

Congress on smart cooperation

Cities and regions cooperating across borders: an opportunity to overcome crisis

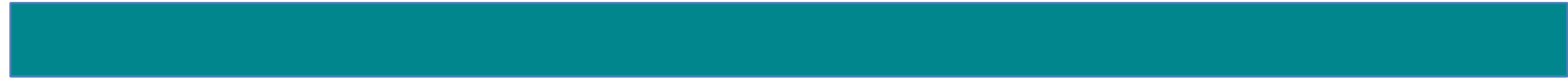
Presentation of CECICN and AEBR document on Smart Cooperation

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**Presentation of CECICN
and AEBR document
on Smart Cooperation**



Who are we and what are our goals?

CECICN and AEBR : 2 networks, more than 500 cities and 100 border regions = 37% of the EU population

Cities and regions involved in Territorial Cooperation:

- within cross border regions
- within macro regions
- within EU wide networks

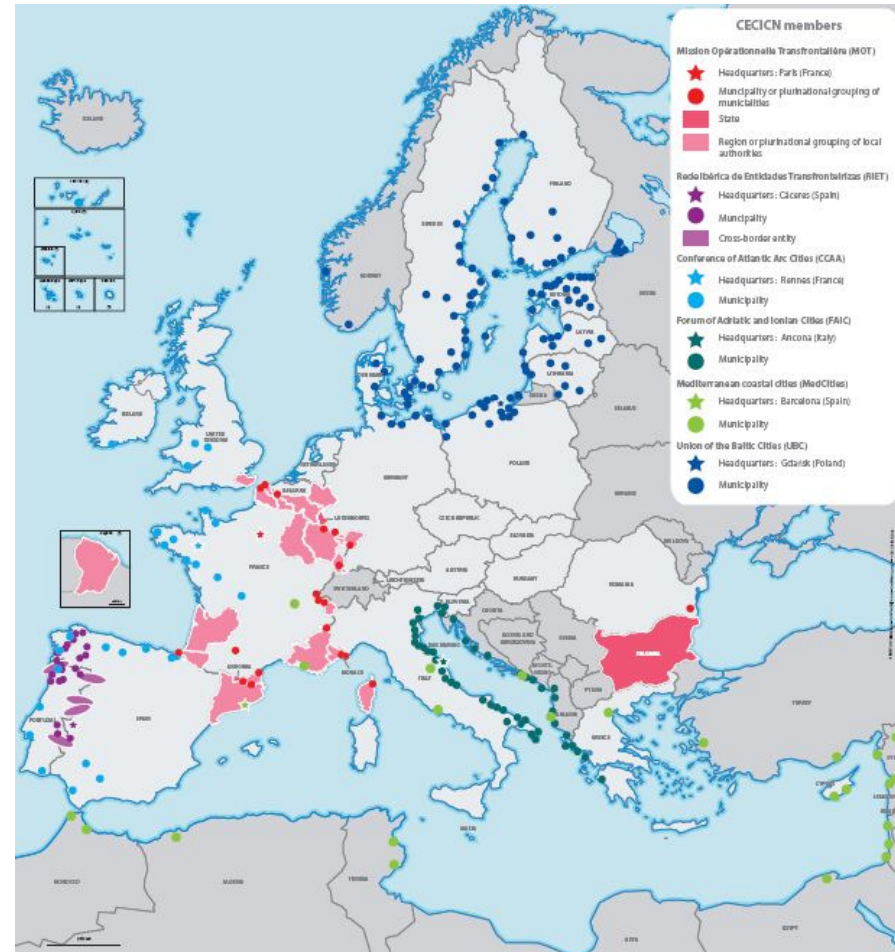
in various urban, rural, maritime contexts

What we have in common:

- spaces of flows; functional territories or networks
- willing to solve the crisis through more EU integration

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CECICN = city networks involved in cooperation



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**AEBR = network of border regions
involved in cooperation**



**Association of European
Border Regions**



Main aim of the report :

- Put European Territorial Cooperation (ETC) at the core of the debate about the 2014-2020 financial perspectives and the implementation of EU 2020 Strategy
- Proposals on how this goal can be implemented within the political context of the EU 2020 Strategy, the Territorial Agenda 2020 and the Leipzig Charter.

1. Political context

- **Crisis... but:**
- **The EU 2020 strategy**
- **The Lisbon Treaty**, strengthening subsidiarity & territorial cohesion
- **Subsidiarity:**
EU 2020 requires involvement of European citizens, first players and beneficiaries; sub-national authorities, closest to the citizens; support of other levels (MS; EU)
- **Territorial cohesion:**
Acknowledging the specificity of each territory:
 - Specific geographic and demographic features, deserving particular attention and support, include “cross-border regions”
 - “Territorial capital” to be tapped through cooperation

The Territorial Agenda 2020:

- Polycentric development, cooperation between territories with complementary potentials
- Long term territorial strategies across borders, with support of the EC where necessary

The Leipzig Charter (2007), “Cities of tomorrow” (2011): Urban agenda

- Cities at the core of EU 2020
- Cooperation between cities; also urban-rural

European Territorial Cooperation objectives

- Help regions and cities
 - to tackle cross-border and transnational challenges
 - to tap their potential linked to cooperation on internal and external borders

- **More EU integration, deeper cooperation** between regions, as well, well-off and lagging behind

It can only succeed if all regions are involved; Cohesion policy: solidarity in favour of poorer regions + catalyst for development of all regions

Territorial cooperation is dependent on the progress made by European integration; **it also contributes very effectively to its achievement.**

2. Key features on Territorial Cooperation today

2.1 Strategic importance of European Territorial Cooperation [1/2]

Territorial cooperation has proved its European **added value**:

- Economic: GDP, jobs, infrastructures, ... but also
- Socio-cultural
- Institutional: capacity building
- Political: visibility of the European integration, involvement of citizens

Cross-border groupings and transnational networks:
intermediate agents and catalysts for territorial cooperation,
valuing their findings in the eyes of citizens.

2.1 Strategic importance of European Territorial Cooperation [2/2]

Partnership and subsidiarity are key characteristics for a successful territorial cooperation: European, national and regional/local administrative levels have to be actively involved and tied together

The territorial dimension of Cohesion Policy is required to complete European and national policies' **thematic approach, and make sure that they are** focused on real priorities of regions

“Smart cooperation”: cross border services (health, transport,..) and interregional networks, meeting strategic priorities (innovation, employment and inclusion, sustainable development)

Territorial Cooperation is one of the key objectives of the EU

2.2 Main weaknesses [1/3]

The border, source of imbalances due to little or non regulated flows and untapped potential

Baltic Sea and Danube strategies made apparent the flaws of European and national legislation concerning free movement and integration

Legal, political, administrative and fiscal frameworks at national or even European level: not always adjust to the cross-border, transnational or interregional reality; lack of interoperability

Weak coherence and coordination of ETC programs with the mainstream programs of Convergence, Regional Competitiveness Employment objectives, and other EU or national instruments

2.2 Main weaknesses [2/3]

Operational Programs: sometimes elaborated with a poor knowledge of the territory

Lack of guidance on the territorial and urban dimension of cooperation within EU regulation and strategic guidelines

European Commission and national authorities: more familiar with regulations and the program level and less with the project level

Cooperation projects are more difficult to implement, more expensive than national projects: partners need more resources to face different legal provisions and working methods

Some programs: too large to address the specific needs of all the territories concerned

Weak participation of local authorities, non-governmental organisations, stakeholders from civil society, business world, in the definition of the program strategy and implementation

2.2 Main weaknesses [3/3]

Management of the ETC programs and projects: far too complex and thus perceived by citizens and institutions as a barrier to cooperation

Each Member State interprets EU-regulations in a different way: many national authorities define stricter rules (management and finances) than necessary, hampering the implementation of ETC programs

The procedure for submission of projects and selection: very different from one program to another

Each program has created its own system, often influenced by subjective criteria from the Monitoring Committee or ad-hoc selection committees

-> Tackle these weaknesses is a condition for European Territorial Cooperation to fully develop its added value

3. Five key ideas towards smart Cooperation

1st Key idea: Financing Territorial Cooperation in Cohesion Policy

The ETC needs a larger budget

EU 2020 and deepening of Single Market require support for ETC, to fit problems and potentials of all regions

Enlargement and neighbourhood policy plead for additional efforts

Financial issue: flows to be simplified; co- financing, pre-financing; new tools such as loans, venture capital, global grants

2nd Key idea: Improving the strategic dimension of cooperation

ETC should be a flagship instrument of territorial cohesion: more integrated and strategic approach; it should be included into all strategic documents (CSF, national PAs)

What is true for macro-regions applies to cross-border regions

- Member States to be encouraged to coordinate strategies legislation, financing and institutions, across borders; with the support of EU
- Need of strategies for cross border regions
- Vertical coordination through the multi level process of CP

3rd Key idea: Reinforcing governance

Cooperation requires **multilevel governance**:

- More territorialized (= **place based**) approach in policies at different levels
- Strengthened **partnership** with cities and regions (level of proximity, daily life, also in the context of cross-border and macro-regions)

Diversity can only be tackled by a **decentralized approach**, such as autonomous sub-programs

Coordination mechanisms to be created between all CP programs (including ETC) and national sectoral/territorial policies

External borders (also outermost regions): synergies between ETC and other EU tools: IPA, ENPI-CBC, EDF

4th Key idea: Developing the tools

Territorial Cooperation requires:

- Common cooperation structures at different scales (CB aggloms or regions, euro-regions, city networks, macro-regions)
- Legal tools: EGTCs to be acknowledged as lead- or project partners, or unique beneficiaries; improve legal basis of EGTC, and facilitate their approval (MS)
- Evidence base on socio-economic realities, territorial disparities and potentials of cross-border and macro-regions
- Guidance for thematic/territorial projects: capitalization, transfer, to be supported at national and EU level, through EU network programs

5th Key idea: Contributing to the Single Market

The current crisis requires a strategic approach for the new programming period, aimed to overcome the economic situation and to contribute to the creation of growth and jobs, along with the other Cohesion Policy goals

ETC at the core of EU policies, including sectoral ones:

- Free movement of people, goods, capital, services
- Smart, inclusive, sustainable growth

6 workshops on Monday afternoon:

1. Macro-regions
2. Smart cross border cooperation
3. Cooperation on the EU external borders
4. Cooperation contributing to smart growth
5. Cooperation contributing to sustainable growth
6. Tools for cooperation

2 parallel sessions on Tuesday morning:

1. Multi level governance of CB cooperation
2. Macro regional strategies