to establish a toll system for vehicles circulating on all German roads (see attached document).

Due to the proximity of the border with Ukraine, and the presence of AEBR members from Ukraine and the Russian Federation, the AEBR expressed its wishes of a peaceful progression of the crisis between these two countries towards an accepted and definitive solution. We consider that the strengthening of CBC between Russian and Ukrainian regions could be a valuable tool to uphold and maintain peace and development in the region once a solution has been found.