

Expertising Governance for Transfrontier Conurbations

Launch conference
« EGTC » Project

Minutes

European Parliament Strasbourg
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Opening

by Michel DELEBARRE, President of MOT, Lead partner of the « EGTC » project

Michel DELEBARRE thanks all the 140 participants for attending so largely the conference. The participants come from 15 countries all over Europe. The conference takes place at the European Parliament, an emblematic venue for Europe and its citizens.

He thanks the Urban Community of Strasbourg, project partner, represented by Nawel RAFIK-ELMRINI, Community Counselor and Deputy Mayor of Strasbourg as well as Roland RIES, its Vice President and Mayor of Strasbourg, for welcoming the conference on their territory.

He warmly thanks the representatives of the five other partners and their counterparts from the other side of the border who will intervene to introduce their cross-border conurbations and their expectations regarding the project.

He greets all the elected representatives of the cross-border sites, the national and European institutions such as Alain LAMASSOURE, Member of the European Parliament and Vice President of MOT, and Jan OLBRYCHT, Member of the European Parliament.

The « EGTC » project (« Expertising Governance for Transfrontier Conurbations ») deals with governance of cross-border conurbations in Europe. Mission Opérationnelle Transfrontalière is lead partner of this initiative. The coming 20 months (duration of the project) will give the opportunity to exchange at European level in terms of cross-border local governance, in order to lead to concrete methods and recommendations.

The urban challenge is a crucial matter for the balanced development of the European territory, since almost 80 % of the European population is concentrated within urban areas.

A large number of those urban areas are cross-border ones. Structured in « cross-border conurbations » in a limited territory, with a common governance, they may become « places of convergence of local, regional, national and European policies » and « motors for cross-border cooperation of proximity and European integration ».

It is the first time a European programme, the URBACT II programme, takes into account the specificity of cross-border conurbations.

The recent change at the European level with the creation of the European Grouping of Territorial Cooperation (EGTC) provides new opportunities to all cooperation all over Europe. The first two EGTCs in Europe are involved in the project as partners: Eurométropole Lille-Kortrijk-Tournai (between France and Belgium) and Ister-Granum (between Hungary and Slovakia). This will contribute to the enrichment of the reflection undertaken by our partnership and encourage other cross-border conurbations to take part to it.

Welcoming speech

by Nawel RAFIK-ELMRINI, Deputy Mayor of Strasbourg, Community Counselor at the Urban Community of Strasbourg

In the name of the Urban Community of Strasbourg, Nawel RAFIK-ELMRINI welcomes Michel DELEBARRE and all the participants.

She reminds that the Eurodistrict Strasbourg-Ortenau was created following the signature by the Urban Community of Strasbourg and the Ortenau Kreis, in 2005, of a convention, which defined the main guidelines and themes of cooperation for this territory. This territory represents one million of inhabitants. It is not only the symbol of a French-German rapprochement but above all the construction of a common territory close to the citizens' needs.

Three years after this signature, the Eurodistrict has developed a large number of cross-border projects.

Nowadays, the ambition of the Mayor of Strasbourg, Roland RIES, is to « move from cooperation to codecision », in order to make the Eurodistrict a real « concentrated of Europe ». For this purpose, it is necessary to provide the Eurodistrict some statutes and a political, operational and financial autonomy.

The final objective is to solve very concrete problems such as on environment, employment, economic development, solidarity, by putting in place «common local governance» based on the principle of « cross-border democracy ».

Nawel RAFIK-ELMRINI concludes by underlining that the Eurodistrict Strasbourg-Ortenau partners are convinced they will successfully face this challenge. This will be achieved with the adaptation of the legal framework to the cross-border activities and not the opposite.

Presentation of the « EGTC » URBACT project

by Christian LAMOUR, « EGTC » project expert, Researcher at the CEPS/INSTEAD

The URBACT II programme

URBACT is a European programme whose aim is to promote the exchange of experience between European cities and disseminate knowledge regarding sustainable urban development.

The second cycle of the Programme, URBACT II (2007-2013), follows in the footsteps of URBACT I (2002-2006), which successfully rallied 217 cities across Europe to work in 38 different projects.

The « EGTC » project objectives

- Exchange experience and good practices...
- between cross-border conurbations...
- on all innovative governance tools such as the European Grouping of Territorial Cooperation (EGTC)...
- in order to develop and implement cross-border urban strategies.

The « EGTC » project partnership



The « EGTC » project challenges

About 60 cross-border conurbations have been identified in Europe, which concern 25 millions of inhabitants. Their development requires the definition of innovative partnerships of multi-level urban governance.

What is cross-border governance? :

- a good articulation of all relevant levels and stakeholders,
- at the cross-border scale,
- in order to develop and implement cross-border urban strategies as well as projects for the sustainable development of cross-border conurbations.

The « EGTC » project outputs

- Two thematic seminars : n°1 « The management of the governance » (March 2009, Chaves in Portugal) ; n°2 « The interface with external actors » (November 2009, Lille in France).
- Two conferences : launch conference and final conference (May 2010, Esztergom in Hungary).
- A « Handbook » : good practices, methodology, European recommendations to facilitate cross-border local governance.
- A Local Action Plan for each conurbation partner (the development strategy of the governance, the recommendations based on the needs of the cross-border conurbation).

The « EGTC » project organisation

- **Within the URBACT II programme:** three thematic poles bring together the URBACT II projects. The « EGTC » working group is part of the « Cities and integrated sustainable development » thematic pole.
- **The « EGTC » working group:** the lead partner and the 6 cross-border conurbations. During the project, the partners are supported by a lead expert (Christian LAMOUR).
- **The URBACT European Support Group :** this high-level working group aims to launch a debate at the European level on governance of cross-border conurbations in order to improve the importance given to this topic by the European and national authorities. The final objectif is to elaborate a range of recommendations.
- **The 6 URBACT Local Support Groups (one per conurbation) :** each Local Support Group gives its support to the concerned cross-border conurbation to elaborate its Local Action Plan. It may be composed, depending on the territory, by public and/or private stakeholders from both sides of the border, for example, members of the civil society, managing authorities, etc.

Presentation of the cross-border conurbations and their expectations

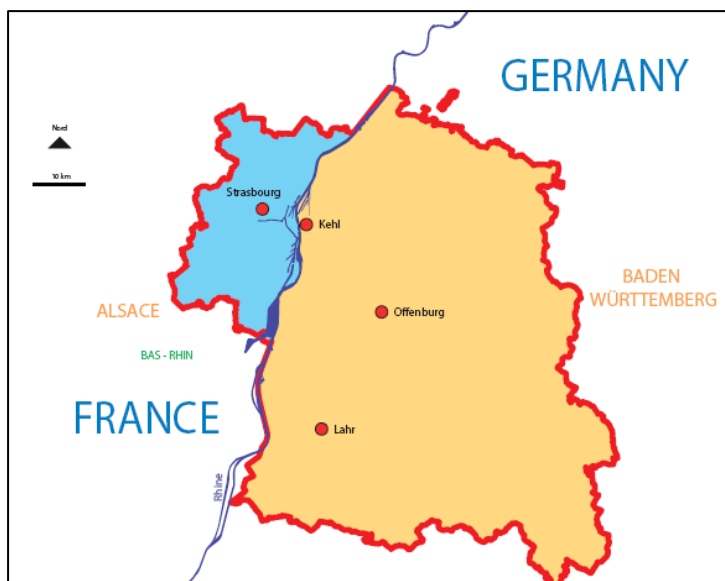
Eurodistrict Strasbourg-Ortenau (France/Germany)

By Nawel RAFIK-ELMRINI and Klaus-Peter MUNGENAST, Mayor of Kappelrodeck



European picnic in the "Jardin des Deux-Rives" between Strasbourg and Kehl.

The Eurodistrict Strasbourg-Ortenau brings together 79 municipalities and 880 000 inhabitants on a territory that covers 2176 km². The cooperation started with the signature of the joint declaration, on 22nd January 2003, between the French President, Jacques Chirac, and the German Chancellor, Gerhard Schröder, for the 40th birthday of the Elysée Treaty. Through this initiative, the French and German States commit themselves to the development of the cross-border cooperation and inter-municipality. In October 2005, the convention creating the Eurodistrict was adopted and, in October 2008, the Lahr resolution presenting the new orientations.



The Eurodistrict perimeter covers the Urban Community of Strasbourg and the Ortenau Kreis territories. Its enlargement is part of the new orientations decided in October 2008. It is headed by two spokesmen, a council (the decision-making organ) and a monitoring committee. The technical work is done by a coordination group and a pool of experts organized within groups (about 10) related to the different matters. It does not have its own budget. Its main areas of intervention are diversified: health, apprenticeship, sports, administrative procedures, languages, telephone communications, environment, mobility, seniors...

The perspectives are:

- To give the Eurodistrict a stable structure of governance (legal form).
- To raise the awareness of the citizens on the added value of the Eurodistrict.
- To focus on priority fields of actions : training, health, employment, transport, environment, leisure activities ...

The expectation regarding the « EGTC » project is to take advantage of the exchange of experience in relation with the forthcoming structuring of the Eurodistrict, by following the three following final objectives:

- A stronger cohesion in the daily life and the cohabitation of the inhabitants.
- An improvement of the attractiveness of the territory at the cross-border scale.
- A stronger visibility of the cross-border added value for the inhabitants.

Eurocidade Chaves-Verín (Portugal/Spain)

By Carmen PARDO, Deputy-Mayor of the city of Verín and Ana LADEIRAS, the Joint Technical Secretariat for the Eurocidade



The Eurocidade Chaves-Verín, located at the North part of the Spanish-Portuguese border (South-East of Galicia) concerns 685 km² and 58 177 inhabitants (the Portuguese side is five times more extended and three times more populated than the Spanish one). This project is very recent and was launched about one year ago.

The cooperation dates back to 2007 with the setting-up of the first working group, the joint technical secretariat of the Eurocidade and a plan of « visibility » presented by the Portuguese and Galician governments. In 2008, many initiatives were developed: setting-up of a working group of 60 socio-economic stakeholders for the development of a strategic agenda, submission of an Interreg IVA project, signature of a convention between the two

cities to share common equipments (sports, hot springs...), organization of common representations promotion (Thermalism, tourism...), setting-up of a common cultural agenda, childhood worldwide day celebration, thermalism senior programme, scholarships , etc.

Two sectors of activities are predominant: tourism (balneology) and the rural development in mountains areas.



Cultural activity for young people in the Eurocidade Chaves-Verín.

The strategic agenda is structured around three axis:

- The development of the Eurocidade with the involvement of the inhabitants.
- The sustainable development of the territory with the definition of concrete actions.
- The economic promotion of the territory (tourism, culture, transportation of goods...).

The perspective is to formalise the governance of the cooperation with the creation of a European Grouping of Territorial Cooperation (EGTC) in order to set-up a operational and legal framework.

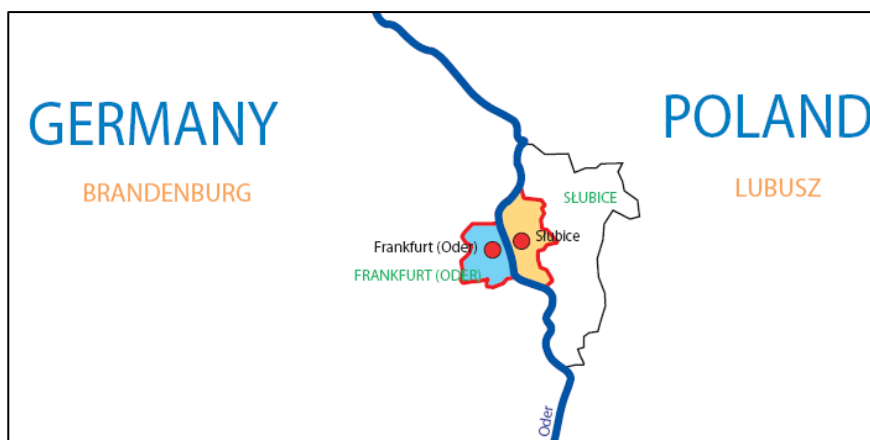
One of the strongest aspects of the project is to have constituted a local support group, from the beginning, bringing together all the scales concerned by the cooperation (States, provinces, municipalities, Eixo Atlantico network ...). This partnership and these good relations with supra-local levels are to be demonstrated in the framework of the « EGTC » URBACT project.

The expectations regarding the « EGTC » project:

- To exchange experience and good practices with other cross-border conurbations.
- To set-up a governance structure.
- To transfer the results and recommendations at the national and European levels

Slubice-Frankfurt (Oder) (Poland/Germany)

By Ryszard BODZIACKI, Mayor of Slubice and Martin PATZELT, Lord Mayor of Frankfurt (Oder)



Located at 80 km at the East of Berlin, the cross-border conurbation of Frankfurt (Oder)-Slubice concerns 80 000 inhabitants (75% on the German side and 25% on the Polish side). Slubice, a former area of Frankfurt (O), is separated from its German border city by a river, the Oder, an important waterway. The river Oder is

important because of its symbol meaning, its nature value and also because of its tourism potential.

The cross-border cooperation is both a challenge and a very important symbol for these two cities, which have been separated by the history for a long time. Today, the two cities are willing to become an example of « good relations » between border cities. The human dimension is central. Despite the history and the displacement of the populations at both sides of the border, the development of cooperation did not lead to any suspicion from the inhabitants.



In 1991, the two cities signed a first declaration to reinforce their cooperation. In the same year, the German University of Viadrina and the Polish Adam-Mickiewicz University Poznan created with Collegium Polonicum a common university and in 1993, the Euroregion Pro Europa Viadrina raised up from the merger between two German and Polish associations. Since then, about 50 common projects have been launched in very diverse fields such as youth, tourism, culture, sport, green spaces... In 1993, the two municipal councils established a common commission, and later in 1994, a common urban development plan was

adopted.

Today, the cross-border conurbation needs a development office with common human and financial means, in order to promote economy, tourism and common marketing.

The expectations regarding the « EGTC » project:

- To exchange experience and good practices with other cross-border conurbations.
- To be part of a European network of cross-border conurbations.
- To intensify the cooperation by developing more projects and structure the cooperation with the establishment of an independent cross-border entity.

Agreement signed between the two cities

Ryszard BODZIACKI, Mayor of Slubice, underlines that the two cities have actively worked on the drafting of a cooperation agreement. He announces that he is willing to sign this agreement today, during the opening session of the "EGTC" URBACT project.

This agreement is signed by Ryszard BODZIACKI and Martin PATZELT, Lord Mayor of Frankfurt. It seals a common future for the two cities and provides a basis for an intensified cooperation.

Ister-Granum EGTC (Hungary/Slovakia)

By Gyula OCSKAY, the manager of the Ister-Granum Euroregion Development Agency and Tamás LUNK, expert on urban planning, the team leader of the URBACT Local Support Group of Ister-Granum



The Ister-Granum Euroregion, located on the Hungarian-Slovakian border, was formed in 2003 by 100 local governments. 85 local governments (46 Hungarian and 39 Slovakian) established in May 2008 the second EGTC in Europe. The cross-border conurbation situated on this territory is composed by the municipalities of Esztergom, on the Hungarian side, and Štúrovo, on the Slovakian side.

The bodies of the established EGTC can be categorized into three groups:

- The decision-making level, represented by the General Assembly of the EGTC (85 mayors), the 8 member Senate and the six professional committees
- The operational level, represented by the Director and the regional development agencies of Esztergom and Štúrovo
- The consultative level, represented by a regional development council in which the chairmen of the professional committees, the parliament of the civil organisations, the 3 largest employers in the region (amongst them Magyar Suzuki Zrt.), as well as the chamber of commerce and industry of the three counties involved are represented.



In Hungary the local governments collect local business tax from the enterprises that operate there, the sum of which for the city was 16 million EUR in 2007. The local government of the City made the decision to return 1 % of this tax by means of tenders to the member settlements of the EGTC for them to be able to realise their smaller developments.

The regional development plan of the region was completed in 2005 with the involvement of the civil society. It is an action based-document with objectives fixed per sector and proposals of

concrete projects.

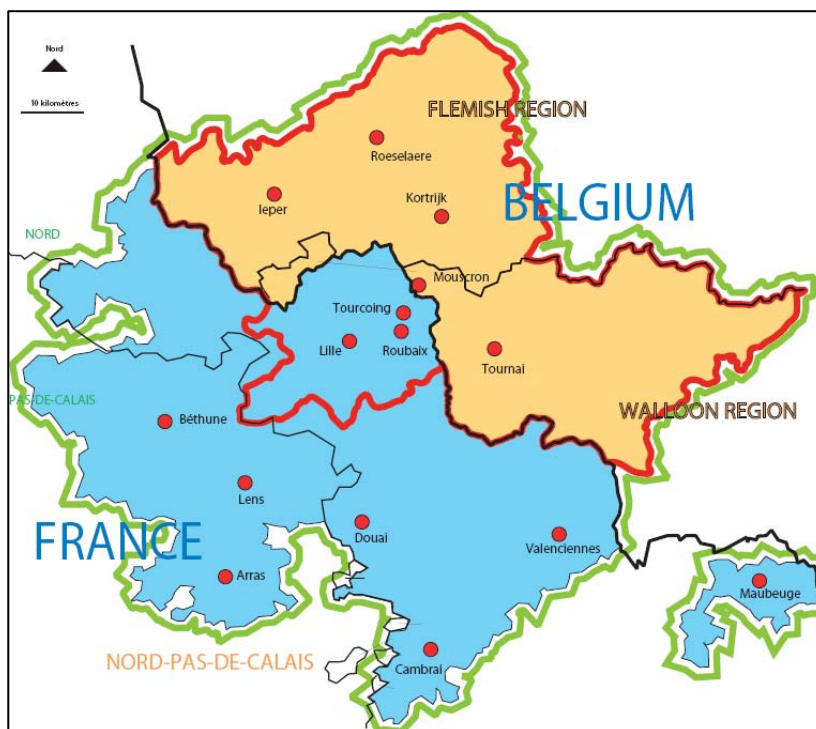
The projects deal with a large number of themes: industry, tourism (management system of common touristic sites), environment (joint agency for the promotion of renewable energies), communication, health (common health system), transports (euro-regional organisation of public transportation)...

The main challenges of the Ister-Granum EGTC:

- New methodology for cross-border urban and spatial planning
- Develop joint sector development plans
- Joint planning of business infrastructure
- Improving labour market efficiency
- Develop cross-border governance framework
- Create and operate joint institutions of tourism, health-care, social services, public transport, energy etc.

Eurométropole Lille-Kortrijk-Tournai (France/Belgium)

By Simon JODOGNE, Head of the « Cross-border cooperation » department and Pauline GESSANT, European Policy officer, at Lille Métropole Urban Community



The Eurométropole Lille-Kortrijk-Tournai covers an area of 3544 km² and a population of 2 millions of inhabitants. The cooperation dates back to 1991 with the creation of the Permanent Conference of cross-border Inter-municipalities (COPIT). In 2002, the local authorities signed a French-Belgian Treaty on cross-border cooperation. In January 2008, following the work of the French-Belgian parliamentary group, the Eurométropole was constituted into a EGTC (the first set-up in Europe).

The EGTC is structured as such :

- An Assemblée : decision-making and control organ.
- A Board : executive organ in charge of the direct leadership of the Eurométropole.
- An executive director committee composed by the President and three Vice Presidents.
- Commissions or Working Groups in charge of assessing the projects and propose a pluriannual action programme.

- A Conference of the Mayors and Bourgmestres in order to exchange with them on the work and the projects of the Eurométropole.
- A cross-border Agency : administrative and technical tool of the Eurométropole.

The EGTC functioning is based on different principles : double parity, bilingualism, absence of transfer of competences, assessment every three years and consultative organs.



The objectives are:

- To achieve a cross-border consistency throughout the entire territory.
- To ensure consultation, dialogue and political debate by bringing together all competent authorities.
- To facilitate, manage and develop projects.
- To facilitate the daily life of the inhabitants.

Since the Assemblée meeting on 1st September 2008, the priorities have been to recruit the staff of the cross-border agency in order to implement the first concrete actions in the following themes : transport, tourism, culture, economy, employment and tax system, education and citizenship.

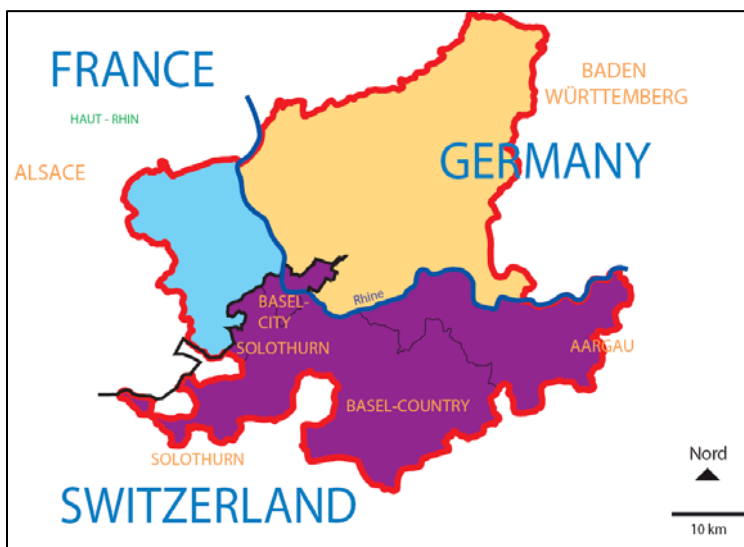
New cross-border footbridge of the "Pont-Rouge", Eurmétropole Lille-Kortrijk-Tournai.

The expectations regarding the « EGTC » project are:

- To discuss the implementation of the EGTC regulation with other cross-border conurbations and find common solutions.
- To be involved in a European network of cross-border conurbations in order to make the legislation evolve and lobby for integrating the governance issue in ERDF funding.

Trinational Eurodistrict Basel (Switzerland/Germany/France)

By Frédéric DUVINAGE, Director of the Trinational Eurodistrict Basel



The territory of the Trinational Eurodistrict Basel (TEB) extends over an area of 1 989 km² between France, Switzerland, Germany and covers a population of 830 000 inhabitants. The degree of integration is relatively high with more than 60 000 commuters who cross the border to work every day.

Cross-border cooperation first emerged in Basel in 1963 when the Regio Basiliensis was established. In 1995, the elected representatives decided to strengthen their cooperation on the conurbation level, which led to the creation of the association Trinational Conurbation Basel and the Trinational Eurodistrict Basel in 2007. It represents a political platform to discuss cross-border matters.

The TEB is an association that has three political bodies :

- The assembly comprises representatives of all the members of the association : it defines the main orientations, objectives and programmes of the association.
- The management committee heads the association (8 German, 8 Swiss and 8 French members).
- The Consultative council consists of 20 Swiss, 15 French and 15 German members.
- Two technical bodies : the technical coordination committees and the technical secretariat



Between 2002 and 2006, the association worked mainly on the fields of urban planning and public transportation. In 2006, it organised the trinational governance between the local authorities of the TEB perimeter.

Since 2007, the association has prepared several INTERREG IV project-applications in the fields of public transportation, landscape, urban planning, tourism, Geographic Information System,...

The partners are currently working on the preparation of the International Exhibition of

Architecture « IBA Basel 2020 », which will start in 2009 and last until 2020.

The expectations regarding the « EGTC » project are:

- To exchange with the other Project Partners on the improvement of metropolitan governance.
- To discover different cooperation approaches.
- To learn about best practices.
- To make contacts, which will be useful for other projects later on.

Presentation of Mission Opérationnelle Transfrontalière, MOT

By Jacques HOUBART, Director General of MOT

Mission Opérationnelle Transfrontalière was created in 1997. It brings together more than 50 members, mainly local authorities located at both sides of the French borders and representing 9 countries in Europe. It is an association chaired by an administration council composed of elected representatives from all French borders and political parties.

The main objective pursued by MOT is to facilitate the emergence and the execution of structuring cross-border projects at local level, by favoring territorial integration on either side of the borders.

To do so, MOT has developed the following activities :

- To support local authorities in developing their cross-border projects in a concrete manner (expertise and operational assistance).
- To conduct strategic research and studies on cross-border cooperation.
- To network cross-border cooperation stakeholders.
- To lobby, at the national and European levels, in favor of cross-border cooperation of proximity.

There are about ten cross-border conurbations on the French borders. The issue of governance became an important matter with the development of cross-border territory project with the support of MOT technical assistance.

About 12 European Grouping of Territorial Cooperation (EGTC) are currently under creation on the French borders. MOT accompanies some of them: Eurodistrict Saar-Moselle (France/Germany), Cross-border Platform Flanders-Dunkirk-Côte d'Opale (France/Belgium) and Eurorégion Alpes-Méditerranée (France/Italy).

MOT launched the creation of EUROMOT, European network of cross-border local authorities, in 2007 at the Lille European conference. This network aims to exchange experience and good practices and ensure that cross-border cooperation is taken into account more effectively in national and European policies. The involvement in the "EGTC" URBACT project underlines its willingness to promote the interests of cross-border territories, particularly cross-border conurbations as "motors of growth" for cross-border cooperation. The challenge is to introduce co-decision mechanisms enabling to implement action programmes dedicated to the inhabitants of cross-border conurbations and to facilitate convergence of national and European policies on local projects leading to more European integration and to a good articulation of national territories.

Debate with the audience

Johannes MAIER, Head of the European Affairs department of the administration of the Government of Carinthia in Austria, questions the representatives of the Eurométropole Lille-Kortrijk-Tournai on the articulation between the cross-border agency and the EGTC. Pauline GESSANT answers that the cross-border agency will be the operational tool and constitute the staff of the EGTC.

Gian Paolo CORDIALE, from the unit in charge of interregional cooperation of the Council of Europe, questions the Director of the Trinational Eurodistrict Basel whether some initiatives have been undertaken in link with the Euro-Airport of Basel-Mulhouse-Fribourg in the fields of economic development, environment, and employment. Frédéric DUVINAGE answers that the members of the ETB are represented within the organs of the airport administration.

The representative of the Council of Europe also questions the speakers from the Eurométropole Lille-Kortrijk-Tournai on the respective financial contributions of the members of the EGTC and on their willingness to exchange further with cross-border conurbations in Europe. On the latest aspect, Simon JODOGNE indicates that a principle of parity was chosen between the French and Belgian partners. A key of financial sharing was adopted to calculate the contribution of each partner (in %).

He reaffirms the willingness to exchange experience and good practices with other cross-border conurbations in Europe and reminds the involvement of the French-Belgian Metropolis in the « EGTC » URBACT project, in the MOT network and in the Open Days 2008.

Nicolas METTRA, Ambassador for the inter-state commission and cross-border cooperation for the French Ministry of foreign affairs, questions the President of MOT on the possibility to create a database on conventions and statutes of EGTC.

Michel DELEBARRE indicates that this initiative might be an output of the « EGTC » URBACT project. This could give the opportunity to make a concrete publication, not only under the legal point of view, but also on processes of constitution of governance structures according to the different cross-border contexts. The project partners could put on-line on the website dedicated to the project an update of their reflection, as the project will be running.

Jacques HOUBART adds that MOT elaborated in 2006 a comparative study on governance structures of cross-border conurbations in Europe for the French Prefecture of Nord Pas-de-Calais (available on the MOT website).

He underlines that the « EGTC » URBACT project may constitute a real platform for exchange for EGTCs in Europe and for the promotion of their interests at the European level.

Michel DELEBARRE indicates that MOT works very closely in liaison with the EGTC expert group of the Committee of the Regions.

Charles RICQ-CHAPPUIS, researcher at the European Observation Center for Regions (CŒUR), questions the speakers from the Eurométropole Lille-Kortrijk-Tournai on the work undertaken regarding the tax system problem. He mentions the French-geneva example where a specific tax system has been established : some taxes perceived by the Canton of Geneva are transferred indirectly to the border French local authorities. Simon JODOGNE notes that the tax system field falls within the competence of the State and is ruled by Inter-State agreements. The adoption of such agreements takes some time. He adds that the current French-Belgian agreement is under modification since the statutes of the cross-border worker is to be suppressed. Then he adds that the difference of wealthness at both sides of the French-Belgian border is far less important than on other borders.

Charles RICQ-CHAPPUIS questions the possibility to identify a European « model » of EGTC. Michel DELEBARRE indicates that this initiative would be contrary to the initial intention of the co-legislators of the EGTC regulation who wanted to provide a mere reference framework. Nevertheless, it is highly relevant to make recommendations to the European institutions in order to improve this regulation. There are not two similar EGTCs in Europe ; if the EGTC was too constraining for all European borders, it would not encourage local authorities to use this tool.

Stefan KUPPERS, from the Province of Limbourg (Netherlands), questions on the possibility to be kept informed on the state of advancement of the « EGTC » URBACT project. Christian LAMOUR, lead expert of the « EGTC » URBACT project reminds the different events that are opened to any interesting persons. The two thematic seminars will give the opportunity to those cross-border conurbations, who are not partners of the project, to exchange their experience with the sites involved in the project. Moreover, all information is available on the website dedicated to the project (<http://urbact.eu/egtc>). The cross-border conurbations interested in exchanging with the project partners are invited to contact directly MOT.

Conclusions

by Christian LAMOUR, "EGTC" Project lead expert

Christian LAMOUR points out that cross-border cooperation origins are relatively recent in comparison with the European construction's ones : indeed, Territories involved in the EGTC project haven't yet developed collaborations on the long term. The process of co-operation started between 10 and 15 years ago in most of the case.

At the same time, cross-border co-operation is cyclic and time-deepened. There is no written futures, prospect of constant cross-border integration. There can be some set-backs, changes of prospect, diverging interests and involvements related to changing stake-holder and national contexts. However, the present cycles of cross-border arrangements are embedded in a trend of European trust-building. Cross-border governance establishes the network of trust. Consequently, the assessment of the relatively recent cross-border co-operation must not based on the existence of concrete achievements but on the ability of the webs to anchor long-term communication grid deepening trust, bargaining attitudes and structural achievements on the long term.

Cross-border sites partners of the project present differences in terms of population and size of the territory. However, there are similarities regarding the governance process such as the willingness to institutionalize the cooperation in order to lead to a meaningful deliberation, a common implementation, and shared and cross-border strategies.

The « bridge symbol », physical link between two territories, plays an important role in this context. Many conurbations of the EGTC have experienced the bridge symbolism.

The objective of the EGTC project is the exchange of experience and transfer of best practices, fostering an EU knowledge society regarding spatial governance.

Still, we must keep in mind that locally based solutions will have to be tailored-made according to the territories and their respective history.

Christian LAMOUR finally reminds that thanks to the European construction and integration, cross-border functional territories have emerged. However, the management of these coherent areas requires the setting up of cross-border connections between national governance arenas involving key-players at different spatial scales. It intensifies the complexity of urban management and more essentially brings into the light the "Community" issue, that is to say fundamentally the solidarity agenda and the democratic legitimacy. A territory considered as a political project implies a series of considerations connected to the "vivre ensemble". An EU cross-border territory as a political process demands a visionary approach of the "vivre ensemble". The current challenge is as follows: how to develop close cross-border relationships and the concept of community in a cross-border context? Indeed, « there is no territory without community ».

Closing of sessions

by Alain LAMASSOURE, Member of the European Parliament, Vice President of MOT,
Secretary of EUROMOT

Alain LAMASSOURE reminds the report he carried out for the French President of the Republic, Nicolas Sarkozy, in June 2008, on « The citizen and the implementation of the European Law ». It points out the weaknesses of a « Europe late for its citizens » whereas 10 millions of citizens live in a European country different from its own. Those delays and difficulties faced by the citizens are particularly visible in cross-border territories and more specifically in cross-border conurbations that concentrate a large number of the European population. The lack of diploma recognition illustrates these difficulties.

One of the challenges of cross-border territories is to appear as « spaces of test and experimentations » for European law.

It is necessary to support cross-border cooperation since it makes Europe closer to its citizens. In this perspective, it is important to develop participative democracy mechanisms and to hand over to the inhabitants.

Cross-border relations lead decision-makers to work on common solutions to face day-to-day problems. To do so, it is crucial within cross-border territories to invent innovative governance forms that involve a large range of actors.

In this context, the exchange of experience remains primordial. MOT, network of local authorities, with its partners City Twins and Eixo Atlantico¹, constituted in November 2007, EUROMOT, European network for cross-border local authorities. This network is intended to extend to other members.

Alain LAMASSOURE proposes, within EUROMOT, to put in place an « inter-parliamentary conference » that brings together Members of the European, national and regional parliaments. They will accompany and follow cross-border projects and will act as intermediary with the European Union and national governments. The objective is to find solutions to obstacles of the daily life of the inhabitants of cross-border territories.

He formulates a last proposal : appointing, within the government of each EU Member State, a person in charge of cross-border cooperation.

¹ More information on: www.espaces-transfrontaliers.eu.