

Annex 6: Detailed Work Programme

The present project focuses particularly on the barriers of social security in border regions. Due to their peripheral location and the clashing of different social security systems, legislation, languages and cultures, these regions are often handicapped. Furthermore, it is often extremely difficult for small groups to be heard in the capitals.

The project can be divided into different work packages:

1. Baseline study and exchange of experience:

The working group composed of the applicant and its network of border regions, the project partner as well as external experts in the field of social security will examine which forms of advisory services for cross-border commuters already exist in Europe, how they function and which results and perspectives exist for these information infrastructures. To this end, all partners and network partners will collect and compile relevant information. This set of concentrated information will serve as basic concept to detail specific barriers and problems of social security in border regions and to compare them with regard to different border regions at the old and new internal borders.

Methodology:

In total, three meetings of the working group are foreseen. Due to the complexity of the issue, interpretation into the three working languages German, French, and English is essential. The two first meetings will be allocated to action 1. The first meeting (1st December 2011) will introduce the partners into the complex topic of coordinating social security. External experts will be invited for that purpose. The baseline study will be prepared and the partner regions will be requested to report about the situation in their border regions and to identify specific barriers and best practices (by using a questionnaire,). This informative material will be collected and assessed with help of the Advisory Committee of the AEBR. The baseline study will be presented to the partners during the 2nd working group meeting (midst April 2012) for discussion. Identified best practices will be invited to present their advisory and information services. At this time, also the information and awareness requirements of the stakeholders of existing networks and advisory services for cross-border commuters should be debated. The expertise of the network "Taskforce-Net", the Association of European Border Regions, EURES points, Solvit, the Benelux Secretariat General and the representatives of European organisations will be taken into account as well.

Time frame: 1 December 2011- 30 April 2012

2. Analysis of the current situation and formulation of recommendations

Based on the baseline study and the analysis of best practices, the working group will elaborate recommendations for the improvement of the advisory services for cross-border commuters. Together with the baseline study, this will form a part of the final report. During the analysis of the baseline study, external experts, i.e. the Benelux Secretariat General, the Task Force "Cross-Border Commuters", as well as representatives from border commuters' consultancies at the old and new internal borders will be consulted as well. This second action aims at elaborating a roadmap for the final report and formulating specific recommendations for political decision makers, in order to improve the coordination of social security systems in Europe, and particularly in the border regions. As a result of the project, a final report of approximately 35 pages should be produced in the three languages German, English, and French. It is foreseen to print 250 copies per language.

Methodology:

Also in this case, the results should be elaborated in form of a structured dialogue between the partners and experts during the one-day working group meeting (midst June 2012). The applicant will elaborate the road map for the final report, and will present it to the partners for assessment. Between the meetings of the working groups, a regular exchange will be maintained via e-mail. A separate area will be activated in the AEBR online forum, in which documents and information can be exchanged. All partners of the network are invited to give their input to the work and to support the analysis with concrete examples from practical experience. During the analyses as well as during the elaboration of statements and the final report, the Advisory Council will assist the applicant with its experience.

Time frame: 1 May-15 August 2012

3. Dissemination and Communication

The overall objective of this project consists of improving the border area citizens' level of information with regard to social insurance issues. Cross-border commuters should be able to get high-quality and reliable personal advice. More needs to be done to prevent cross-border commuters of unpleasant surprises, which are then taken up by the press to polemicize the pitfalls of Europe. Furthermore, it has to be avoided that cross-border commuters do not accept job offers from the other side of the border due to the high uncertainties, thus affecting their freedom of movement. By means of the final report, the significance and the added-value of advisory services in addition to classical print and IT information for cross-border labour market mobility will be highlighted. The dissemination of the project results as well as communication about the recommendations contained in the report are an essential component of this project. To this

end, a one-day final conference will be held and the printed version of the report will be dispatched and published on the websites of the AEBR and its partner regions, Euregio Meuse-Rhin and the involved cross-border consultancies.

The final conference will also be prepared and planned in the framework of the third working group meeting. It will be held in autumn 2012 in the Euregio Meuse-Rhin (probably mid-October 2012 in Liege, Belgium) and will closely be connected to the AEBR Annual Conference, thus ensuring sufficient recognition and publicity. The presence of high-ranking political and administrative representatives of national, regional and European institutions will provide a broad platform for dissemination of the results. The coordination of social security in border regions will be discussed with participants from all parts of Europe and beyond. The recommendations will be presented to the broad public. They will also be handed over symbolically to high-ranking representatives of the European Commission, the Committee of the Regions, and the Parliament.

Methodology: Lectures given by experts from the political, economical and scientific sector will help to communicate contents and ideas of the partners. In addition to professional speeches, also some affected people will have their say. The practical examples of barriers to the free movement should be discussed in the light of 20 years internal market. Interpretation is foreseen into 5 languages in order to reach a broad public.

The results of the projects will be sent in hardcopy form (report). Furthermore, digital versions will be available via the websites of the partners. A transfer of the recommendations to the Committee of the Regions is foreseen to take place with help of the partners of the AEBR network, which are active within the CoR. One idea is, e.g. to use them in the framework of a statement on the situation of cross-border commuters after 20 years of internal market.

Time frame: 16 August 2012 - 31 December 2012

4. Project coordination and administration

The AEBR will act as lead partner in this action and plan the tasks, coordination of working group meetings as well as their preparation and follow-up. Meeting documents will be prepared, and the logistical and administrative preparation of the meetings and the conference will be organised (copies, translations, speakers, collection of data...). The progress of the project will be monitored by the applicant and is to be presented in each partner meeting.

Methodology:

Apart from the meetings, there will be a regular exchange of information between the partners by help of modern communication tools.

Time frame:

The administrative commitments with regard to accounting and reporting will be carried out by the applicant and the project partner during the whole contract period: 1 December 2011-31 December 2012