



New generation of cross-border cooperation : support at national level to overcome obstacles

Open Days

The Budapest Platform workshop, 9:00 to 10:45

Code 08C01

MINUTES

8 October 2014, Brussels

Committee of the Regions, Jacques Delors, Room JDE 51



Outline

This workshop, gathering more than 130 participants, was organised by the Budapest Platform, a European network of national structures supporting cross-border cooperation. Its objective is the sharing of experience and the implementation of joint projects at European level.

The representatives of the MOT (France), of the CESC (Hungary), of the CCNR-N (Portugal), of the Dutch Ministry of the Interior, of the German Federal Office for Building and Regional Planning (BBR), and of the Grand Duchy of Luxembourg illustrated how the role of the national level is important to overcome cross-border obstacles, and how a multilevel approach of cross-border cooperation produces tangible results at the service of citizens.

An intervention from the Commission put the exchanges into a European perspective, encouraging the Member States to coordinate with each other on the basis of the treaty and stressing the renewed attention paid to cross-border affairs by the European institutions.

Debate

Jean Peyrony, moderator of the workshop, introduced the proceedings by presenting the Budapest Platform. Set up in December 2010, it is a European network of national structures supporting cross-border cooperation (to date: PT, FR, NL and HU). It is open to any country that wishes to join.

Gyula Ocskay stressed the importance of integrated territorial tools for supporting cross-border cooperation at the Hungarian borders. He highlighted the necessity of simplifying the tools designed by the European Union, in order to contribute to enhancing the way strategies of the territories are taken into account in the programs.

Nuno Almeida explained the Spanish-Portuguese model for coordination of national strategies at the border. Cross-border relations are enshrined in the respective partnership agreements, implemented jointly by the Regional Autonomies on the Spanish side and the Portuguese Administration. Consolidated entities such as the Working Community Galicia/Norte Portugal lead the cooperation process based on a joint strategy designed under the guidelines of the Cohesion Policy, of which the Joint Investment Plan Galicia/Norte Portugal 2014-2020 is a very concrete example.

Tom Leeuwestein discussed the necessity of inter-ministerial coordination and of coordination with the neighbouring States on each border in order to overcome the legal obstacles at Dutch borders, e.g. with regard to employment.

Volker Schmidt-Seiwert spoke about German federal support for cross-border cooperation in a context of sharing powers with the *Länder*. Cross-border activities are settled actually in the *Länder* and regions. Ministries of the federal level support as coordination bodies cross-border and transnational programs. The "Bundesprogramm Transnationale Zusammenarbeit" is a direct support of transnational projects. Support of cross-border activities exists also in the framework of the Demonstration Projects of Spatial Planning, which are important instrument for federal spatial planning to promote project oriented planning and politics. The monitoring of border territories and neighbouring regions is integral part in the spatial monitoring system of the BBR.

Jean Peyrony also highlighted the role of the national level in cross-border data monitoring at the French borders. In his opinion, coordinated involvement of the States at each border is indispensable for better understanding of cross-border challenges.

Jean-Claude Sinner presented the programme of the IT-LV-LU Trio Presidency, whose objective it is to make a leap forward in quality with regard to territorial cohesion and to urban policy. More specifically, the Trio plans the development of a legal instrument for cross-border cooperation by 2020.

Agnès Monfret, head of the European Cross-border Cooperation unit at DG REGIO, encouraged all levels of governance to coordinate in order to arrive at the Treaty objective of harmonious development throughout the territory of the European Union. She praised the "cross-border heroes" who move things forward and stressed the renewed attention paid to cross-border issues by a new generation of border-sensitive MEPs and a Commission determined to promote growth, and smart legislation in the EU process. She noted with great interest the Dutch experiment at conducting "border impact assessments", which the European institutions could explore.

Conclusions

Jean Peyrony concluded the discussions emphasizing the need of coordination on each border with a strong European support. This support could be implemented through all the networking programmes: Interact, Espon, Interreg Europe, Urbact, interacting with stakeholders at the European level: Association of European Border Regions (AEBR), Conference of European Cross-border and Interregional City Networks (CEICN) and the Transfrontier Euro-Institut Network (TEIN).

"Cross-border pioneers encounter intangible border obstacles. Removing them requires a systematic mapping of remaining border obstacles, then enhanced multilevel harmonisation and cooperation in the interest of border people"
Agnès Monfret

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Organiser:

The Budapest Platform

Moderator:

Jean Peyrony, Director General of the Mission Opérationnelle Transfrontalière (MOT), France

Speakers:

Gyula Ocskay, Secretary General, Central-European Service for Cross-Border Initiatives (CESCI), Hungary

Nuno Almeida, Head of the Strategic Cooperation Unit, North Regional Coordination and Development Commission (CCNR-N), Portugal

Tom Leeuwestein, Head of Unit, Ministry of the Interior and Kingdom Relations, The Netherlands

Volker Schmidt-Seiwert, Federal Institute for Research on Building, Urban Affairs and Spatial Development, within the Federal Office for Building and Regional Planning (BBR), Germany

Jean-Claude Sinner, First Class Councillor of the Government, Grand Duchy of Luxembourg

Agnès Monfret, Head of Unit "European Cross-border Cooperation", DG REGIO, European Commission

More information, links:

www.budapestplatform.eu

www.espaces-transfrontaliers.eu

www.cesci-net.eu

www.ccnr-n.pt

www.government.nl/ministries/bzkr

www.bbr.bund.de

www.dat.public.lu