



Joint events on Cross-Border Cooperation

**12th November 2015: Joint Seminar
“The participation of the EGTCs
in programmes of European Territorial Cooperation”**

**13th November 2015: Joint Conference
“The Future of Cross-Border Cooperation in Europe”**

Venue: European Committee of the Regions

Jacques Delors Building – Rue Belliard 99-101, B-1040 Brussels





The Future of Cross-Border Cooperation in Europe

Cross-border cooperation (CBC) has developed for almost 60 years (initiated formally in the EUREGIO at the German-Dutch border, in Scandinavia and in the Upper Rhine area). There was one common aspect in all these areas: the cooperation was not limited to certain selected topics, but included all areas of life, as for example it was the case in 1972 with the first EU funded cross-border action programme for the EUREGIO. In close cooperation with the Association of European Border Regions (AEBR) the Council of Europe organised for more than twenty years European-wide conferences on cross-border topics and launched the Madrid Outline Convention as a first approach for a cross-border legal instrument thirty-five years ago.

Since 1990 the evolution of CBC was even more accelerated thanks to the EU programme Interreg. The idea was developed during the eighties in cooperation with AEBR, ensuring longer-term support to cooperation. In 2006, a legal instrument for territorial cooperation (the EGTC) applicable in the whole EU facilitated even more opportunities for CBC. The AEBR elaborated a baseline study for this instrument for the Committee of the Regions and the Commission.

During the last 25 years EU Interreg programmes have been more and more aligned with the priorities of cohesion and regional policy, and do not finance the whole range of topics. At the same time, in many member States and in border areas there seems to be a certain tendency to equate CBC more and more with INTERREG funding.

Best practices identified and Interreg evaluations implemented by the European Commission show that CBC goes beyond Interreg. CBC includes all areas of life, is based on mid- and long-term strategies, where common projects have to fit in, and it is most successful when implemented on a regional or local level in partnership with national governments, the EU, civil society and NGOs.

Therefore, successful CBC is closely linked to well-functioning regional and local democracy, spatial planning and the development of region-specific objectives with regard to cross-border development (mid- and long-term strategies). It is a CBC task to examine what the regional and local levels can do to achieve their objectives, which national means from both sides of the border can be used and which priorities can be implemented with Interreg support. As many cross-border problems and tasks have above all national, but often also European and global causes, the States, the EU and the Council of Europe are responsible for giving their support, and for this they need border regions and cross-border structures as partners. A cross-border organisation with a recognised cross-border legal form is a more suitable partner than a private-law organisation.

During the Workshop on EGTCs and ETCs on 12th November we will check the state-of-the-art and perspectives of this instrument, and the Common Conference on 13th November will tackle the future of CBC in general, not only with regard to EU programmes, but also other aspects. The added value of CBC for border regions and for Europe, its contribution to cross-border territorial integration, new opportunities for growth and jobs, a better cooperation with neighbouring States and between third countries, and a better use of new chances (energy, health care, public services, education, modern communication media, etc.) need to be further elaborated, as well as the elimination of existing obstacles. Studies to better identify these obstacles, and systematic efforts by the regions, their associations and the EU institutions to overcome them, measure performance and improve CBC are increasingly on their way. In this Conference we want to explore the perspectives of CBC for the coming years, stressing its value as cornerstone and cement of the European House.

9.30-12.00 Meetings of the AEBR Task Forces

Various venues in Brussels. *The information will be provided to the participants registered and will be available online*



13.00 PRE-CONFERENCE SEMINAR – “The participation of the EGTCs in programmes of European Territorial Cooperation”

Co-organised by the CoR and the AEBR

Venue: European Committee of the Regions, Room JDE 62

Languages: EN, FR, DE, ES and IT passive

13.00 Registration and welcome lunch (*on invitation of the CoR*)

14.30 **Opening**

Raffaele Cattaneo, Chair of the Commission COTER and Political Coordinator of the EGTC Platform of the CoR

15.00 **Roundtable 1: Questions related to the participation of the EGTCs in INTERREG**

16.15 Coffee break

16.30 **Roundtable 2: New ideas for the future INTERREG projects**

17.30 **Launching of the 2016 edition of the EGTC award 'Building Europe across Borders'**

17.45 End of the seminar

18.00 Evening Event – AEBR reception at the Representation of North Rhine-Westphalia in Brussels

Bestowal of the Sail of Papenburg 2015

Tasting of Regional Products

Due to limited capacity, the AEBR will send personalised invitations

Venue: Rue Montoyer 47, B-1000 Brussels; Phone: +32 (2) 739-1775

13th November 2015

08:30

Registration

09:00-10.30

AEBR statutory meetings on separate invitation



“The Future of Cross-Border Cooperation in Europe”

Joint Conference of the European Commission, the European Committee of the Regions, the Congress of Local and Regional Authorities of the Council of Europe and the Association of European Border Regions,

Venue: European Committee of the Regions, Room JDE 52 and listening room JDE 51

Languages: EN, FR, DE, ES and IT passive

10:30 Registration

11:00 **Opening and Welcome**

Raffaele Cattaneo, Chair of the COTER Commission and Coordinator of the EGTC platform of the CoR, President of the Regional Council of Lombardia

Video message **Corina Crețu**, Commissioner for Regional and Urban Policy

Karl-Heinz Lambertz, President of AEBR, President of the Parliament of the German-Speaking Community of Belgium

Gudrun Mosler-Törnström, President of the Chamber of Regions of the Congress of Local and Regional Authorities of the Council of Europe, Vice-President of the regional parliament (Landtag) of Salzburg



11:45 **Cross-Border Cooperation: Corner Stone and Cement of the European House**

A European Task and Political Priority of the EU

Chair: Ann-Sofi Backgren, 1st Vice-President of the AEBR

Walter Deffaa, Director General, DG Regional and Urban Policy, European Commission

Cross-Border Cooperation – Key for Territorial Integration

Martín Guillermo Ramírez, Secretary General AEBR

How to further improve CBC at regional/local level?

View of the border regions: political bottom-up approach

Pavel Branda, Chairman of the CoR interregional group on cross-border cooperation, Euroregion Neisse-Nisa-Nysa (D/CZ/PL).

12:30 Lunch *(on invitation of the Congress of Local and Regional Authorities of the Council of Europe)*

14:00 **Cross-Border Cooperation: Added Value for Cross-Border Regions and Europe**

Using Opportunities and overcoming Obstacles at Internal and External Borders/ Third Countries

Chair: Andreas Kiefer, Secretary General of the Congress of Local and Regional Authorities of the Council of Europe

Iskra Mihailova, Chair of the Committee on Regional Development, European Parliament

Lena Andersson Pench, Director, DG Regional and Urban Policy, European Commission

Nathalie Thiberge, Programme Manager, Directorate-General for European Neighbourhood Policy and Enlargement Negotiations (DG NEAR)

François Maïtia, Vice-President of AEBR, Vice-President of Région Aquitaine (FR)

Dawid Lasek, Vice-Chairman of the Management Board, Association of the Carpathian Euroregion Poland (tbc)

Debate

15:15 Networking coffee break



15:35 **Future priorities for CBC in Europe**

Cross-border health care, energy, public services, territorial planning, legal bodies

Chair: Gert Versnick, Vice-Chair of Euroregion Scheldemond/Province of East Flanders, Vice-President of AEBR

Breda Pecan, Rapporteur of the Congress of Local and Regional Authorities, Council of Europe on External Borders/Third Countries, Representative of the Chamber of Local Authorities, Alternate of the Governance Committee

Jiří Buriánek, Secretary General of the Committee of the Regions

View of the border regions:

- **Nikola Dobroslavič**, Prefect of Dubrovnik-Neretva County (HR) (Croatian-Bosnian border and member of the Adriatic Ionian Euroregion), and rapporteur of the CoR's own opinion on *Strengthening CBC: the need for a better regulatory framework?*
- **Xosé Lago**, Deputy Director-General of External Relations and Cross-Border Cooperation, Regional Government of Galicia (ES) (Spanish-Portuguese border, Euroregion/EGTC Galicia-Norte)

17:00 **Concluding and Closing speeches**

Markku Markkula, President of the Committee of the Regions

Lena Andersson Pench, Director, DG Regional and Urban Policy, European Commission

Gudrun Mosler-Törnström, President of the Chamber of Regions of the Congress of Local and Regional Authorities of the Council of Europe, Vice-President of the Regional Parliament (Landtag) of Salzburg

Karl-Heinz Lambertz, President of AEBR, President of the Parliament of the German-Speaking Community of Belgium

17:30 **End of the Conference**



INFORMATION

Webstreaming:

Channels www.livestream.com/corlive1
www.livestream.com/corlive2

12 November
13 November

Social networks:

Hashtag: *#FutureCBC*

@EU_Regional

@EU_CoR @EGTCplatform

@SocialnetAEBR

@COECongress

www.flickr.com/photos/cor-photos

Contact: egtc@cor.europa.eu
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Websites: www.aebr.eu
www.cor.europa.eu/egtc

Registration: <http://europa.eu/!kQ68wj>