

Expertising Governance for Transfrontier Conurbations

Seminar: "Involvement of civil society within cross-border agglomerations"

Tournai (Belgium), February 11th 2010



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SUMMARY OF THE MINUTES

Develop the inhabitants' feeling of belonging to a cross-border area. Involve civil society within the cross-border public life. Those two questions are fundamental in the construction of cross-border territories and were the heart of the discussion between the 120 participants who assisted to the latest URBACT "EGTC" seminar.

Patrick PEUGEOT, president of the Forum of the Eurometropole Lille-Kortrijk-Tournai, first opened the seminar with a presentation of this cross-border forum which was created in September 2009. It brings together numerous actors, French and Belgian, from the economic, the social, and the cultural spheres, and associations. The forum also federates the living forces of the territory and is solution-oriented within the strategy of the Eurometropole.

Projects which favour meetings and a common "vivre ensemble"

Various examples of cross-border projects which involve directly the inhabitants from both sides of the border were presented. For example, within the Strasbourg-Ortenau Eurodistrict (Franco-German border), a solidarity run called "solidarity KM" is organized every year in May in order to give the chance to French and German children to meet and run together for a good cause. The **Eurocity Chaves-Verin** (Spain/Portugal) also presented some cross-border initiatives directly aimed at young people (photography contest, sport meetings...).

Necessity of an active participation and role of the Medias

However, in order to create cross-border communities, involving the inhabitants within the projects is not enough. The presentations have demonstrated the **necessity to work for an active participation**. Therefore, in order to spark off a larger cultural curiosity, the role of the Medias and the **creation of a "cross-border public space"** are essential. The example of the **"Two Banks Newspaper"**¹ with its 15.000 visitors per day has shown, according to Kai Littmann, director of the newspaper, that the readers' curiosity for real cross-border subjects (for example the European and Eurodistrict sections) is well alive, and it is fundamental to enable an easy access to information in order to arouse this curiosity.

The example of the cooperation that is led within the **Öresund, between Malmö (Sweden) and Copenhagen (Denmark)**, two cities linked by a bridge since 2000, has demonstrated, following the setting-up of an online forum dedicated to the citizens of the cross-border region, that 99% of them are interested in cross-border cooperation for very practical questions related to their daily lives (job ads, movie time schedule, cultural agenda...). These initiatives are essential in order to arouse a "cross-border community" and a feeling of belonging to it.

The successes of other cross-border Medias going in the same direction were presented as well, such as the example of **cross-border French-Belgian TV shows** that are broadcasted on local channels.

¹ "Journal des deux rives": online French-German daily newspaper in the Upper-Rhine Region, created last September – www.2-rives.com.

Involve the civil society within cross-border public policies

To go further, the setting-up of cross-border governance systems (that are more complicated due to their cross-border nature) does not enjoy any direct democratic legitimacy. The gap with the populations might grow bigger. Thus, the third workshop of the seminar dealt with this question: **how can the visibility of cross-border public action be insured, and its legitimacy guaranteed?** Formal or informal systems of involvement of the socio-economic actors, the numerous examples vary according to the objectives and the socio-cultural contexts of the territories.

For example, within **the Frankfurt (Oder)/Slubice conurbation** on the German-Polish border, the administrations have organized, in June 2009, a public debate forum as well as working groups that bring together the authorities and the civil society. In the end, one third of the ideas, strategic objectives and projects for a cross-border conurbation come from the civil society.

Another example would be the setting-up of a “civil parliament” in 2006 on the Hungarian-Slovakian border within the **Ister-Granum EGTC**. It is a place for civil organizations to express their needs and opinions to the experts’ council. This council brings together the executive council of the civil parliament (elected), the representatives of the three main employers of the region, the representatives of the chambers of trade and industry, and the thematic committees of the cross-border EGTC.

Another example within the **Trinational Eurodistrict Basel** is the creation of an association, “Metrobasel”, which represents the interests of companies, institutions and key actors of the civil society in order to promote the trinational metropolitan region Basel.

The solutions that were brought up to develop participative democracy are still various: develop instruments for cyber democracy, create “cross-border development councils”, increase the number of citizens’ forums and of surveys toward the population, etc.

The powerpoints are available on the following website: <http://urbact.eu/egtc>

MINUTES

Introduction

Patrick PEUGEOT, President of the Forum of the Eurometropole Lille-Kortrijk-Tournai on the French-Belgian border introduces the seminar and to excuses Mr. MASSY, Mayor of Tournai, for not being able to attend.

The Tournai City-hall, venue of the seminar, has a particular symbolic dimension since the ceremony for the creation of the Forum of the Eurometropole Lille-Kortrijk-Tournai was held there six months before. The Forum, which is an entity that brings together the representatives of the civil society of the Eurometropole territory, results from the common will of all institutional partners to develop their relations with the population after they have focused on the institutional and political dimension of cooperation.

The COPIT, an association which was created to encourage cross-border projects and reflection, was the first steps towards the Eurometropole. After ten years of existence, the partners of the Eurometropole have turned towards a new governance tool that is more adapted to the needs of the cross-border metropolis, the European Grouping of Territorial Cooperation (EGTC). This new tool comprises the inter-municipalities of the cross-border territory, the regional and State entities, and at the same time it involves the elected representatives of the interested cities into a big conference of the Mayors.

The current challenge is to measure the potential offered to mobilize the civil society beyond policies.

Lille Metropole Urban Community has come to be an example with the opening of its development council (made up of socio-economic actors from the territory) to the actors of the Belgian civil society. In Belgium, such a system involving the civil society did not exist.

The reflection on the Forum of the Eurometropole have led to a meeting with the actors of the civil society on both sides of the border, some “cross-border activists” willing to build a daily life that is more profitable to the population. A cross-border commission has been set-up with the mission to identify the fields in which a cross-border approach could benefit to the inhabitants’ daily life. The involvement of some actors, which was made visible, has led to the development of new commitments.

The employment rate on the French-Belgian border, which is a very concentrated area, is unbalanced. The challenge of the cross-border job forum project is thus to develop opportunities for job seekers and companies. The idea is to organize the job forum in a touring way on the territory of the Eurometropole from one year to the other. This type of operation is the only mean to turn Europe into an entity which the population can trust. This shows that a civil society that is mobilized and organized, and often supported by administrations, can change the lives of the inhabitants.

In order to organize the involvement of the civil society, Stefan DECLERCQ, Mayor of Kortrijk, launched the idea of the creation of a cross-border development council, the Forum of the Eurometropole.

Then, **Dr. Hans-Günther CLEV**, Director General of the Mission Opérationnelle Transfrontalière (MOT), introduces the “EGTC” URBACT II project, which is led by the MOT. This project brings together into a network six cross-border conurbations which exchange on the tools of cross-border governance, including the European grouping of territorial cooperation (EGTC). The URBACT II programme asks each of the partners to elaborate a Local Action Plan (LAP) on local governance at the end of the project. This LAP will help to identify the necessary measures in order to improve the functioning of a cross-border conurbation. The activities carried out in the framework of the project, and particularly the realization of the LAP, must involve the Local Support Group (LSG) set-up by each partner municipality. The Local Support Groups are made up by the border municipalities (part of the cross-border agglomerations) and in some cases by the upper-local levels (regional and national) and the private actors.

Christian LAMOUR, Lead expert of the “EGTC” URBACT project and researcher at the research center CEPS/INSTEAD in Luxembourg, introduces the project’s themes. The urban governance requires at the same time the emergence of a collective leadership and the structuralization of a community feeling exceeding the frames inherited from past. Beyond the State space, any structuralization of an organizational power as well as any logic of community asks for a capacity of innovation much superior to that required inside the State. It thus seemed necessary to launch the “EGTC” URBACT project in order to generate exchanges between actors having to manage the European city in the spaces of State transition.

The first debates took place during the conference of Chaves in Portugal in Mars 2009 and concerned the methods capable of defining and of making operational the collective wide decisions (cross-border institutional formalization, articulation between elected representatives and technicians, technical coordination, financing).

The meeting of this day concerns the community field of the “EGTC” URBACT project and more exactly the mobilization of the civil society through the concrete projects as well as at the level of the global decision-making process. The objective of the conference is to explain and to discuss on the most relevant operations to strengthen a link between the resident populations in the cross-border city and the network of public authorities.

The followed logic can be at once cognitive and emotional (make the cross-border territorial project known to the populations and set up actions susceptible to generate a positive opinion with regard to this area of referencing). The initial postulate is not to create a unique cross-border identity but to imagine one “European cosmopolis” whose cohesion is going to pass by a respect for the differences and the communicational long-lasting cycle. The three workshops of the seminar allow us to investigate these roads of “to live together separately” in urban and cross-border Europe.

I. Workshop 1: Cross-border projects leading to popular mobilization, “Arouse a cross-border daily life”

- Cross-border popular events:

Pascale SIMON-STUDER represents the German partner (Ortenaukreis) of the Eurodistrict Strasbourg-Ortenau on the French-German border. She puts forward several initiatives encouraged and coordinated by the Eurodistrict which aim to enable the population on both sides of the border to meet in a common and friendly area. The partners of the Eurodistrict Strasbourg-Ortenau (the Urban Community of Strasbourg in France, the Ortenaukreis, and the cities of Offenburg, Lahr, Kehl, Achern and Oberkirch in Germany), which have equipped themselves with a European grouping of territorial cooperation on February 4th 2010, now wish to move towards more integration of the inhabitants into cooperation.

The “Km Solidarity” run is an annual event dedicated to the primary schools of the Eurodistrict and to their pupils (around 18 000 participants), which is led by the Eurodistrict since 2007. Initially it was a French-only project led by the Urban Community of Strasbourg. The pupils are invited to run for an association of their choice and earn, for each kilometer they run, a certain amount of money which is then given to the association. This type of event promotes both sports and solidarity, as well as it arouses cross-border meetings. The Eurodistrict organizes and coordinates the project. The project could be, in the future, led by the EGTC. The idea is to enlarge the initiative to all the schools in the Eurodistrict. This type of events has a ripple effect since the schools and the administrations work together.

The Bicycle day of the Eurodistrict is a project which links together sustainable tourism, soft vehicles, and cross-border meetings. This initiative meets a great success and generates a demand that is greater than the offer. The leading actors of the projects are associations. The Walking day of the Eurodistrict, which is based on the promotion of sports and the discovery of the natural and cultural heritage, is also a very interesting initiative. Both projects should also be led by the EGTC.

Marita LORENZO, from the Eurocidade Chaves-Verin on the Spanish-Portuguese border, develops the actions led by the Eurocidade towards the citizens and which are co-financed by the running INTERREG IV A project. The cross-border information center of the Eurocidade, which was created in 2008, aims to make available all news on the actions of the Eurocidade that are dedicated to the population: the available services on both sides of the border, the Eurocitizen card (which gives discount prices to some sports and cultural infrastructures on both sides of the border) or the cultural agenda of the Eurocidade (elaborated in link with cultural associations). The other main actions of the center are to lead opinion polls among the cross-border population, to promote the cross-border projects led by the civil society (professional associations, cultural actors,...), to create links between the civil society on both sides of the border, and to organize sport and leisure activities (football competitions, photography contests, creation of a mascot for the Eurocidade, language classes, cross-border week of road safety...).

The enhancement of the added value of the Eurocidade is very important in order for the population to adhere to the cooperation between Chaves and Verin, which is recent partnership. Citizenship trainings also take place in schools. The departments in charge of youth in Galicia and in the

Portuguese government are also partners of the INTERREG IV A project. This collaboration has given birth to the future cross-border youth forum. This forum aims to reinforce the involvement of youth associations in the life of the Eurocidade, to encourage a better interaction between them, and to promote the cultural and leisure offer.

- **Cross-border public services:**

István FERENCsik of the Ister-Granum EGTC, on the border between Hungary and Slovakia, presents the future project of the energy center led by the EGTC (cofinancing and coordination). This project will benefit from an INTERREG IV A support. This project, which answers to a need from the territorial collectivities, from the citizens and to the challenges of sustainable development, will be aimed at promoting the best practices in terms of renewable energies (solar, biogas) and energy efficiency, and to promote their development. The following cross-border actions will be developed at the Ister-Granum Euroregion level and will lean on the existing environmental centers on both sides: exchange of good practices and of technologies, awareness campaigns, linking of small and medium-sized companies on both sides of the border, technical assistance for the development and the implementation of projects ...

Jean-Pierre RUCHOT, technical councilor to the regional director of Pôle Emploi (French job administration)² in the Nord-Pas-de-Calais Region, represents the steering committee of the Forum of the Eurometropole. He mentions that the services of the Nord-Pas-de-Calais Pôle Emploi have been working on cross-border issues for 10 years.

A study from 2008 estimated the number of cross-border workers to 29 500. The differences in the employment rates are very important between both sides of the border (for example, in the Panne-Coxyde in Belgium, unemployment rate: 4.5%; on the French side: 9.5%). To analyze the needs of the cross-border employment area, an “Enquiry on needs for labour force” was developed at a cross-border level in order to acquire knowledge on the recruitment conditions in Western Flanders. This tool, which is new and unique in France, has led to a good knowledge of recruitment environment by questioning the companies of western Flanders on their needs.

Among the challenges that the actors of the employment field face in the cross-border environment: decompartmentalize the job markets (for example, Pôle Emploi cannot finance any training to the benefit of Belgian companies, which would be an interesting system when it comes to training French job seekers who meet the needs of Belgian companies) or establish a coherence between training programmes.

The cross-border job Forum is representative of a very deep French-Belgian partnership. Cofinanced by the INTERREG IV A programme, this initiative aims to facilitate meetings between actors of the employment sector, workers, and companies on both sides of the border. It is a real success.

The French and Belgian partners have now set their objectives: for example, to forge a sustainable and structural partnership based on economic benchmarking (adaptation and modernization of the tools to analyze the needs) and to develop languages training programmes.

² French structure born from the fusion between the National Job Agency (ANPE) and the Association for Employment in Industry and Trade (ASSEDIC). It is responsible for all job researches.

Debate with the audience:

To a question on the necessity to create cross-border cooperation structures, Dr. Frédéric DUVINAGE, Director of the Trinational Eurodistrict Basel (on the French-German-Swiss border), answers that such a structuring is not essential in order to lead actions. Nevertheless, one has to admit that very few things can happen without a structure. The designation of a coordinator in charge of being an intermediary and dedicated to cross-border cooperation remains essential.

A representative of the European Commission (DG REGIO), asks the speakers about the added value of the EGTC tool for the cross-border population. He questions the development factors of cross-border cooperation: the existence of legal possibility of structuring the cross-border cooperation and of grants to cooperate, or a real need from the populations.

Pascale SIMON-STUDER presents the arguments that encouraged the Eurodistrict Strasbourg-Ortenau to engage on this road: before the creation of the EGTC structure in February 2010, the partners of the Eurodistrict were linked to each other only by a cross-border cooperation agreement, without any legal structure, nor any budget, with two administrations located on both sides of the border. This bicephal organization made it difficult to develop actions without any dedicated budget and with the impossibility to apply for European grants in the name of the Eurodistrict. With the EGTC, it will be possible to: set-up a common secretariat in Kehl (to ease the technical work), insure a better representation and a greater visibility of the Eurodistrict, apply for grants in the name of the Eurodistrict (without calling to another partner in so far as the EGTC partnership answers to the required conditions), involve the State as a member. In conclusion, the creation of the EGTC will help gain efficiency and better answer to the needs of the populations.

Kai LITTMANN, journalist for the “Two Banks Newspaper” (French-German border), underlines the fact that all the initiatives that were presented and that are designed for the citizens, as interesting and useful as they might be, do not illustrate the mobilization and the active participation of the civil society in these cross-border actions, which is the pre-requisite of citizens’ support. The thing is not to talk about the citizen but “with” the citizen, and to include him or her into the process.

Pascal SIMON-STUDER from the Eurodistrict Strasbourg-Ortenau indicates that a participative democracy platform (e-democracy) will be set-up very soon and that this initiative will be open to everyone who wishes to express themselves on the future of the Eurodistrict.

Patrick PEUGEOT underlines the necessary cooperation between the civil society and the institutions, which ultimately aims to obtain a better involvement of the population. He adds that the cooperation structure should not centralize all opportunities for cooperation, but should be a “point of rallying around the structural points” and should lead the territory and its actors: the structure exists, among others, to create a relationship, and to bring a technical and logistical support. He adds that periodical assessments of cooperation could help to demonstrate the added value of cross-border actions and the utility of a cooperation structure.

A representative of the Transpyrenees Atlantic Conference (French-Spanish border) refers to certain themes – drugs, road flows, health – which have to be dealt with at a cross-border level. The Transpyrenees Atlantic Conference, which does not have any legal personality, has successfully been

able to gather all competent actors, including the State, around these questions in order to impulse common actions.

Michel CHARRAT, the President of the European cross-border grouping, an association which represents cross-border workers on the French-Swiss border, indicates that his association has its seats in a cross-border cooperation structure dedicated to the management of cross-border bus lines in the French-Vaud-Geneva agglomeration (Local grouping of cross-border cooperation, LGCC). Such an involvement from the association enables it to bring up the needs of the workers in terms of mobility to the public authorities that are competent for public transportation.

A few preliminary conclusions

- Identify the needs of the cross-border populations in order to implement actions with a strong added value that answer the best to their expectations.
- The cross-border governance structures are not inclined to take in charge all cross-border actions: these structures build an intermediary between the partners, are likely to bring a support to the field actors, to build a link between them, to promote their actions, to represent their territory, etc.
- The development of actions for the populations by public actors is necessary but not sufficient. It is the duty of the public actors to accompany the actors of the civil society to initiate cross-border actions and to start actions to mobilize these citizens.

II. Workshop 2: Cross-border Medias and virtual community, “Building a cross-border identity”

Dr. Frédéric DUVINAGE, Director of the Trinational Eurodistrict Basel (TEB), presents several initiatives from Medias with a cross-border interest on the trinational territory: Telebasel, a local German channel that communicates on the TEB, and the “vis-à-vis” programme which results from a collaboration between “France 3 Alsace” and “Südwestrundfunk Studio Freiburg”, and which meets a great success. Another initiative, to the contrary, has not reached the expected result: the trinational newspaper “Dreiland Zeitung”, the supplement to the German daily paper which stopped after ten years of existing. This failure can be partly explained by the lack of curiosity from the population in what is going on at the other side of the border: Provide information on the news and on concrete projects is necessary in order to raise the citizens’ interest.

Communicate on the institutional cross-border cooperation is not enough. It is necessary to secure the loyalty of the journalists and to do so, to communicate on concrete projects and of interest for citizens. The Eurodistrict has also developed its institutional communication: it organizes a press conference after each meeting of the trinational advisory Council in order to debrief the population on the decisions taken by the elected representatives. The delivery of the feasibility studies on the cross-border tramway gained a particular interest from Medias.

The TEB also equipped itself with an internet website open to all (<http://www.eurodistrictbasel.eu/>), which enables itself to communicate on its own activities and to sponsor some actions led by the civil

society (TEB logo, political support, communication on the website). It is difficult to require from a light structure of three people to take care of the administrative and institutional governance as well as all actions involving the population.

Kai LITTMAN presents the “Two Banks Newspaper”³ (France-Germany), which he manages. Created in September 2009, it is a French-German online daily newspaper dealing with the cross-border life, mainly on the territory of the Upper-Rhine but also on national news since it covers cross-border matters. This bilingual newspaper provides articles written in French and not translated into German, and vice-versa, and encourages thus the bilingualism.

This paper meets a growing success (with 15,000 pages read per day and a balance between French and German readers) whose success can be explained by the attractive content of the media and by the way the information is presented: culture, economy, society, daily life topics are proposed. A weekly column « The Brussels’ week » attracts many readers. Citizens are interested in Europe; the information must be made accessible to them. Besides, a column dedicated to young people is elaborated in partnership with schoolchildren from Strasbourg through the drafting of articles in German and French.

The newspaper receives very important supports: the Vice-president of the European Parliament, daily newspaper “Dernières Nouvelles d’Alsace”, radio 700... Nevertheless, Kai LITTMAN regrets the lack of public financing and mentions that improving the platform would require complementary financing. Website: <http://2-ufer.com/>

Lars WHITT, of the Oresund Committee (made up of leading politicians from Skåne in Sweden and Zealand in Denmark, whose the main cities are Copenhagen in Denmark and Malmö in Sweden) and responsible for the internet platform “Oresunddirekt”, reminds the background of this initiative. The construction of the bridge entailed the emergence of a basin of cross-border employment with an increasing number of border workers, and the political will to build a common region. To facilitate the life of the populations on both sides of the border, the public authorities established several measures of which the translation in both languages of legislations having an impact on the other side of the border.

Oresunddirekt came to supply information to the citizens who cross the border in very numerous domains: culture, public utilities... A platform of internet discussion was launched in 2005 to arouse a big cross-border debate on the future of the Region Oresund "Oresund on 2025", but this initiative showed to be failure and very few persons contributed to this debate. Nevertheless, the persons benefited from the forum to express themselves on subjects of their choice: culture, social, transport... Today, the forum benefits from 70 to 80 contributions a day and important exchanges take place on political subjects and cross-border projects to come. The appropriation by the populations of this media, which offers them the possibility of expressing themselves freely on their everyday life, explains the reached success.

³ In French, Journal des 2 rives.

Debate with the audience:

Questioned about the lack of interest of the populations for cross-border matters, the participants answer that this can be noticed by the consumerist behavior of the inhabitants. The mutual interest of the citizens on each side the border will be important all the more as these will live near. Beyond the linguistic boundaries, the media can allow to exceed certain mental borders which constitute even bigger obstacles.

Pascale SIMON-STUDER underlines the interest which there would be to realize studies of impact of the media towards the various social categories, namely if these media touch the whole population.

On the place occupied by the local and regional authorities with regard to the media, Lars WHITT answers that these have to impulse this type of initiatives, in particular financially, without influencing the editorial line. Besides Pascale SIMON-STUDER underlines the lack of mutual knowledge of the media which are situated on each side by the border. Cross-border platforms of exchanges between the media could be organized. In this perspective, the institutional actors could play the role of facilitator.

On the interactive dimension of the "Two Banks Newspaper", Kai LITTMAN indicates that the readers can comment freely on articles published on the site of the newspaper and exchange directly with the journalists.

A participant questions the speakers about the risks put by the construction of a cross-border identity being made to the detriment of a European identity. Christian LAMOUR reminds that the cross-border identity is not exclusive but recovers a heterogeneous identity, a "mosaic" integrating the different levels of belongings.

He asks then the question of the role played by public Medias in the cross-border areas.

The director of No Télé, regional television of Wallonia picarde (financed by the French Community of Belgium), indicates that a partnership has connected them for 15 years to their French counterparts essentially on cross-border cultural projects. Within the framework of the Eurometropole Lille Kortrijk Tournai, a collaboration was tied 6 years ago with the Flemish television to take up a project of cross-border weekly broadcasts (INTERREG IVA cofinancing): "Transit" on the economy, "Transactua" on politics and "Trans' Art" on culture. These programmes are broadcasted on three regional channels. The "Trans' Art" programme, which makes the promotion of the cultural activities, had a strong impact on the development of the cross-border cultural activities in the three regions. The magazine Transactua reviews what makes debate in each of the regions and meets a striking success. Website: <http://www.notele.be/>

The representative of the Committee of the Regions indicates that he would be interested in putting on-line the presented initiatives of the civil society on the website dedicated to the European grouping of territorial cooperation (EGTC). These initiatives constitute the "binder" for a multi-level and efficient governance. Website: <http://portal.cor.europa.eu/egtc/>

Some preliminary conclusions

- The local Medias, the vectors of a cross-border community of nearness.
- The web media can serve to develop vertical connections between the civil society and the decision-makers but, above all, horizontal ones between the populations on both sides of the border (platform of exchange, « e-democracy »).
- The communication on concrete projects must be privileged with regard to that concerning the institutional dimension of the cross-border cooperation.

III. Workshop 3: participative Democracy in the cross-border agglomerations "Involve the civil society in the cross-border public policies"

Philippe LUYTEN, Walloon Vice-president of the Forum of the Eurometropole Lille-Kortrijk-Tournai, presents this consultative structure consisted of the representatives of the civil society of the territory of the Eurometropole. The creation of the EGTC and the implementation of its institutional organs were followed by the installation of this Forum at the request of the members of the development councils of the French-Belgian territory. Gathering 60 representatives stemming from these authorities (Council of development of Lille metropole, of Wallonia picarde, Transforum in Kortrijk), the Forum has for task to stimulate the debate, to be force of proposal, to call for the attention of the members of the Eurometropole (auto-seizure), to participate in the prospective reflection on the strategy of the Eurometropole and in its evaluation, to play the role of relay towards the ground and to answer consultations at the request of the Eurometropole.

Sören BOLLMANN, project manager for the agglomeration of Frankfurt (O)-Slubice, presents the experience of both cities in participative democracy. The continuation of the tramway on the Polish side was the object of a referendum in 2006: 30 % of participation and 80 % of unfavorable votes. Learning from this experience and taking into account the skepticism of the populations towards the cross-border cooperation, municipalities made a commitment in a wider, more transparent and participative process, offering a legitimacy to the cross-border cooperation: the organization of a big conference (2020 Conference of Future for Frankfurt(O)-Slubice) in June, 2009 allowed to mobilize more than 200 persons on both sides of the border around the vision of future of the cross-border agglomeration. Numerous thematic, interactive workshops allowed the participants to kick away strong ideas such as the creation of a twin-city center or the development of the bilingualism.

Frankfurt (O)-Slubice organizes besides regularly thematic working groups involving the politicians, the civil servants and the actors of the civil society (association, companies). An internet platform was launched and it is planned to organize every year a conference with the citizens. The ambition of Frankfurt (O)-Slubice is to establish a narrow link between the various levels of the governance of the cross-border agglomeration: political, technical and civil society.

Dr. István FERENCSEK, representing the Ister-Granum EGTC, indicates that from its creation, the members of the EGTC had planned a place for the civil society. Several organs organize the association of these actors in the cross-border policies led by the EGTC.

The civil Parliament, created under the form of an association, allows representatives of NGOs (non-governmental organizations), associations, to work at strengthening the links between associations on both sides of the border (development of joint projects, identification of common challenges) and to contribute to the experts board of the EGTC. The constitution of a Civil Parliament, representing the interests of the associations within the Euroregion Ister-Granum, constitutes besides a means to federate these actors, who individually would not make the weight, to make raise their expectations and to influence the decision-making process. It is about the first experiment of structuralization of a cross-border civil society between Hungary and Slovakia. The civil Parliament also has for task to liven up the service network for the civil organizations of the territory of the Euroregion Ister-Granum, which has vocation to bring them a technical and legal support in the editing of projects.

Besides, the Regional Development Council is a consultative structure which involves eighteen economic actors (the main employers, chambers of commerce and industry, job regional agency) on both sides of the border.

Legitimacy, flexibility, participative democracy, "bottom-up" approach, narrow link with the EGTC, are the key words of this organization.

Marita LORENZO from the Eurocidade Chaves-Verin develops the actions undertaken in the direction of the citizens and allowing a narrow association in the activities of the Eurocidade: the first stage was the identification of the main actors (sports associations, of representation of the women...). These representatives of the civil society have vocation to give ideas to Eurocidade and to make sensitive the populations in the cross-border question. These actors were invited to pronounce on the strategic Agenda of the Eurocidade and participate in a very concrete way in its implementation, more particularly in the development of actions connected to the citizenship and to the economic development fields. For the moment, the dialogue with the civil society is not formally structured but the existing frames of dialogue allow fruitful exchanges and development of actions at the initiative of these actors.

Dr. Frédéric DUVINAGE, director of the Trinational Eurodistrict Basel (TEB), presents the role played by the economic operators in the ETB. Established by French, German and Swiss municipalities, the TEB developed relations with the economic trinational environment constituted by large industries, by banking institutions... This last one got organized within a structure of lobbying with a perimeter of action which is equivalent to that of the TEB: Metrobasel.

Every year, Metrobasel realizes an economic newspaper in two languages and spreads it widely with the population. Once a year is held a big forum during which companies estimate the public policies led on the trinational territory and formulate propositions of actions to make the cross-border area more attractive and more competitive. All the structures of governance occurring on the territory of the Eurodistrict (TEB, Regio Basiliensis, Metrobasel) are engaged in the same direction, which is the one of a better integration of the trinational territory. The major difficulty is the difference of approaches as for what recovers the term "civil society", as for the modalities of association of these actors, and as for its structuralization.

Debate with the audience:

Questioned about the representativeness of the Forum of the Eurometropole, Philippe LUYTEN reminds that this cross-border consultative structure consists of members of the development councils of the three constituents of the Eurometropolis. A first selection took place first of all at the level of every development council to identify the representatives within the forum, and a second selection was then held within the Forum itself. Throughout the process, a particular attention was paid to a good representativeness of the various sectors of the civil society and to a strong will of the persons concerned to get involved actively in the cross-border cooperation. Sören BOLLMANN, as for him, indicates that one very large number of persons had been invited at the conference of the future of Frankfurt (O)-Slubice, about 5000 persons, including the most skeptics in strengthened cross-border cooperation. The information about the holding of this event had also been published in the press. It remains nevertheless difficult to involve actively all the strata of the society.

On the role played by the economic actors in the governance of a cross-border territory, Dr. Hans-Günther CLEV reminds that in the case of the metropolitan region of Rhein-Neckar, the institutional cooperation was incited by the economic actors who saw an interest for their own development there. Dr. Frédéric DUVINAGE indicates that in the case of Metrobasel, the cross-border institutional cooperation and the economic cooperation advance hand in hand. Questioned about the links maintained with the civil society not represented within Metrobasel, he indicates that MetroBasel tried to organize local forums but was confronted with the various modes of structuralization of the civil society on both sides of the border.

A participant wonders about the contents of the concept of "civil society": economic, cultural, religious actors, environmental associations, etc. It is proposed that MOT realizes a typological analysis of the socioeconomic actors, the cross-border civil society.

Another intervention underlines the existence of multiple factors of legitimization of the public policies: a legitimization connected to the process of elaboration, to the choices which are made or to the results of these policies. In this framework, what is the role of the civil society and at which moment it has to intervene? Dr. Hans-Günther CLEV, Director General of MOT, reminds that another type of legitimacy must be taken into account: the know-how legitimacy.

The representative of the TEB notes that the civil society is a force of opposition of the institutional actors and which has, in this perspective, to ask the good questions. Philippe LUYTEN indicates that the role of the civil society as well as the identification of the actors to be involved are key questions which are differently appreciated in the three regions of the Eurometropole: as an example, for the Wallonia picarde, more place and legitimacy are given to the economy, to the culture, to the associations fields; on the French side, the institutional holds a more important role but headways towards a stronger implication of the civil society are visible. Sören BOLLMANN considers that it is advisable to look at all the sectors of the civil society and to establish a narrow link with the political representatives who are elected by the population. The implication of such or such part of the civil society has to be the object of a transparent process.

On the existence of a good practice of the mode of implication of the civil society in cross-border governance, Dr. Hans-Günther CLEV reminds that every mode of association must be adapted to the local circumstances. In the cross-border scale, it does not have to end in the simple implementation

of a stemming practice on one side or other one of the border but in a hybrid system taking into account cultural, administrative differences on both sides. The process highlighted by the various speakers constitutes in itself a good practice: the identification of the actors of the civil society must be made according to a transparent and justified process of selection and the choice of the mode of association of the civil society must vary according to the sectors of cooperation, to the role attributed to them and to the cultural and administrative environments on either side of the border.

Some preliminary conclusions

- The participative democracy platforms must be representative of the population.
- A plural legitimacy of the public action partially based on an implication of the civil society.
- The modes of selection and association of the civil society must be transparent.

Conclusions by Christian LAMOUR, Lead expert of the "EGTC" URBACT project

The second thematic conference of the "EGTC" URBACT project will have allowed us to encircle the outlines of the community strategies led on territories, the limits of which are astride those of the States: the cross-border territories. It is first of all important to note that the creation of an European community is not only connected with the scale of the 27 Member States. The community feeling can also emerge on the scale of **border spaces which concentrate the third of the European population.**

The definition of a cross-border collective project leading to a community feeling cannot be conceived as an exclusive and monolithic process. This is explained by the fragmentation of the belongings and of the individualization of the processes of identity gestation, but also by the multipolar logic of the political power in current Europe. The actions with community purpose, in the urban and cross-border spaces, participate in the construction or in the intensification of a "multi-belonging" felling on the scale of European territories of proximity.

Several questioning were indicated this day concerning the civil society and Europe:

- What are the constituents of the civil society?
- Has it been necessary to wait for the current political trend in favour of participative democracy in order to develop public - private logics around the urban development?
- Does the European civil society exist and if yes, since when?

Actually, **there is no single definition of the civil society.** Is it necessary to consider every person and organization not belonging to the sphere of the authority public as being a member of the civil society? The participative logics, or shown as such in the urban space, often aim at reintegrating in the democratic process the groups which feel excluded from the decision-making process.

Besides, the development of public-private partnership in the urban management was prior to the crisis of the representative democracy. The organization of the city has always been based on a narrow relationship between the public and private elites. These relations strengthened with the

globalization of the exchanges, the volatility of the capital and a bigger uncertainty of the economic future.

Finally, the European civil society has a history longer than that of the Treaty of Rome. The emergence of a community of ideas in the European scale not connected with the public sphere is already perceptible in the Middle Ages and still strengthens in the Age of the Enlightenment and in Europe of the Industrial revolution. However, the current European civil society is more segmented than that developed within the framework of Nation-States. It always tends to group together elites around often targeted objectives (example: organization of the economic space). However, can we conceive an European civil society with a widened basis and dealing with cross-cutting ambitions on the scale of cross-border urban territories? Can the cross-border urban governance lead to a community project based in the long time? Does an European public place of proximity may appear and increase the global legitimacy of the European Union?

Actually, the projects presented during the conference show that the structuralization of one "us" going beyond the only elected representatives is one of ferments of territory projects.

We can distinguish first of all the operations which we can assimilate to the "primary cross-border communication", that is the implementation of concrete projects in the cross-border scale which are strong broadcasting issuers of messages and collective values exceeding Nation-States. It covers all the cultural and sportive events (ex: the special event of the Eurodistrict Strasbourg-Ortenau), but also public equipments which are opened to all the populations. **The feeling of belonging is correlated in the situations of long-lasting co-presence in public places where is going to form itself one collective memory and solidarity** (ex: the school space).

Besides, it is necessary to note the existence of an outfit of actions connected with the "secondary cross-border communication", that is the projects aiming to **organize an informative flow between the public decision-makers and the resident population ("vertical connection")**. This transfer can be direct via special events (ex: the Conference of the future of Frankfurt (O)-Slubice) or via long-lasting organizations (ex: the Civil Parliament of the Ister-Granum EGTC).

Messages also migrate via the media sphere. Several territories develop strategies in term of media which are essential tools in the emergence of "imagined communities" (example: cross-border television programmes on the territory of the Eurometropole Lille-Kortrijk-Tournai). The cyberspace (in particular the internet sphere) will offer opportunities for a national decompartmentalization of the debates, in particular by **the creation of platform of internet exchanges developing "horizontal connections" within the population**. But everything will depend on the organization of the broadcasting issuers, of the flow and on the degree of listening and on reaction of the public.

Besides, the media sphere, although it allows transferring quickly the information, does not produce inevitably a community link in the geographical proximity. It can provoke on the contrary some distance and some difference. The media relationship can present the risk of highlighting stereotypes which evolve little in the time. Actually, **the media construction within a Europe under construction on its borders is not neutral**. The question at stake is the role and missions of the audiovisual public utility in border zone. At present, the cross-border media projects often rely on not long-lasting INTERREG projects or on the will of some actors (example: the "Two Banks Newspaper" in the Strasbourg-Ortenau area).

The conference of this day will have allowed enlightening a series of points relative to the **legitimization of the projects of cross-border territory**. It will have shown that **the territoriality has sense only if it integrates a community logic**.

The central **objective of the governance is to reduce the functional, cultural and democratic fragmentations** which crack the cross-border agglomeration. **Multi-level partnerships have sense for the local populations only if they allow the existence of concrete projects facilitating their everyday life in the cross-border space**. Besides, the relations between elected representatives allow to create some empathy at the level of the political circles, but they also join a logic of wider cultural link (for example the projects relative to the youth).

Finally, in the absence of direct representative democracy at the level of cross-border urban areas, it seems important to insert a dose of **participative democracy in the decision-making processes to compensate for the institutional character of cross-border cooperation**.

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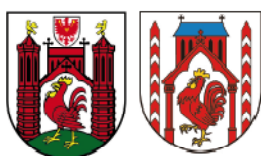
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