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Joint Meetings on Cross-Border Cooperation

**12 November 2015: Joint Workshop
“European Groupings of Territorial Cooperation
(EGTCs) and European Territorial Cooperation (ETC)”**

**13 November 2015: Joint Conference
“The Future of Cross-Border Cooperation in Europe”**

Venue: Committee of the Regions

JDE Building – Rue Belliard 99, B-1040 Brussels

The Future of Cross-Border Cooperation in Europe

Cross-border cooperation (CBC) has developed for more than 50 years (initiated formally in the EUREGIO at the German-Dutch border, in Scandinavia and in the Upper Rhine area). There was one common aspect in all these areas: the cooperation was not limited to certain selected topics, but included all areas of life, as for example it was the case in 1972 with the first EU funded cross-border action programme for the EUREGIO.

In close cooperation with the Association of European Border Regions (AEBR) the Council of Europe organised for more than twenty years European-wide conferences on cross-border topics and launched the Madrid Outline Convention as a first approach for a cross-border legal instrument thirty-five years ago.

Since 1990 the evolution of CBC was even more accelerated thanks to the EU programme INTERREG. The idea was developed during the eighties in cooperation with AEBR, ensuring longer-term support to cooperation. In 2006, a legal instrument for territorial cooperation (the EGTC) applicable in the whole EU facilitated even more opportunities for CBC. The AEBR elaborated the baseline study for this instrument.

The EU INTERREG programmes are more and more aligned with the priorities of cohesion and regional policy, and do not finance the whole range of topics. In the same time, in many member States and in border areas it seems as if there is a certain tendency to equate CBC more and more with INTERREG funding.

Best practices identified and INTERREG evaluations implemented by the European Commission show that CBC goes beyond INTERREG. CBC includes all areas of life, is based on mid- and long-term strategies, where common projects have to fit in, and it is most successful when implemented on a regional or local level in partnership with national governments, the EU, civil society and NGOs.

Therefore, successful CBC is closely linked to well-functioning regional and local democracy, spatial planning and the development of region-specific objectives with regard to cross-border development (mid- and long-term strategies). It is a CBC task to examine what the regional and local levels can do to achieve their objectives, which national means from both sides of the border can be used and which priorities can be implemented with INTERREG support. As many cross-border problems and tasks have above all national, but often also European and global causes, the States, the EU and the Council of Europe are responsible for giving their support, and for this they need border regions and cross-border structures as partners. A cross-border organisation with a recognised cross-border legal form is a more suitable partner than a private-law organisation.

During the workshop on EGTCs and ETCs on 12th November we will check the state-of-the-art and perspectives, and the common conference on 13th November will tackle the future of CBC in general, not only with regard to EU programmes, taking into account the above mentioned aspects. The added value of CBC for border regions and for Europe, its contribution to cross-border territorial integration, new opportunities for growth and jobs, a better cooperation with neighbouring States and between third countries, and a better use of future chances (energy, health care, public services, education, modern means of communication, etc.) need to be further elaborated, as well as the elimination of existing obstacles.

Also in the name of our conference partners, the **Directorate General for Regional and Urban Policy of the European Commission**, the **Committee of the Regions**, and the **Congress of Regional and Local Authorities of the Council of Europe**, whom we would like to thank a lot for their generous cooperation and support, you are cordially invited to join us in Brussels!

12 November 2015

“European Groupings of Territorial Cooperation (EGTCs) and European Territorial Cooperation (ETC)”

PRE-CONFERENCE WORKSHOP IN COOPERATION WITH THE EGTC PLATFORM OF THE COR

Venue: Committee of the Regions

09.30 Registration

10.00 Opening

10.30 1st Round Table

11.30 Coffee Break

12.00 2nd Round Table

13.00 Conclusions and Closing

13.30 Lunch



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Remark: In the afternoon, there will be meetings of the AEBR Task Forces in different venues in the European quarter. These workshops will last two hours (from 15:30 to 17:30. The venues and programmes are under preparation by the different Task Forces and information will be provided in due time.

18.00 Evening Event – Reception at the Representation of North Rhine-Westphalia in Brussels on invitation of AEBR (*Please note that due to limited capacity, the AEBR will send the personalised invitations on a ‘first registered, first served’ basis*)

(Rue Montoyer 47, B-1000 Brussels; Phone: +32 (2) 739-1775)

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13 November 2015

- 08:30 Registration
- 09:00-10.30 AEBR statutory meetings on separate invitation
- 10:30 Coffee Break, Registration



“The Future of Cross-Border Cooperation in Europe”

Joint conference of AEBR, the Directorate General for Regional and Urban Policy of the European Commission, the Committee of the Regions and the Congress of Local and Regional Authorities of the Council of Europe

Venue: Committee of the Regions, Room JDE 52

Conference Languages: EN, FR, DE, ES

11:00 **Opening and Welcome**

Karl-Heinz Lambertz, President of AEBR, President of the Parliament of the German-Speaking Community of Belgium

Keynote speeches

Walter Deffaa, Director General, Directorate General for Regional and Urban Policy, European Commission (to be finally confirmed)

Gudrun Mosler-Törnström, President of the Chamber of Regions of the Congress of Local and Regional Authorities of the Council of Europe, Vice-President of the regional parliament (Landtag) of Salzburg (confirmed)

Markku Markkula, President of the Committee of the Regions (confirmed)



11:45 **Cross-Border Cooperation: Corner Stone and Cement of the European House**

A European Task and Political Priority of the EU

Chair: Karl-Heinz Lambertz, President of AEBR, President of the Parliament of the German-Speaking Community of Belgium

Walter Deffaa, Director General, DG Regional and Urban Policy, European Commission (confirmed)

Cross-Border Cooperation – Key for Territorial Integration

Martín Guillermo Ramírez, Secretary General AEBR

How to further improve cross-border cooperation at regional/local level?

12:30 Lunch *(on invitation of the Congress of Local and Regional Authorities of the Council of Europe)*

13:30 **Cross-Border Cooperation: Added Value for Cross-Border Regions and Europe**

Using Opportunities and overcoming Obstacles at Internal and External Borders/ Third Countries

Chair: Andreas Kiefer, Secretary General of the Congress of Local and Regional Authorities of the Council of Europe

Iskra Mihailova, Chair of the Committee on Regional Development, European Parliament (confirmed)

Lena Andersson Pench, Director, DG Regional and Urban Policy, European Commission (confirmed)

Nathalie Thiberge, Programme Manager, Directorate-General for European Neighbourhood Policy and Enlargement Negotiations (DG NEAR) (confirmed)

François Maïtia, Vice-President of AEBR, Vice-President of Région Aquitaine (FR) (confirmed)

Czesław Fiedorowicz, President of Euroregion Spree-Neiße-Bober (PL/DE), Speaker of the Polish border regions (tbc)

15:00 Coffee break



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The Congress



Le Congrès



COUNCIL OF EUROPE
CONSEIL DE L'EUROPE



15:30 **Future priorities for CBC in Europe**

Cross-border health care, energy, public services, territorial planning, legal bodies

Chair: Gert Versnick, Vice-Chair of Euroregion Scheldemond/Province of East Flanders, Vice-President of AEBR

Frank Vansteenkiste, Director-General, Department of Spatial Planning and Development, Ministry of Sustainable Development and Infrastructure of the Grand Duchy of Luxembourg (confirmed)

Breda Pecan, Rapporteur of the Congress of Local and Regional Authorities, Council of Europe - External Borders/Third Countries, Representative of the Chamber of Local Authorities, Alternate of the Governance Committee (confirmed)

Raffaele Cattaneo, Chair of the COTER Commission and Coordinator of the EGTC platform of the CoR, President of the Regional Council of Lombardia (confirmed)

View of the border regions:

- **Jesus Gamallo Aller**, Director-General for External Relations and Relations with the European Union in the Regional Government of Galicia (ES) (tbc)
- **Gabriele Lackner-Strauß**, Vice-President of AEBR, President of Euregio Bayerischer Wald-Böhmerwald (DE/AT/CZ) (tbc)

17:00 **Closing speeches**

Karl-Heinz Lambertz, President of AEBR, President of the Parliament of the German-Speaking Community of Belgium

Jirí Buriánek, CoR Secretary General (confirmed)

Gudrun Mosler-Törnström, President of the Chamber of Regions of the Congress of Local and Regional Authorities of the Council of Europe, Vice-President of the Regional Parliament (Landtag) of Salzburg (confirmed)

Walter Deffaa, Director General, DG Regional and Urban Policy, European Commission (confirmed)

Evening at free disposal.