

International and interdisciplinary conference

“B/ORDERS IN MOTION: Current challenges and future perspectives”

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PANEL D3: Conditions, Challenges and Perspectives for cross-border cooperation in Europe

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This panel focuses on the legal dimension of cross-border cooperation by stressing the conditions that allow/impede efficient as well as effective cross-border cooperation in Europe. In addition, the panel aims to discuss future challenges and perspectives of cross-border cooperation.

All over Europe and its internal border regions, networks of transborder institutions, policies, strategies and agendas have been created both by the EU and its member states. Financial support through the EU Cohesion Policy and other sources as well as political encouragement by the creation of legal tools like the European Grouping of Territorial Cooperation (EGTC) fostered the merging of Europe. Besides the already mentioned legal instrument EGTC also the Outline Convention of on Transfrontier Co-operation from 1980 with its Protocols (1995, 1998 and 2009) by the Council of Europe is one of the most important instruments that politically fostered bi- and multilateral functional cooperation across Europe.

Besides legal instruments also “soft factors” are crucial for policy implementation. Administrative obstacles, lack of communication, transparency and confidence can impede cross-border cooperation and also the effective and efficient usage of the legal framework. In recent times, studies on “trust” between partners of cross-border cooperation are blooming.

This panel seeks to differentiate between the characteristics, innovation potentials, advantages and benefits of cross-border cooperation by applying these legal forms on the one hand and to identify different sets of conditions that may hamper or enable cross-border policies and future challenges and perspectives of cross-border cooperation.

PANELISTS:

Cross-border territorial planning along the external borders of EU – Hungarian examples

Mátyás Jaschitz (Budapest)

The future evolution of the concept of territorial cohesion is on the move at the moment. But the genuine aim of territorial cohesion can only be achieved by the effective integrated development of peripheral border areas of Europe – which is not exactly the living practice yet; and which is especially true for the external borders of the EU.

The study introduces a complex cohesion focused cross-border planning and governance approach. Through a fresh case study example implemented by CESC (Central European Service for Cross-border Initiatives; a Central-European think and do tank of cross-border and transnational cooperation) it highlights the special relation and interdependence of planning and governance in border regions. It provides a description of a special cohesion focused cross-border spatial planning

methodology, which reveals the policy-driven opportunities and threats of external European Union borderlands; and it also shows a possible best practice regarding the issues of planning and governance in such cases.

As a result, the study also confirms how this complex cohesion focused planning and governance approach could contribute to the recent European “space making” process and the planning discourse itself.

The study is reflecting to the theoretic specialities of cross-border planning on external borders in general, through the practical experiences of the concrete cross-border planning process of the first EGTC with a 3rd country member: Tisza European Grouping of Territorial Cooperation.

Future Perspectives of cross-border cooperation in Europe

Martin Klatt (Sonderborg)

Cross-border cooperation has been and will continue to be a core element of European integration. Even though the persistence of borders has surprised policymakers and researchers, border regions in Europe have changed during the last decades. There are few reasons to believe that these changes will be reversed and borders closed within the Schengen EU, albeit states have re-introduced border controls at some points. Economic interests in open borders are strong, as are the EU citizens' interests in free movement.

Interreg, core funder of many cbc-activities, is under revision. But it has been throughout its more than 25 years' history. Refocusing on daily social practices in border regions, on the non-subsidized activities of people and businesses, could help discovering new opportunities for more goal-oriented funding. Or for just doing it. Awareness of technological and administrative barriers does not mean that these barriers are unchangeable. Some institutional flexibility and cross-border thinking might lead to new interesting projects. There is a need for administrative new-think: not on how to extract EU money, but on how to improve the quality of life in one's municipality and region, always including the neighbour. True subsidiarity.

Concepts like Unfamiliarity help explaining mobility, or the lack of it. Encouraging diversity and neighbourhood can easily be incorporated in school curricula. Language training should be organized more flexible in the school system, at least securing the opportunity to learn the neighbouring country's language sufficiently in public school systems, despite national curricula. Cross-border infrastructure created in the past can be filled with life. In the end, it is all about political will.

Obstacles for cross-border railway connections on the example of the Brenner Corridor

Andreas Eisendle (Innsbruck)

The European Grouping of Territorial Cooperation “European Region Tyrol-South Tyrol-Trentino” (EGTC Tyrol) was registered in 2011 by the Austrian State (Land) Tyrol and the two Italian Autonomous provinces of South Tyrol and Trentino. The territory of the EGTC Tyrol is crossed by the Brenner Corridor which is considered “one of the principal land transport routes between certain

Member States" (ECJ, Case C-28/09) and is part of the TEN-T Core Net "Scandinavian-Mediterranean". As a consequence, the territory is confronted with a high traffic volume and the resulting challenges for the particularly sensitive alpine environment and the health of its population. This is further intensified by an unfavourable modal split into a high transport volume on the road and a much lower volume of rail transports.

It therefore comes as no surprise that the multi-functional EGTC Tyrol also lists among its objectives the realisation of a "sustainable mobility" in accordance with the intentions and aims of the Alpine Convention. Among the endeavours to facilitate a "green Brenner Corridor" the EGTC Tyrol also supports in particular the modal shift from road to rail with regard to both passenger and freight transport. Furthermore, the EGTC Tyrol acts as a leading partner within the "Action Group 4 – Mobility" of the EU Strategy for the Alpine Region (EUSALP) also promoting the inter-modality and interoperability as well as the intensification of the cooperation and integration of existing transport structures.

In this context, the presentation addresses the obstacles for cross-border cooperation in the transport sector by focusing on the example of railway connections along the Brenner Corridor.

Enhancing cross-border services of public interest

Sabine Zillmer (Berlin)

European policy documents acknowledge that better access to services of public interest is key for territorial cohesion. Cross-border provision can support better quality, more effective and more efficient delivery of these services. ESPON research indicates a wide variety of public services delivered across borders at basically all borders of the EU including some external borders. They include domestically organised services that extend their influence across the border and services specifically established for cross-border areas.

Potentials for delivering services of public interest across borders touch various policy fields from health care to education, from emergency services to civil protection, from environmental protection to transport. In which fields they are applied is strongly linked to the local and regional needs. Cross-border services enhance service provision in very different territorial contexts from densely to sparsely populated regions and depend also on geographic specificities. Cross-border service provision is furthermore a means for small countries to balance service supply and demand, both quantitatively and qualitatively.

Cross-border services come with a trade-off between their benefits and additional efforts and specific conditions. Cross-border services tend to be unstable in case of legal or political change. Thus, they should only be set-up if there is a need identified and political support voiced. Some cross-border public services can be implemented rather easily and quickly, others require legal action at possibly even different territorial levels and take much more time to develop. It is no exception but the rule that cross-border public service development takes several years or even a decade.

Zooming into a few examples of different policy fields across Europe will highlight cases where cross-border public services have proven to be particularly useful to ensure high public service quality in

border areas or to improve living conditions for a stable regional development in view of regional development challenges caused by environmental, economic or demographic change.