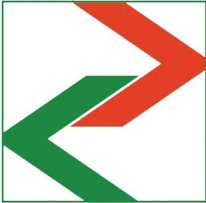


AEBR General Assembly 2022
hosted by
the Assembly of the Autonomous Province of Vojvodina, Republic of Serbia
Novi Sad, 29 September 2022

Annex 2.2.a

Annual Report 2021
50 years of AEBR



AEBR – AGEG – ARFE

50

years of cross-border
cooperation

1971 2021

Martín Guillermo Ramírez
Secretary General
Association of European Border Regions (AEBR)

29/9/2022

1

Anholt Castle
(where everything started)



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2

AEBR Events and activities in 2021



- 2 February, **b-solutions Info Session** (online)
- 3 February, **Task Force CB Health** (online)
- 4 February, AEBR-EURADA Joint Forum **SMEs in Border Regions** (their specific problems, possible solutions, opportunities offered by the new EU Programs and more) (online). Recording on [AEBR's YouTube channel in YouTube](#).
- 8 February, **AEBR Task Force Strategy** meeting
- 19 March, **AEBR Executive Committee** meeting (online)
- 7 April, **Meeting of the Presidents of AEBR and ORU-FOGAR** (Organisation/Organisation des Régions Unies / Forum of Regional Governments and Global Associations of Regions), Abdessamad Sekkal, President of the Rabat-Salé-Kénitra regional council (Morocco) (online)
- 10 May, IVY event **Celebrating Europe's Day** (online)
- 15 June, ENTELIS+ project Forum **#RightToConnectNow: Digitalization, an opportunity for the formation of an inclusive society** (online)
- 18 June 2021, **50th Anniversary event (New Anholt Talks: round table of founders and communication event) and Executive Committee meeting**, Anholt Castle, Westphalia
- 2 July, **AEBR Task Force Strategy** (online)
- 23 September, **AEBR Executive Committee** meeting (online)
- 6 October, **AEBR/DG SANTÉ Webinar and Workshop on Draft Final Recommendations of the Study Cross Border Patient Mobility in Selected EU Regions**
- 7 October, Joint AEBR-CESCI-MOT Declaration, signed in Strasbourg
- 11-14 October, participation in various workshops during the **EWRC** on small places, internationalisation of SMEs, Youth engagement for the Green Deal, improving Public Health services on CB territories, EU Border Regions: living labsof EU integration, citizenship on CB territories, healthcare in CBC
- 20-22 October, **AEBR V Cross-Border School, Executive Committee meeting, General Assembly and Annual Conference "Mirror to the Future"** in Arnhem (Province of Gelderland, the Netherlands)
- 10 December, AEBR-DG REGIO presentation of **b-solutions publications** (online)
- 15 December, AEBR-TESIM Joint Forum: **Recovery in border regions of the Eastern Partnership territories** (online)

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3

3

EU issues of interest for border regions in 2021

- Conference on the Future of Europe
- European CB Mechanism (PT & SI presidencies)
- Cohesion Policy's legislative package 2021-2027 entered into force on 1/7/2021
- 1/7: CoR's Resolution on the Future of CBC
- 14/7: DG REGIO's report "EU Border Regions: Living Labs of European Integration"

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4

4



Martin Guillermo Ramirez

Karl-Heinz Lambertz

Ann-Sofi Backgren

Ann-Sofi Backgren
AEBR President (2019-2020)
AEBR First Vice-President (2020-2022)

Karl-Heinz Lambertz
AEBR President (2010-2017, 2020-...)

"to overcome borders,
one should be allowed to
cooperate,
should want to cooperate,
and be able to cooperate "

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5

5

**AEBR
Priorities in
2021**



#InterregYouth

Interreg Europe

European Union | European Regional Development Fund



50 years of cross-border cooperation 1971-2021

AEBR - AGEG - ARFE



B SOLUTIONS

- **COVID-19** (safety, caution, resilience, digitalisation)
- **Green Deal**
- **Future Cohesion Policy** (including IPA and ENI countries) and implementation of the **Multiannual Financial Framework** after Brexit
- **b-solutions: new Phase**
b-solutions@aebr.eu
www.b-solutionsproject.com
- **Interreg Volunteer Youth: extension**
www.interregyouth.com/
- **CB patients flows**
- **CB provision of services or provision of CB services?**
- **Strengthening research & policy making for better practice of CBC**
- **Communicating CBC**

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6


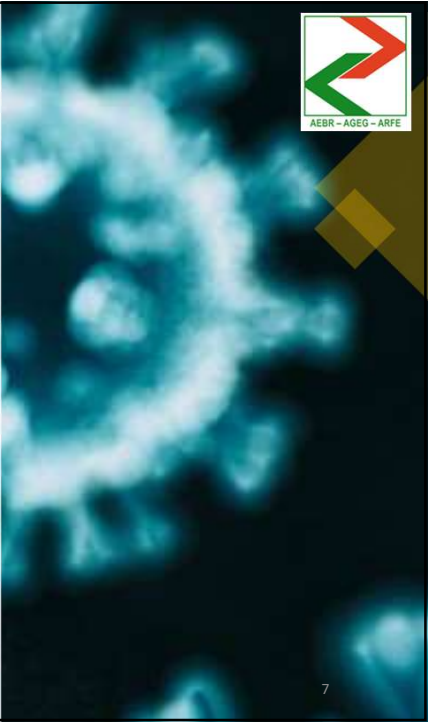
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CBC during the COVID-19 pandemic

- Policy makers have previously ignored CBC and CB interaction in most cases (capitals are too far away from borders)
- Then, towards the declaration of pandemic, their first idea was...

1. **...borders closing to control dissemination of the virus:**
 - national control measures, little coordination
2. **Urgent re-opening, in particular to essential services (and essential CBC); discovery of “cross-border” realities:**
 - Many services (also essential ones) and value chains depend on workforce, providers and other players across the border
 - Conscience of CBC at all levels
3. **EU and CB Coordination:**
 - Green Lanes and other measures
 - Use of CB structures to guarantee essential services across borders
4. **CBC was included in most political agendas** (European and national ones) but, for how long?

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7

7



AEBR Annual Events in Arnhem (Gelderland, NL)
20-22 October 2021





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8

8

European perspectives for CBC in post-COVID times and the new programming period 2021-2027



Interreg VI - € 8,050 million (plus co-financing)
Interreg VI A (CBC) **€ 5,800 million**
Interreg VI B (transnational) € 1,467 million
Interreg VI C (interregional) € 490 million
Interreg VI D (outermost regions) € 280 million
Neighbourhood CBC (NDICI) and IPA CBC II

Most figures dropped due to the reduction of the regular budget of the EU due to the **Brexit**. However, the real impact of the **New Generation EU – NGEU** (the extraordinary fund for reconstruction) in CBC programmes is still unknown

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Integrates cooperation with third countries (involving external financing instruments: IPA III, NDICI & ODA)

5 Cohesion Policy Objective: a **smarter, greener, connected, social** and **closer** Europe

2 Additional Interreg Specific Objectives: better Interreg **governance**, and **safer & more secure** Europe

NEW: Simplified cost options, Small Project Funds, role of EGTCs



Identifying legal and administrative obstacles to CBC, and proposing solutions

- 90 cases studied: 43 published in the 1st Compendium; 47 for the 2nd one (December 2021, together with thematic and story-telling publications)
- b-solutions@aebr.eu
- www.b-solutionsproject.com



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Specific Objectives

- specific solutions addressing concrete legal and administrative obstacles
- innovative proposals to inform innovative approaches
- increased exchange of information and mutual engagement
- raised awareness of key stakeholders at local/regional/ national/EU level

10




Lessons learned



These lessons expect to raise awareness among CB practitioners and inspire others to identify their own obstacles:

a) Variety of obstacles	g) Political commitment
b) Variety of causes	h) Multi-level engagement
c) Tailored solutions	i) Deep analysis
d) A long process	j) Information sharing
e) Changes in legal frameworks	k) Capacity building
f) Complementary tools	l) Interreg and EGTC potential
	m) ECBM (?) potential

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Policy recommendations

- 1. Capacity building** of local stakeholders in borders regions:
 - a. improved training provision for LRA & CBC actors;
 - b. support for information/coordination units at the LRA;
 - c. commissioning detailed comparative studies;
 - d. strengthening capacity within professional service firms
- 2. Promotion of effective multi-level engagement and responses**
 - a. Legal mechanisms
 - b. Joint commissioning of CB studies & analyses
 - c. Enhanced forums of dialogue
- 3. Maximising the value of EU tools and instruments**
 - a. The proposed ECBM
 - b. Interreg and other existing EU instruments

These are available for consultation at the dedicated section of the compendium (vol. 1) on [b-solutions' website](#).

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Interreg Volunteer Youth



#InterregYouth



European Union | European Regional Development Fund

Involving young people in Interreg



- Some 750 young Europeans involved since 2017
- More than 30 Citizens' Engagement Initiatives
- Extended to IPA and Neighbourhood programmes and citizens
- www.interregyouth.com/

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13

CB Public Services






Co-financed by the European Regional Development Fund

Inspire policy making by territorial evidence



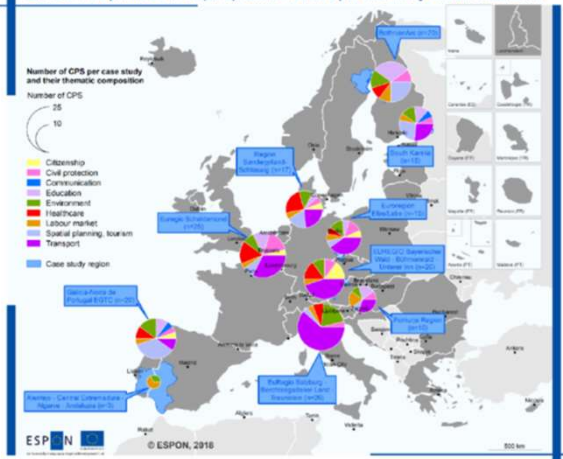
Alentejo-Central Extremadura	EuRegio Salzburg- Berchtesgadener Land-Traunstein	Galicia-Norte de Portugal EGTC
BothnianArc	Euregio Scheldemond	Pomurje Region
Euregio Bayeri- scher Wald- Böhm-erwald- Unterer Inn	Euroregion Elbe/Labe	Region Sonderjylland- Schleswig
		South Karelia



European Committee
of the Regions

Map 2.6: CPS per case study region and thematic focus

Cross-border public services (CPS): Number of CPS per case study and thematic focus



ESPON, 2016

Regional level: n.a.
Source: ESPON, 2016
Origin of data: ESPON, 2016
© ESPON for administrative boundaries

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Map 4.1 Location of good practice examples

Cross-border public services (CPS): Location of "good practice examples"

Short list of good practices

TRANSPORT

- Tram Strasbourg-Kehl
- Busline 983 Frankfurt – Slubice
- Bus line Dornbirn – Lustenau – Heerbrugg
- Elbe-Labe Ticket

SPATIAL PLANNING, ECON DEV. TOURISM

- Tourism office Haparanda-Tornio
- Geographic Information System (SIG-GR)
- InterTrade Ireland

HEALTH CARE

- **ZOAST**
- Hospital Cerdanya
- Healthacross, clinic Gmünd

EDUCATION AND TRAINING

- Elementary school in Prosenjakovci
- Schengen Lyceum
- University cooperation South Karelia
- **Eucor – the European campus**

LABOUR MARKET AND EMPLOYMENT

- EURES Greater Region
- EURES Alentejo
- Border mobility SE-NO

ENVIRONMENT PROTECTION

- Meseta Transboundary Biosphere Reserve
- Mura-Drava Danube
- **Drinking water provision Wissembourg**
- TRION Climate
- River contract Haute Sûre

CIVIL PROTECTION

- Firefighting boat "Europa 1"
- Rescue service Salzburg
- Forest firefighters Böhmewald

CITIZENSHIP

- GIP Scheldemonde
- INFOBEST
- Regionskontor and infocentre

Table 2.1.1 Comparison of good practice examples (CPS) in cross-border areas

Theme / Part of implementation	Region / Country	Good practice example	Key features	Impact	Transferability
Transport	Central Europe	Tram Strasbourg-Kehl	Cross-border transport	Improved mobility	High
Transport	Central Europe	Busline 983 Frankfurt – Slubice	Cross-border transport	Improved mobility	High
Transport	Central Europe	Bus line Dornbirn – Lustenau – Heerbrugg	Cross-border transport	Improved mobility	High
Transport	Central Europe	Elbe-Labe Ticket	Cross-border transport	Improved mobility	High
Spatial planning, econ dev. tourism	Central Europe	Tourism office Haparanda-Tornio	Cross-border tourism	Improved tourism	High
Spatial planning, econ dev. tourism	Central Europe	Geographic Information System (SIG-GR)	Cross-border tourism	Improved tourism	High
Spatial planning, econ dev. tourism	Central Europe	InterTrade Ireland	Cross-border tourism	Improved tourism	High
Health care	Central Europe	ZOAST	Cross-border health care	Improved health care	High
Health care	Central Europe	Hospital Cerdanya	Cross-border health care	Improved health care	High
Health care	Central Europe	Healthacross, clinic Gmünd	Cross-border health care	Improved health care	High
Education and training	Central Europe	Elementary school in Prosenjakovci	Cross-border education	Improved education	High
Education and training	Central Europe	Schengen Lyceum	Cross-border education	Improved education	High
Education and training	Central Europe	University cooperation South Karelia	Cross-border education	Improved education	High
Education and training	Central Europe	Eucor – the European campus	Cross-border education	Improved education	High
Labour market and employment	Central Europe	EURES Greater Region	Cross-border employment	Improved employment	High
Labour market and employment	Central Europe	EURES Alentejo	Cross-border employment	Improved employment	High
Labour market and employment	Central Europe	Border mobility SE-NO	Cross-border employment	Improved employment	High
Environment protection	Central Europe	Meseta Transboundary Biosphere Reserve	Cross-border environment	Improved environment	High
Environment protection	Central Europe	Mura-Drava Danube	Cross-border environment	Improved environment	High
Environment protection	Central Europe	Drinking water provision Wissembourg	Cross-border environment	Improved environment	High
Environment protection	Central Europe	TRION Climate	Cross-border environment	Improved environment	High
Environment protection	Central Europe	River contract Haute Sûre	Cross-border environment	Improved environment	High
Civil protection	Central Europe	Firefighting boat "Europa 1"	Cross-border civil protection	Improved civil protection	High
Civil protection	Central Europe	Rescue service Salzburg	Cross-border civil protection	Improved civil protection	High
Civil protection	Central Europe	Forest firefighters Böhmewald	Cross-border civil protection	Improved civil protection	High
Citizenship	Central Europe	GIP Scheldemonde	Cross-border citizenship	Improved citizenship	High
Citizenship	Central Europe	INFOBEST	Cross-border citizenship	Improved citizenship	High
Citizenship	Central Europe	Regionskontor and infocentre	Cross-border citizenship	Improved citizenship	High

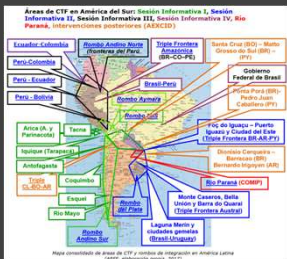
The CoR's COTER Commission worked during 2020 and approved on 26 November 2020 a draft opinion on **Cross Border Public Services in Europe**, finally adopted by the Plenary of the CoR on 3 February 2021 (Rapp.: Pavel Branda)

Other projects


- Interventures (Interreg Europe): internationalisation of SMEs in border regions
- ENTELIS+: empowering the elderly and persons with disabilities to participate in the digital society
- DG Santé’s “Cross-border patients mobility”
- ESPON’s TEVI 2050 (Territorial Scenarios for the Danube and Adriatic-Ionian Macroregions)
- Jean Monnet Network “Borders, human-to-military security database”

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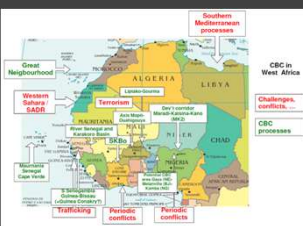
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AGI



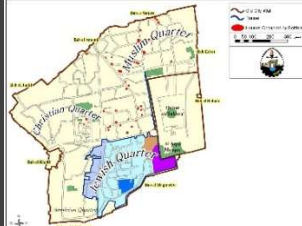
AEBR - AGO - ABE



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AEBR
Global
Initiative



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European Cross-Border Citizens Alliance

AEBR, Gronau-Berlin, Germany
MOT, Paris, France
CESCI, Budapest, Hungary
(+EGTCs Platform = European CB Citizens' Alliance)

TEIN, Kehl, Germany
ITEM, Maastricht, the Netherlands
ISIG, Gorizia, Italy
Center for Cross-Border Studies, Armagh, Northern Ireland

Favourite organisations for CBC in Europe, active and coordinated under very uncertain circumstances in 2020

EU Institutions

- Border Focal Point, European Commission's DG Regio
- EGTC Platform (Committee of the Regions, CoR)
- REGI Committee (European Parliament)

Council of Europe

- Congress of Local and Regional Authorities (The Congress)
- Center of Expertise for Good Governance

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9



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Tasks of AEBR

The logo of the Association of European Border Regions (AEBR), featuring a stylized green and red arrow pointing right, with the text 'AEBR - ASSOCIATION' below it.

- **Lobby towards European institutions**
- **Support to CB Structures**
- **Information to players**
- ***Think-tank*: Studies on CB Themes**
- **Preparation, implementation and evaluation of projects**
- **Training in CBC (capacity building)**
- **Design of CB Strategies**

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AEBR SG received the István Pálfi Award for CBC 2021



During a CBC conference organized by the Hungarian government during their Presidency of the Council of Europe, State Secretary Tamás Menczer, on behalf of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade handed over the István Pálfi Awards for CBC 2021 to Dr Bálint Márton Szücs, Head of the Joint Secretariat of Interreg V HU-HR, and M. Guillermo Ramírez, AEBR SG.

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THANK YOU VERY MUCH FOR YOUR ATTENTION!

We are also in the social media:



Association of European Border Regions

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