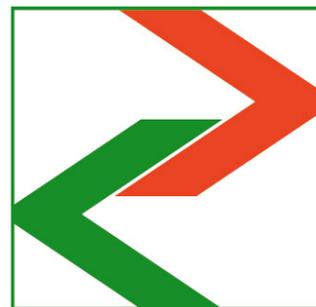


Arbeitsgemeinschaft Europäischer Grenzregionen (AGEG)
Asociación de Regiones Fronterizas Europeas (ARFE)
Association des régions frontalières européennes (ARFE)
Association of European Border Regions (AEBR)
Comunità di lavoro delle regioni europee di confine (AGEG)
Europæiske grænseregioners Arbejdsfællesskab (AGEG)
Werkgemeenschap van Europese grensgebieden (WVEG)
Associação das Regiões Fronteiriças Europeias (ARFE)
Σύνδεσμος Ευρωπαϊκών Συνοριακών Περιφερειών (ΣΕΣΠ)
Stowarzyszenie Europejskich Regionów Granicznych (SERG)



„PARTNERSHIP IN A EUROPE WITHOUT BORDERS”

AEBR' electronic newsletter – July 2005

This Newsletter of the Association of European Border Regions (AEBR) will be published quarterly in order to inform the border regions and their friends about the latest news of AEBR, the cooperation in European border and cross-border regions as well as the cooperation with other European institutions and associations.

This newsletter is published in English, French and German (average circulation 1600).

AEBR proposals have contributed to changes in the proposals for the new Regional Policy, says President Lambert van Nistelrooij:



During the AEBR Executive Committee Meeting in Karlstad/Region of Värmland (SE) on 17/18 June, AEBR's president reported on several conversations with representatives of the European Parliament, the European Commission and the Committee of the Regions. The main topics covered in the meetings in spring 2005 were inter alia:

- the EU's future regional policy,
- the renationalisation of European programmes,
- the important role played by border regions in the implementation of the Lisbon Strategy,
- the financial outlook for the EU and

- a number of individual issues, e.g. the European Neighbourhood Programme or the new legal instrument for cross-border cooperation.

Many of AEBR's proposals were incorporated into proposed amendments submitted by Members of the European Parliament.

Increasing cross-border business relations between Norway and Sweden



On the occasion of AEBR's Executive Committee meeting in Karlstad/Region of Värmland/SE on 17/18 June 2005, the Managing Director of "Wermland Chamber of Commerce", Ms. Annemärthe Andréasson, reported on the close and increasing business relations with Norway as well as on the growing influx of settlers from other European countries, in particular from The Netherlands. For more info: www.wermland.cci.se

The photo shows Ms. Andréasson talking to AEBR Vice-President Dr. Kolck.

AEBR's Executive Committee favours continued support for all border regions

During its meeting in Karlstad/SE, the Executive Committee of AEBR resolutely pointed out that all border regions have to be supported. Both the "old" and "new" border regions have to solve problems for economy and citizens, even if these problems are frequently of a different kind. A joint eligibility would be helpful in order to attain genuine cross-border projects. EU funds should best be allocated per border and per programme.

Many of AEBR's suggestions have been incorporated into proposed amendments submitted by Members of the European Parliament, says AEBR Secretary General Jens Gabbe

The Secretary General of AEBR points out that the following suggestions of AEBR have been incorporated into proposed amendments submitted by Members of the European Parliament:

- Central EU issues could no longer be changed at national level;
- All border regions have to be taken into consideration;
- Cross-border cooperation should be made a higher financial priority,

- Border regions are among the particularly handicapped regions as defined by Constitutional Treaty Article III § 220.

These concerns have particularly been expressed in the report of the European Parliament on the regulation governing the structural funds, since this was a joint decision by the European Council and the European Parliament, which is where there are the greatest openings for exerting influence. Furthermore, it has to be made clear that the secretariat for an INTERREG programme does not have to be attached to the Managing Authority, as this would endanger the bottom-up-principle.

Important results of the meeting of EU ministers on territorial cohesion/European Spatial Development

On 20/21 May 2005, a meeting of EU ministers on „Territorial cohesion / European Spatial Development“ took place in Luxemburg. Under the chairmanship of the Luxemburg Presidency, the 25 ministers and representatives of European Commission, four candidate countries and Norway (as guest) as well as further representatives of European institutions agreed on a framework document on the policy of territorial cohesion, which will be developed within the next two years to a data-based political analysis of the most important territorial challenges of the EU. It should also present options on how the diversity of territorial potentials of the EU could better be used for strengthening sustainable economic growth. In the first term of the year 2007, an informal meeting of the ministers on the territorial cohesion and a political debate on achieved results will be conducted. With the support of the vast majority of the delegations, the European Commission was requested to take an intensive share in this process. EU Commissioner Hübner promised cooperation with the Member States, but left open if the Commission presents a White Paper on territorial cohesion. In addition, the vast majority of the ministers declared themselves in favour of a continuation of the ESPON - Research Programme beyond the year 2006.

For more information, please consult: Ref-AR22@bmvbw.bund.de - www.bmvbw.de

AGEG in favour of further support for maritime cross-border cooperation

On 17 June 2005, the Executive Committee once again emphasized AEBR's positive opinion on maritime cross-border cooperation, especially with respect to existing cooperation projects in the Baltic Sea and between France and England as well as England and Ireland. But maritime cooperation has to draw as clear a distinction as cooperation on land borders does between cross-border, interregional and transnational forms. At certain distances,

genuine cross-border maritime cooperation is no longer possible. In this case, it is interregional or transnational cooperation.

New considerations with regard to the EU's legal instrument

The Olbrycht report had adopted a position on the Commission proposal of July 2004, whilst in the meantime the Member States were negotiating with the Luxembourg EU-Presidency on a new text dating from 15 April 2005. Since this too was a joint decision by the European Council and the European Parliament, the Olbrycht report has to be updated. The new paper by Luxembourg's EU Presidency contains many improvements, such as encompassing all territorial cooperation and protecting existing legal forms. The statutes have to be published and recorded. The association will be monitored under the national law of the place where it has its headquarters. The Member States remain responsible for EU programmes. States can become members. The association can only act on its members' behalf, not for third parties. The members of the association decide on its duties and on whether to delegate them to a member. Provision is made for bodies and majority decision-making procedures as well as clear financial arrangements.

This new proposal is a real amelioration. The question comes up, however, if the EU legal instrument is too complicated for INTERREG, in particular with regard to the Member States, as they will hardly submit to a majority decision taken by regional and local authorities. Many Member States pointed out that the legal instrument is too complicated for INTERREG. In this respect, it could rather be utilised for decentralised cooperation.

Rural development in the context of EU agricultural policy (CAP) after 2007 still controversial



During AEBR's Executive Committee meeting on 17 June 2005, Dr. von Malchus reported on the EU's planned concept „Rural Development in the framework of European Agricultural Policy after 2007“. It was elaborated that the three pillars of agricultural policy, among them also the development of the rural area, are no longer as

sacrosanct as hitherto. The development of the rural area would be of utmost importance, in particular for the border regions, which have to face this issue on a cross-border level. The funding predominantly goes to the first and second pillar, directly to the farmers. In the first

instance, rural development is no European, but rather a national matter and is decided in national programmes. Thus, cross-border cooperation has no influence on the development of rural areas. AEBR President Lambert van Nistelrooij reported that the European Parliament was still considering how far it could endorse the Commission's proposals.

AEBR will increasingly discuss the topic „Rural Areas“ during the year 2006, possibly at an AEBR Forum or at the General Assembly and Annual Conference.

AEBR calls on its members to take advantage of the possibilities within the frame of regional action programmes 2007 – 2013, which are offered by the EU support for rural areas.

Cross-border disaster prevention and emergency services still problematical

On 17 June 2005, AEBR's Executive Committee discussed cross-border disaster prevention and emergency services in detail. Reports from different European regions were given. The topic will be closely examined on the occasion of AEBR's Forum in Basle on 27 and 28 September 2005, in combination with the subject "Health without Borders". The reports as well as the invitation to the Basle Forum are available in three languages on AEBR's homepage www.aebr.net.

Problems of cross-border workers after 10 years of single market not solved – Special representative for border issues in the EU?

In the meeting of 17 June 2005, AEBR Secretary Jens Gabbe pointed out that freedom of movement and social protection for cross-border workers is still not fully guaranteed. The term "cross-border worker" continues to remain unclear in terms of criteria to do with fiscal and social legislation. The conditions to be met for qualifying for benefits, e.g. in case of inability to work or a disability, remain different. National practices remain a hindrance for cross-border workers. It is therefore no surprise that only 0,5% of employees in the European Union are cross-border workers.

The Committee of the Regions (CoR) suggested that a special committee should deal with this issue and that experiences of relevant political institutions are compiled, e.g. also from AEBR. The committee should aim at providing concrete proposals for reduction of barriers and coordination of social security systems. AEBR's Secretariat General is currently examining whether an AEBR forum on this topic could be held in a member region together with the CoR.

Furthermore, AEBR's Secretariat General contacted the chairman of the EP's Committee on Foreign Affairs Elmar Brok and the chairman of the Committee on Constitutional Affairs Jo Leinen and suggested the nomination of a representative for border issues. It appears promising that this task will be assigned to a Vice-President of the European Parliament.

Schools and teachers learn from each other across the border–COMENIUS – round 2006 started

The EU again called upon schools and teachers to hand in „European Projects“. The funding round for the year 2006 started on 17 June 2005. Funded are school partnerships, foreign language and school development projects (COMENIUS 1). Projects on ideas on how teachers could learn from each other across the border can be submitted within the framework of COMENIUS 2. COMENIUS 3 takes care of a better networking of project executing organisations. This homepage of the Pedagogic Exchange Services assists in searching for partners within the EU: <http://www.kmk.org/pad/sokrates2>

Announcement of the „AEBR AWARD 2005“: Deadline 31 July 2005

AEBR's Award for special cross-border achievements "Sail of Papenburg", created in 2002 and donated by the Ems Dollart Region, will be also bestowed in 2005. The topic of this year's award is:

„Cross-border cooperation – important contribution to implementing the Lisbon Strategy“

An outstanding project in terms of the implementation of the Lisbon Strategy will be awarded. The award will be presented at the General Assembly in Drama/GR on 20/21 October 2005.

For more information, please consult: www.aebr.net

Cooperation with the Committee of the Regions and European regional organisations

The cooperation with the European regional organisations with thematic distribution of tasks and with the CoR is good. Meetings with the European Commission have shown that the large European regional organisations argue jointly and that they efficiently bring forward their special concerns, e. g. AEBR all concerns of the border regions.

The good cooperation with the Committee of the Regions will be continued in 2005/2006 with joint political activities and events on topics of current interest.

„Streamlining of the Nordic Co-operation“

The Nordic Governments have decided to concentrate their cooperation on the most important Nordic affairs and to simplify the cooperation structures of the Nordic Council of Ministers. The Nordic Council of Ministers reduces its council from 18 to 11 members and focuses its activities on 10 sections. Economy, Energy and Regional Policy are combined in one sector. As hitherto, cross-border cooperation issues are dealt with in the framework of regional policy.

For more information, please consult: www.norden2005.um.dk/da

The new Baltic Euroregional Network (BEN)

The Nordic Council of Ministers and the Council of the Baltic States have announced a Nordic funded network for border regions in the Baltic Sea Region for September 2005. The Baltic Euroregional Network (BEN) has a total budget of around 1,4 mill. EURO and is funded by INTERREG III in the framework of the EU Baltic Sea Region.

For more information, please consult: www.benproject.org

Preventive flood protection measures by means of transnational spatial planning (ELLA)

Preventive flood protection, i. e. flood protection by means of measures of spatial utilisation control, is a European challenge and aims at mastering the cooperation between spatial planning institutions in the catchment area of the rivers Elbe and Labe within the INTERREG INTERREG III B project ELLA. The creation of a network leads to a spatial coverage of the catchment areas of Elbe, Labe and neighbouring regions. This supports the aims of the European Spatial Development Perspective (EDSP).

For more information: Saxon State Ministry of Interior, Dr. Edgar Trawnicek, Head of Division, e-Mail: Fachplanung-EU@SMI.Sachsen.de

New study on “European regions – challenges, aims, forms of cooperation” published by ÖROK (Austrian Spatial Planning Conference)

In April 2005, the Austrian Spatial Planning Conference published a study entitled “European regions – challenges, aims, forms of cooperation” (institution series no. 169). The study compares European regions at Austrian borders with other European regions. Furthermore, the study presents areas of both conflict and development in the “European regions” and analyses visible effects as well as examples of cooperation in the special fields of spatial planning, transport and economy.

For more information, please consult: www.oerok.gv.at

Important studies, reports and information on cross-border cooperation in Europe, which have recently been received by AEBR Secretary General J. Gabbe and the editor Dr. v. Malchus:

Europäische Union – Regionalpolitik: Best practice in regional development, inforegio panorama, No 16, May 2005.

Kommunal- og Regionaldepartement (NO): INTERREG – EU-program for grenseoverskridende regionalt samarbeid, Oslo, mai 2005.

GrenseTjänsten (NO/SE): Grenseoverskridende information, www.grenstjansten.no

NORDREGIO Nordic Centre for Spatial Development (SE): Norway and Sweden: Neighbours with Similarities and Differences, Journal of NORDREGIO, No. 2 June 2005, www.nordregio.se

Union of the Baltic Cities: Logistic Corridors in the Baltic Sea Region, Baltic Cities Bulletin 1/2005, www.ubc.net

Baltic 21 Sekretariat (SE): Baltic 21 Newsletter 1/2005, www.baltic21.org

Sønderjylland-Schleswig (DE/DK) – www.region.dk, www.region.de

Baltic Sea Commission: Visions and Objectives – Action Plan for the CPMR BALTIC SEA COMMISSION 2004, www.cpmr.org

EUREGIO (DE/NL): EUREGIOINFORM, März 2005, www.euregio.de - www.euregio.nl

REGIONY (PL): Pismo liderów samorządowych, A magazine of local government leaders / Association of Pomerania Regional Development / Szczecin, Nr specjalny/luty 2005.

Monika Meyer-Künzel, Katja Friedrich u.a. (Hrsg.): Zwei Grenzstädte wachsen zusammen – Im Zukunftsdialo g zur Europastadt Görlitz/Zgorzelec, München 2005, www.oekom.de

Euroregion Erzgebirge / Krúnohori (CZ/DE): Infopress 1/2005.

Leibniz-Institut für ökologische Raumentwicklung e.V., Dresden (DE): IÖRinfo, April 2005, Heft 30, E-Mail: Gisela.Richter@ioer.de

EUREGIO bayerischer wald – böhmerwald (AT/CZ/DE): EUREGIO-Post-Messenger, Sektion Mühlviertel, Ausgabe 06/05, www.euregio.at oder www.regionalmanagement-muehlviertel.at

EuRegio Salzburg-Berchtesgadener Land-Traunstein (AT/DE): 10 Jahre EuRegio 1995-2005 – Bürgernah – Grenzüberschreitend - Gemeinsam - , Salzburg 2005, www.euregio.sbg.at

INTERREG III A Oberrhein Mitte-Süd - REGIO PAMINA: INTERREG (DE/FR/CH): Der Oberrhein wächst zusammen: mit jedem Projekt, INTERREG am Oberrhein – Gemeinschaftsinitiative zur Förderung grenzüberschreitender Projekte, Fünfzehn Jahre Projektrealisierung, o.O.,2005.

Regio Basiliensis (CH): Jahresbericht 2004, Regio Basiliensis – Die Schweizer Partnerin für die Oberrhein-Kooperation, Gründungsmitglied der RegioTriRhena (CH/DE/FR), Informationsbulletin, April 2005, www.regbas.ch

Redaktion Interreg-Newsletter (CH): Elektronischer Interreg-Newsletter für die Schweiz, E-Mail: admin@interreg.ch

The Secretariat General of AEBR (J. Gabbe: info@aebr.net) and the editor (Dr. v. Malchus: dr.v.malchus@t-online.de) thank for the transmission of scripts and reports on cross-border cooperation. We request all European border regions to provide us with relevant information.

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