

## **AEBR Cross Border Award „Sail of Papenburg“ 2017**

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Before I come to my actual presentation as chairman of the jury for the bestowal of the Cross Border Award „Sail of Papenburg“, I would like to use the opportunity to thank all the people that did an excellent job while preparing and organising this event week. Here, first of all I would like to thank our host organisation.

I see it as my personal need to express our gratitude, even though it is not primarily my task as chairman of the jury.

European border regions have for many years already promoted cross-border cooperation with their own ideas and initiatives, with cross-border networks built over decades and with a lot of commitment.

The Ems Dollart Region donated the Cross Border Award in the year 2002, and since then the award is bestowed every year on the occasion of the Annual Conference.

The award honours particular achievements in the area of cross border cooperation, e.g. in the cultural, economic, institutional, environmental and social sphere in a border or cross-border region.

The award honours and motivates: it honours outstanding programmes, strategies, projects and actions within the scope of cross-border cooperation that preferably can be seen as exemplary. At the same time it should motivate border and cross-border regions to actively contribute to a better understanding and better relations at the borders between the nations throughout Europe. Thereby European integration at the borders will be directly promoted.

It is a great pleasure for me to hand this prize today over to the winner as new chairman of the jury. Here, I would also like to thank my predecessor, Dr. Reinhold Kolck, who presented this prize since its donation.

I'd like to thank not only him, but all members of the jury for their work, also this year.

Year by year the jury has the difficult task to assess the submitted proposals and applications. The challenges for the jury are every time different. I will explain this in more detail later.

First of all, let me thank the EU Commissioner for Regional Policy, Mrs Corinna Cretu. She took anew the patronage over the prize underlying in this way the importance of this award.

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Ladies and Gentlemen,

Honoured are outstanding achievements in and /or by a border and cross-border region.

In principle, only organisations aiming to boost direct neighbourly cooperation along a national border are eligible for the award. Membership in the European Union or AEBR is not required.

The motto for the year 2017 was:

Periphery – in the Centre of Cohesion

- CBC in the light of the 7th Cohesion Report
- CBC – driving force for the future European Cohesion.

An independent jury appointed by the Executive Committee assesses the submitted proposals. The winner of the AEBR Cross-Border Award is decided by majority decision on the part of the members of the AEBR Executive Committee.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Even though we work with precisely defined evaluation criteria and a scoring scheme, it is still difficult to assess the proposals.

Even while working with a precise evaluation criteria and a differentiated scoring scheme, it is not really easy to achieve a fair outcome of the competition.

Let me as example name the evaluation criterion „particularly difficult conditions.“

Practitioners in cross-border cooperation have certainly made already the experience that while trying to consider supra-regional and national targets the realisation of a project became much more difficult. And, sometimes the fact that the partners succeeded in finalising a project despite difficult conditions was seen as a major result of a project.

The jury members are aware of these problems and try to take them sufficiently into account. But sometimes it's a difficult task. At least – and this is the reason why I'm quite happy with the outcome – we came in the jury with a vast majority to nearly the same conclusion. This is in particular true for the first places in the ranking.

The Executive Committee followed the recommendation of the jury.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

The jury has received 7 applications / proposals before the expiration of the deadline.

I can hardly refer today to all applications in detail. But I'd like at least to thank all applicants that took part in the competition for the Cross Border Award 2017.

Please, let me present you briefly the first three places in the ranking list:

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Two applicants with the same achieved score have to share **the third place**:

Six cross-border regions along the German, Dutch and Belgian borders, as well as the provinces Noord-Brabant and Antwerp have established Cross-Border Info Points for commuters and their employers along the borders. They provide an important contribution to the realisation of a cross-border labour market in this large region. The application has been submitted by the EUREGIO.

With the same score and also the third place ranked the project „Unlimited Health Together“ realised in the cross-border regions Lower Austria (AT), South Moravia (CZ) and South Bohemia (CZ).

The **second place** goes to two border regions in North-West Ireland. That is Donegal County in the Republic of Ireland and the Strabane District in Northern Ireland with their project “The Northwest Strategic Growth Plan and the North West Strategic Growth Partnership.”

For the first place and the bestowal of the Cross-Border Award „Sail of Papenburg“ 2017 the jury has recommended the AEBR Executive Committee the application of the International Lake Constance Conference (IBK) with its project „IBH – The International University of Lake Constance and their IBH-Labs – Networks of regional universities and practitioners for research and innovation.“ The AEBR Executive Committee followed the recommendation of the jury.

It is a great pleasure for me to welcome Mr Thomas Radke, deputy director of the International Lake Constance Conference as representative of the Lake Constance Region, who will take the award. Please, come to the front.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

The application that has won the cross-border award „Sail of Papenburg“ this year is in many ways outstanding:

Its significance becomes obvious while looking at the size of the cross-border region, where the project „IBH – The International University of Lake Constance and their IBH-Labs – Networks of regional universities and practitioners for research and innovation“ is implemented: 6 districts and the city of Kempten on the German side of the Lake Constance, 6 cantons in Switzerland, the Federal State Vorarlberg in Austria and the Principality of Liechtenstein.

Alone for its network with 30 universities and colleges from Germany, France and Switzerland the IBH as Lead Partner is an outstanding cross-border cooperation project.

With joint and cross-border projects the IBH enhances the development of the Lake Constance Region.

On initiative of the IBH and in cooperation with the university of applied sciences in Konstanz, with the Vorarlberg university of applied sciences and with university of applied sciences in Winterthur the IBH-Labs were initiated.

Together with practice partners following IBH-Labs have been launched in 2017:  
- IBH Living Lab Active & Assisted Living,

- a project supporting people with physical and psychological handicaps
- IBH-Lab SMEdigital,  
a competence network for digitisation in the mid-sized sector
- IBH-Lab Seamless Learning,  
a project promoting cross-border and cross-context learning.

The IBH-Labs address key challenges in education, economy and society.

While addressing these challenges in a cross-border way with high level of professional expertise, the Lake Constance Region provides an important contribution for the development of this large and important region. With its ideas and contents this project can serve as a model for other regions.

Therefore, following the decision of the AEBR Executive Committee I'd like to hand over the CBA „Sail of Papenburg 2017“ with my congratulations to Mr Radke.

Badajoz, 27<sup>th</sup> October 2017

Bernhard Bramlage  
Chairman of the Jury