

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)  
Werkgemeinschaft van Europese grensgebieden (WVEG)  
Associação das Regiões Fronteiriças Europeias (ARFE)  
Σύνδεσμος Ευρωπαϊκών Συνοριακών Περιφερειών (ΣΕΣΠ)  
Stowarzyszenie Europejskich Regionów Granicznych (SERG)

---



Version of 1<sup>st</sup> February 2006

*Implementing the Community Lisbon Programme:*

**COMMUNICATION FROM THE COMMISSION TO THE COUNCIL,  
THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT, THE EUROPEAN ECONOMIC AND  
SOCIAL COMMITTEE AND THE COMMITTEE OF THE REGIONS**

*More Research and Innovation – Investing for Growth and*

*Employment: A Common Approach*

*COM(2005) 488 final*

**Comments of AEBR**

On the occasion of its Maastricht meeting on 9 December 2005, AEBR intensively dealt with the Commission Communication (on the basis of two reports given by members of the Executive Committee), taking into account the Commission Communication „Science and technology, the key to Europe's future – Guideline for future European Union policy to support research”.

**AEBR comments as follows on this communication:**

**1) New mentality and bottom-up-approach**

Due to the fact that national governments do not prioritise the interests of border regions and do not become active in order to remove existing hindrances between them, the border and cross-border regions need a change in mentality. Therefore, the border and cross-border regions have to show own initiative. It is necessary to bundle the strengths of the regions on both sides of the border, e.g. by intensifying contacts and real cooperation between universities, research facilities, economy, hospitals, supply/refuse disposal facilities, regional/local authorities etc. For that purpose, actions and contacts are needed, in which regional/local authorities play an important role as regards the future frame of border and cross-border regions.

**2) Own initiative of border and cross-border regions**

- it is necessary to strengthen the endogenous regional potentials across the borders,
- the strength of the regions on both sides of the border, not in the sense of administrative and national borders, but in the sense of economic borders, has to be the initial point,
- the strength and powers have to be reflected in a good cross-border „strategic regional programme“, in which a joint strategy for research and innovation should be embedded,
- this „strategic programme“ should be developed and implemented by the national levels and actors from both sides of the border,
- the thinking in terms of „concentration, complementarity and creation of a critical mass“ is as important as thinking in terms of „knowledge, cognition and finances “ (e.g. public/private cooperation or cooperation between knowledge facilities (Universities, HEIs/ economy, specialised training facilities and SMEs).
- Thus, there can be a mutual cross-border enhancement. Good examples are in this case cross-border research sceneries or “life sciences” regions.
- All available regional, national and European funds have to be positioned in such a way – just think about the 7<sup>th</sup> framework programme and the new structural funds -, that economy regions and all involved ones can use them optimally in order to realise their cross-border strategic programmes.

### **3) Cross-border competition**

In the framework of the European Integration Process, border and cross-border regions must learn to accept the term competition:

- **Competition situations** between regional commercial locations of different countries should also be supported on a cross-border level. A cross-border rival situation can also help to stimulate competition between the best ones.
- In addition to natural cross-border **competition** situations, cross-border structures and programmes could achieve additional value by means of cooperation.
- Cross-border regions could improve the infrastructural and economic environment for founding enterprises, for instance via joint advisory services, a single contact centre for the formalities of founding a company, bilingual forms, joint advisory services for legal issues etc.

### **4) Concrete measures for cross-border cooperation in favour of more research and innovation**

- 'European poles of excellence' could also be created in border regions through cross-border cooperation between universities and their facilities as well as between laboratories (for example, where at least one outstanding institution or group exists on both sides of the border, but where excellence can only be achieved through co-operation).
- Cross-border cooperation in basic research (for example, academic research at a university on one side of the border and application-oriented research in a technical college or higher education institute, for example, on the other side of the border).
- The fluid cross-over between basic research and applied research and development (product and process development) in particular can be used in cross-border cooperation in border regions that would not be in a position to do so alone.
- Cross-border regional technological initiatives should be set up.
- Infrastructures of European interest can also be developed across borders (advice from the European Strategy Forum on Research Infrastructures). For example, selected large structures or a broadband fibre optic cable could be purchased or laid across a border. A single border region alone would not have enough resources for such investment but a cross-border investment could be worthwhile.
- Medium-sized research infrastructures that would benefit neighbouring regions and Member States could also be set up across borders. Regions working alone often do

not have enough resources to justify such investment in a medium-sized infrastructure.

- Cross-border technology platforms should bring together companies, research institutions, the financial world and regulatory authorities with the objective of boosting cooperation in a lasting manner and implementing innovative ideas.
- A cross-border action programme in the fields of research and technology should be developed and funded by national, European, public sector and private sector sources.
- Cross-border cooperation between small and medium enterprises should be supported in such a way as to allow them to participate in innovation and research processes (for example, risk capital).
- The transfer of expertise related to new application-oriented skills developed in basic research to SMES on a national level and across borders should be fostered and speeded up.

\*\*\*\*\*

\*\*\*\*\*

F:\DATA\334 AGEG\REFERATEundSTELLUNGNAHMEN\2006\MehrForschungundInnovation\Stellungnahmezu488ENcp.doc