The European Groupings of Territorial Cooperation

What, how and why

Europe in my region
Building Europe through cities, regions and municipalities

Zagreb, 25 November 2014

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Europe without borders?
Europe without borders?

The railway station of Nova Gorica, at the border between Italy and Slovenia, till 2004 and today
Europe without borders?

Polish-German border between Frankfurt am Oder and Słubice
Europe without borders?

Former checkpoint dismantled between Frankfurt an der Oder (DE) and Słubice (PL)
© A. Alcolea, 2008
Europe without borders?

- GDP per head poorest region: +/- 6,200 €
- GDP per head richest region: +/- 68,000 €
Europe without borders?

- Disparities in EU28

*European Commission*
*6th Cohesion Report*
Europe without borders?

Impact of the crisis (2010)

Growth of GDP in real terms in EU27

* Negative growth in regions in orange or in red

6th cohesion report. EC
Europe without borders?

- EU cross-border cooperation programme areas

*Eurostat*
The European regions and cities have the right to cooperate

Recognised by the **Madrid Outline Convention on Transfrontier Co-operation between Territorial Communities or Authorities**

(1980, Council of Europe)
The acquis of the Madrid Outline Convention

- **The Madrid Outline Convention of 1980**
  - Right to sign *cooperation agreements*
  - Objective → *General cooperation*
  - Council of Europe → 47 States, all Europe except Belarus

- **Protocol No 1** (Strasbourg, 1995) adds the right to create *structures of cooperation* with legal personality → Euroregions

- **Protocol No 2** (Strasbourg, 1998) extends this right to *interregional* cooperation → Not only cross-border

- **Protocol No 3** (Utrecht, 2009) creates the Euroregional Cooperation Grouping → Ratified so far by Cyprus, France, Germany, Slovenia, Switzerland and Ukraine
The European Grouping of Territorial Cooperation
What is an EGTC?

EGTC means European Grouping of Territorial Cooperation

- Initially promoted by the Committee of the Regions
- EU instrument → Created by Regulation (EC) 1082/2006 amended by Regulation (EU) 1302/2013
- Objective → Economic, social and territorial cohesion
- Public entities from different Member States can get together under an entity with European legal personality → The EGTC has its own organisation, budget and staff.
- The EGTC may implement programmes and projects of territorial cooperation, with or without EU funding.
- Entered into force on 1 August 2007. The Member States adopt national provisions of implementation. The amended Regulation applies since 22 June 2014
What for?

EGTC

Missions

- Art. 7 (2) “An EGTC shall act within the confines of the tasks given to it, namely the facilitation and promotion of territorial cooperation to strengthen Union economic, social and territorial cohesion, and the overcoming of internal market barriers.”

- Art. 7 (3) Tasks of the EGTC:
  - specific actions of territorial cooperation between its members [...] with or without financial support from the Union.
  - Primarily [...] the implementation of cooperation programmes, or parts thereof, or the implementation of operations supported by the EU through the ERDF, the ESF and/or the CF.

- Limits: Powers of the State such as police, regulation, justice or foreign affairs.
Who can participate?

- Entities of **Public Law** (authorities, and reference to the Directive 2004/18/EC on public procurement) and associations

- Some entities of **Private Law** (Directive 2004/17/EC and Services of General Economic Interest)

- Participation of entities from **third countries**:
  - At least 1 Member State needed
    - The headquarters must be located in the EU
    - The third country adopts **similar legislation** or signs an **agreement** with the country of seat of the EGTC
    - The EU Member States involved **authorize** it
How to set up an EGTC

- **Identification of the headquarters**
  - The seat determines the applicable Law

- **Constitutive documents** → **Convention** and **statutes**
  - The Convention has primacy over the national legislation
  - The Convention can foresee exceptions to the rules of applicable law: staff – procurement – audit – others

- **Authorization** by the national authorities
  - **Tacit approval** after 6 months
  - Explicit approval required by the country of headquarters

- **Register** and **publication** at national level → Legal personality

- Notification to the **Committee of the Regions** and publication at the **OJEU**
The revised EGTC Regulation

New elements – Operational

EGTCs can be:

- **Managing authorities** of programmes or their beneficiaries
- Intermediate authorities of **Integrated Territorial Investments**
- Implementing bodies of **Joint Action Plans** and of **CLLD**

Operational Programmes can foresee **cross-border, transnational and interregional cooperation** (Art. 96.3 (d) CPR)

The EGTCs are interested in (Monitoring Report 2013):

- Joint Action Plan (JAP): **10 EGTCs**
- Community-Led Local Development (CLLD): **9 EGTCs**
- Integrated Territorial Investment (ITI): **15 EGTCs**

The EGTC may help to implement **macreregional strategies**
Three joint statements

The European Parliament, the Commission and the Council added:

I. The Institutions intend “to improve the visibility of the possibilities to use EGTCs as an optional instrument for territorial cooperation available in all EU policy areas”.

II. The institutions engage themselves to undertake “actions of coordination and communication among national authorities and between authorities of different Member States in order to ensure clear, efficient and transparent procedures of authorization of new EGTCs”.

III. The Member States will endeavour to apply the rules of the Regulation on law applicable to contractual obligations for the staff hired under private law and the principle of territoriality for staff hired under public law.
Trends and developments
EGTC trends and developments

- 49 EGTC set up, according to the Register of the CoR
- More than 600 LRA involved
- A reality in 19 Member States
- Impact on the life of 30 Mo Europeans
Examples of EGTC

First EGTC to become management authority of a programme
Involves FR, DE, LU, NL, BE

www.interreg4a-gr.eu
Examples of EGTC

Archimed

- Cooperation structure among Mediterranean islands
- Joint defence of common interests
Examples of EGTC

Cerdanya cross-border hospital

- Service to 60,000 inhabitants in the Pyrenees
- www.hcerdanya.eu
Examples of EGTC

Duero-Douro

- Rural development: 187 municipalities with an average population of <500 inhabitants
- Projects:
  - Central purchase of equipments (public lighting)
  - Econometric model for investments
  - Goat livestock to prevent forest fires and create jobs
  - Culture, education
  - ‘Vital tourism’: Turn the border area into a touristic destination of excellence

www.duero-douro.com
Euroregion Pyrines Mediterranean

- Euroregional development in one of the economic poles of Europe
- Project CreaMed: creating networks between the business incubators [www.eurocreamed.eu](http://www.eurocreamed.eu)
- Winner of the EGTC AWARD 2014

[www.euroregio.eu](http://www.euroregio.eu)
Examples of EGTC

EGTC Euro-GO

- Cities of Gorizia, Nova Gorica and Šempeter-Vrtojba.
- Consolidate a cooperation dating from 1964
- The EGTC is needed to overcome the recession in the territory
- Fields: Hospitals, traffic, energy, environment, transport, etc.

www.euro-go.eu
Examples of EGTC

**Euregio Tirol – Suedtirol – Trentino**

Euroregione Tirolo – Alto Adige – Trentino

- Euroregional development in the Alpine region
- Very strong and integrated cooperation in many fields
- Honourable mention of the EGTC AWARD 2014

[www.europaregion.info](http://www.europaregion.info)
Croatia is active!

Implementation in 2013
→ Parliamentary decision (Odluku) 01/07/2013

Euregio Ohne Grenzen / Senza Confini
Euroregija Bez Granica

- In May 2014, Istria (HR) joined Carinthia (AT), Veneto and Friuli-Venezia Giulia (IT)

http://www.regione.veneto.it/web/decentramento-e-federalismo/euroregione-senza-confini

Central European Transport Corridor

- From Skane (SV) to Rijeka (HR)
- Based in Szczecin (PL)
- Currently, members from SV, PL and HU

http://www.cetc.pl
Trends and lessons
EGTC trends and developments

- National implementation varies, but also national approaches
- Only one EGTC implements programmes: ‘Greater Region’
- Although ‘laboratory for multi-level governance’, most of the EGTC group only regions or only municipalities
- Main focus on cross-border cooperation
- Main areas: Axis Benelux-FR-DE, around HU and Mediterranean
  → Precedent cooperation started in the 90s.
- The financial crisis is affecting them
- Laboratories of the Single Market → Many problems reported
- Need of awareness among LRA, public and EC services
Advantages:

- Permanence, visibility and accountability
- Long-term strategic vision
- Less bureaucracy → Single signature suffices

Problems detected (and solutions):

- The Single Market is not easy → Good conventions are needed to overcome problems of staff, procurement, insurances, taxes, etc.
- Big effort of establishment → It is better to start cooperation and create the EGTC in parallel
- Lack of awareness → The EGTC is unknown by Ministries, by LRAs and even by some European institutions
Lessons: The factors of the EGTCs

- Vision
- Negotiation
- Trust
- Choice
The role of the Committee of the Regions
CoR opinions

- ‘Preferential instrument for cooperation’
- Remove bureaucratic obstacles
- Not only regional policy → Strategy Europe 2020, mainstream all EU policies
- Awareness at all levels
- External dimension → Non-EU countries
- Participation of the civil society
The EGTC Platform

Platform of EGTC since 2011, grouping all players in EGTC and cross-border

- Annual monitoring report and studies
- Assistance and support
- Political input on cross-border issues

European register of EGTC in the CoR

Face-to-face communication:
- Annual meeting → March 2015
- Open Days → 8/10/2014
- Thematic portal
  www.cor.europa.eu/egtc
- Social networks
The challenge of implementation

Participation in Operational Programmes

CoR-AEBR Seminar “The participation of citizens from border regions in the Operational Programmes – The Case of the EGTC”, Brussels, 19/11/2013:

- Border regions and EGTCs need to be consulted in the **programming** as part of a structured dialogue (cf. Art. 5 Code of Conduct)

- The **national authorities** should consider the specific needs of border areas and the potential of the EGTCs for the ETC
The challenge of implementation

Dialogue with National Authorities

CoR-Greek Presidency Workshop on “Implementing the New Legislation on EGTC – Dialogue with National Authorities”, Brussels, 26/06/2013:

- Need for **awareness**
- The aspects of **cooperation are neglected** in most of the 28 PAs and around 300 Ops
- Need of **participation and effective involvement** of the EGTCs
The award ‘Building Europe across Borders’

- Bi-annual **EGTC award of the CoR**
  - Focus on implemented actions related to growth and jobs
- **Awardee: Pyrenees Mediterranean**
  - Honourable mentions to ‘Gate to Europe’ and ‘Tyrol-South Tyrol-Trentino’
“Europe will not be made all at once, or according to a single plan. It will be built through concrete achievements which first create a de facto solidarity”.

Declaration Schuman – 9 May 1950
Hvala!

Committee of the Regions
Direction of horizontal policies and networks

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