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# YOUTH CHARTER FOR CROSS BORDER COOPERATION

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AEBR Youth Charter for Cross-border Cooperation is created by young people from all over Europe at the AEBR TFEB youth events during the 2016 and 2017. Charter is aiming to give the framework for creating solutions for improving youth action and increase youth possibilities to get involved, to initiate and to implement regional and cross-border activities and project in society. The framework consist **three points** of view: *What can Youth do for Society?; and What can Society do for Youth?; and What can Youth do for Youth?.*

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Already in 1981, the Association of European Border Regions (AEBR) published the European Charter for Border and Cross-Border Regions. This Charter was updated by AEBR members in 1995, 2004 and 2011. In 2016 AEBR celebrates its 45th Anniversary and many things happened since its foundation **and now** is time to create an *AEBR Youth Carter for Cross Border Cooperation* and to open it for debate amongst European border and cross-border regions.

This Charter is initiated by AEBR Task Force of External Borders and its Network of Young Leaders for Cross-Border Cooperation. This year AEBR Task Force of External Borders celebrates its 10th Anniversary and in 2018 Tenth AEBR TFEB Youth Forum will take place. **Inspiration** for this Chapter was found in results of AEBR events involving Youth all over the Europe, also taking into account:

- The European Charter for Border and Cross-Border Regions of the Association of European Border Regions;
- Madrid Outline Convention “on Transfrontier Cooperation between Territorial Communities or Authorities”(Council of Europe, ETS No. 106 - Madrid, 21 May 1980) and its Additional Protocols (Additional Protocol - ETS No. 159, Protocol No. 2 - ETS No. 169, and Protocol No. 3 - CETS No. 206.) that gives general frame of regulation of the establishment and operation of Euroregional Co-operation Groupings (ECG);
- EU Regulation of the European Parliament and of the Council of 17 December 2013 (No 1302/2013) amending Regulation (EC) No 1082/2006 on a European Grouping of Territorial Cooperation (EGTC) that made possible establishment of the European Grouping of Territorial Cooperation (EGTC);
- INTERREG- cross-border (Interreg A), transnational (Interreg B) and interregional (Interreg C). - European Territorial Cooperation (ETC), that is one of the two goals of cohesion policy and provides a framework for the implementation of joint actions and



- policy exchanges between national, regional and local actors in order to promote a harmonious economic, social and territorial development of the Union as a whole.
- European Solidarity Corps - the new European Union initiative which creates opportunities for young people to volunteer or work in projects in their own country or abroad that benefit communities and people around Europe;
  - Interreg Volunteer Youth (IVY) initiative that is aimed at involving young European volunteers to support, promote and report the concrete achievements of these programmes and projects, as well as generally promote cooperation across borders and related values such as solidarity;
  - Erasmus + EU Programme that supports education, training, youth and sport in Europe and European strategy 2010-2018 that is adapted for the purpose of providing equal opportunities for young people and encouraging young people to actively participate in society;
  - Council of Europe policies regarding youth participation and involvement in community on issues: Youth policy, Human right education, Intercultural learning, Youth information, Youth participation and -Non-formal education;
  - also United Nations Sustainable Development Goals – SDGs, especially SDG 17 Partnership for the Goals, UNDP Youth Strategy 2014-2017: Empowered Youth, Sustainable Future and other policies and strategies that are providing ground base for youth development in the field of international and cross-border activism, policy development, strategic planning and project implementation.

Having in mind **problems** that youth face today in the field of cross-border and regional cooperation such as:

- Lack of knowledge on cross-border and regional cooperation and absence of awareness of possibilities for youth, even when youngsters participate in some project with transnational and cross-border character (eg. Erasmus Youth Exchange or Council of Europe youth programs) they are now aware of that,
- Problems within youth enrolment are lack of possibilities and chances for youth action, lack of information and mechanism for youth participation in policy development and strategic regional and cross-border planning and implementation;
- Lack of youth activity and motivation to get involved in cross-border and regional cooperation represent biggest problem considering the youth side, whether the low support and bureaucracy designed for young activity characterise problems considering government's side.
- Lack of skills for initiation and implementing cross-border and regional projects.



We, AEBR Young Leaders for Cross-border Cooperation will commit ourselves to achieve common **vision** that youth must take full involvement in regional and cross-border society development through participation and information exchange. Young people must motivate other youngsters in their environments to act and participate in all aspects of society, including environment protection, economic and social development. And as far as culture, media and reconciliation concerned, promotion and positive information exchanges are crucial for better tomorrow.

It is our **mission** and duty to look for, and gather all relevant problems in order to find solutions to improve youth action and increase youth possibilities to get involved, to initiate and to implement regional and cross-border project. Common mission is found in creation of this Charter and promotion of youth regional and cross-border activity and action. More detailed missions are everyday once. They include developing social skills, improving youth possibilities and conquering difficulties and solving common regional and cross-border problems. They are connected to each and every young person, and for improving that person's ability to participate in social activities and decision making, we must start from that one person and create network of positive energy for youth cross-border, regional and transnational actions.

Our activities will be guided by following **objectives**:

- Networking of young people across the European continent in purpose of regional and cross-border cooperation;
- Supporting youth regional and cross-border ideas and activities, creating platform for exchange ideas and good practice between youth and experts, and empowering youth for initiating and implementing cross-border, regional and transnational cooperation
- Shaping new generation of youngsters for spreading joint regional and cross-border messages, raising awareness on how the attitudes and behaviours of young people can bring a change in communities from both side of the border, changing attitudes to more open regional and cross-border mindedness and promoting cross-border values among young people by using social media as an effective communication tool
- Promoting active citizenship of youth in border regions and encouraging young people for stepping up-taking actions for solving regional and cross-border problems;
- Fostering youth participation in the process of regional and cross-border policy development and strategic planning and educating communities how to working together with young people across the borders;
- Advocating for involving regional and cross-border cooperation as one of priorities in programmes such as EU Erasmus plus, EU citizens, CoE and UN youth policies, and others.



We will act from **three deferent perspectives** as follow:

## 1. YOUTH FOR SOCIETY

The main idea behind this perspective is that society can benefit from youth actions and knowledge. Concrete tasks for youth actions for the YOUTH FOR SOCIETY perspective are consisted of the following most important and general activities:

- Creating a strategical framework for communication with society
- Conducting joint advocacy campaign in order to address key cross-border problems to the relevant actors, emphasizing implications on socio-economic development and environmental protection
- Lobbying for involvement of young people in the decision making process in order to change existing youth policies
- Conducting the Study on society needs for cross border cooperation and advocating for change specific policies in the specific fields of the cross-border regions
- Volunteering in border regions and launching youth initiatives for better cross-border society
- Connecting the Young Leaders with society via CBC HUBs

## 2. SOCIETY FOR YOUTH

General idea behind this perspective is that society is playing the crucial role in shaping new generations, and that youngsters and their activities often depends of society. Concrete tasks for youth actions for the SOCIETY FOR YOUTH perspective are consisted of the following most important and general activities:

- Conducting advocacy campaign in order to address key youth cross-border problems
- Lobbying for financial support for youth cross-border initiatives and making youth cross-border cooperation one of priorities in the Erasmus + and other EU Programmes
- Conducting a Study on mapping good models for more inclusion for young people in cross-border cooperation and enabling the youth actors are included in cross- border and international policy making process
- Educating young people on cross-border cooperation and bringing experts and young people together via online platform, face to face meetings, trainings and other events
- Providing internships in the regional and local institutions involved in cross-border and international cooperation



### 3. YOUTH FOR YOUTH

The main idea behind this action is that young people can help each other and that youngsters eventually find a way with their passion, knowledge and skills to improve their possibilities and chances for a positive change. Concrete tasks for youth actions for the YOUTH FOR YOUTH perspective are consisted of the following most important and general activities:

- Planning and making strategy and action plan for the cross-border future
- Advocating for creation of legal framework for better youth involvement in regional and cross-border participation
- Creating online knowledge sharing Platform for networking of young leaders for cross-border cooperation
- Organisation of intensive face to face, offline and online communication between the young leaders
- Raising awareness on cross-border cooperation, opening minds of young people, and spreading information through social and other media
- Organization of educational trainings and creative workshops in communities
- Organization of CBC camps and CBC bus tours gathering young people to take joint actions in the fields of Political Framework, Economic development, Environmental protection, Social development, Media and Culture, Peace and reconciliation and Project development

**Added value** of implementation of the AEBR Youth Charter for Cross Border Cooperation will be:

- Added value from the perspective: *What can Society do for Youth?* is framework, support, opportunity and liberty for youngsters to achieve their goals, and grow in a positive way. They need to become active members of society,
- Added values from the perspective: *What can Youth do for Society?* is that youth as change makers takes responsibilities to change the society; and
- Added value from the perspective: *What can Youth do for Youth?* is engaging in all spheres of society (encouraging other youngsters, colleagues, friends, classmates, children);
- *Overall Added value:* building friendship and mutual understanding between youngsters across Europe and better communication, exchange and cooperation between Youth and Society in border regions;

This Charter is **created by young people** from all over Europe. List of all participants that contributed to the creation and finalisation of the document can be found in Annex I.