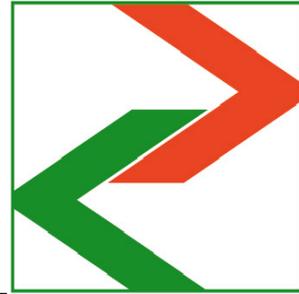


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Asociación de Regiones Fronterizas Europeas (ARFE)
Association des régions frontalières européennes (ARFE)
Association of European Border Regions (AEBR)
Comunità di lavoro delle regioni europee di confine (AGEG)
Europæiske grænseregioners Arbejdsfællesskab (AGEG)
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Associação das Regiões Fronteiriças Europeias (ARFE)
Σύνδεσμος Ευρωπαϊκών Συνοριακών Περιφερειών (ΣΕΣΠ)
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***CONTRIBUTION OF CROSS-BORDER CO-OPERATION TO
IMPLEMENTING THE LISBON STRATEGY***

***AEBR ANNUAL CONFERENCE, 20-21 OCTOBER 2005 IN DRAMA,
EUROREGION NESTOS-MESTA***

FINAL DECLARATION

Introductory remark

Pursuant to a statement by President Barroso the European Commission is still committed to upholding the balance between the three pillars of the Lisbon Strategy:

- growth and employment,
- social cohesion,
- sustainable environment.

Barroso added, however, that the relating instruments are currently redesigned in such a way that they boost dynamic economic growth. In terms of financing, these restructuring measures take priority over all other issues, as economic growth prepares the ground for strengthening the other two pillars, i.e. "social cohesion" and "sustainable environment".

In the debate about the future financing of the EU budget and priorities, one **key question** needs to be asked:

- Which contribution does cross-border co-operation make to implementing the Lisbon Strategy?

Answer:

- Cross-border co-operation adds value.
- Evidence for this added value can be provided.

The added value of cross-border co-operation

The European, political, institutional, economic and socio-cultural added value is described in Annex 1.

For the period 2000-2006, approx. 5 billion € are available for the entire cooperation in the EU. This amount nearly corresponds to the EU aid for the objective-1-labour market programme in Spain. Thus, cross-border cooperation achieved great successes with comparably low means.

The specific added value of cross-border co-operation to implementing the Lisbon Strategy derives from the fact that cross-border co-operation **always adds value** to national measures.

This added value results from

- additionality of cross-border programmes and projects,
- synergies through cross-border co-operation,
- joint research and innovation,
- cross-border networking,
- exchange of best practice and know-how,
- spin-off effects by overcoming borders,
- efficient cross-border resource management.

Evidence of the specific added value of cross-border co-operation to implementing the Lisbon Strategy:

- cross-border spatial and development concepts (i.e. border areas in Germany (Bavaria/Saxony) along the border to Austria or the Czech Republic, as well as in Austria along the borders to the Czech Republic/Slovakia/Hungary/Slovenia; Italian/French border; Polish/German border; sea protection areas between Corsica and Sardinia);
- creation of the necessary cross-border infrastructure (also maritime) as inevitable physical precondition for cross-border cooperation with regard to creating growth and employment (e.g. Spain/France, Sweden/Finland/Norway, Alpine area, external borders of the EU, etc.);
- further promotion of growth and economic development in addition to the developments at national levels (i.e. cross-border area Ireland/Northern Ireland; Germany/Belgium/Netherlands with new jobs; Spanish/Portuguese border with its risk capital fund or Bulgaria and Romania with a cross-border business card);
- new cross-border business relationships between producers and suppliers (i.e. network of the Chamber of Commerce in Northern Greece/Bulgaria and in the Czech Republic/Germany (Saxony); at German/Danish border; French/German border along the Upper Rhine; Hungarian/Austrian border);

- new co-operation and sales opportunities for small and medium-sized enterprises; these companies typically operate within a radius of some 200 km from their location, which usually covers the geographic area of the neighbouring border region (i.e. Northern Greece with an entrepreneurship centre for Balkan and the Black Sea states; Finish/Norwegian/Swedish border with the Arctic Investors Network; Spanish/Portuguese border with the forum of entrepreneurs);
- establishment of a cross-border labour market which offers additional new employment opportunities (i.e. France and Switzerland with adjustment payments for commuters that work in Switzerland; German/French border area along the Upper Rhine; Öresund with its specific labour market strategy = increase of commuters from 3.000 up to 10.000)
- bilingual cross-border professional training (i.e. German/Polish, Dutch/German and French/German border areas);
- establishment and improvement of cross-border public transport links (buses, railways) for the benefit of citizens, commuters and tourists (i.e. Austrian/German border close to Salzburg and in the triangle Germany (Bavaria/Saxony) /Czech Republic with a cross-border public transport system including throughout tariffs; Swedish/Danish border with a common public transport across the Öresund Bridge);
- cross-border tourism concepts and projects (i.e. Lake of Constance; Germany (Bavaria) /Austria, Poland/Lithuania with a joint Touristic Service Centre; Galicia/Norte with a touristic map for Spanish/Portuguese area; Tatra (Poland/Slovakia) in the Carpathian Mountains); joint touristic marketing and promotion activities in Ireland/Northern Ireland and the Pyrenees (France/Spain); joint touristic strategies for Kent (GB) and North-Pas-de-Calais [F]);
- greater catchment area for business activities and services on both sides of the border; in many cases, businesses and services, such as research facilities and universities, waste disposal, recycling and infrastructure facilities, would not yield a profit (critical mass) or not even be available at all in border regions if there was no cross-border co-operation (i.e. joint Research Institute for New Rehabilitation Techniques or Centre for Microscope and Spectroscopy Analyses in EUREGIO on the German/Dutch border; co-operation network of universities in Öresund, in the Danish/German border area and in the cross-border region South Tyrol (I)/Tyrol (A));
- a more efficient use (critical mass) of public funds (joint sewage plants on the Polish/German border; joint libraries in the Upper Rhine region, Saar/Lor/Lux area and on the Danish/German border; co-operation in the health sector between Greece and FYROM, Spain and Portugal, Ireland and Northern Ireland);
- joint research and innovation (critical mass) generating additional synergies (i.e. co-operation in the field of technology in Extremadura/Alentejo; Technology and Business Park on the Austrian/Slovenian border);
- additional synergies and spin-off effects thanks to the co-operation of universities, colleges of further education and other educational institutions (i.e. co-operation of universities Strasbourg, Basel, Freiburg in the Upper Rhine region or in Lorraine/Saarland as well as of the universities in the region Friuli-Venezia Giulia with their neighbours in Slovenia and Austria);
- Sustainable cross-border management with regard to environment and environmental protection (Extremadura/Castilla y León/Portugal, Pyrenees, Germany (Bavaria) /Austria, Austria/Czech Republic, Poland/Ukraine/Belarus, Baltic States/Russia/Belarus, Belgium/Netherlands/Germany);
- Cross-border co-operation as model for “new governance” (everywhere in Europe through Euroregions and similar structures, which practice subsidiarity and partnership, networks etc. in spite of different structures, competencies and laws on both sides of the border).

Prospects: The regional diversity and the different basic conditions in Europe call for region-specific concepts and solutions, and this particularly for cross-border cooperation: it is of particular importance that growth and employment, social cohesion and ecological sustainability are taken into account in all three pillars of the Lisbon strategy.

The **value of cross-border cooperation can be proven in terms of money**. The objective-1-labour market programme for Spain alone amounts to **€ 5,4 billion**. This amount corresponds to the sum that is **available for the entire cooperation in the EU for the period 2000-2006**. We do not need to be afraid of a comparison with regard to the results: With comparably low means, a very good job was done.

It would be good if all the other cooperation structures could, like the cross-border cooperation, provide evidence of their contribution to the implementation of the Lisbon strategy.

Drama, 21.10.2005

Lambert van Nistelrooij
President

Jens Gabbe
Secretary General

THE ADDED VALUE OF CROSS-BORDER COOPERATION

Association of European Border Regions

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.

In this way, cultural cross-border cooperation becomes a constituent element of regional development. Only if socio-cultural cooperation takes place is a workable cross-border environment for business, trade and services established.

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