
3 x 3 = 10 ADVANTAGES OF AEBR

Being a member of AEBR means:

- ◆ participating in the only Europe-wide network of border and cross-border regions;
- ◆ aspiring to common values, goals and strategies for cross-border cooperation and thereby playing an important part in the process of European unification;
- ◆ highlighting and clarifying the special problems and specific opportunities for border and cross-border regions at both the national and European levels;
- ◆ helping to solve cross-border problems and to implement joint Europe-wide and national actions;
- ◆ making the most of the advantages of a Europe-wide network offering services specifically geared towards border and cross-border regions;
- ◆ actively contributing towards a European policy that takes account of public interests and concerns, and helping to foster mutual understanding and tolerance and break down barriers between the peoples of Europe.

**AEBR
AGEG
ARFE**



**The added value
of cross-border
cooperation**

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)
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The added value of cross-border cooperation

European added value arises from the fact that in the light of past experience, people who are living together in neighbouring border regions want to cooperate and thereby make a valuable contribution to the promotion of peace, freedom, security and the observance of human rights.

Political added value involves making a substantial contribution towards:

- the development of Europe and European integration;
- getting to know each other, getting on together, understanding each other and building trust;
- the implementation of subsidiarity and partnership;
- increased economic and social cohesion and cooperation;
- preparing for the accession of new members;
- using EU funding to secure cross-border cooperation via multiannual programmes, and ensuring that the necessary national and regional co-financing is committed in the long term.

Institutional added value entails:

- active involvement by the citizens, authorities, political and social groups on both sides of the border;
- secure knowledge about one's neighbour (regional authorities, social partners, etc.);
- long-term cross-border cooperation in structures that are capable of working efficiently:
 - as a vertically and horizontally functioning partnership, despite having different structures and areas of responsibility;
 - as a legally accepted target of aid and a working partner, receiving and administering funds;
- joint drafting, implementation and financing of cross-border programmes and projects.

Experience gained throughout Europe shows that jointly developed programmes and projects can be most effectively implemented and realised if the regional and local partners play a considerable role.

The **socio-economic added value** becomes apparent in the respective regions, albeit in different ways, through:

- the mobilisation of endogenous potential by strengthening the regional and local levels as partners for and initiators of cross-border cooperation;
- the participation of actors from the economic and social sectors (for example, chambers of commerce, associations, companies, trade unions, cultural and social institutions, environmental organisations and tourism agencies);
- the opening up of the labour market and harmonisation of professional qualifications;
- additional development, e.g. in the fields of infrastructure, transport, tourism, the environment, education, research and cooperation between small and medium-sized enterprises, and also the creation of more jobs in these areas;
- lasting improvements in the planning of spatial development and regional policy (including the environment);
- the improvement of cross-border transport infrastructure.

Socio-cultural added value is reflected in:

- lasting, repeated dissemination of knowledge about the geographical, structural, economic, socio-cultural and historical situation of a cross-border region (including with the media's help);
- the overview of a cross-border region afforded in maps, publications, teaching material, and so on;
- the development of a circle of committed experts (multipliers), such as churches, schools, youth and adult educational establishments, the conservation authorities, cultural associations, libraries, museums, and so forth;
- equal opportunities and extensive knowledge of the language of the neighbouring country or of dialects as a component of cross-border regional development and a prerequisite for communication.

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AE BR – Europe

- 1 AE BR – the only Europe-wide organisation representing border and cross-border regions
- 2 AE BR – a political mouthpiece for all border and cross-border regions at European level
- 3 AE BR – a European platform, driving force and helpdesk for all aspects of cross-border cooperation

AE BR – a hub of active service

- 4 AE BR – a helpdesk for the establishment of cross-border structures and programmes and for finding solutions to practical problems
- 5 AE BR – a meeting point and source of information for all general and topical questions to do with cross-border cooperation
- 6 AE BR – a platform for the exchange of best practices for crossborder projects

AE BR – networks

- 7 AE BR – a focal point of common convictions, strategies and measures for border and cross-border regions
- 8 AE BR – the initiator and energiser of networks, partnerships/ twinning of border and cross-border regions
- 9 AE BR – an instrument for taking up special cross-border issues in mini-networks

- 10 AE BR – vital
 - ◆ for strengthening and further developing cross-border cooperation
 - ◆ as both a key element in European integration and a guarantor of regional diversityIf no AE BR existed, we would have to create one!