

## PROJECT SHEETS

Theme: “Involvement of civil society within cross-border conurbations”

The integration process of the EU has facilitated the emergence of functional urban areas cross-cutting state borders, i.e. cross-border conurbations, which face specific challenges related to the management of cross-border flows (goods, capital, information and workers), leading to specific problems and new potentialities of development.

The appropriate response to such challenges lay down on the development of new systems of governance aiming to conduct policies at a cross-border scale.

With the absence of a cross-border elected government, such governance systems, seeking effectiveness, must also take into consideration the requirements of transparency and legitimacy, particularly by promoting strategies favoring the involvement of civil society.

Indeed, the risk of a gap between citizens belonging to different national democracies, the public authorities involved in the cross-border co-operation and the governance structure is present.

In this context, the partners of the URBACT project EGTC, “Expertising Governance for Transfrontier Conurbations”, have filled in project sheets to prepare for the seminar on “the involvement of civil society within cross-border conurbations” taking place on 11 February 2010 in Tournai. They have identified the key challenges, the developed best practices and the solutions that are to be developed in all three of the following themes:

1. Cross-border projects building-up popular mobilization
2. Cross-border media and virtual communities
3. Face-to-face participative democracy in cross-border conurbations



# Eurocidade Chaves-Verin ES/PT

## Project sheet

**Theme: “Involvement of civil society within cross-border conurbations”**

### 1. Cross-border projects building-up popular mobilization

*How can public authorities promote a popular mobilization in cross-border conurbations?*

#### Good practices

The key challenges are:

- To promote cultural and social cohesion. To become familiar with a common culture
- High rates of young leaving the conurbation
- To make youth and elderly associations become involved in the cross-border activities
- To increase interaction between youth from both sides of the border
- To overcome cultural prejudices on both cities

Good practices developed to take up these challenges:

#### **a) Cross border information centre\***(this is an Interreg IV A project):

- The whole project itself (what are the benefits of the conurbation for citizens...),
- Information on services that citizens can use on the other side of the border (“programa termalismo senior”)
- Provide information about the activities organized by the Eurocidade,
- Receive and collect applications to take part in the activities of the conurbation

\*At the moment the office is situated in the Council of Verin. For citizens from Chaves, the information is provided through the Cultural Centre in Chaves.

**b) Cross-border Office for youth**

- A youth strategy has been set in partnership between both Municipalities with the support of Portuguese and Galician governments (Youth Departments) in order to:
- Create a Platform to support mobility, interaction and collaboration between youth. The mentioned action will finally contribute to a better social and cultural cohesion.
- Assess on work offers, culture, leisure, and study possibilities within the Euroregion.
- Organize and present any type of cultural activities (theatre, dance, photography) coming from young artists.
- Promote youth tourism within the Euroregion

Activities already carried out: Theatre, jornadas en Chaves para jóvenes

**c) Annual educational, leisure and sport activities**

- Cross-border educational activities:

Celebration of the International Children´s day on 1 June each year.

“Convive coas Linguas” programme. This programme is developed along the summer months and involves: sports activities, languages courses, trips. It is organized by the Eurocidade, in collaboration with the Councils of Chaves and Verín.

Language courses. Portuguese courses in Verín, Spanish courses in Chaves (courses for local shopkeepers and traders).

Road safety education Week.

Main objectives: preventing road crashes through education and campaigns, and supporting people bereaved or seriously injured in road crashes.

Activities: Workshops and Seminars on road safety to company drivers, parents and young people in the conurbation. Road safety messages through theatre. Road safety park for children (karts). Educational exhibition for scholars and families.

- Cross-border leisure and sport activities:

Football competition.

Running competition.

Going sight-seeing through traditional routes for smuggling (trips).

Trips (pilgrims´ way)

**d) Informal cooperation and cooperation Protocols between schools from Chaves and Verín.**

Previous cross-border projects and collaboration between secondary schools have given a great impulse to those activities carried out by the conurbation in the field of education. Cross-border activities have found strong support from those schools, leading to a great success of most of the activities carried out. They assess us in those activities for children

**e) Eurocitizens card.**

The Eurocidade has already developed a project to create a card for citizens from Chaves and Verín.

### **Solutions to be developed**

To improve **the services provided by the cross-border information centre**

To create a **cross-border rehearsal room for young musicians** from both sides of the border

To implement a common social area which provides with universal services for citizens from the conurbation. Main instrument which will provide Euro-citizens with cross-border Identity will be an **identity card**. It will be the key to e-government services and services from businesses, on the one hand, and the key to embrace Euro-citizen identity. Therefore, citizens from Chaves and Verín will definitely increase their sense of belonging to a same territory-conurbation- and Europe.

To establish **formal committees** in the area of culture, education and sports with participation of representatives from the civil society

To **promote youth participation** through existing youth associations

## **2. Cross-border media and virtual communities**

*How can media be used to facilitate a greater visibility and a common identity for cross-border conurbations?*

### **Good practices**

The key challenges are:

- More visibility, communication: The Eurocidade must be well-known at local, national and European levels (politicians and civil society)
- To involve civil society in chat forums
- To create a Tourism Strategy
- Improve understanding of ethnic and cultural diversity, respect for cultural identity and traditions

Good practices developed to take up these challenges:

**a) Common cultural Agenda:**

It is the main tool to know the activities organized by the Eurocidade and Councils. It boosts the interest of citizens for the events taking place on both sides of the border. Of our society rich and diverse cultural life (we don't have any statistics about how many people participate in the activities organized on the other side of the border).

**b) Publications:**

Strategic Agenda: distributed at local and regional levels

**c) Media :**

News about the conurbation in local and regional newspapers and radio. For events that involve actors outside the conurbation, national media have been present as well

**d) Creation of an image of the CB:**

Including the creation of a trademark around the main source of the CB: "water".

The conurbation has taken part in forums, mainly regarding with economics and tourism.

### **Solutions to be developed**

**a) Web-site**

To define the content of the future conurbation

**b) Eurocity guide and directory**

**c) A civil society chat forum**

To create a dynamic interaction between locals, exchange of ideas, consultation regarding the management of the Eurocidade and any other actions that could contribute to a better governance for the project, such as uploading any project idea.

**d) Trimestral Newsletter**

**e) Radio programme**

**f) Citizenship education and training:**

Focus group: primary and secondary schools of the conurbation.

Objective: improve communication and visibility of the Eurocidade's objectives, Strategic Agenda and activities.

### 3. Face-to-face participative democracy in cross-border conurbations

*Which are the possible levels of participative democracy to be developed at a cross-border scale?*

#### Good practices

The key challenges are:

- Embracing a Euro-citizen identity. To set up common ideas, beliefs and ways of behaving.
- Involve actively population from the conurbation
- Ownership of the processes by target group

Good practices developed to take up these challenges:

- Representatives from civil society have participated in the elaboration of the Strategic Agenda through consultation process.
- Creation of focus groups
- Identification of main actors within civil society. The Eurocidade has already started to involve those actors through the participation in the LSG, committees or meetings held :

eg. we have involved in our LSG the president of FEMURO (women association for the County territory (Ourense); members of sports association, animals association, rural foundation. They are people who could influence on society on those areas they work.

#### Solutions to be developed

- To organize an **Assembly composed of citizens** from Chaves and Verín for them to bring initiatives to the governance of the conurbation. (this event will take place in March in Chaves).
- Creation of a **common social area**: universal access to social public services by eurocitizens from the conurbation, improving their quality of life.
- Promote a **common cultural heritage**. Exposure to culture on the other side of the border through films and music, as well as taking part in the most representative cultural events for the cities, such as carnival for Verín, or “Feira dos Santos” for Chaves.

For more information see:

<http://www.cm-chaves.pt/?path=/Portugu%EA/Eurocidade>

# Trinational Eurodistrict Basel CH/F/DE

## Project sheet

**Theme: “Involvement of civil society within cross-border conurbations”**

### **Preliminary remarks:**

Civil society in France, in Switzerland and in Germany each has its own specific culture and history. Civil society is understood to constitute that part of our society in which citizens organise themselves in accordance with democratic rules and are able to influence the fortunes of the local community. Civil society means the space between the market, state and family in which voluntary associations are formed, opportunities for participation and co-determination are used and citizens assume responsibilities in the common good. A similar term used in Germany is “Bürgergesellschaft” (civic society). This is understood to mean a form of democratic society which is shaped and developed through the active participation of its members. Commitment to and identification with civil society is important for cross-border cooperation, in order to ensure that institutional cooperation does not remain an abstract construct which cannot be experienced and understood by citizens.

Involvement of civil society is becoming increasingly important: an increasing number of citizens actively support their local community. The preamble of the articles of the TEB Association sets out the following objectives:

- further to strengthen the common European area of the tri-national conurbation Basel as a place to live and work
- to promote the identification of the people with this common living environment

- to extend the democratic involvement of the population in cross-border issues, and
- to support the successful cross-border cooperation of recent decades in the interest of citizens.

This means the objective of all TEB measures and projects must be the cross-border common good within the conurbation. However, in order to ensure that the cooperation does not appear “imposed from above”, the population needs to be involved and the process of building up a common identity needs to be developed on an ongoing basis.

## 1. Cross-border projects building-up popular mobilization

*How can public authorities promote a popular mobilization in cross-border conurbations?*

### **Good practices** (a few selected examples)

A cross-border understanding for the TEB region and sustained identification with the TEB region cannot be created merely by meeting the population and visiting neighbouring countries.

- **Within the TEB perimeter**

- **Slow-Up Basel Dreiland** – [www.basel-dreiland.ch](http://www.basel-dreiland.ch)

Slow-Up is a car-free adventure day in the Basel region which aims to promote health. The slowUp Basel-Dreiland, which passes through three countries, is intended to provide the population of the tri-national region with shared experiences and to eliminate borders. For this reason event’s motto is “gemeinsam en route: ensemble unterwegs”.

- **Museum Night** – [www.museumsnacht.ch](http://www.museumsnacht.ch)

Museums open one night in the year within the Basel conurbation.

- **Expo Trirhena** – [www.loerrach.de/servlet/PB/menu/1085912\\_l1/navigation.html](http://www.loerrach.de/servlet/PB/menu/1085912_l1/navigation.html)

The permanent adventure exhibition on the tri-national region and its history in Lörrach

- **The tri-national art exhibition “regionale”** – [www.regionale9.net](http://www.regionale9.net)



A cross-border event for young, contemporary art from our tri-national region. In the interim, there are now 15 institutions – eight from the Basel region, four from South Baden and three from Alsace – offering regional artists of all age groups the opportunity to exhibit their works. This means “regionale” is a platform for cross-border exchange between artists, cultural institutions and members of the public who are interested in art.

- **Cross-border festival “STIMMEN”** Burghof Lörrach – [www.stimmen.com](http://www.stimmen.com)

Festival with international stars and discoveries, soloists and choirs, temporal or sacral works. Performances in all three TEB countries.

- **Online space exchange** for the Basel region (TEB) – [www.raumfinder.ch](http://www.raumfinder.ch)

Raumfinder is an online search-portal in which you can find locations for an event (wedding places, party rooms, places for the next meeting)

- **Infrastructure projects** (tri-national bridge – [www.w-wt.de/tourismus/bruecke.html](http://www.w-wt.de/tourismus/bruecke.html); cross-border tram links – [www.tram8.info/](http://www.tram8.info/); REGIO-S-Bahn - [www.regio-s-bahn.ch](http://www.regio-s-bahn.ch))

- **Within the perimeter of the Upper Rhine Cooperation which includes the TEB perimeter**

- **Journée d’architecture** – [www.ja-at.eu](http://www.ja-at.eu)

Since the year 2000 the Upper Rhine Festival of Architecture (Architekturtage Oberrhein) offers architects, urban planners and artists a forum for current trends, projects and topics relating to architecture. TEB has been involved since 2008 as a partner.

- **Upper Rhine Museum Pass** – [www.museumspass.com](http://www.museumspass.com)

The Upper Rhine Museum Pass is an annual visitor’s ticket for over 180 museums in Germany, France and Switzerland. This ticket is currently bought each year by approx. 35,000 people within the Upper Rhine region. In addition to the citizen dimension, the project also entails close cooperation between the member museums.

- **The interactive sport ticket** with the REGIO prize awarded by the Upper Rhine Conference – [www.regio-sport.eu/de/home/index.html](http://www.regio-sport.eu/de/home/index.html)

The interactive sport ticket gives associations of various sports disciplines the opportunity to attract partners and to obtain information about cross-border sporting activities.

#### **- Further projects**

Projects in the education and youth field within the TEB perimeter (e.g. school partnerships [www.educomm.edubs.ch](http://www.educomm.edubs.ch)) as well as the Upper Rhine Conference (school and teacher exchange; promoting multilingualism, youth project funds, Upper Rhine Youth Parliament)

#### **Solutions to be developed**

As the population already has a wide variety of opportunities, it is important to ensure that this is communicated. For this reason, the TEB region needs a web portal (the current TEB website is an institutional website)

Another option is the development of micro projects<sup>1</sup> which are aimed at the population (realisation is currently being assessed). These projects should have the aim to promote cross-border exchange and partnership on local level (sports, culture, tourism, education, etc.). The Eurodistrict would launch a call for projects and manage the fund (a jury will select the projects). The applicants have to co-finance the project (minimum of 50%). Model for a future micro project is the example of the Eurodistrict PAMINA (<http://www.eurodistrict-regio-pamina.eu/pamina/spip.php?article740>)

The INTERREG “Upper Rhine Metropolitan Region for active cross-border dialogue between citizens” has been overseen by the Tri-national Upper Rhine Metropolitan Region since October 2009 within the framework of the “civil society” pillars.

With the help of three major decentralised citizens congresses, awareness of the existing cross-border activities and their institutional forms is to be boosted amongst citizens. In addition, the citizens’ forums will promote new forms of cross-border cooperation between citizens, and will offer a platform for the cross-border networking of key civil society players and organisations. The first

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<sup>1</sup> Similar to the previous citizens project programme “People-to-People”, an INTERREG-III project which aimed to promote cross-border encounters between the populations of the Upper Rhine region by encouraging small projects. The possible topics and themes were culture, the young, encounters and leisure, the environment, sports as well as media and communications. Between 2002 and 2007, 180 projects were supported within the framework of this programme to the tune of €940,000.00 (also see [www.3regio.org/](http://www.3regio.org/))

citizens' congress is due to be held on 17 April 2010 in Basel – the TEB perimeter will be a key determinant here.

## 2. Cross-border media and virtual communities

*How can media be used to facilitate a greater visibility and a common identity for cross-border conurbations?*

### Good practices

People in the Upper Rhine and TEB region live in an information and communication society. Modern communication technologies facilitate the flow of information and improve the exchange of information between German, French and Swiss neighbours – this in particular in cultural terms, as well as from economic and social perspectives. However, added value can only be created if these technologies are linked together between the neighbours in the border region and proper compatibility is ensured between the different national standards.

The linking and networking of various different media, including and in particular across national and cultural borders, from radio through the internet to television, to newspapers and online services, makes a major contribution towards integration. For this reason, the realisation and maintenance of joint media projects, taking account of intercultural aspects, is of particular importance in this relation.

#### - Dreiland-Zeitung

Weekly Basler Zeitung newspaper supplement on politics, culture and daily life in the tri-national region. Was discontinued in the year 2001 after 10 years.

#### - Television programme Vis-à-Vis – [www.swr.de/vis-a-vis/ueberuns/index.html](http://www.swr.de/vis-a-vis/ueberuns/index.html)

Vis-à-Vis is the Franco-German magazine produced by Südwestrundfunk Studio Freiburg and France 3 Alsace. The bilingual programme focuses on the daily lives of people living in the Upper Rhine region.

#### - Media Forum Freiburg – [www.mff.net](http://www.mff.net)

The Media Forum is an initiative for the promotion of the media- and IT-industry. It is open to French and Swiss partners and has also a cross-border focus.

- Triregio programme on the local broadcaster **Telebasel** – [www.telebasel.ch/sites\\_sendungen/triregio.php](http://www.telebasel.ch/sites_sendungen/triregio.php)

The broadcasting is only in German but the content is on regional and cross-border level. There are difficulties for German and French citizens to watch the programme (frequencies and TV-channels are regulated on national level).

- **Webjournal.ch** – the iPortal for the tri-national region Basel <http://www.webjournal.ch>

It is a private initiative of a Swiss journalist and the website is only in German. But the cross-border aspect is really specific.

- **Radio Broadcast “Dreiländer - Ein Thema”**

A monthly live co-production of three radio stations:

- . SWR Studio Karlsruhe and Freiburg/Breisgau
- . Radio DRS Studio Basel
- . France BLeU Elsass

The frequency is only on amplitude modulation.

### **Solutions to be developed**

A joint communication strategy for the TEB is recommended. This could entail the following:

- Improving the reception of broadcasters from neighbouring regions – networking the existing cable infrastructures within the three countries, and feeding in joint broadcasting formats
- Political Media Dialogue: meetings of the TEB Board of Directors with media representatives and publishers
- Appealing to media professionals and communication managers to recognise and promote regional cross-border reporting as a fundamental part of their duty to provide information about the common region in which people live and pursue cultural interests.
- Lobbying for regional cross-border media services in the capital cities
- WebTV as possible broadcasting vehicle for the TEB (e.g. see [www.reinach-bl.ch](http://www.reinach-bl.ch))
- Setting up a web portal for the TEB region (cf. above 1. Solutions to be developed)

- Regular TEB newsletter (online and sent by E-Mail)
- Regular information journal for households within the TEB region.

A newsletter or information-sheet on paper. But problems of financing (really costly)

- Promoting public (media) debates beyond regional and national borders
- Improving cross-border operating conditions for the media and communications
- Networking the media and communication experts

### 3. Face-to-face participative democracy in cross-border conurbations

*Which are the possible levels of participative democracy to be developed at a cross-border scale?*

#### Good practices

The integration of civil society in the political process of the TEB ensures social and democratic input. This question is very closely linked to the aspect of leadership and the need for a uniform overall perspective. Citizens want to be more closely involved, and the task at hand is to realise this desire.

- **metrobasel** – [www.metrobasel.ch](http://www.metrobasel.ch)

Metrobasel is an association which represents the interests of businessmen, institutions and key civil society players for the purpose of promoting the tri-national metropolitan region of Basel. The vision “metrobasel 2020” was drawn up as a “paper for the future” in the year 2006 by 50 personalities drawn from all parts of the tri-national metropolitan region of Basel.

- **REGIO BASILIENSIS** – Swiss association with 600 individual and collective members, dedicated to promoting cross-border cooperation – [www.regbas.ch](http://www.regbas.ch)

- **District council** as quasi-democratic instrument for shaping opinions and goals within the framework of the TEB

- **The association Förderverein Bürgerbrücke e.V.**, which supports the realisation of the so-called Dreiländerbrücke or “Tri-national Bridge”.

- **Neighbourhood Conference Prize** (until 2005)

The Neighbourhood Conference Prize supports cultural, economic and political commitment towards maintaining cross-border contacts

- **Citizens' initiative "Lebenswertes Grenzach"** ("Grenzach Worth Living") for improved living conditions – noise problem in Grenzach-Birsfelden

**Solutions to be developed**

It would be sensible to facilitate a more direct involvement of the population through regular consultations, debates and public hearings.

Possible options (need to be assessed in greater detail):

- Development of e-democracy instruments
- Creation of a tri-national "development council" – similar to the French system
- Making it possible for the population to organise petitions and to launch initiatives
- Citizens' forums for the purpose of developing opinions
- Agenda-setting for participatory democracy
- Surveys conducted amongst the population
- Direct election of the district council members by the population of the three countries
- Monitoring the democratic development of the TEB

For more information see:

<http://www.eurodistrictbasel.eu/>

# Eurometropole Lille-Kortrijk-Tournai F/BE

## Project sheet

**Theme: “Involvement of civil society within cross-border conurbations”**

With the creation of the EGTC « Eurométropole Lille-Kortrijk-Tournai » in January 2008, which brings together 14 institutional partners (States, regions, intercommunalities), a common crossborder governance structure for 2 millions of citizens was created.

Along this cooperation, the civil society plays a major role in the crossborder development of this territory.

### **1. Cross-border projects building-up popular mobilization**

*How can public authorities promote a popular mobilization in cross-border conurbations?*

#### **Good practices**

In a 2 million inhabitant conurbation the challenge is not to raise the number of cross-border projects but to facilitate them and to increase the awareness and participation of the citizens.

#### **- Lille 3000**

Lille was European Capital of Culture in 2004. The success of this year was mostly built on the mobilization of the population and the civil society.

Lille 3000 continues the story by organizing cultural events, places, and festivals, and becomes, more and more, a eurometropolitan cultural project.

The closing evening of the 2008 festival (supported by local authorities and major companies) was organized in Kortrijk, Belgium. Thousands of participants came from the whole eurométropole.

[www.lille3000.com](http://www.lille3000.com)

#### - **Cross-border annual job forum**

Since 2006 an annual job forum, where jobseekers and providers meet, helps the cross border mobility of workers. This event is always a big success with more than a hundred companies and 6000 visitors.

[www.job-eurometropole.com](http://www.job-eurometropole.com)

### **Solutions to be developed**

Common touristic map to be developed by the EGTC. The targets are both the external visitors and the “eurometropolitan”.

## **2. Cross-border media and virtual communities**

*How can media be used to facilitate a greater visibility and a common identity for cross-border conurbations?*

### **Good practices**

The two key challenges are to gather the available information, on all everyday life issues, and to provide bilingual information.

#### **Crossborder TV shows**

Three weekly local cross border TV shows have been broadcasted since 2002 with the support of local bodies (Franco-Belgian chamber of commerce, CRRAV, Lille Métropole), Interreg, and TV networks (WEO, WTV, No télé)

- Transpuls : crossborder cultural news
- Transactua : news
- Transit : economic news

The TV shows are bilingual and developed by crossborder teams



### **Solutions to be developed**

- common **touristic website** to be developed by the EGTC
- **website of the EGTC**
- common **cultural agenda** to be provided by the EGTC or one of the partners

### **3. Face-to-face participative democracy in cross-border conurbations**

*Which are the possible levels of participative democracy to be developed at a cross-border scale?*

#### **Good practices**

The main challenge is to deal with community issues in a 2 million inhabitant area without being too heavy or redundant with other organizations.

#### **The « Forum de l'Eurométropole »: a cross border development council**

60 members (30 french, 15 walloons, 15 flemish) represent the companies, unions, NGOs of the territory since September 2009. They debate deals with any cross border or eurometropolitan issue, if asked by the EGTC or on their own initiative.

The members of this council are also members of one of the three existing development councils (one for Lille Métropole, one for Flanders, one for Wallonia).

The seat of the forum is in Tournai, Belgium.

For more information see:

<http://www.lillemetropole.fr/index.php?p=986>

## Eurodistrict Frankfurt (O)-Slubice DE/PL

### Project sheet

#### Theme: “Involvement of civil society within cross-border conurbations”

Creating a cross-border civil society which would be some kind of resistance towards the power of prejudices, resentments and manipulation of public opinion; supporting and organizing a dialogue between non-public actors, citizens, administration and politics; keeping alive a goal-centered, vision-orientated process of common strategic and concrete development.

Long term vision for 2020: European Twin City Frankfurt (Oder)-Slubice, which is (1) cosmopolitan, (2) multilingual, (3) life-long-learning, (4) dynamic, (5) friendly for families and a European City of (6) sports and (7) culture

#### 1. Cross-border projects building-up popular mobilization

*How can public authorities promote a popular mobilization in cross-border conurbations?*

##### Good practices

- **German-Polish kindergarten** (Euro-Kita) in Frankfurt (since 2000), 20 Polish and 34 German children
- **Joint German-Polish classes** at “Karl-Liebknecht” high school
- **European University** Viadrina/ Collegium Polonicum: Joint university on both sides (since 1991), about 6.000 students from 80 countries, ¼ from Poland

- **“European Garden”** – linked green space (parks, Oder island) on both sides of the river (since 2003). European, local, national and regional (Land, Voivodship) funding

### Solutions to be developed

- **Cross-border projects dedicated to citizens: cultural, school...exchange?**

Related to our vision “bi-lingual city, from kindergarten to the mature age”, which distinguishes our city from other European middle-sized cities, we are about to invest much more into our soft skills:

- project nr 212.2: Building a **polish-german integration kindergarten** in Slubice (2010-2011), complementary to the already existing “Euro Kindergarten” in Frankfurt (Oder) and in cooperation with the project “Language Garden” (2009-2011), which supports intercultural competences in 10 kindergartens in Frankfurt and Slubice  
(financing: 85% European, 10% national Polish funding, 5% local)
- project nr 221.1: Introducing **Polish and German as second foreign language** in all primary schools (2010-2015)

- **Cross-border services to citizens: Transport, territorial marketing center...?**

Related to the need of more “man and woman power” in communicating and coordinating between both administrations and of common PR activities (after ending of the URBACT EGTC project in May 2010) we are about to establish a common cooperation agency:

- Project nr 132.1: Establishment of a **german-polish cooperation center** within the former frontier crossing point buildings (2010-2012)  
(financing: 85% European, 10% national Polish funding, 5% local)
- Project nr 141.1. Feasibility study for a **tramway line** from Frankfurt to Slubice (2010)  
After the first Frankfurt-Slubice tramway project has been rejected by a Frankfurt referendum, we are coming out with a new approach: larger and more useful line, large political lobbying, better PR.  
(local funding)

Why develop such initiatives?

Because of city development reasons: increasing quality of daily live, supporting economic growth, becoming more competitive comparing to other European 80.000 conurbations and more attractive for investments and tourists

## 2. Cross-border media and virtual communities

*How can media be used to facilitate a greater visibility and a common identity for cross-border conurbations?*

### Good practices

**Chat forum** [www.frankfurt.slubice.pl](http://www.frankfurt.slubice.pl) (since 16.10.09):

Creating possibility to talk with each other (instead of about each other) and to spread out information (instead of prejudgments)

Financing: small Interreg project

Communication about the forum: in newspapers, on public forums, ...

It has not been really successful so far.

### Solutions to be developed

Needs for cross-border newspaper, television, radio, website

On the polish side a local, bilingual television station is to be established.

## 3. Face-to-face participative democracy in cross-border conurbations

*Which are the possible levels of participative democracy to be developed at a cross-border scale?*

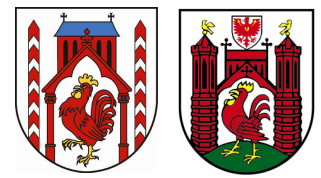
### Good practices

#### **Joint Governance structures:**

Thanks to the URBACT EGTC projects we were able to establish a Joint Steering Group, consisting of both Mayors and Heads of several administration departments and five regular Working Groups (see below), which have been working during 2009 on the Frankfurt-Slubice LAP 2010-2020.

**Open conference:** Future Conference 4-6 June with more than 200 participants from nearly every part of the society from both cities, consisting of several workshops and forums, leading to a common vision, strategic and operative goals and project ideas.

Thanks to the results and the dynamics of Future Conference politics and administration realized the necessity to work out a long term compulsory framework, based on the results of the Future Conference.



The administration took over the responsibility to organize once a year a public debating forum on local cross border issues for that Governance questions remain a strong public subject.

**On 08.12.2009** the heads of both administrations confirmed the LAP 2010-2020. On 20.01.2010 the Joint City Council Commission did the same, now it is about to be discussed within the remaining City Council commissions in order to be voted on the Common City Council Assembly on 29.04.2010.

**Working Groups:** Meetings June-December, Strategic Meeting of both Mayors and Heads of Departments (Economy, City Planning, Culture, international cooperation, Finances): Involvement of civil society: participation, idea giving; about 1/3 of all ideas, strategic goals, vision and projects was coming from outside administration

This initiative was developed in order to overcome the lack of vision and long term, real co-operation and to reduce the power of prejudices and “being like strangers” to each other.

# Eurodistrict Strasbourg-Ortenau

F/DE

## Project sheet

**Theme: “Involvement of civil society within cross-border conurbations”**

### **1. Cross-border projects building-up popular mobilization**

*How can public authorities promote a popular mobilisation in cross-border conurbations?*

#### **Good practices**

At the time being, the Eurodistrict Strasbourg-Ortenau organizes four sportive events for the people of its territory throughout the year. The Solidarity Run for schoolchildren, the European Picnic and the Bicycle Day have got a long tradition in Strasbourg and different services of the Urban Community of Strasbourg are in charge of the organization. In 2007, the German partners of the Eurodistrict were invited to join in and these events started to be organized at a cross border level. The Eurodistrict Walking Day took place for the first time in 2008 in Germany/Lahr. The idea of having such an event was born at Eurodistrict level and the organization is done by the technicians of the Eurodistrict with the support of the different sport sections of the municipalities on the territory.

**a) The Solidarity Run for schoolchildren** aged 6 to 11 always takes place in May during the European Month. The idea is to bring French and German children together and make them run for a good cause. The children are sponsored by the local authorities and the money they “earn” in this way

goes to an hospital or an association for handicapped children. In 2009, about 18.500 children took part in the run and gathered thus about 6000 Euros for a good cause.

The main challenge of the Solidarity Run is to get the schools of the Eurodistrict to participate in the event as it means a supplement of organizational work for the school administration and the teachers. As a mean of encouraging the pupils to participate, they are informed at school about the bicultural character of the event, the possibility of making new friends belonging to a different culture and the importance of helping children who are not as fortunate as oneself because of a handicap or an illness. Over the years the number of schools participating in the Solidarity Run has grown on the French side whereas on the German side, the situation has remained more or less constant as the contest can only be organized for the schools of the 5 largest towns of the Ortenau district . However the general idea is to enable more and more schools to participate in the future, this especially on the German side. Another difficulty is to convince the children that the main objective of the day is not only to achieve a good performance, but also to meet other children from the opposite side of the border and to run for children who are ill or handicapped. In order to overcome this difficulty and to foster exchanges between the pupils of both countries - and offering them an opportunity to meet the culture over the border - games with binational teams and bilingual workshops are organized throughout the day.

#### **b) The European Picnic and the Eurodistrict Bicycle Day<sup>1</sup>**

Here the biggest challenge is first to get the people to attend the two events and secondly to encourage them to have exchanges with their foreign neighbors in order to get to know each other. It takes generally a couple of years for a sportive event to get established in a region by word of mouth and although we can't precisely quantify the number of participants, it is sure that the event is becoming more and more popular every year. Generally people tend to come with friends and relatives and to stay within their own group. But our guided bicycle tours in two languages on both sides of the Rhine have proved very popular and we think that they provide an excellent opportunity to get in touch with strangers while riding in a pleasant environment. As all guided tours were in the past booked very quickly and we had to turn down people, we wish to be able to employ more bilingual guides and offer a larger amount of tours in the future.

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<sup>1</sup> The generally take place on the same day during the European month

### c) The Eurodistrict Walking Day

It always takes place in the autumn, alternatively on the German or the French side of the Eurodistrict.

The main challenge for this Walking Day is to get “average people” interested in walking together. After the walks we organize a “coming together party” with music and it might be a good idea to try to attract more people through an interesting musical program at the end of the day. This event is mainly organized through ramblers associations on both sides of the border. The mobilization within the associations is quite good, but it is difficult to get average public, especially young adults, to participate. The guided walking tours in two languages are popular with the people and the offer could be extended to other destinations.

### d) Cross-border job forum

For the first time in June 2009, the Eurodistrict had an exhibition stand at the Employment Fair of Offenburg to promote apprenticeship in a bilingual and bicultural context. The Fair is renowned in the whole region of Southern Germany. In 2009, there were about 250 exhibitors who attracted more than 20.000 visitors, mainly pupils gathering information about apprenticeships, university courses and studies and possible jobs and employers. Unfortunately, the stand did not attract many youngsters and the challenge is to make it more attractive in the future (for example by inviting young adults to testify about their learning and experience in a bicultural context)

### Solutions to be developed

The communication on each one of those events could be improved (flyers, posters in the streets, ads in the newspapers). To do so, a **larger budget would be necessary**, and it might be interesting to look for sources of financing from the European Union.

The organization of this kind of events in a bicultural context is time consuming and the mobilization of several people is required for several weeks. **Bilingual additional staff** dedicated to the organization of cross border events would greatly improve the possibilities in this context. Several associations already contribute to the organization of these open air events, but it might be possible to get an even **stronger involvement of the civil society** in the future. At present, all events are of a sportive kind and the Eurodistrict needs to organize at least one



cultural yearly event such as a music, a film, a book or a theatre festival/event. **Culture** taken in its general sense is what gives people a sense of belonging to a community and is very important for the forging of an identity as a Eurodistrict citizen.

In order to encourage projects to be developed by the citizens (grass root level), the Eurodistrict intends to apply for a **micro-projects fund** financed by the EU programme Interreg IV A. This fund will be dedicated to the realization of small projects by and for the civil communities.

## 2. Cross-border media and virtual communities

*How can media be used to facilitate a greater visibility and a common identity for cross-border conurbations?*

### Good practices

Nowadays it is utterly important to be present on the web and use this kind of media to present oneself. The Eurodistrict completely remolded its **website** ([www.eurodistrict.eu](http://www.eurodistrict.eu)) in the spring of 2009. It was necessary as the original homepage had not been made by professionals. It was too old fashioned and lacked interactivity and attractiveness. As a result, the Eurodistrict Assembly decided to spend 20.000 Euros of its budget dedicated to projects on a new website. The new homepage is much more attractive and has got several interactive features. For example, the interactive map of the swimming pools in the area is very popular with cybervisitors.

Furthermore, at present time we are developing a **web platform for e-democracy** with an agency specialized in the organization of large people's consultations. This platform will be launched together with the new European Grouping for Territorial Cooperation. The idea is to allow people to give their opinion on what they expect from the Eurodistrict through an online dialogue. The dialogue will last for four weeks and the results of the consultation will be taken into account in the planning of the future action plan of the European grouping. The main challenge will be to get people interested in the platform and make them take part in the different discussions through the forums and chats. In order for the dialogue to work, it is very important that the people know that their suggestions matter and will be taken into account in future planning.

We plan a multi-level communication campaign around the subject prior to the launching of the platform in order to attract the interest of the population.

A new online newspaper (**Journal des deux Rives**) covering the Upper Rhine between Basel and Karlsruhe and reporting about the Eurodistricts of this area and European subjects has recently been

created through a private initiative. This paper is financed through advertisements and several sponsors and is a very good idea.

### **Solutions to be developed**

Media covering the Eurodistrict area would of course be a very good thing. At the moment, there are no newspaper, radio or television dedicated to this area. The creation of such media would of course be expensive, although of an uttermost importance for the forging of a Eurodistrict identity for the population.

### **3. Face-to-face participative democracy in cross-border conurbations**

*Which are the possible levels of participative democracy to be developed at a cross-border scale?*

#### **Good practices**

It is obvious that a cross border conurbation can only exist if its citizens are heard and integrated in the decision making process. One of the main challenges is to get civil society interested in the evolution of the territory and show them that their opinion matters and will be taken into account. This is the reason why we do not only want to consult people through an online dialogue, but also through real **discussion forums organized in different fields of activities**. The first projected round table of this kind will be organized on health issues in the early summer of 2010. It will be organized with a citizens association dealing with problems encountered by cross border workers.

#### **Solutions to be developed**

A **cross border council** representing the interests of the civil society and giving advice to the cross-border governance level on a permanent basis would be a very good thing to ensure that the new Eurodistrict is built from the bottom to the top.

**For more information see:**

<http://www.eurodistrict.eu/fr/>

## EGTC Ister-Granum SK/HU

### Project sheet

**Theme: “Involvement of civil society within cross-border conurbations”**

Even if the Ister-Granum EGTC (European Grouping of Territorial Cooperation) is a young formulation, since the very beginning the involvement of civil society in the actions of the EGTC was a concrete aim. Therefore, the newly formulated institutional structure of the EGTC is providing linking points to decision support and participatory levels for the civil bodies through they are able to express the – in Hungary not so strong – civil based expectations and suggestions.

#### **1. Cross-border projects building-up popular mobilization**

*How can public authorities promote a popular mobilization in cross-border conurbations?*

##### **Good practices**

##### **a) Maria Valéria Bridge Run ([www.hidfutas.eoldal.hu](http://www.hidfutas.eoldal.hu))**

Since the reopening of the Maria Valéria Bridge in 2001, every year the last Saturday of September is the date of the “bridge run”. Not only the young generation of the twin cities Esztergom and Sturovo

but also parents and amateur of sports participate to the event. Organizer is the Association for Student Sport of Esztergom.

**b) Art exhibitions in “Bridge Guard’s House”, Sturovo**

Every year, international artists are invited to present their works to the Hungarian and Slovakian visitors. The exhibition always follows the idea of common cultural roots and history or the Danube River or History or recent days of the Region Ister-Granum.

Last year for example, a Japanese artist exhibited his paintings. The paintings by Takehiro Mizumoto experiment with the depiction of relativity and uncertainty, they try to represent multiculturalism. His invitation was a symbol of recent development of the cross border region as Suzuki Hungary is the major employer of the region.

**c) Wine Ball of VINUM ISTER- GRANUM REGIONIS Wine Order (Esztergom)**

Every year the Vinum Ister-Granum Regionis Wine Order organizes a ball of wine producers of Ister-Granum EGTC. A good opportunity to meet and talk about wine and share experiences formal and informal way.

**d) “Twin Energy Center Project”**

The Energy Center project which is still in its early phase establishes two “demonstration” sites on the Hungarian and Slovakian sides of the EGTC. The Center demonstrates the BATs (Best applied Technologies) in renewable energy application and energy efficiency.

The demonstration and educational centers will present technical and technological solutions for renewable energy apply and energy efficiency. The two buildings will be models of small scale household applications (SK) and larger communal applications (HU).

#### e) “Szent István” Days

The “Szent István” Days, a cultural festival dedicated to the first holly king of Hungary St. Stephan (Szent István). He founded Esztergom and gave it its primacy rank.

During the time of the festival several cultural programs, open-air concerts are held. The market sells the Region’s goods, local food and handicraft products.

#### Solutions to be developed

Probably the most important fact to make the events successful is the **good communication and marketing**. This complex activity is not only time consuming, but needs **higher budget** year after year, which is a serious burden for the civil organization.

Therefore Esztergom allocates some of its own sources (e.g. through Solidarity Fund).

The Development Agency of Ister-Granum can offer:

- free advertisement surface on its own web pages;
- news on the running and planned events;
- printed leaflets and flyers.

The EGTC also has a unique position in cross-border European Territorial Programs, as it is able to submit project proposal on its own. Thus the events alone or built-in certain projects can be (co)financed by EU sources (of course the opportunity is given to civil organizations, too.)

## 2. Cross-border media and virtual communities

*How can media be used to facilitate a greater visibility and a common identity for cross-border conurbations?*

The Ister-Granum Development Agency operates a portal-like web page for the Ister-Granum EGTC. This is a trilingual platform in Hungarian, Slovak and English languages.

## Good practices

### a) **Economic Portal of the Ister-Granum EGTC** (<http://eco.istergranum.hu>)

This portal was developed by the national development fund in Hungarian, Slovak and English languages. The main aim of the portal is to present the economic environment of the Region and promote investments. The Hungarian part of the EGTC has stable investors e.g. Suzuki Hungary, while the Slovakian part mainly provides employees.

The web page also presents:

- Industrial Parks
- Training for employees
- Job market
- Tourist attraction and services

Through the webpage the visitors can subscribe to newsletters and can register their enterprise in the regional company register, database. This database is accessible to registered visitors and offer various search options.

### b) **Civil Portal** ([www.eurohidalapitvany.hu/civil/index.php?id=nyitolap](http://www.eurohidalapitvany.hu/civil/index.php?id=nyitolap))

The portal collects the NGOs of the EGTC. It provides various services for the visitors and registered NGOs, as follows:

- partner search for NSRF (National Strategic Reference Framework) and EU calls and projects,
- events,
- organizations,
- introduction of regional civil organizations,
- link to civiljutube.hu (civil video-share portal)

### c) **Ethnical Portal** (<http://www.komp.mtaki.hu/>)

The web page was developed in the framework of “KOMP” Interreg III/A project. The portal presents the minorities of Ister-Granum EGTC. As the page developed by the Research Institute of Ethnic and

National Minorities of Hungarian Academy of Sciences, the scientific approach is rather strong. The portal collects surveys and studies on minorities sometimes at settlement level. The content is valuable for researcher and for everyone interested deeply on the topic.

### **Solutions to be developed**

The needs and other experiences showed that the content of the portals has to be thematically divided e.g.: separate tourist, destination management portal, e-job center etc.

**The potential target groups should be better defined** to successfully reach them via internet.

Although the classical media (broadcasts, regional papers etc) are missing in the Region, **the e-communication should be developed**, because this can ensure the strengthening of information and communication on regional society.

Especially in case of ethnical portal the surveys and studies should be reachable the languages of minorities at least at summary or abstract form.

### **3. Face-to-face participative democracy in cross-border conurbations**

*Which are the possible levels of participative democracy to be developed at a cross-border scale?*

#### **Good practices**

##### **a) Civil Parliament**

The Parliament was registered as public association in 2006. The core idea of its establishment was to promote the social acceptance of regionalism. After the birth of the EGTC the aims slightly changed:

- strengthen the relation between Hungarian and Slovakian civil organizations,
- articulate common interests,
- launching common programmes, events and projects,
- operate the Service Network for Non-profit Organizations of the Ister-Granum EGTC,
- participate in the work of Expert Board of the Ister-Granum EGTC.

Through the Parliament, civil organizations will be able to express their needs and opinions to the Expert Board. The role of the Expert Board is to function like a Regional Development Council. Its members are:

- Executive Board of the Civil Parliament,
- Representatives of the three top employers from the Region,
- representatives of the Chamber of Commerce and Industry (from two counties),
- six majors lead the Thematic Committees of the EGTC.

### **Solutions to be developed**

The Parliament is not a real parliament. The membership is voluntary, only the Executive Board is elected. **The association should work and be operated independently and continuously.** Due to the voluntary membership a strong campaign should be launched **to foster NGOs and civil organizations to become members.**

This is a time consuming task, as in Hungary this kind of participatory approach is weak and there are only a few (good) examples. However, the successful work of the Civil Parliament is a real good practice.

Furthermore the Civil Parliament has to participate in the decision-making process of the EGTC. The opportunity is given, but the civil organizations have to find the relevant topics they are working for.

#### **For more information:**

<http://www.istergranum.hu/>