

General framework: The tools of Cross-Border Cooperation (CBC) The Association of European Border Regions

Coordination

Martine Camiade, Géraldine Caprani

Intervention

Martin Guillermo Ramirez, Secrétaire général - ARFE (Association des Régions Frontalières Européennes).

Represents the interests of CB regions towards the Council of Europe, the European Union and the national Governments.

Emil Gött (1864-1908) Sayings Aphorisms

Borders must not create the feeling that this is where you come to an end, but rather that this is where you still need to grow.

- **Cross-Border Cooperation (CBC) is a story of Multi-Level Governance**

50+ years of “formal” CBC; centuries of “informal” and “abnormal” CBC.

Laboratories for European Integration.

Central Europe (Rhine basin), Northern Europe,

Mediterranean regions, Eastern Europe (Caucasus) ...

Global CBC for Global Challenges: Latin America and Africa

- **Long European Tradition**

1960: 20 border regions in Scandinavia, NW Europe and the Rhine basin

1980: 40 (the Mediterranean, the Alps, the Pyrenees and Ireland)

2000: 120 border regions in Europe

2011: 200 structures (regions and euroregions)

-
- **Euroregions, Eurodistricts, Eurocities**
 - **Working Communities**
 - **CB Initiatives Cabinets (GIT)**
 - **EGTCs – EGCs**
 - **Macroregions?**

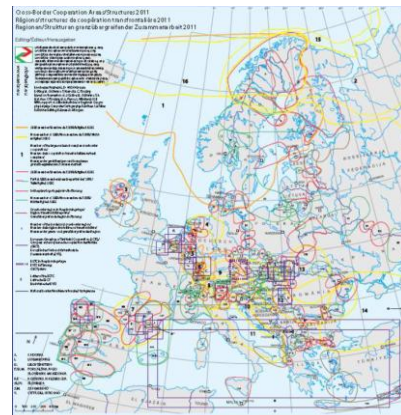
- **AGEG – AEBR – ARFE**

1971: 10 members (projects)

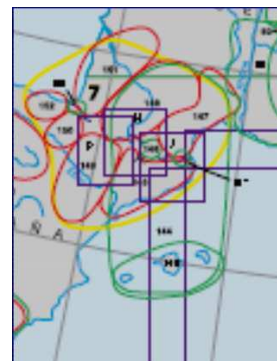
1980: 30 (programmes, instruments)

2011: 100 (generalisation)

≈ 200 European border areas



European CBC Cooperation structures in 2011
(keep on growing)



CBC structures in the Pyrenees



CBC in the Mediterranean

- **EUROREGIONS and similar structures**

EUREGIO, German-Dutch border
A **name**, an **area**, and a **mission**

CBC of **regions** and **municipalities**; **economic** and **social** partners

Similar regional profiles and shared problems:

- common historical heritage
- comparable agricultural, textile and clothing
- monostructural activities, and, bad infrastructures

INTERREG PROGRAMMES (Is there life after Interreg?)

- **EU Programmes exist and are healthy, but...
...legal instruments?**

No single EU wide legal instrument, for all Member States (and far beyond) for CB, IR or TN cooperation

The **Nordic Agreement** (1977) CBC between municipalities

Multilateral inter-state agreements: Madrid Outline Convention (Council of Europe) and **Additional Protocols**: framework for bilateral/trilateral inter-state agreements

Bilateral agreements: Benelux Agreement, German/Dutch **Anholt** Agreement or **Karlsruhe** Agreement

Numerous **conventions, treaties, agreements and protocols** at bilateral and trilateral level

Regional and local agreements, led to many **border and CB 'working communities'** (Euregios and similar structures) on the EU's internal and external borders;

Project-specific cooperation, through direct bilateral regional and/or local agreements or through European and national legal instruments (e.g. European Economic Interest Group (EEIG), mixed economy companies)

The European Grouping of Territorial Cooperation (EGTC) – Next: ECG

- **European experience shows**

Supranational integration processes does not guarantee cohesion in very diverse territories. Their own dynamics strengthen more developed areas (**territorial dumping**).

There is a need of a **“positive discrimination”**: territorial cooperation programmes and projects (Interreg) to enhance **economic, social and territorial cohesion**.

- **From “general territorial development” to CBC**

(**José Luis Rhi-Sausi**, CeSPI, Rome)

CBC opens a new dimension of local development, breaking national stiffness and creating new areas which do not fit in the traditional logic of States

DIFFICULTIES:

Mistrust by central governments
Differences in economic structures
Different levels of management capacity
Divergences in decentralization (asymmetries)

- **Debate on specific structures for CBC**

Risk of duplicating objectives, functions and services with existing institutions.

Chaotic growth of non-specialized institutions.

Need to combine horizontal and vertical policies: **SUBSIDIARITY – MLG – EGTC (EGC)**.

- **CBC**

It is not a new administrative level.

There are no exclusive competences in CBC structures (delegation).

It is a good example of Multi-level Governance.

The trick of Subsidiarity, Decentralization and Integration lies not in giving up national sovereignty, but in sharing it (up- and downwards) **towards a Common Objective**

- **Phases in CBC**

Information: **common knowledge and trust across the border**

Consultation: **before starting measures with potential impact on the other side of the border**

Harmonization: **of laws, regulations, procedures ...**

Integration: **of territories (single areas)**

- **Diversity**

Various :

Cultures and social systems
Administrative structures and powers
Fiscal and social legislations

Many other political activities

... meet at the borders

Citizens have grown up in very different environments

They will not sacrifice aspects of everyday lives for the European ideal

No State will alter its tried and trusted structures

- **Challenges for Integration Across Borders**

Different identities, feelings, systems, etc... will collide at the borders in the years to come (diversity)

Difficulties to normalize relationship across borders

Economic, management, administrative differences

OPPORTUNITIES

Common objective of the EU (and far beyond): from an economical alliance to a political entity

CBC closes gaps in integration processes: there is no way back

- **Day-to-day at border areas: Preliminary conclusions**

The work made by CB structures can only be successful if supported by citizens and regional / local politicians from both sides of the border, generating trust

At the borders, the citizens deal with practical aspects of Europe every day (Laboratories for European Integration)

There will be no regulation compatible with all countries (except EGTC / ECG)

- **Cross-border Cooperation (CBC)**

CBC has never been a national priority, but it is a (Pan) European task and political objective of the Union

But this is not the only European objective very slowly developed by Members States:

- Implementation of the Lisbon Strategy
- The Treaty
- Common External Policy

Other opportunities: Eastern Partnership, integration processes in Latin America, in Africa

- **Objective: Critical Mass**

CB regions over half of their potential areas of influence

CBC makes easier to achieve a critical mass: synergies, efficiency, joint planning and managing

Creation of CB influence areas

Creation of alliances for joint sustainable benefits

- **CBC Added Value**

(Pan-) European (Continental)

Political

Institutional

Socio-economic

Socio-cultural

- **Socio-economic added value of CBC**

Mobilisation of endogenous potential, strengthening regional and local level as partners and initiators of CBC

Participation of economic and social actors (chambers, associations, companies, trade unions, cultural and social institutions, environmental orgs and tourism agencies)

Opening up of labor markets and harmonisation of professional qualifications

Additional developments: infrastructures, transport, tourism, environment, education, research & cooperation between SMEs, and the creation of employment

Lasting improvements in Spatial Development and regional policy (including environment)

Improvement of cross-border transport infrastructure

- **Specific added value to implement the (Lisbon) EU2020 Strategy**

Additionality of cross-border programs and projects

Synergy through CBC

Joint Research and Innovation

CB Networking

Benchmarking (exchange of best practice and know-how)

Spin-off effects by overcoming border effects

Efficient CB resource management

PERMANENT CBC STRUCTURES (EUROREGIONS, EGTCs (EGCs), WC, ...

- **Addendum: Evidences (examples) of CBC specific added value to implement the Lisbon Strategy / the EU2020 and any other European Strategy for integration and cohesion**

CB spatial and development concepts
Creation of CB infrastructures
Promotion of growth / economic dev't in addition to national dev't
New CB business relationships between producers and suppliers
New cooperation and sales opportunities for SMEs
Establishment of a CB labour market
Bilingual CB professional training
Establishment and improvement of CB public transport links
CB tourism concepts and projects
Greater catchments areas for business activities and services
A more efficient use of public funds
Joint research and innovation
Additional synergies and spin-off effects
Sustainable CB management of environment and environmental protection
CBC as model for "new governance"

- **Conclusions I**

After 2013:

New opportunities for genuine CBC. **5th cohesion Report** recommends to continue (and increase) Territorial Cooperation, in particular CBC.

Treaty of Lisbon also recommends a special attention to CB regions.

The European Parliament has recommended that TC receives **7% of Cohesion Fund** (Sánchez Schmid's report).

Extension of CBC outside the EU borders:

- European Eastern Partnership, and far beyond (Caucasus)
- Processes in America, Africa and Asia

- **Conclusions II**

New challenges for CB structures:

- Promoting "hot" issues (R&D, restructuring, labour market, CB healthcare, ...).
- Old wine in new bottles? The risk of "dying of fashion": euroregions, EGTCs, macroregions (**Black cat, white cat, ...**)
- The EU legal instrument **EGTC** has to be improved by learning from lessons up to now

And also for Networks! (AEBR, MOT, NEEBOR, Baltic, Black Sea, Mediterranean, ...) (**Benedetti: old answers for new questions?**)

More exigencies for local and regional levels: pre-condition for successful CBC (and more social participation). **Political will and participation.**

The **States** involved should also promote CBC (with their own budgets) in **new functional spaces**.

No new competences, no new administrative levels.

Contact:

Association of European Border Regions
 Enscheder Strasse, 362
 D-48599 Gronau (Germany)

Phone: +49-2562-70219
 Fax: +49-2562-70259