

Invitation

Dear Madam / Sir,

The Budapest Platform and the Benelux are very pleased to invite you at the seminar « The role of the states in supporting cross-border cooperation » on the **2nd July 2013 from 2 pm to 5 pm** (followed by a reception) at the Benelux Office, Regenschapstraat 39, 1000 Brussels.

The Budapest Platform is a European platform of 4 support structures for cross-border cooperation at national level¹.

The aim of the seminar is to draw the attention to the need of a more integrated, strategic approach in preparing the programming documents and PAs for the next budgetary period. The main topics to be discussed:

- monitoring territorial development in cross-border regions requiring statistical coordination between neighbouring states;
- cross-border co-ordination of sectorial policies at national level;
- use of territorially integrated methods and tools with a view to decreasing the backwardness of borderlands;
- integrated development of cross-border metropolitan functional regions;
- the role of the national level in coordinating programming and regional development in border regions.

If you wish to participate in this event, please send an e-mail of confirmation before the 24th June, 2013 to the following address: cesci@cesci-net.eu.

Looking forward to seeing you among the participants of the seminar.

Kind regards,

Gyula OCSKAY, Secretary General of CESCO
on behalf of the partners of the Platform

¹ MOT for France, CESCO for Hungary, Ministry of the Interior and Kingdom Relations for the Netherlands and Working Communities Galicia-North Portugal and Castilla y León-North Portugal for the Spanish-Portuguese border

Definition of the main concept

Cross-border cooperation requires multi-level governance

European citizens are confronted everyday with the level of government closest to them in terms of services provided, or policies implemented. But other tiers of government have an impact on their life as well: infrastructure, higher education, health, economic development, welfare, to mention just a few, are functions for which regions, states and European institutions develop policies, take decisions and influence citizens' lives and firms' strategies. Policies at these different levels need to be coordinated, so as to ensure consistency and to be accountable to citizens; multi-level governance is required, with Cohesion Policy as the main way to provide a European dimension to it.

In the context of cross-border (CB) regions, this is even more so. Cross-border cooperation (CBC) aims at reducing negative effects of borders on local/regional level, easing joint work on issues that know no borders (environment, risk prevention), enhancing cross-border public and private services, labor markets, clusters, and establishing sustainable partnerships, for the sake of territorial integration and cohesion. CB territories are specific and need to be taken more into account. However, legislations generally depend on national level; national policy and legislation still have to be adapted to the cross-border needs. Moreover, in many States, several ministries concerned by policies having an impact on cross-border territories (transport, health, employment...) do not address them in a proper way, and do not coordinate on CB issues, creating typical "inefficiency traps" [Barca, 2009²]. EU legislation supports free movement as well as CBC but even for policy fields where EU law is in force its implementation may be different on the different sides of the border, therefore hindering cross-border projects.

Not only strategies, regulations, and funding require horizontal coordination across the borders, but different levels have to be involved, when a competence in a specific field is not held by the same level within the different countries involved. Some issues may involve only local authorities on one side of the border, and regional or national ones on the other.

Cross-border cooperation requires a more strategic approach, preceding programming

European territorial cooperation has been traditionally supported by the EU with the assumption that it should be led by local and regional authorities, the role of European and national levels being mainly to ease cooperation through appropriate legislation (Madrid

² An agenda for a reformed Cohesion Policy. A place-based approach to meeting European Union challenges and expectations", Independent report prepared at the request of Danuta Hübner, Commissioner for Regional Policy, By Fabrizio Barca, April 2009

Convention, EGTCs, etc.) and funding (Interreg, ETC). The recent experimentation of strategies within macro-regions has shown that a top-down approach should complement the bottom-up one. The macro-region method cannot be simply transferred to cross-border regions, and notably the European Commission cannot play an equivalent role; however, more and more stakeholders share the view that EU and national levels should be more strategically involved in CBC.

Another lesson from macro-regions is the need to make a distinction between strategies and programs; a cross-border regional strategy may be supported by an ETC program, but also by regional or national programs, funded or not by the EU, as it is the case for macro-regions.

The draft regulations for 2014-2020 Cohesion Policy propose to foster the strategic approach also for ETC, with the Common Strategic Framework (CSF) and national Partnership Agreements addressing ETC, meaning that these agreements should coordinate on each border. This provides an opportunity to develop a multi-level governance of cross-border cooperation, identifying more clearly than before the different levels: the level of the border between two or more countries, the levels of euro-regions and cross-border territories.

Cross-border cooperation requires stable governance tools at different levels

All territories require a sound governance, backed by politicians, and supported by tools allowing to build a common evidence and vision of the territory. Cross-border regions, often isolated and peripheral within national territories, even more so. Moreover, cross-border governance at the local level needs to be complemented at upper levels:

- At the border level, financial support to agencies such as Euro-institutes³ should be provided by Interreg A programmes.
- At national level, support structures like the MOT (France), CESCO (Hungary), CCDR-N (Portugal), Ministry of Home affairs (Netherlands), are required, so as to better articulate the different levels involved in cross-border cooperation, and the different sectors in the national administration with respect to the needs of cross-border territories. These structures have created a European platform (The Budapest Platform⁴) so as to exchange at the technical level on common issues. The Budapest Platform wishes to enlarge its network to other EU countries.

³ <http://euroinstitut.org/wFranzoesisch/1-Qui-sommes-nous/1-index.php>

⁴ <http://budapestplatform.eu>



- At the EU level, cross-border cooperation requires not only financial support, but also awareness raising within the European Commission, and support by networking tools in the field of evidence (Eurostat, ESPON) and capitalization (Interact, Interreg C, Urbact, etc.); synergy should be developed with EU networks in the field of ETC: AEBR, CECICN, TEIN (EU network of Euro-institutes).

General objective of the seminar

This seminar intends to raise the issue of tools that have to be implemented, so as to support multi-level governance of cross-border cooperation.

Points to be discussed:

- Governance of cross-border cooperation within 2014-2020 EU Cohesion Policy;
- Role of Partnership Agreements (how to coordinate them across-borders), strategic process;
- Specific role of ETC programs, coordination between them and other programs;
- Role of integrated approach and ITI in cross-border regional development;
- How to build evidence (data, visions) in cross-border regions with the support of the upper levels (national, EU)?
- How to develop assessment tools for CB context?
- Multi level support for evidence building, capitalization and transfer of good practices in the field of ETC :
 - at the border level: role of ETC programmes and tools at the border level: Euro institutes, cross-border agencies;
 - at the national level: horizontal and vertical coordination on CBC issues; supporting tools such as the MOT, CESCO,...(Budapest platform); role of national technical assistance programmes towards ETC (e.g. EUROPACT in France);
 - at the EU level: coordination; inter-service groups within the EC; Territorial Impact Assessment in support of CB regions; supporting tools at the EU level: the role of Interact, Interreg C, ESPON, Urbact;
- How to coordinate these programmes with EU networks: AEBR, CECICN, TEIN (EU network of Euro institutes); *toward an EU resource platform for CBC ?*
- How to coordinate EU tools with national tools: *toward a network of Interact national contact points* (as it is already the case for ESPON)?