

STRATEGIC FORUM 2020-2021

REALITY 2020

**AND AGENDA FOR
THE NEXT DECADE**



**XIX ANNUAL STRATEGIC PLANNING LEADERS FORUM OF THE REGIONS
AND CITIES OF RUSSIA**

St. Petersburg, 25 October 2021

Round Table session INTERNATIONAL INTERREGIONAL COOPERATION

AMIDST OVERCOMING THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC

**Covid-19 and beyond: New Visions for
Cross-border collaboration**

Martín Guillermo Ramírez

Secretary General

Association of European Border Regions (AEBR)



"to overcome borders,
one should be allowed to
cooperate,
should want to cooperate,
and be able to cooperate "

Ann-Sofi Backgren
AEBR President (2019-2020)
AEBR First Vice-President

Karl-Heinz Lambertz
AEBR President (2010-2017, 2020-...)

AEBR Priorities in 2020-2021



- **COVID-19** (safety, caution, resilience, digitalisation)
- **Green Deal**
- **Future Cohesion Policy** (including IPA and ENI countries) and implementation of the **Multiannual Financial Framework after Brexit**
- ***b-solutions***: new Compendium, other publications and 3rd Phase
b-solutions@aebr.eu
www.b-solutionsproject.com
- ***Interreg Volunteer Youth***: extension
www.interregyouth.com/
- **CB patients flows**
- **CB provision of services or provision of CB services?**
- **Strengthening research & policy making for better practice of CBC**
- **Communicating CBC**



CBC: Cross-Border Cooperation in “optimal” environments (EU internal borders) also face growing challenges



1. CB regions are a small-scale Europe
2. Many obstacles to overcome, but also many little daily stories in positive (CBC belongs to Europe’s Positive Agenda, like the Erasmus Programme)
3. Main challenges:
 - Effects of “re-nationalization” and skepticism (Brexit, anti-European movements, nationalism); migration phenomena; and then strengthened border controls
 - Unemployment and lack of opportunities
 - Brain-drain and demographic change; climate change and clean energies
 - Access to ICTs, (CB) Smart Specialization Strategies (RIS3), innovation practices, etc.
 - Response to the exigence of welfare and prosperity for all territories

CBC during the COVID-19 pandemic

- Policy makers have previously ignored CBC and CB interaction in most cases (capitals are too far away from borders)
- Then, towards the declaration of pandemic, their first idea was...

1. ...borders closing to control dissemination of the virus:

- national control measures, little coordination

2. Urgent re-opening, in particular to essential services (and essential CBC); discovery of “cross-border” realities:

- Many services (also essential ones) and value chains depend on workforce, providers and other players across the border
- Conscience of CBC at all levels

3. EU and CB Coordination:

- Green Lanes and other measures
- Use of CB structures to guarantee essential services across borders

4. CBC was included in most political agendas (European and national ones) but, for how long?

The European Green Deal

#EUGreenDeal

Mirror to the future



50
years of cross-border
cooperation 1971 2021



European perspectives for CBC in post-COVID times and the new programming period 2021-2027



Interreg VI - € 8,050 million (plus co-financing)
Interreg VI A (**CBC**) **€ 5,800 million**
Interreg VI B (transnational) € 1,467 million
Interreg VI C (interregional) € 490 million
Interreg VI D (outermost regions) € 280 million
Neighbourhood CBC (NDICI) and IPA CBC II

Most figures dropped due to the reduction of the regular budget of the EU due to the **Brexit**.
However, the real impact of the **New Generation EU – NGEU** (the extraordinary fund for reconstruction) in CBC programmes is still unknown

Integrates cooperation with third countries (involving external financing instruments: IPA III, NDICI & ODA)

5 Cohesion Policy Objective: a **smarter, greener, connected, social and closer** Europe

2 Additional Interreg Specific Objectives: better Interreg **governance**, and **safer & more secure** Europe

NEW: Simplified cost options, Small Project Funds, role of EGTCs



Identifying legal and administrative obstacles to CBC, and proposing solutions

- 90 cases studied: 43 published in the 1st Compendium; 47 for the 2nd one (December 2021, together with thematic and story-telling publications)
- b-solutions@aebr.eu
- www.b-solutionsproject.com



Specific Objectives

- specific solutions addressing concrete legal and administrative obstacles
- innovative proposals to inform innovative approaches
- increased exchange of information and mutual engagement
- raised awareness of key stakeholders at local/regional/ national/EU level



Lessons learned

These lessons expect to raise awareness among CB practitioners and inspire others to identify their own obstacles:

- a) Variety of obstacles
- b) Variety of causes
- c) Tailored solutions
- d) A long process
- e) Changes in legal frameworks
- f) Complementary tools
- g) Political commitment
- h) Multi-level engagement
- i) Deep analysis
- j) Information sharing
- k) Capacity building
- l) Interreg and EGTC potential
- m) ECBM (?) potential

Policy recommendations

1. **Capacity building** of local stakeholders in borders regions:
 - a. improved training provision for LRA & CBC actors;
 - b. support for information/coordination units at the LRA;
 - c. commissioning detailed comparative studies;
 - d. strengthening capacity within professional service firms

2. Promotion of **effective multi-level engagement and responses**

- a. Legal mechanisms
- b. Joint commissioning of CB studies & analyses
- c. Enhanced forums of dialogue

3. Maximising the value of **EU tools and instruments**

- a. The proposed ECBM
- b. Interreg and other existing EU instruments

These are available for consultation at the dedicated section of the compendium (vol. 1) on [b-solutions' website](#).



Involving young people in Interreg

- Some 700 young Europeans involved since 2017
- More than 30 Citizens' Engagement Initiatives
- Extended to IPA and Neighbourhood programmes and citizens
- www.interregyouth.com/



CB Public Services

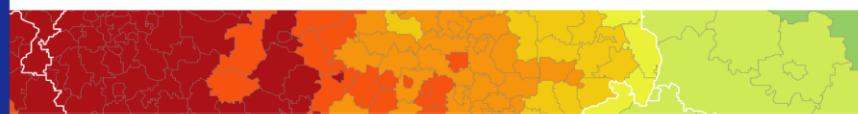


European Committee of the Regions



Co-financed by the European Regional Development Fund

Inspire policy making by territorial evidence



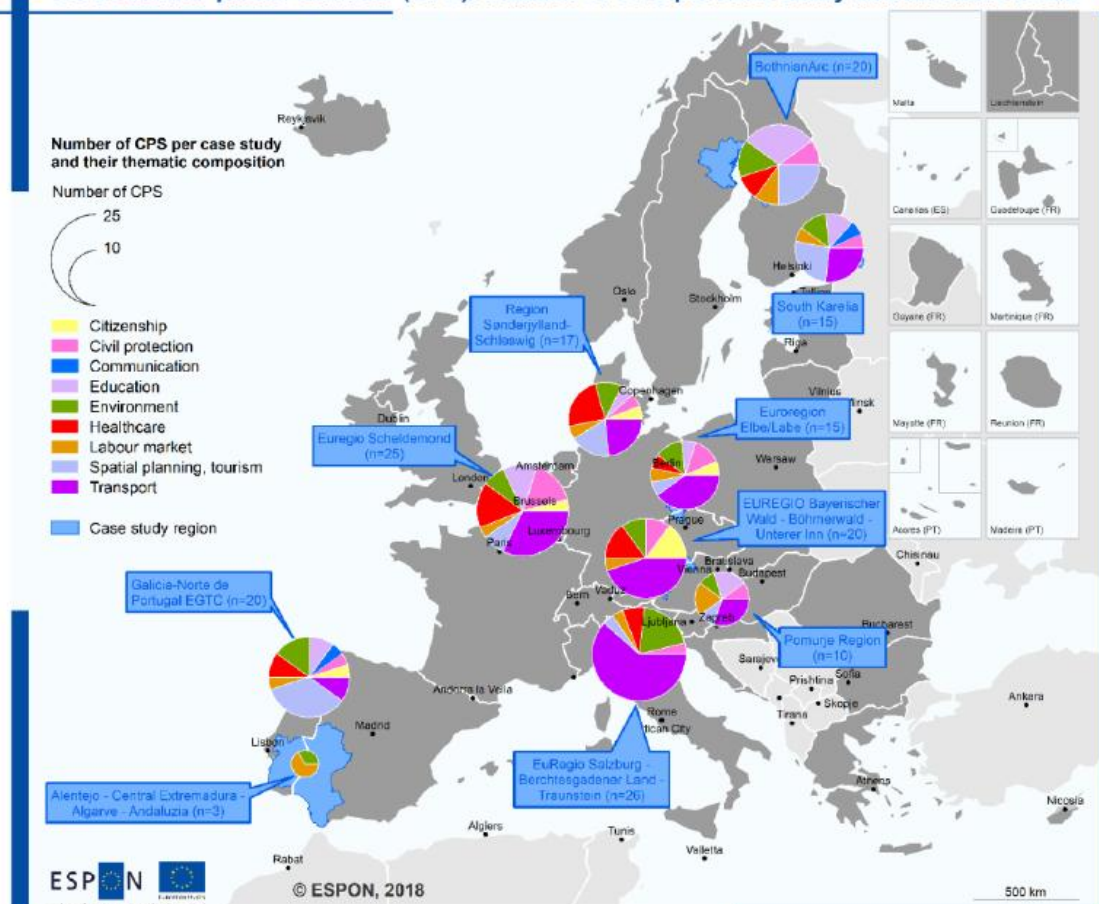
Alentejo-Central Extremadura
BothnianArc
Euregio Bayerischer Wald- Böhm-erwald- Unterer Inn

EuRegio Salzburg- Berchtesgadener Land-Traunstein
Euregio Scheldemond
Euroregion Elbe/Labe

Galicia-Norte de Portugal EGTC
Pomurje Region
Region Sønderjylland- Schleswig
South Karelia

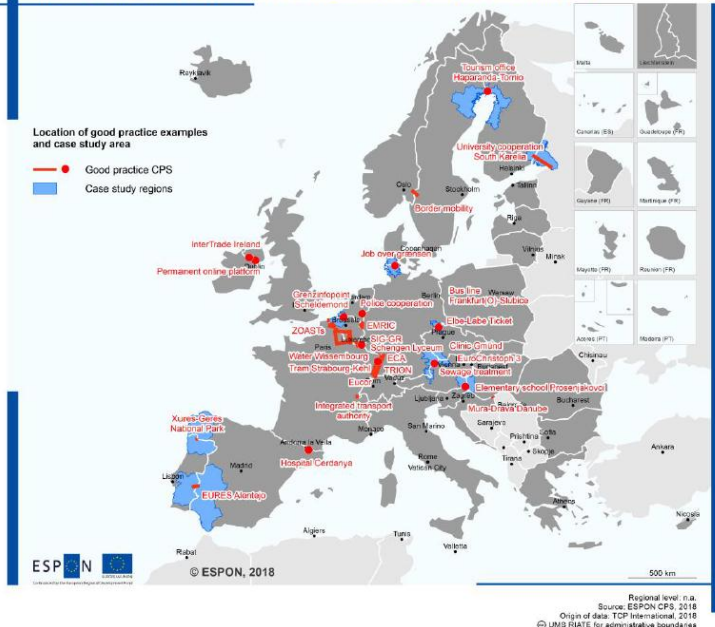
Map 2.6: CPS per case study region and thematic focus

Cross-border public services (CPS): Number of CPS per case study and thematic focus



Regional level: n.a.
Source: ESPON CPS, 2018
Origin of data: TCP International, 2018
© UMS R/ATE for administrative boundaries

Cross-border public services (CPS): Location of "good practice examples"



Short list of good practices

TRANSPORT

- **Tram Strasbourg-Kehl**
- **Busline 983 Frankfurt – Słubice**
- **Bus line Dornbirn – Lustenau – Heerbrugg**
- **Elbe-Labe Ticket**

SPATIAL PLANNING, ECON DEV. TOURISM

- **Tourism office Haparanda-Tornio**
- **Geographic Information System (SIG-GR)**
- **InterTrade Ireland**

HEALTH CARE

- **ZOAST**
- **Hospital Cerdanya**
- **Healthacross, clinic Gmünd**

EDUCATION AND TRAINING

- **Elementary school in Prosenjakovci**
- **Schengen Lyceum**
- **University cooperation South Karelia**
- **Eucor – the European campus**

LABOUR MARKET AND EMPLOYMENT

- **EURES Greater Region**
- **EURES Alentejo**
- **Border mobility SE-NO**

ENVIRONMENT PROTECTION

- **Meseta Transboundary Biosphere Reserve Mura-Drava Danube**
- **Drinking water provision Wissembourg**
- **TRION Climate**
- **River contract Haute Sûre**

CIVIL PROTECTION

- **Firefighting boat “Europa 1”**
- **Rescue service Salzburg**
- **Forest firefighters Böhmewald**

CITIZENSHIP

- **GIP Scheldemond**
- **INFOBEST**
- **Regionskontor and infocentre**

Table 3.1: Overview of potential future CPS in case study areas

Theme / Field of intervention	Education, training	Environment protection	Healthcare, social inclusion	Labour market, employment	Spatial planning, tourism	Transport
Alentejo-Central Extremadura		Invasive species management				Multimodal freight transport platform & mobility observatory
BothnianArc	Lowering language barriers			Better labour market matching		
Euregio Bayerischer Wald-Böhmerwald-Unterer Inn						Better transport links
EuRegio Saalburg-Berchtesgadener Land-Traunstein		Improving waste water treatment services	Optimising existing CPS			
Euregio Scheldemond			Home care in bi-polar villages			North Sea Port nautical management
Euroregion Elbe/Labe			Providing access for Czech patients to a German hospital			
Gaïcia-Norte de Portugal EGTC	Education (universities)				Spatial Planning	Transport
Pemurje Region		Nature park management				New connections & information services
Region Sanderjylland-Schleswig			Potentially different CPS for cross-border emergency, psychiatric advice etc.	Stabilisation of existing CPS & online platform		Cross-border spatial monitoring
South Karelia					Information platform	Information for car travellers

blue = "old internal" border, orange = "new internal" border, green = "external border", pink = "old and new internal border"
Source: Service provider, 2018



Tasks of AEBR



- **Lobby towards European institutions**
- **Support to CB Structures**
- **Information to players**
- ***Think-tank*: Studies on CB Themes**
- **Preparation, implementation and evaluation of projects**
- **Training in CBC (capacity building)**
- **Design of CB Strategies**

••• New tasks

- Identified at borders affected by migratory phenomena (but not only): **minorities and particularly vulnerable groups.**
- Identified at hitherto very stable borders, even within the EU (re-bordering): **conflict resolution and overcoming; but there is also an emergence of a “cross-border civil society” (and labour markets, ...)**
- Risk prevention: **natural disasters, pandemics**

THANK YOU VERY MUCH FOR YOUR ATTENTION!

Association of European Border Regions

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We are also in the social media:



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