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Regions as partners

**The European Territorial
Cooperation Objective**



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Photographs (pages): European Commission (3, 4, 6, 7, 8, 9, 12, 25, 26), Thomas Dix/Stadt Weil-am-Rhein (1, 19), CRITT Charleville-Mézières (5), Carrefour Economie Technologie Enseignement (6, 21), INTERACT (11, 17), INTERREG IVC Secretariat (14), URBACT (15), URBAN II Dortmund-Nordstadt (15), ESPON (18), Y4I (19), Celtic Enterprises (19), VIDEOCOM (19), Provincie West-Vlaanderen (20, 23), Mabiolac (20), CORELOG (24), RegEnergy (24), REVIT (24), CopraNet (24).

Cover: the “Three Countries Bridge”, a pedestrian and cyclist bridge linking Weil-am-Rhein (Germany) and Huningue (France) near Basle (Switzerland).

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Bringing regions and people together

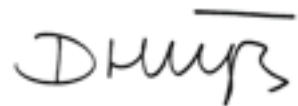
Cohesion Policy is the key instrument in addressing the European Union's ambition to promote more growth and jobs. Sharing ideas and cooperating across borders is one of the most important factors contributing to innovation, which is seen as a key contributor to achieving sustainable growth and jobs. European Territorial Cooperation programmes bring regions and people together and thus facilitate the exchange of good ideas and best practice in Regional Policy, irrespective of the existence of borders.

It is in this context that European Territorial Cooperation has moved centre stage in the new Cohesion Policy period 2007-13. The increased importance of these co-operation programmes, still commonly referred to as INTERREG, is demonstrated by the fact they have now become one of the 3 Cohesion Policy objectives. This **European Territorial Cooperation** Objective, financed by the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF), supports 70 cross-border, transnational and interregional cooperation programmes. The budget for this objective amounts to €8.7 billion for the period 2007-13.

This edition of the *Inforegio Panorama* magazine is dedicated to cooperation and networking. The main article demonstrates how INTERREG has had real impact on the lives of citizens in the Franco-Belgian border area. An expert article from the Directorate-General for Regional Policy puts cooperation into a wider context and explains its benefits in simple terms, while an interview with a legal expert clarifies why the new legal instrument, the European Grouping for Territorial Co-operation (EGTC), is of such importance. Moreover, authors representing each of the four cooperation networking programmes (INTERREG IVC, INTERACT, URBACT and ESPON) explain how they operate and what they have to offer to the regions.

Finally, an article on the conference held in late November 2007 about the new ways of communicating Cohesion Policy together ("*Telling the story*") completes this edition of *Inforegio Panorama*.

I do hope you find this mix of articles interesting and that it encourages you to co-operate and network in one of the 70 European Territorial Co-operation programmes.



Danuta Hübner
Commissioner for Regional Policy



Cohesion policy, at the heart of the Lisbon process

The first report on the negotiations of the new generation of cohesion policy strategies and programmes highlights a clear change of direction in favour of the renewed Lisbon agenda agreed in 2005.



Urban renewal around Patrick Street in Cork, Ireland.

The European Commission communication, “Member States and Regions delivering the Lisbon strategy for growth and jobs through EU cohesion policy, 2007-13”, which was jointly presented by Regional Policy Commissioner, Danuta Hübner, and Employment and Social Affairs Commissioner, Vladimir Spidla, in November 2007, provides a first assessment of the results of the negotiations on the new cohesion policy strategies and programmes.

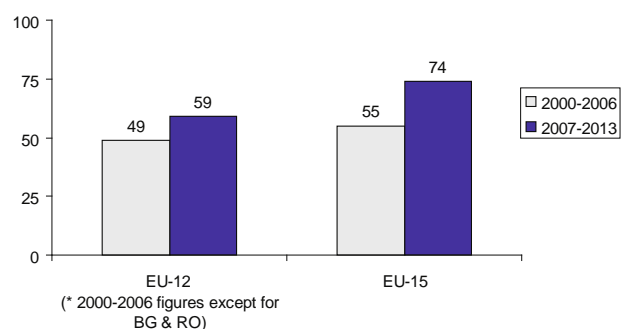
In terms of funding priorities, it shows that under the new Convergence objective, 65% of the funds are to be invested in Lisbon-related objectives. This represents an increase of 11% compared to the previous programming period. Regions falling under the Regional Competitiveness and Employment Objective, which have traditionally allocated more resources to Lisbon type measures, also plan to continue to invest a high proportion of the funds, 82% of the total, in this area, a small increase on the 2000-06 period.

The new rules for cohesion policy encourage this “earmarking” of funds by Member States for investment in Lisbon-related measures. Under the earmarking provision, specific targets were set by the European Council in December 2005. For the EU-15 Member States, for which earmarking is obligatory, 74% of funding for the Convergence Objective and 83% of funding for the Regional Competitiveness and Employment Objective have been allocated to Lisbon measures, well in excess of the targets set by the Council (60% and 75% respectively).

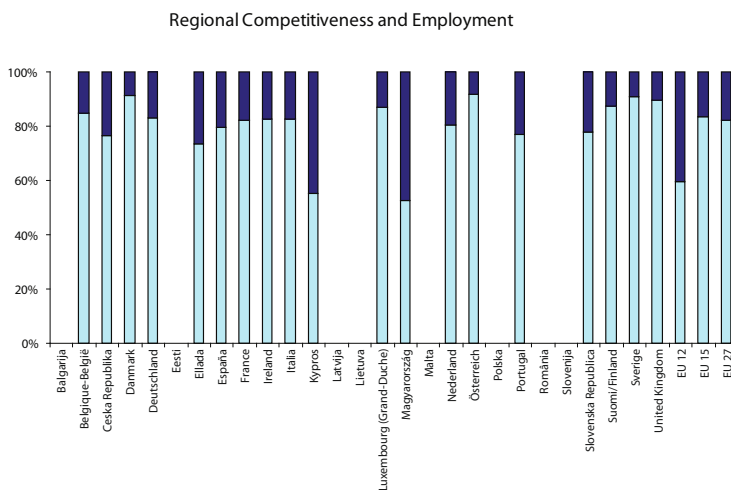
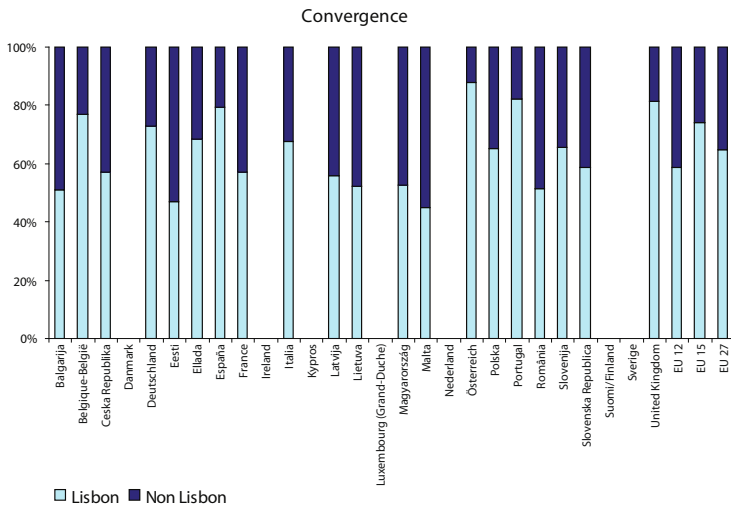
For the EU-12 countries (newer Member States) these targets are voluntary but the programming documents

also demonstrate a high level of ambition, with 58% of the Convergence Objective and 59% of the Regional Competitiveness and Employment Objective funding allocated to Lisbon measures.

Level of earmarking for Convergence Regions in EU-12* and EU-15
Comparison 2000-2006 / 2007-2013
(in % of total funds)



The analysis per country shows a shift towards Lisbon-type measures in all Member States. For EU-15, the figures range from 60% (France) to 88% (Austria) for the Convergence regions, and from 67% to 92% (Denmark) for the Regional Competitiveness and Employment regions. While the commitments are more modest in EU-12, there is still a considerable investment in other sectors which are fundamental to economic progress; albeit not in the earmarked categories.



Contributing to EU priorities

In contributing to the growth and jobs agenda, the new programmes will address the four priority actions agreed by the Member States at the Spring European Council in March 2006. In particular, there is a strong emphasis on priority action 1: **“Investing more in knowledge and innovation”**. Almost €83 billion is allocated for investment in this area. Over half of this will be invested in improving innovative capacity in business, by supporting technological transfers and cooperation networks, as well as R&D and eco-innovation.

The remainder is shared between support for the diffusion and use of ICTs by businesses and by citizens and the development of ICT technologies; support for business start-ups and self-employment; the development of skills; and the promotion of a more flexible and adaptive workforce. Overall, this represents a doubling of investment in R&D and a tripling of investment in innovation, compared with the period 2000-06. In the new Member States, the share of R&D and innovation expenditure in the total budget will be four times more than in the previous period.

The promotion of entrepreneurship, which is directly linked to the 2006 Spring Council priority action 2, **“Unlocking the business potential, particularly of SMEs”**, emerges as another key theme for 2007-13. Member States put a particular emphasis on the provision of business support services, which will receive some €19 billion over the next seven years, equivalent to 5% of the total cohesion budget.

A related action is that of promoting new approaches to improving access to finance for businesses from non-grant sources, such as loans and venture capital. In this area, Member States have exploited the possibilities offered by the JEREMIE (Joint European Resources for Micro to Medium Enterprises) initiative, which aims to improve the availability of innovative financial engineering products in the regions. The planned ERDF investment under JEREMIE for 2007-13 is estimated at over €2.5 billion, with a projected leverage of private capital of around €12.5 billion.



The Regional Centre of Innovation and Technology Transfer (CRITT) at Charleville-Mézières, France.

Support for priority action 3, **“Improving employability through flexicurity”**, will be largely realised through investment in active labour market policies, new forms of work organisation, implementation of lifelong learning strategies and the development of education and training systems better adapted to future skills and qualifications requirements. Support to this priority also includes the promotion of partnerships to mobilise reform in the labour markets. Altogether it represents around €70 billion of the cohesion budget.

The new programmes also reflect a strong emphasis on priority action 4, **“Improving management of energy resources and move towards an efficient and integrated EU energy policy”**. Much of the effort in this sector falls to the private sector and absolute levels of expenditure under the programmes therefore appear modest compared to other fields. However, compared to the period 2000-06, investment in renewables and energy efficiency will be five times higher under the Convergence objective and seven times higher under the Regional Competitiveness and Employment objective.

Other key Lisbon and Community priorities

Increased investment in the Lisbon-related categories will also target other areas which are important for economic competitiveness. The new cohesion programmes aim to create win-win situations by strengthening potential synergies between environmental protection and growth. Priorities in this field include the provision of environmental services such as clean



■ *A need for education and training systems better adapted to future skills and qualifications requirements.*

water supplies, waste and waste-water treatment infrastructure, improved management of natural resources, decontamination of development land, and protection against environmental risks. Overall, some €51 billion is expected to be invested in these areas.

Member States and regions eligible for funding under the Convergence objective or the Cohesion Fund have also prioritised the development of the Trans-European Transport Networks (TEN-T). Around half of the entire allocation foreseen for transport (EUR 76 billion) will be allocated to TEN-T projects (€38 billion). Other transport priorities concern investments in secondary connections to improve accessibility to the TEN-Ts as well as the promotion of more environmentally sustainable transport systems. Planned expenditure on the latter represents almost 45% of the entire allocation for transport, equivalent to around €34 billion.

Some €32 billion will be invested in enhancing access to employment for women, older workers, young people and those on the margins of the labour market. An additional €1.9 billion will support the modernisation of labour market institutions and a similar amount is allocated for actions to reduce gender-based segregation in the labour market and promote reconciliation of work and private life. A further €13.5 billion is planned for investment in measures to improve the adaptability of workers, enterprises and entrepreneurs to the requirements of a changing economy and labour market.

Recognising the important economic return on investment in education, €25.3 billion is allocated to support the reform of education and training systems, including actions for efficient lifelong learning strategies and support for groups at risk, such as early school leavers. Finally, certain programmes, in pursuing the integrated approach to development, have also organised actions around the problems of particular territories in order to promote a more balanced development pattern. Some of these initiatives in urban areas also make use of JESSICA (Joint European Support for Sustainable Investment in City Areas), which is supported by the European Investment Bank.

Promoting good governance and partnership

The analysis confirms a high degree of cooperation between those responsible for coordinating the implementation of the National Reform Programmes (NRP), agreed in 2005 by each Member State under the Lisbon strategy, and those responsible for preparing the cohesion policy strategies and programmes.

It also suggests that while approaches to partnership vary from one country to another, depending on their institutional circumstances, in many, the structures for involving partners in the programming have improved compared to the previous programming period. The more decentralised management of the programmes for 2007-13 also offers the prospect of a wider involvement of stakeholders beyond the programming phase, notably urban authorities and social partners.

Strengthening administrative capacities

Efficient public administrations and services are seen as fundamental to economic growth and thus are directly linked to the objectives of the renewed Lisbon agenda. Around €3.6 billion will help the least developed countries and regions to modernise their public administrations and services at national, regional and local level. Support will be provided for actions to improve the quality of regulation, strengthen the capacity to develop effective policies and programmes, including the training of staff, the creation of accessible and quality services to citizens and the reinforcement of territorial administrations.

Further reporting in 2008

In the spring of 2008, the Commission will provide a more detailed report, following the conclusions of the negotiations on the programmes for 2007-13. In addition, from 2008, the Commission will include in its Annual Progress Report to the Spring European Council a summary of the Member States' reports on the contribution of the programmes to the implementation of the NRPs. In 2009, Member States are required to submit a strategic assessment of how the programmes have contributed to achieving their initial objectives, in particular those that relate to the priorities set out in the Community Strategic Guidelines and the Integrated Guidelines for Growth and Jobs of the Lisbon agenda. This will be followed in 2010 by a report from the Commission synthesising the Member States' reports and reflecting on the opportunity and the need to adjust programming in the light of emerging challenges.

INTERREG, irrelevant or indispensable?

By Colin Wolfe⁽¹⁾

Drive from Brussels to Luxembourg and on to Strasbourg and one would be forgiven for thinking that borders no longer exist in the EU. But even here, in the heart of Europe, the role of INTERREG remains vitally important in overcoming the influence of borders and achieving a properly functioning internal market.



Busy truck route crossing the border of Belgium, France and Luxembourg.

Not all EU borders are barriers. Drive from Brussels to Luxembourg and to Strasbourg and, apart from the differences in fuel prices and the signposts changing colour, Europe looks barrier-free.

But even here, in the EU's heartland, blockages persist. Hospitals duplicate each other, police, fire and ambulance services often run to the border and no further. The flood threatening your cellar may have started as a storm way up a foreign river valley. Business and science parks are rarely international cross-border parks – they compete rather than cooperate. And yet these are among the most integrated European borders. Swing east from Strasbourg on the Rhine, and reach Europe's other big river, the Danube. Here, the borders are rather more obvious. Fire-engines stop at the border not due to insurance problems, but because no bridge exists to allow them to cross.

European Territorial Cooperation

It is precisely these problems that prevent the EU from working in the most optimal way. While regional diversity is undoubtedly a very desirable characteristic of the EU, regional disconnection is a less appealing prospect. Differences in train timetables are costly if they leave you sitting on your cross-border platform because your connection left five

minutes before you arrived. Getting lost due to differences in signposting is not a good route to international goodwill.

EU INTERREG programmes aim to address these issues. The cross-border version (strand A) targets individual borders, or (as around Luxembourg) where several borders are interlinked. The transnational version (strand B) focuses on bigger zones or international regions, such as the Baltic Sea or the Alpine Space, and addresses correspondingly bigger problems (marine pollution, retreating snowlines). The interregional version (strand C) brings together all EU-27 Member States plus Norway and Switzerland. If Europeans have something to learn from each other, and if we do not want to continually re-invent the wheel, then strand C has much to offer.

European Territorial Cooperation – basic facts

- One of 3 objectives of EU Cohesion Policy (alongside "Convergence" and "Competitiveness")
- Known as "INTERREG"
- Now in its 4th series of programmes
- Budget 2007-2013 > €8.7 billion (current prices) (up from €5.5 billion 2000-2006)
- About 70 programmes across the EU

(1) Head of Unit, Territorial Cooperation, DG Regional Policy, European Commission.



Construction of a new road between Greece and Bulgaria.

INTERREG A – Cross-border cooperation

Cross-border cooperation is essentially about "filling the gaps". Whether the problems crossing the border are about infrastructure (building bridges), about markets and services (linking universities to business to clients) or about cultural or linguistic barriers, INTERREG A is intended to address them. It does so through agreed cross-border analyses and response strategies, formalised in one of the 52 cross-border programmes. It deals with a wide range of issues, which include:

- Encouraging entrepreneurship, especially the development of SMEs, tourism, culture and cross-border trade;
- Improving joint management of natural resources;
- Supporting links between urban and rural areas;
- Improving access to transport and communication networks;
- Developing joint use of infrastructure;
- Administrative, employment and equal opportunities work.

Cross-border cooperation

- Known as INTERREG STRAND A
- 52 programmes
- >70% of budget, i.e. €5.4 billion

INTERREG B – Transnational cooperation

Transnational cooperation works on a wider scale. It develops cooperation at a zonal level, in regions involving several countries. As well as the Baltic Sea and Alpine Space, mentioned above, other programmes cover maritime zones such as the North Sea, the Mediterranean, or the Atlantic Area, or big land regions such as North-West Europe or South-East Europe. This wider cooperation allows for the developed of

an agreed approach to issues affecting entire river basins or mountain ranges. The programmes add an important extra European dimension to regional development, built around analysis at a European level, leading to agreed priorities and a coordinated strategic response. This allows meaningful work on matters such as communication corridors, flood management, international business and research linkages, and the development of more viable and sustainable markets. Moreover, it provides an agreed strategic investment framework for other resources, from convergence objective funds to levered finance instruments, with potential for considerable impact. Themes covered include:

- Innovation, especially networks of universities, research institutions, SMEs;
- Environment, especially water resources, rivers, lakes, sea;
- Accessibility, including telecommunications, and in particular the completion of networks;
- Sustainable urban development, especially polycentric development.

Transnational cooperation

- Known as INTERREG STRAND B
- Zonal, large international regions
- 13 programmes : North Sea, Baltic Sea, Northern Periphery, Mediterranean, Alpine Space, South-West Europe, North-West Europe, Central Europe, Atlantic Area, South-East Europe, Madeira-Azores-Canary Islands, Reunion, Caribbean
- >25% of budget, i.e. €1.8 billion



Karlsruhe (Germany) has benefited from a cross-border tourist development program supported by INTERREG «PAMINA».

INTERREG C - Interregional cooperation

Interregional cooperation works at pan-European level, covering all EU-27 Member States, and more. It builds networks to develop good practice and facilitate the dissemination of lessons and experiences by successful regions. It showcases what regions do well, to the benefit of those still investing. A key part of this particular stand is

the "Regions for Economic Change" initiative, which goes one step further than sharing good ideas by bringing all the policy makers on board. The European Commission also supports this initiative by providing specialist and policy expertise in order to "fast-track" work in fields such as the information society or managing marine resources. The idea is to harness know-how, especially new ideas, to be exploited as widely as possible. Emphasis is put on links to convergence and competitiveness programmes, in order to translate the ideas into investment. Themes include:

- Innovation and the knowledge economy;
- Environment and risk protection.

To conclude, these territorial cooperation programmes underline the European dimension:

Interregional cooperation

- Known as INTERREG STRAND C, INTERACT, URBACT, ESPON
- Covers all of the EU, Norway and Switzerland
- Budget of > €445 million

- INTERREG A Cross-border "fills the gaps" and contributes to removing border obstacles;
- INTERREG B Transnational "develops trans-European zones";
- INTERREG C Interregional "harnesses regional development knowledge" at European level.

The period 2000-2006 demonstrated the need for these approaches. While over 13 000 projects received support, this satisfied only part of the demand. The expectations for 2007-2013 are higher, numerically, strategically and in terms of impact. This new programming period provides us with the opportunity to take another step forward in replicating the "Brussels-Luxembourg-Strasbourg" driving experience in other areas of territorial cooperation.



The «Verein Frau und Arbeit» centre supports women starting their own businesses in Salzburg, Austria.

Two decades of INTERREG

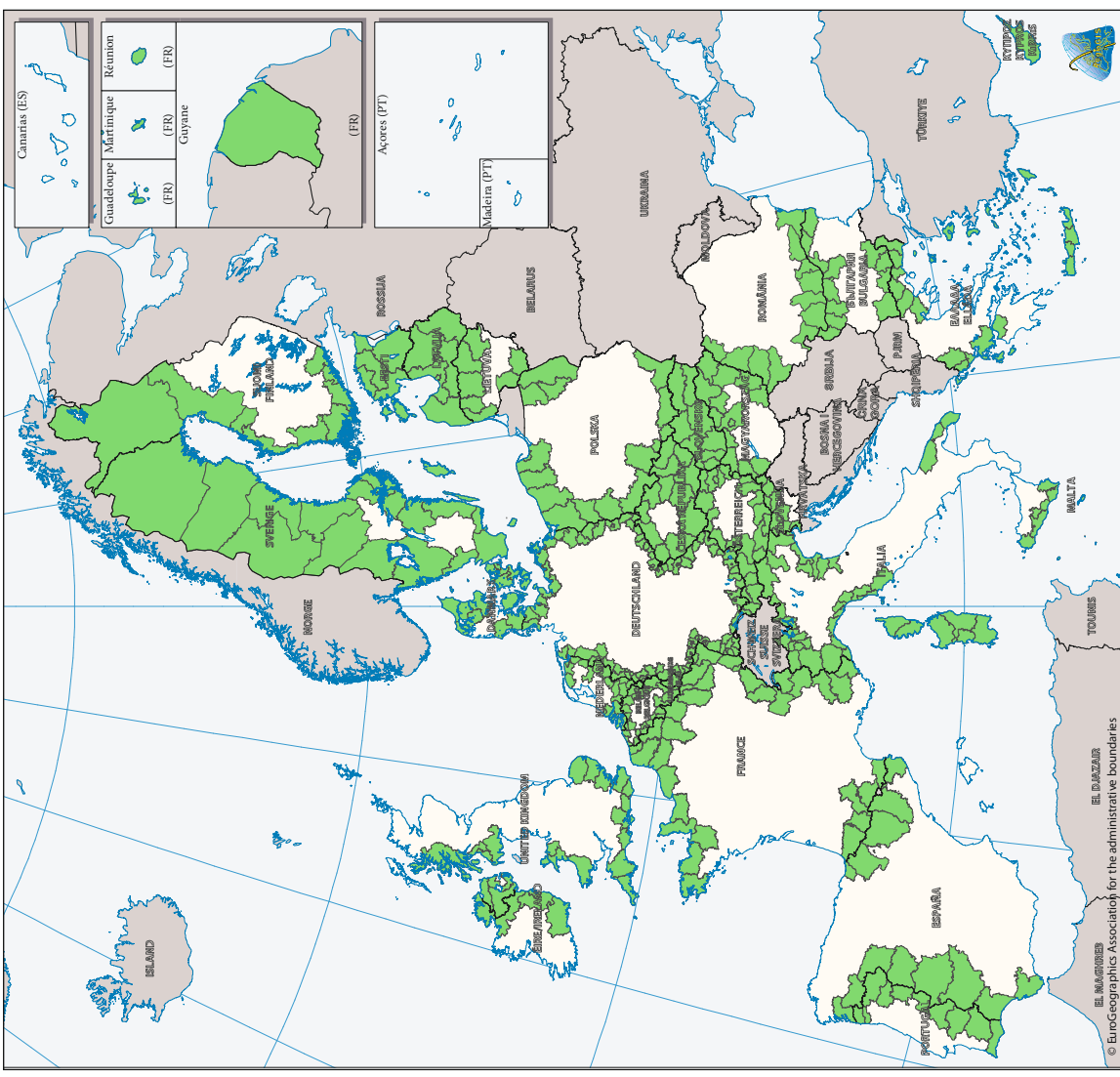
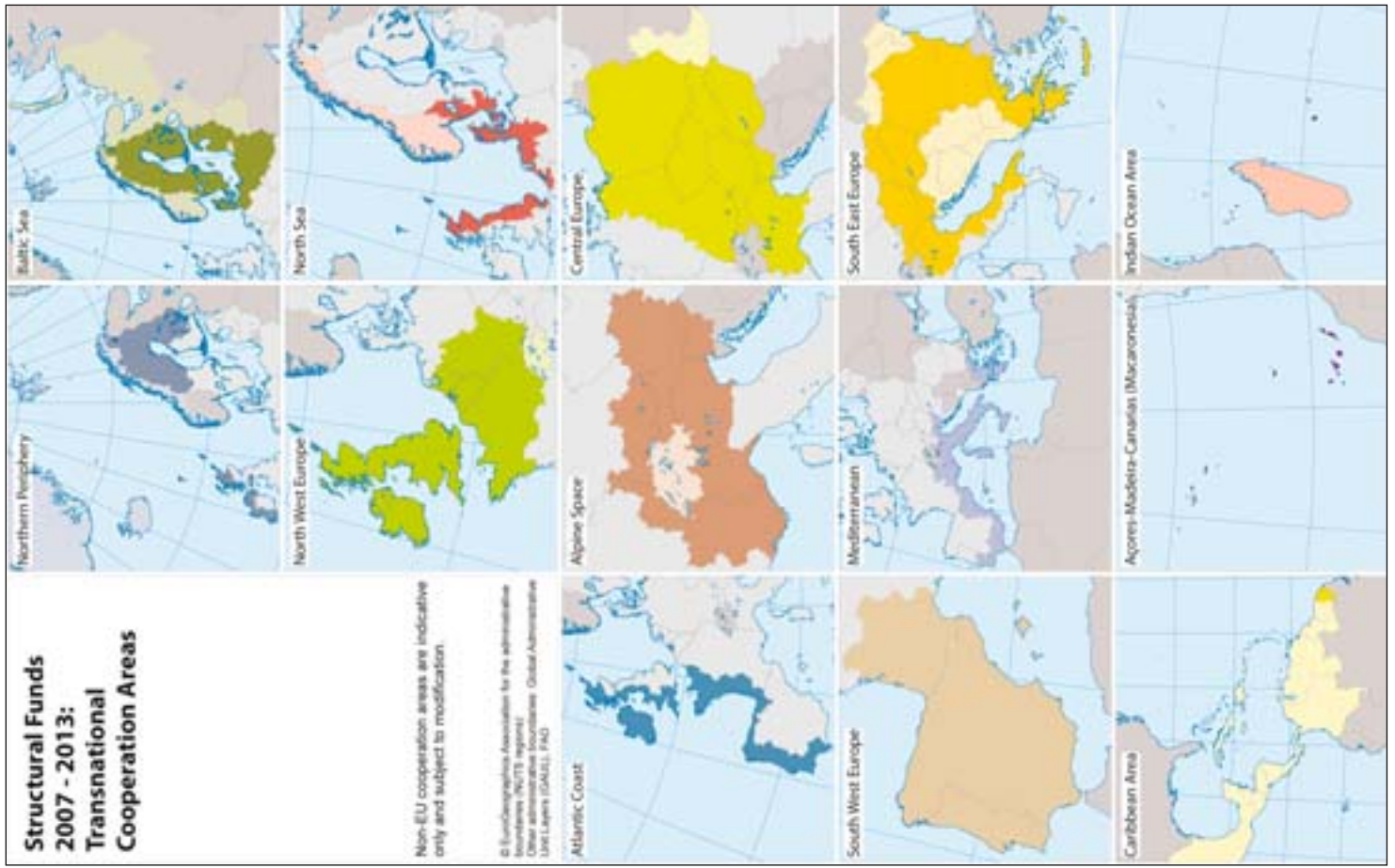
The European Commission granted support for territorial cooperation for the first time in 1989, when 14 groups of pilot projects were allocated some ECU 21 million under Article 10 of the ERDF. These projects were designed to tackle the structural development difficulties of border areas.

In 1990, based on the experience of these pilot projects, the Commission created the INTERREG Community Initiative. **INTERREG I** (1990-1994), which was intended to prepare border areas for a Community without internal frontiers, was implemented through 31 operational programmes and involved an amount of ECU 1 082 million. Launched in the same year as a supplement to the INTERREG programme, the REGEN Initiative aimed to complete some missing links in the trans-European network for transport and energy distribution in Objective 1 regions.

INTERREG II (1994-1999) combined the objectives of INTERREG I and REGEN and was implemented through 59 different operational programmes. It had a total budget allocation of ECU 3 519 million (1996 prices), allocated between three distinct strands: INTERREG IIA (1994-1999) - cross-border co-operation; INTERREG IIB (1994-1999) - completion of energy networks; INTERREG IIC (1997-1999) - co-operation in the area of regional planning, in particular the management of water resources.

INTERREG III (2000-2006) had a total budget of more than EUR 5 billion and was also made up of 3 strands: cross-border cooperation (strand A, 53 programmes), transnational cooperation (strand B, 13 programmes) interregional cooperation (strand C, 4 programmes).

For the 2007-2013 period, **INTERREG IV** has now become the third Objective of EU Cohesion Policy: the "European Territorial Cooperation" objective. €8.7 billion is available for this objective, which is again divided between three strands: €6.44 billion for cross-border, €1.83 billion for transnational and €445 million for inter-regional cooperation.



Cooperation objective 2007-2013 Crossborder Cooperation

Crossborder cooperation regions

The European Grouping of Territorial Cooperation



Group discussion at an INTERACT seminar.



The "European Grouping of Territorial Cooperation (EGTC)" is a new legal instrument that aims to facilitate and promote cross-border, transnational and regional cooperation. Unlike the structures which governed this kind of cooperation until 2007, EGTC is a legal entity, with all the associated powers and obligations. It can therefore buy and sell goods, as well as employ personnel. Dirk Peters, Legal Officer in the legal unit of DG REGIO, tells us more.

Q.: Mr Peters, you participated in the negotiations on the Regulation on the European Grouping of Territorial Cooperation (EGTC)¹. Why has the Commission proposed this Regulation?

A.: The Commission's experience of cooperation programmes and projects goes back to the start of the INTERREG Community Initiative in 1990. During this time, different legal and administrative systems presented a real obstacle to the smooth implementation of these programmes and projects. In certain border areas, it was possible to jointly establish legal entities on the basis of bilateral or trilateral treaties under the "European Outline Convention on Transfrontier Co-operation" of the Council of Europe, which dates from 1980 when it was signed in Madrid. However, even in this context it was not possible to solve all the problems, especially those related to cross-border co-operation. In many other border areas, especially in the new Member

(1) Regulation (EC) No 1082/2006 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 5 July 2006 on a European grouping of territorial cooperation (EGTC), OJ L 210, 31.7.2006, p. 19.



Cooperation for organ donation between Denmark and Sweden.

States, such treaties do not exist. That is why Commissioner Barnier, who comes from a border region himself (Savoie in France), proposed in the 3rd Report on economic and social cohesion of 2004 a new legal instrument in the form of a European cooperation structure. The draft Regulation then formed part of the legislative package for the 2007-2013 programming period for the renewed Cohesion Policy.

Q.: What is the European Grouping of Territorial Cooperation?

A.: The EGTC is a new legal instrument under Community law, not under international law like the Madrid Framework Convention. As with any other Regulation it does not need ratification or negotiation in bi-/multilateral treaties, but is binding and directly applicable in all Member States. Thus, the Regulation itself enables regional and local authorities from different Member States, as well as certain bodies governed by public law or associations of all these authorities, to set up joint groupings with a legal personality to implement cooperation programmes and projects.

Q.: The EGTC is a better management tool than other existing instruments under international or national law, however it was difficult for the Member States to accept the proposal. Why was this the case?

A.: This is indeed difficult to understand when you accept the basic principle of Community law: If a municipality in a Member State can set up a joint body with a neighbouring municipality inside the same Member State to run a bus line or a water sewage treatment plant or if a region can manage a nature park or a regional development agency together with its neighbour region inside the same Member State, the Community Regulation allows them to do the same thing across the border, inside the Community. There is an aspect of non-discrimination in it. Unfortunately some central authorities still consider cooperation across the border as external cooperation whereas it is really about internal cooperation inside the Community or, if you prefer, within the Single Market.

(1) www.cor.europa.eu/en/activities/egtc_studies.htm

Q.: Does the Regulation as finally adopted unanimously reflect that somewhat cautious attitude of the Member States?

A.: Yes, it does. Just to explain the two most controversial points: the Commission's original proposal did not foresee that the Member States themselves could become a member of an EGTC; neither was there to be any ex-ante control procedure by the central authorities. On the first point, we discovered that it was necessary to take the central authorities on board, as competencies are very asymmetric between Member States. In order to match some Länder competences in Germany, you need the central level in France, the regional authorities in France not having the same competencies. This factor is even more valid for smaller Member States without a regional level, where these competences have to be assumed by the national level. On the other controversial point, it became obvious that the whole Regulation could only be adopted when the Member States got the power to exercise ex-ante control. However, it should be borne in mind, that the right to establish an EGTC, granted directly by the Regulation to the regional and local authorities, means that the Member States must allow the participation in an EGTC, unless certain conditions are not fulfilled. Article 4 of the Regulation does not say that the Member States may allow participation if certain conditions are fulfilled. Here the Commission will pay close attention to ensure that the Regulation is implemented correctly and effectively.

Q.: On this latter aspect of the implementation of the Regulation: people talk about national transposition rules before the Regulation really applies. Is the Regulation not really a Directive?

A.: During the OPEN DAYS in October 2007 several seminars were specifically dedicated to the EGTC. In fact, it so happened that many more people from regional and national authorities inside and outside the Community wanted to participate than the space available allowed. Many of these are waiting to establish joint EGTCs! Yes, some national representatives tried to explain why they had not informed the Commission about the national provisions (by the 1 August 2007 deadline) to ensure the effectiveness of the Regulation by arguing that the Regulation was a "disguised" Directive. In actual fact, the EGTC Regulation is in line with other Regulations setting up a legal entity under Community law, explicitly asking Member States to adopt national implementation rules such as the European Grouping of Economic Interest, the European Society and the European Corporation. Even "normal" Regulations such as the general Regulation on the Structural Funds² require, in some Member States, a parliamentary act in order to fix the respective tasks of the central and regional levels. It is clear that the Commission will ensure that all Member States adopt these national rules. However, without such rules and since 1 August 2007, Member States cannot deny the right granted directly by the Regulation to their regions to set up

an EGTC just because these national rules have not yet been adopted. This is quite different from a Directive.

Q.: Looking at this on a more practical level - what kinds of cooperation can an EGTC be used for?

A.: We can distinguish four types of cooperation listed in the Regulation: (1) to implement territorial cooperation programmes or (2) projects co-financed by the Structural Funds and the Cohesion Fund; (3) to carry out other specific actions of territorial co-operation with or (4) without Community co-financing. "Territorial" covers all kinds of cooperation: cross-border, transnational or interregional. To carry out these tasks, an EGTC may set up its own structure, have assets and hire staff.

Q.: Can you give some examples?

For the first type, some programmes under the new European Territorial Cooperation objective will be managed by an EGTC, acting as managing authority of the programme (e.g. "Grande Région" around Luxembourg, with partner regions in Belgium, France and Germany). A key advantage here will be that the EGTC, with its own legal personality, will sign the contracts with the lead beneficiary, regardless of where this lead partner is established. Cooperation projects (type 2) could cover the running of a cross-border transport or health service under a Cooperation objective programme or under two "national" Convergence programmes. Other Community programmes such as the 7th Framework Programme for Research and Technological Development or the CIP (Competiveness and Innovation Framework Programme) may co-finance cooperation projects presented by entities from two Member States (type 3). Finally the fourth type could cover concrete projects without (or after) Community funding or more "governance"-like platforms to give a permanent and legal structure to a Euroregion covering a certain cross-border or transnational area.

Q.: And finally, could you say something about how to set up an EGTC?

A.: The future members of the EGTC must draft a convention and statutes, which must be notified to the relevant national authorities. The latter have three months to approve the participation of prospective members and must substantiate any refusals they make. On the day of registration or publication of the statutes, the EGTC will acquire a legal personality. The Commission cooperates closely with the Committee of the Regions³ and with the new INTERACT programme⁴ in order to support and give advice to those regions wishing (to quote Commissioner Hübner) to take the "radical step forward in the implementation possibilities for cross-border cooperation" set by the EGTC Regulation. I would like to end by paraphrasing this year's motto of the OPEN DAYS: The EGTC: "Making it happen!"

(2) www.interact-eu.net

(3) www.cor.europa.eu/en/activities/egtc_studies.htm

(4) www.interact-eu.net

“From INTERREG IIIC to INTERREG IVC – the next step towards the Lisbon and Gothenburg objectives”



Michel Lamblin, Director of the INTERREG IVC Programme

Adopted by the European Commission in September 2007, the new interregional cooperation programme (abbreviated to “Interreg IVC”) will receive funding of €321 million from the

European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) for the period 2007-13 and covers all 27 Member States as well as Norway and Switzerland, who provide their own funding. The aim of the programme is to provide a framework for the exchange of experiences between regional and local institutions from the different countries on common challenges in areas such as globalisation, demographic change, energy supply and climate change.

As this new programme gets underway, INTERREG IIIC projects are also coming to a close. These projects involve over 2 600 partners in 263 different operations, with the participation of regions from all EU Member States. Almost half of these operations concern issues of economic development, job creation, entrepreneurship, information society and technological innovation. Significant results have been achieved in terms of identifying good practices and, more importantly, transferring these practices between regions.

What future is there then for the next budget period 2007-2013? Interregional cooperation will continue to develop under the INTERREG IVC programme. It will build on the success of the IIIC programme, certain aspects of which have been retained, while also introducing new priorities and approaches.



The “ChangeLAB” INTERREG project aims to encourage environmentally friendly patterns of consumption without lowering quality of life and prosperity.

I welcome this continuation in interregional cooperation. It is important that regional and local authorities will be able to carry on working together and benefit from each others experience. This shows that the European Commission and Member States recognise that interregional cooperation really helps to improve regional policies. This is particularly important as

regions – with the right help – can do so much to contribute to the Lisbon and Gothenburg objectives.

Lisbon and Gothenburg objectives: central pillars of INTERREG IVC

So-called after the European Councils held in those cities in 2000 and 2001 respectively, Lisbon and Gothenburg comprise a broad strategy to increase the competitiveness of the EU and achieve sustainable growth. Focusing on economic (Lisbon) and environmental (Gothenburg) axes, the regions have been identified as key partners in helping to achieve these objectives.

Future operations will therefore focus on two priorities: the Innovation and Knowledge Economy, and Environment and Risk Prevention. Nine sub-themes have been identified under these two priorities, with around 55% of the €321 million budget allocated to priority 1 (economic) themes, and 39% to priority 2 (environmental) themes, while 6% of the budget has been allocated to technical assistance for the programmes. Currently, about 75% of INTERREG IIIC operations address these priorities.

Unlike the INTERREG IIIC programme, which was divided into four administrative regions, INTERREG IVC has one Managing Authority (Région Nord-Pas de Calais) and a Joint Secretariat based in Lille, France. Four Information Points are located across Europe – in Rostock (Germany), Katowice (Poland), Valencia (Spain) and within the Secretariat in Lille – as points of contact for projects and regions.

Two types of interventions are possible under INTERREG IVC: ‘Regional Initiative’ projects, which focus on exchanging experience and transferring good practices, and ‘Capitalisation’ projects, which include Fast Track projects seeking to optimise the transfer of results and good practices into mainstream programmes.

Interest in the INTERREG IVC programme is already very high, and the Joint Technical Secretariat can assist applicants in several different ways – Frequently Asked Questions, Lead Applicant Seminars and Individual Consultations. All information is available for download on the INTERREG IVC website.

INTERREG IVC

Main activity: Interregional cooperation

EU contribution (ERDF): € 321 000 000

Countries concerned: EU-27 Member States, Norway and Switzerland

Nord-Pas de Calais Region (France)

Contact: info@interreg4c.net (<http://www.interreg4c.net>)

“From URBACT I to URBACT II: a new era in urban cooperation and exchange”



Anne-Laure Guignard, URBACT Communication Manager

URBACT was created by the European Commission and 14 Member States to develop transnational exchanges of experience between the cities participating in the URBAN I and II programmes. Since 1 May 2004, all cities of the new Member States can also participate in this initiative, which aims to identify the lessons learnt and disseminate the knowledge to all European cities.

URBACT I 2002-2006: a laboratory for challenging territories

URBACT I included the participation of 230 cities, with a third of these from the new Member States. The programme focused on creating and facilitating thematic networks and working groups to tackle issues related to urban regeneration, local development, citizenship, and also youth issues.

- **20 Thematic networks:** created around specific themes of urban policy, respecting an integrated approach, with each establishing its own approach, key questions and practical projects.

- **8 Thematic working groups:** for 18 months, these working groups brought together practitioners on the ground, experts and researchers in order to address a precise topic of particular relevance to European cities and to Community priorities.

- **Knowledge Transfer (e.g. the Support for cities initiative):** intended principally for the new Member States, to provide participating cities with support in terms of skills and knowledge provided by experts with experience in integrated urban policy on defining and developing integrated urban strategies (involved 43 cities from 8 different countries).

- **Capitalisation tools:** Capitalisation relies on certain tools and resources that are made available to local actors: thematic files on the website, cross-cutting thematic working groups, thematic conferences.



URBAN II fair in Dortmund-Nordstadt, Germany.

URBACT II 2007-2013: the new challenge

The new Operational Programme was approved on 2 October 2007 and URBACT II was officially launched at the Berlin conference in November. The priorities of the new programme are in line with the Lisbon and Gothenburg objectives in the field of sustainable urban development and the Commission's new Regions for Economic Change initiative. Two thematic priorities are defined:

Priority 1: Cities, engines of growth and jobs

- Promoting entrepreneurship;
- Improving innovation and the knowledge economy;
- Employment and human capital.

Priority 2: Attractive and cohesive cities

- Integrated development of deprived areas and areas at risk of deprivation;
- Social integration;
- Urban environment.

The URBACT II programme has a broader approach than URBACT I. It is open to all cities from the EU, Norway and Switzerland, as well as to regional authorities and universities.

To increase the impact and exemplary nature of exchanges, each partner city will commit itself to drawing up a local action plan, based on a **Local Support Group**. Thematic networks and working groups will also involve as many of the **Managing Authorities** of the Operational Programmes as possible. A call for proposals for the creation of thematic networks and working groups is currently open.

Thematic poles will also be created to ensure that the programme truly capitalises on the information available. National dissemination points will be established and regional conferences will be held in various Member States to relay information between the URBACT II programme and local actors.

URBACT II

Main activity: transnational exchanges on integrated urban development

EU contribution (ERDF): €53 319 170

Countries concerned: 27 EU Member States, Norway and Switzerland

Managing Authority: French Ministry for Urban Policy

Contact: www.urbact.eu



URBAN renovation in Vienna, Austria.

“INTERACT: promoting good governance in cooperation programmes”



Sarah Hayes, Communications Manager of the INTERACT Managing Authority

The INTERACT (*INTERREG Animation, Cooperation and Transfer*) programme targets the institutions and stakeholders responsible for the management and delivery of the European Territorial Cooperation Programmes. INTERACT provides support and advice throughout the programme life-cycle with the aim of promoting good governance.

INTERACT focuses on management techniques but also on issues related to strategic orientation, and to institutional and thematic networks. Constantly seeking out the users' point of view, and involving them as much as possible in the delivery of the programme, INTERACT creates and strengthens a cycle of exchange – learning from each other and together to strengthen territorial cooperation.

In the new programming period 2007-2013, all European Territorial Cooperation programmes will have to face new challenges and adapt to the increased role of national legislation. The programmes will also have to be more focused on the Lisbon and Gothenburg agendas. Some cooperation areas face the additional challenges of working with Candidate and potential Candidate Countries, as well as with new Member States.



INTERACT seminar in Budapest, Hungary.

Both new and experienced institutions will have to seek innovative ways to improve their performance and deliver programmes that better meet these new challenges. INTERACT will continue to offer products and services to assist the institutions and

stakeholders involved in this process. The three main objectives of INTERACT are:

- to contribute to greater efficiency of programme management;
- to increase the effectiveness of programme delivery;
- to facilitate the transfer of know-how and the exchange of knowledge between programmes and strands.

In order to achieve this, INTERACT will have a new regionally focused approach, addressing programmes via the INTERACT Secretariat in Vienna, and four INTERACT Points located in Valencia (Spain), Viborg (Denmark), Vienna (Austria) and Turku (Finland), which will serve regional groups of cross-border and transnational programmes.

The core themes addressed by INTERACT include: programme and financial management; project management and support; capitalisation of INTERREG; strategic programme planning; audit and control; monitoring and evaluation; communications; and external cooperation.

A wide range of products and services were developed under the first INTERACT programme and the new programme will also adapt these for the new programme period. Through seminars, conferences, advisory services, handbooks and online tools, INTERACT will work to ease and simplify the day-to-day management of European Territorial Cooperation programmes.

More information and upcoming events:

www.interact-eu.net

INTERACT II

Main activity: Information on European Territorial Cooperation.

EU contribution (ERDF): € 34 033 512

Countries concerned: 27 EU Member States, Norway, Switzerland and neighbouring countries

Managing Authority: Federal Chancellery of Austria

Contact:
interact@interact-eu.net (www.interact-eu.net)

“ESPON: understanding spatial development in Europe”



Peter Mehlbye, Director of the ESPON coordination unit

Launched in 2002, the “European Spatial Planning Observation Network” (ESPON) is a programme under the Structural Funds with the special task of studying dynamics within the European territory. The focus is on territorial structures, trends, perspectives and EU policy impacts within the European Union. Comparable information about regions and cities of Europe is provided in order to support policy development, growth and job creation.

In order to deliver evidence and knowledge about diversity within Europe, the first ESPON programme undertook a number of applied research projects and studies. It carried out 34 applied research projects by contracting transnational project groups. More than 130 different European institutions and 600 researchers were involved, constituting a European scientific community in the field of European spatial development.

Within a short period of time, the ESPON programme had produced substantial new knowledge on spatial development trends, the impact of EU policies, as well as development opportunities and prospective development paths within the European territory. ESPON results have been made available to policymakers, stakeholders and others with an interest in European spatial development. Data, indicators, and maps are also accessible via the ESPON website and in various ESPON publications.

ESPON findings have been used in policy documents, particularly at the European level, and are increasingly being applied in national and regional development strategies. They have also proved useful for transnational and cross-border cooperation activities. Increasingly, it is becoming recognised that development considerations for regions, cities and larger territories need to include a European perspective.

The new ESPON 2013 Programme

The ESPON 2013 Programme, due to start in January 2008, will ensure continuity as well as new innovative approaches in consolidating a European observation network on spatial development and cohesion.

Its mission is to support policy development related to territorial cohesion and a harmonious

development of the European territory. Several socio-economic, environmental and cultural themes will be analysed. These themes will be decided on by policy makers and comparable information, evidence, analyses and scenarios will become available during the next 7 years, stimulating a more integrated analysis of the development of regions, cities and larger territories. This will facilitate the mobilisation of territorial capital and under-used potentials, thereby contributing to improving European competitiveness, European territorial cohesion and cooperation.

Targeted analysis in partnership with regions and cities

One novelty of the ESPON 2013 Programme is the introduction of targeted analyses based on user demand. This approach supports a more intensive use of existing results in partnership with different groups of stakeholders. The aim is to enhance the understanding of the larger spatial context, make comparisons to other territories, regions and cities, and to create new development dynamics by adding a European dimension and understanding to the deliberations.

ESPON 2013 Programme

Main activity: European spatial planning observation EU contribution (ERDF): €47 000 000

Countries concerned: 27 EU Member States, Iceland, Liechtenstein, Norway and Switzerland

Managing Authority: Luxembourg Ministry of the Interior and Spatial Development

More information and upcoming events:

[www.http://www.espon.eu/](http://www.espon.eu/)



Substantial new knowledge on spatial development trends.

INTERREG IVA EMS-DOLLART-REGION

Y4I – Fostering young innovators



Total cost: €679 490
EU contribution: €412 665

"Youth for Innovation (Y4I)" is a pilot project to train young people in all aspects of innovation. The objectives are to increase the innovative capacity of the regions concerned, provide SMEs with skilled workers and increase their awareness of research rules at the EU level. During the pilot phase (October 2005 – June 2007) Y4I was implemented by the region of Weser-Ems (D) in cooperation with Andalusia (E), Lubelskie (PL), North Karelia (FIN), the South Aegean Region (GR) and Upper Austria (A). The project was funded under the INTERREG IIIC Operation "Change on Borders". Project activities included the introduction of innovation curricula in 23 pilot schools and universities within the six regions. As a result, "young scientists" developed 52 mini research projects on practical issues common to cross-border areas. Y4I will be continued as a cross-border project between the Netherlands and Germany and will be funded by Ems Dollart Region (INTERREG IVA)."

Daniel Kipp, Project Manager, Europe Direct Oldenburg c/o Dieter Meyer Consulting GmbH
kipp@eurooffice.de
www.y4i.net

INTERREG IIIA OBERHEIN-MITTE-SÜD

"Three countries bridge" for pedestrians and cyclists



Total cost: €8 259 863
ERDF contribution: €1 680 000

"The construction of the 'Three Countries Bridge' has connected the communities of Weil am Rhein in Germany and Huningue in France, which lie on either side of the Rhine, not far from Basel in Switzerland, hence the name of the bridge. Spanning 248 m, it is the longest pedestrian and cyclist self-supporting bridge in the world. It officially opened on 30 March 2007. Local people from both sides of the Rhine celebrated the opening with a two-day across-the-bridge party at the end of June. For these cross-border communities, the bridge has now become a symbol of Franco-German friendship, a tourist attraction and, thanks to its shape, which resembles a rainbow, a symbol of peace."

Wolfgang Dietz, Mayor of the City of Weil am Rhein.
Roland Igersheim, Chairman of the Communauté de Communes des Trois Frontières
stadt@weil-am-rhein.de

INTERREG IIIA WALES/IRELAND

Celtic Enterprises: entrepreneurship in education



Total cost: €1 305 549
EU contribution: €962 765

"Celtic Enterprises promoted entrepreneurship in schools in West Wales and South East Ireland by providing 'real business experiences'. Teams of up to 5 students participated in setting up and running a 'real business' for up to 6 months, gaining experience of the skills required to run a company. Successful businesses competed in an annual joint Wales/Ireland competition and also undertook business exchange visits. Students in all of the schools interacted with each other by various means, including video-conferencing. Teachers also gained skills in teaching entrepreneurship through a tailor-made development programme. Careers advisers have now integrated enterprise into their guidance programmes and the project has laid the foundation for a co-ordinated, all-age enterprise education programme in schools and colleges. The partners now plan to take this highly successful cross-border project to other countries of the EU through Interreg IVA and Interreg IVC."

Philip Drakeford, Director of the Education Division, Careers Wales West
philipdrakeford@cwwest.co.uk

INTERREG IIIA LITHUANIA/POLAND

VIDEOCOM: cross-border film school



Total cost: €69 160
EU contribution: €51 870

"The VIDEOCOM project provides training and video equipment for students and employees at the Universities in Gdansk, Klaipeda and Olsztyn. In total, 36 participants will acquire the skills they need to make films. They will learn how to write a film script and how to shoot the film and edit the material. As a result of this training, they will have a better understanding of how films are made, which should encourage them to make use of this media in promoting their universities, cities and regions. Four films will be produced during the project: 'People of science'; 'Problems and development prospects of small businesses'; 'Ecological sources of energy'; and 'Agritourist farms'."

Jerzy Olak, Project coordinator, University of Warmia and Mazury in Olsztyn
jerzy.olak@uwm.edu.pl

French-Belgian territorial cooperation

Erasing the border

Hundreds of partnerships in health, culture, technology, the environment, citizenship and more. From PACTE to INTERREG IV, French-Belgian cross-border cooperation is doing very well indeed.



Cultural tourism accessible to everybody is a priority for the «Network of Fortified Towns».

"It sure was hard work!" exclaims Henri Lewalle, the man in charge of European affairs and cross-border cooperation at the Alliance nationale des Mutualités chrétiennes (National Alliance of Christian Mutual Societies) Belgium's largest health insurance organisation. "Healthcare is a very complex and highly politicised domain," he explains. "It's also a very advanced sector, employing highly skilled people. Reaching a consensus in this area can be an uphill struggle at times, but it's worth the trouble."

Henri Lewalle could talk forever about French-Belgian cross-border healthcare cooperation, a project he has coordinated for about 15 years. "I don't want to boast, but we are among the most advanced in Europe. It all started in 1990 with the PACTE project between Hainaut, Nord-Pas-de-Calais and Picardie and the first stage of INTERREG. We and our French friends got together and asked ourselves and each other: 'What could we do together?' Initially, we didn't think of healthcare as an eligible sector since it's the responsibility of individual Member States. But then we looked at the issue from the perspective of a cross-border project and set ourselves the goal of ensuring that cross-border populations enjoy the same health benefits as frontier workers."



The «Mabiolac» project aims to produce new biodegradable materials from lactic acid.

The French-Belgian Health Observatory

The French-Belgian Health Observatory was the first cooperation project in the field of healthcare, and its initial remit was to conduct studies on healthcare provision in France and Belgium. However, in 1992, under the impetus of Professor Mouton, an international specialist in infectious diseases such as AIDS and

SARS, a cooperation project was launched between Tourcoing and Mouscron hospitals; they are only a few hundred metres apart but are 'separated' by the border. The project involved allowing people living near the border to benefit from each establishment's expertise in its particular specialist area: AIDS at Tourcoing and chronic renal failure at Mouscron. In 1992, the first INTERREG agreement was signed between the two establishments, and it is still running today: Mouscron provides haemodialysis for 300 Belgian and French patients a year, while Tourcoing treats 800 AIDS patients. Other agreements will deal with other pathologies in other parts of the cross-border region. *"Any agreement we draw up means significant economies of scale thanks to the complementary nature of our work. At the same time, costly equipment remains profitable and there is close cooperation between healthcare suppliers,"* points out Henri Lewalle. *"We wanted to build on this partnership with INTERREG II. In 1999, we created the French-Belgian Health Observatory, which is a federation of all the regional stakeholders in the sector (such as French health insurance funds, Belgian mutual societies and doctors' associations) in the cross-border area – there are 55 member institutions in total."*

The Observatory became a 'European Economic Interest Grouping' (EEIG) under INTERREG III in 2002. This legal basis facilitated the conclusion of the French-Belgian Framework Agreement on cross-border cooperation in healthcare, one of the first of its kind in Europe, on 30 September 2005. *"It's fantastic that an INTERREG project led to an agreement between states. What's more, that was just the beginning..."*

The Observatory opened the door to other major cooperation projects like TRANSCARDS, which enables the 50,000 inhabitants of Thiérache, a rural region straddling the French-Belgian border, to receive treatment in seven French and Belgian hospitals regardless of their nationality. This project was the inspiration for implementing 'organised access zones for cross-border healthcare' (ZOASTs), which allow the population in border areas to receive outpatient and hospital care on either side of the border. Patients do not need prior medical authorisation to do this, and they can receive treatment by simply showing their health insurance card, as software guarantees the interoperability of SIS (Belgium) and Vitale (France) card readers. There are currently two ZOAST programmes in operation. The ZOAST for the border region between Wallonia and the edge of the French Ardennes covers some enclaves where it is easier for residents to access foreign healthcare than their own country's healthcare - for instance, patients in the French districts of Givet and Fumay can be treated in Dinant, Belgium, under the same conditions as in France. Some 180,000 people benefit from this scheme. Another ZOAST covers the urban areas of Mouscron, Tourcoing, Roubaix and Wattrelos. This involves four hospitals and some 300,000 people.

"Over time and with the various stages of INTERREG, we have moved from making agreements on specific pathologies (AIDS, renal failure, etc.) to developing a structure for access to organised healthcare (e.g. TRANSCARDS, ZOASTs, emergency health services). Our ambition now is to develop a full range of cross-border healthcare for everyone living in the region. Thanks to INTERREG and European law, which does a lot to promote such agreements, this is a wholly realistic aim."



«Mini-Usines», a crossborder training programme.

Healing the wounds of history

Erasing the border also means focusing on the best legacy of what has often been a turbulent history, as the many remains of fortresses and other strongholds show. In this connection, the 'Network of Fortified Towns' – with considerable support from INTERREG – has transformed former conflict zones into meeting places.

"Originally," says Solange Leclercq, coordinator for the Nord-Pas-de-Calais coastline (France), *"local stakeholders in Gravelines wanted to capitalise on a rich heritage of fortifications by forging links with other fortified towns in neighbouring regions of Belgium and the United Kingdom, specifically West Flanders and Kent."* This desire led to the creation of an INTERREG II project in 1996, which was extended between 2000 and 2006 by INTERREG III and is managed by three partners: the Province of West Flanders (project leader), the Syndicat mixte de la Côte d'Opale in France and Kent County Council. There were 17 member sites to begin with. By 2007, there were 25. Activities carried out under this project combine joint cross-border ventures and specific initiatives by member sites, all of which aim to meet the scheme's objectives. *"INTERREG loans and the people involved were both decisive factors in this project: without the loans, the project could still have existed, but it couldn't have done as much."* Cooperation between countries was not the only challenge: *"One benefit of INTERREG for us here in France is that it has helped towns and even different departments within the same government organisation to work better together."*

One main aim of the INTERREG III project (approx. €11,218,000, of which €3,404,000 came from the ERDF) was to promote the use of new technologies. Various systems of audio guides were tested in pilot towns across the three regions, and finally a system operating based on mobile phones - first piloted in Menen, Flanders - was chosen. Audio-guided visits and a website (www.fortifications.org) were also set up to support the guidebooks for each language, the trilingual leaflet and the range of printed material. Another priority is to provide access to as broad a range of people as possible, notably disabled people: *"That was the hidden part of the iceberg, an immense task with barely any visible results. There were no European standards in this area and we needed to establish joint criteria. To do this, we audited each member*



3 questions for Jean-Pierre Robbeets

Inspector-General,
International Relations Department
of the Walloon Region

- How would you rate almost two decades of cross-border cooperation between Belgium and France?**
I'm very pleased with it because it has been very exciting and the different stages of INTERREG in which we've taken part since 1990 have always worked very well. From an administrative point of view, we have never had to apply the automatic decommitment rule⁽¹⁾, for instance. Most importantly, a huge number of projects have been implemented in all areas. Many of these emerged from sustainable activities and partnerships. Of course, within the cross-border region, some areas are more open to cooperation than others.
- Is cooperation a source of innovation?**
Innovation is essential for progress: bringing down borders is an innovation in itself! Cross-border initiatives such as technology exchanges, joint tourist offices, access to healthcare and cross-border public transport are also innovative ideas.
- What do you think is the recipe for successful cooperation?**
First of all, you need a certain state of mind: you must want to succeed together. Politicians have to be committed to the project. You must also be very familiar with your partners' administrative setup. Finally, you must be transparent and involve the citizens. Not because it's a nice gesture, but to ensure that they take ownership of the projects while showing them that Europe is also active at local level.

(1) Obligation to return to the Commission any loan money that has not been used two years after being granted.

town from an accessibility point of view, forged links between different departments and cooperated with organisations that deal specifically with disabilities."

In the final stage, the focus was on developing educational initiatives – the Flemish association 'Horizon Educatief' was the driving force in this area. This stage was not without its challenges, which mainly arose from the highly centralised nature of education in France and the fact that it is not the Province but the Region that is responsible for education in Flanders. Neither was it without great successes, such as the Young People's European Heritage Day in France, which was linked into the European Heritage Days programme. The fifth Young People's European Heritage Day took place in 2007, and 32,550 children have benefited from the programme in the 5 years since its inception. This initiative also exists in Ostend, Flanders, where it actually predates the network.

From an employment perspective, the role of 'integration workshops' in France is worthy of mention. This scheme means

young people will be employed and awarded certificates in restoring the fortifications, an area in which staff costs are normally very high. The high level of scientific cooperation between the three regions should also be discussed – it has applications in restoration work as well as in popularisation. However, Solange Leclercq insists that the most important factor to consider is *"the sheer amount of time and resources required for coordination."* This is confirmed by her Flemish counterpart, Sophie Muylleert, who emphasises the quality of this partnership: *"We had an efficient team at cross-border level. We met every two months and had no real language problems or issues with how to divide up funds. We've always got on very well in that respect."*

Everything is changing for 2007-2013: the long-standing Fortified Towns Network project has borne fruit and the partners involved do not intend to renew it formally. Rather, they are planning to move away from fortifications and expand into different areas. The member towns may be interested in how other projects have developed, whether they are linked to transnational cooperation (INTERREG III B) like 'Septentrion: from fortified town to sustainable town' and 'Crossing the Lines' or to interregional cooperation (INTERREG III C).

The MAC's and the MAM

Hornu, in the Belgian province of Hainaut, is not a fortified town, but it is home to an extremely important structure built between 1810 and 1830: Grand-Hornu, a unique example of functional urbanism from the beginning of the industrial age. The site, built in neoclassical style, comprises workshops, offices and residences for both workers and directors. With their many arches, pediments and half-moon windows, the old colliery buildings are a magnificent setting for the MAC's, the Museum of Contemporary Art of the French Community of Belgium, which has been there since 2002. The MAC's, which aims to contribute to bringing a devastated sub-region up to speed culturally and economically, has a staff of 50 and is visited by 75,000 people each year.

Ever since it was founded, the museum has focused on cooperation. *"INTERREG, which was launched at the same time as the museum opened, has been a boon for us,"* says Julien Foucart, who works on the INTERREG project at MAC's. *"INTERREG gave us the chance to conclude a formal partnership agreement with the MAM, the Greater Lille Museum of Modern Art, which was founded in 1983. We have a lot of things in common: the same regional culture, the same operational structure and the same type of location - we are located on remarkable sites that are relatively close to one another. Thanks to INTERREG, we immediately benefited from an influx of French visitors and, most importantly, the MAM's valuable experience."*

The 'Borderline' project linking the two museums has two main aims: raising disadvantaged young people's awareness of modern and contemporary art and increasing the mobility of museum-goers between the two regions. Their cooperation project has included joint promotional campaigns and around twenty educational projects. They have also exchanged collections and set up a network ("REZI") of the main cultural stakeholders in the INTERREG area. However, the high point of this partnership came in 2005 when the MAM, which had to close until 2009 for extension work, sent its collections and

some of its reserve collection to the MAC's. "In just a few years, we have made quite a bit of progress together," says Dominique Cominotto, deputy manager of the MAC's. "Now, we have much more than just a partnership, we have real integration between our teams. We've really matured."

There is no shortage of projects with INTERREG IV - the two museums are ready to work with new partners, and pretty major ones at that: they are forming links with the Louvre, which will have a branch in Lens starting in 2008, and the Dr Guislain Museum in Ghent, which specialises in art brut. Ideas in the pipeline include the Navettes de l'Art project (transport by coach between Ghent, Lille, Hornu, Lens, etc), the Musées jardins project (summer activities geared towards families), pooling documents held by the four museums and even an exhibition - in a former customs house.



«GoGIS» project: generating a cross-border Geographic Information System.

Neighbours

"INTERREG cooperation between France and Belgium works just as well as tobacco smuggling did in the old days," jokes Didier Tellier, Head of Information at the Directorate-General for External Relations of the Walloon Region, the managing authority of the INTERREG III A France-Wallonia-Flanders programme (see text in box). "Of course, all this is made easier by our culture and geographical proximity. But there is another factor that is especially important: the involvement of the people impacted by the project. In this respect, we should probably improve our communication. With INTERREG IV, we aim to build on the strategies from previous stages – Lisbon, Gothenburg, research, sustainable development, culture, and so on – and to ensure that we communicate more consistently with the citizens and the project promoters."

The last word quite rightly goes to one of these project promoters - Jean-Marc Popot, the director of the Regional Centre of Innovation and Technology Transfer (CRITT) at Charleville-Mézières, which specialises in surface treatment and is involved in two INTERREG projects: "The added value of INTERREG is, quite simply, that it allows us to work with our neighbours. Before INTERREG, we didn't have a cross-border mentality. We would go and look for talent in France, 800 km from Charleville, when we could have found it in Belgium, right on our doorstep."

INTERREG IV France-Wallonia-Flanders (2007-2013)

With a total budget of around €248.5 million, of which just over €138 million comes from the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF), the INTERREG IV "France-Wallonie-Vlaanderen" programme has four priorities:

- 1) boosting economic development in the area through a coherent and integrated cross-border approach;
- 2) developing and promoting the cross-border region's identity through cultural activities and tourism;
- 3) increasing the feeling of belonging to a common area by improving the range of cross-border services and people's access to them;
- 4) making joint management of the area more dynamic with development that is sustainable, coordinated and in step with living conditions.

Technical support for purposes of instruction and project implementation is also provided.

With 10.5 million people living across an area covering 61,604 km², the region covered by the cooperation project represents 1.84% and 2.6% of the European Union's surface area and population respectively.

The INTERREG IV France-Wallonia-Flanders programme was approved on 15 November 2007 and is managed by the Walloon Region (Belgium).



Contact: <http://www.interreg-fwvl.org/>

INTERREG IIIB CADSES

CORELOG - COordinated REgional LOGistics



Total cost: €1 486 600
EU contribution: €957 450

"The CORELOG project, which involves six Member States, focuses on the development of public policies in the areas of logistics and freight transport. The aim of the project is to boost the competitiveness of manufacturing companies and logistics and transport operators. CORELOG has developed 8 laboratories to study and test logistics management cooperation schemes among companies and between public and private stakeholders. These laboratories demonstrate the savings which can be achieved by both the companies and the regional public authorities through the promotion and adoption of new logistics solutions. They target both the demand and supply of transport and logistics services with the direct involvement of manufacturing companies and logistics operators, as a basis for future policy making."

Paolo Ferrecchi, Lead Partner,
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INTERREG IIIB NORTH WEST EUROPE

REVIT: fostering brownfield redevelopment



Total cost: €11 005 616
EU contribution: €22 597 609

"In almost every city of North-West Europe there are brownfield areas which could be redeveloped in order to improve the quality of the urban environment. The redevelopment of brownfield sites can also contribute to the creation of new employment opportunities and stimulate the local economy, as well as preserving greenfield sites and preventing the consumption of virgin land. Six partners from four different countries were involved in the REVIT project. They examined common problems with the development of brownfield sites that needed to be tackled more effectively. The teams looked at the following aspects in particular: brownfield regeneration instruments and methods that stimulate community involvement; new financing options; public private partnership models and marketing concepts in the context of brownfield redevelopment; multi-functional development, preservation and intelligent re-use of industrial heritage; and putting an end to environmental damages and protection of natural assets."

Thomas Zügel, Lead Partner, Stadt Stuttgart, Amt für Stadtplanung und Stadterneuerung
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INTERREG IIIC EAST

RegEnergy: meeting the rising demand for energy



Total cost: €1 466 234
EU contribution: €989 443

"RegEnergy created a Europe-wide network of 18 partners from ten EU countries and Russia. These partners have joined their efforts in order to share knowledge and information about the reform and management of the energy sector. The members of the network include national, regional and local stakeholders. The project aims to promote environmentally friendly and affordable energy provision in Europe, to improve and restructure the energy sector, and to promote energy efficiency. It provides information about the financial instruments and local policies to support the rational use of energy and assists European regions and communities to meet the challenges of the rising demand for energy by sharing knowledge about innovative good-practice examples in renewable energy."

Julia Jesson, project coordinator
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INTERREG IIIC SOUTH & WEST

CoPraNet: integrated coastal zone management



Total cost: €1 855 740
ERDF contribution: €1 151 205

"The objectives of 'CoPraNet' were to help establish a coastal practitioners' network and bridge the gap between planners, managers and the research community throughout Europe. This was to be achieved by supporting the interregional exchange of best practice information on coastal management issues and improving implementation of integrated coastal zone management (ICZM) in Europe. The 21 European partners in the project produced an easily accessible and multi lingual beach management guide and a web-based ICZM database consisting of more than 158 study cases and 167 projects throughout Europe was built. A considerable number of information products, in several languages, were also produced and disseminated. Another important deliverable of the project was 'QualityCoast', a programme for coastal tourism destinations which aims to inform tourists and visitors and to involve local authorities in the development of sustainable tourism in their areas. 'QualityCoast' was tested in Portugal in cooperation with local authorities."

Margarida Nunes, Regional Commission of the Ministry of Environment, Spatial Planning and Regional Development of Portugal (CCDR/MAOTDR)
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“Telling the Story” conference explores innovative ways to communicate on cohesion policy

On the 26 and 27 November 2007, more than 450 people from all over Europe came together in Brussels for a conference entitled, "Telling the story: Communicating Cohesion Policy together".



The participants primarily included those responsible for information and publicity about the Structural Funds at regional or national level, and this was the first official meeting of the INFORM co-ordinating group of officials, which is called for in the new regulations. The event, opened by Commissioners Danuta Hübner (Regional Policy), Vladimír Špidla (Employment and Social Affairs) and Dirk Ahner (Director-General for Regional Policy), was organised by the Directorate-General for Regional Policy, in cooperation with the Directorate-General for Employment, Social Affairs and Equal Opportunities as well as the Directorate-General for Communication.

The objective of the conference was to take stock of the implementation of the new information and communication requirements for the programming period 2007-2013. In particular it focused on the exchange of experiences and best practice on practical issues, such as the preparation of communication plans, the design of user-friendly websites, better cooperation with the media and the Commission's representations in the Member States, and - last but not least - how to measure the success of these activities (see also *Panorama Magazine No. 21 of December 2006*).

Visible benefit

Commissioner Hübner opened the conference by saying: "This conference marks the starting point of a new era in communicating together the good story Cohesion Policy can tell. There are thousands of engaging stories to tell about the practical impact of Cohesion Policy all over the regions of Europe. Involving people at local level increases ownership of the policy by generating debate and providing a channel for their concerns. Cohesion Policy is the most visible benefit of EU membership in many regions, and offers tailor-made opportunities for better communication on Europe."

Commissioner Špidla added: "*The funds help people to cope with the changes we see and the challenges we face. Investing in people's future has a real impact on their daily lives. The funds represent not only good economic policy but also the social face of Europe.*"

The plenary session was followed by six thematic workshops. The first workshop was devoted to the organisation of communication activities, which begins with the preparation of a communication plan. Ondrej Stefek from the Czech Republic explained how the authorities there were creating a communication plan based on the evaluation results. Judit

Szucs from the National Development Agency in Hungary spoke about their communication strategy for the next seven years. Vasilije Kujacic from DIACT in France presented the renewed and strengthened French approach to communication on Cohesion Policy.

Several experts advised on how to help beneficiaries with their communication activities. An interesting idea came from Richard Holmes, from the Government Office for Yorkshire and the Humber in the UK, who spoke about media training courses for voluntary and community sector beneficiaries, which have proved to be low-cost but high-impact.

Informing the public about the outcomes of Cohesion Policy is also crucial. Speakers from Estonia, Andalusia, Poland and France explained what actions they were undertaking in this regard, which often involve the use of short and humorous video clips.

Networking

A key objective of the conference was to promote networking among the participants. This was encouraged at several points during the programme, at a number of purpose-built networking corners – a new feature, organised for the first time by DG REGIO. Participants had the opportunity to informally meet experts and their counterparts from other countries around a number of specific topics.

In the afternoon session, special attention was given to the issue of transparency. In response to growing public demand for increased transparency in the use of EU Funds, there is now a regulatory requirement that a complete list of beneficiaries must be published by the Member States. This is considered to be one of the most important information and publicity tasks in the new period. During one of the workshops several excellent examples were presented and explained. Latvia has been publishing all project beneficiaries since 2004, in while some regions in Sweden there are internet-based applications which give access to project and beneficiaries' data. For INTERREG programmes involving cross-border communication, transparency and full access to information have been a feature since the previous programming period.

Another workshop looked at different ways of telling a story to make it interesting for the different media. A third workshop looked at the lessons that can be learned from web-based communication, which is becoming an increasingly important communication tool in the Cohesion Policy field.

Networking continued more informally during a conference reception, organised in "Les Salons de l'Atalaide" - a beautiful "maison de maitre" dating back to 1888. Claus Sørensen, Director-General for Communication, welcomed everybody and shared his view on the work in the communication field.

Tuesday's workshops were devoted to the issue of networking at various levels. This included the regional level, presented by Anna Maria Linsalata from Emilia-Romagna in Italy, the national level, where James Ritchie spoke about his experience of networking on the ESF in the UK, and also the



From left to right: Vladimír Špidla, Commissioner for Employment, Social Affairs and Equal Opportunities, Danuta Hübner, Commissioner for Regional Policy, and Dirk Ahner, Director-General, DG Regional Policy.

Community level. Sonja Seiser from Burgenland in Austria presented her experience of networking within the informal Structural Funds Information Team, which resulted for her, among other experiences, in transferring an idea for a game for children from Andalusia to the Burgenland region.

Other workshops stressed the role the Commission Representations can play in information activities about Cohesion Policy, particularly in linking knowledge about regional media with the communication plans and the work of officials of the managing authorities. Europe Direct points can also play a major role in informing the public about Cohesion Policy, which was explained by Niels Christian Andersen from Bornholm in Denmark, Barbara Kerner from Baranya County/Pecs in Hungary and Claire Sarda Verges from Languedoc Roussillon in France.

Commissioner Hübner closed the conference by saying that the global outcome of operational programmes must also be communicated. "At all the stages it is essential to stress the role of the European Union in the process – in the development of ideas, and in the funding." She also assured participants that she, together with her colleagues in the Regional Policy Directorate, were available to support the communication officials in their efforts.

All speeches and presentations can be downloaded from the website below. The proceedings of the conference will be published early in 2008.

Conference website:

http://ec.europa.eu/regional_policy/country/commu/conferences/november07/index_en.cfm

REGIO & networks

European Commission priorities for 2008

The European Commission recently adopted its work programme for 2008. Over the next year, the Commission will maintain its focus on delivering results within the overall strategic objectives set out at the start of its mandate: prosperity; solidarity; security and freedom, and a stronger Europe in the world. Within this, specific priorities for 2008 include: growth and jobs, a sustainable Europe, an integrated approach to immigration, putting the citizen first, and Europe as a world partner.

http://ec.europa.eu/atwork/programmes/index_en.htm

Looking back to OPEN DAYS 2007

The final evaluation report of the OPEN DAYS 2007 was published in November. It summarises the results of five online surveys completed by participants, event partners, speakers/chairpersons, journalists and local event organisers. A total of 1 161 questionnaires were assessed, representing 19.4% of the total number of participants. The four most significant findings were: (1) the quality of the event varied between "excellent" and "good" for 90.3% of the participants, 97.5% of speakers/chairs, 98% of journalists and 100% of the local organisers; (2) 92% (participants) and 95% (speakers/chairs) said that they would return in 2008; (3) the most frequent recommendation was to organise "fewer but more targeted seminars"; (4) as regards themes for 2008, the ones which were mentioned most often by both partners and speakers were: R+D/innovation; cooperation; sustainable development/climate change; new provisions of the treaty/territorial cohesion. The next OPEN DAYS will take place between 6 and 9 October 2008.

http://ec.europa.eu/regional_policy/conferences/od2007/index.cfm

2006 Annual Reports for Regional Policy

The European Commission recently published three annual reports for 2006, respectively on the Structural Funds, the Cohesion Fund and the pre-accession instrument ISPA. The reports review budgetary implementation, the way in which programmes were carried out and the major projects adopted during the year.

http://ec.europa.eu/regional_policy/sources/docoffic/official/repor_en.htm#coh

European initiative for micro-credit

In November 2007, the European Commission adopted a Communication with a view to encouraging the use of micro-credit in Europe. This method of financing is intended for small enterprises, the unemployed and those who generally do not have access to bank loans. Micro-credit could facilitate such target groups in creating their own businesses and working independently. It could also mean that an extra investment of EUR 6.1 billion in Europe. The Commission proposes creating a European service to support the development of institutions for micro-financing.

<http://europa.eu/rapid/pressReleasesAction.do?reference=IP/07/1713&format=HTML&ag.ed=0&language=EN&guiLanguage=en>

REGIO agenda

Dates	Event	Place
25-26 February 2008	Regions for Economic Change conference "Regions learning from one another" http://ec.europa.eu/regional_policy/cooperation/interregional/ecochange/index_en.cfm	Brussels (B)
11-14 March 2008	EASY-ECO Vienna Conference 2008 "Governance by Evaluation: Institutional Capacities and Learning for Sustainable Development" http://www.easy-eco.eu	Vienna (A)
6 - 9 October 2008	OPEN DAYS 2008 - European Week of Regions and Cities http://ec.europa.eu/regional_policy/conferences/od2007/index.cfm	Brussels (B)

Latest publications

Growing regions, Growing Europe



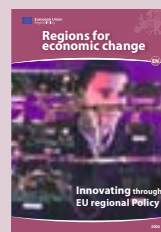
http://ec.europa.eu/regional_policy/sources/docoffic/official/reports/cohesion4/index_en.htm
Fourth Report on Economic and Social Cohesion
Available in 22 languages

Regions for economic change – strengthening competitiveness through innovative products and technologies and prosperous communities



http://ec.europa.eu/regional_policy/cooperation/interregional/ecochange/documents_en.cfm?nmenu=2
Available in 19 languages

Regions for economic change – innovating through European Regional Policy



The challenge of research and innovation for 2007-2013, illustrated through 15 ongoing projects.
http://ec.europa.eu/regional_policy/cooperation/interregional/ecochange/documents_en.cfm?nmenu=2
Available in 19 languages

The urban dimension in Community policies



Community policies for cities in the 2007-2013 programming.
http://ec.europa.eu/regional_policy/sources/docgener/guides/urban/pdf/urbanguide1_en.pdf
Available in DE, EN and FR

Cohesion policy 2007–13 Commentaries and official texts



http://ec.europa.eu/regional_policy/sources/docoffic/official/regulation/pdf/2007/publications/guide2007_en.pdf
Available in 21 languages

<http://talesfromtheborderlands.blogspot.com/>

The "Tales from the Borderlands" blog is dedicated to cross-border cooperation programmes. It is a virtual platform to exchange information, ideas, experiences and documents on border regions and cooperation programmes. Such programmes include those implemented in the framework of INTERREG and the new European Territorial Cooperation Objective which is funded by the Structural Funds.



<http://www.aebr.net/>

The Association of European Border Regions (AEBR) is the only European regional organisation that specifically deals with cross-border issues. AEBR association represents the interests of 90 border and cross-border regions at European and national levels. Its activities include submitting proposals, networking with the European institutions, organisations and networks, and cooperating with other European regional associations. A trilingual website (in English, French and German) provides an overview of AEBR's activities and information about events of interest for cross-border cooperation and regional development.



<http://errin.eu/en/>

The European Regions Research and Innovation Network (ERRIN) was established to help regional actors to participate fully and effectively in the European Research Area. From April 2004 to March 2006, ERRIN was supported by the European Commission's Directorate-General for Research in the framework of the Regions of Knowledge Pilot Action Programme. ERRIN became a self-supported network as of January 2007. The network is constantly growing and currently has 53 members, which are all regional actors. Its website is designed to advance ERRIN's five principal goals: knowledge sharing at the EU level; inter-regional exchanges; practitioner development; policy; and thematic developments.



<http://www.eucc.net>

"EUCC - The Coastal Union" association has a membership of about 2 700 organisations in 40 countries. Founded in 1989 with the aim of promoting coastal conservation by bridging the gap between scientists, environmentalists, site managers, planners and policy makers, it has grown into the largest network of coastal practitioners and experts in Europe. EUCC's mission is to promote coastal and marine management that takes account of biodiversity conservation. It calls for sustainable development that maintains the integrity of landscapes, cultural heritage and the social fabric of coastal areas, while also taking into account the effects of climate change.



Inforegio website: the key pages available in 22 languages

"The Policy" and "The Means" are the first two sections of our new website (with their respective sub-sections) to be made available in 22 languages. Visitors can read in the languages of 27 Member States detailed information on the history, main aims and key elements of regional policy for 2007-2013.

http://ec.europa.eu/regional_policy/index_en.htm

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