



**European Committee
of the Regions**

EGTC Good Practice Booklet



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List of abbreviations

Abbreviation	Full term
AEBR	Association of European Border Regions
CBC	Cross-border cooperation
CEF	Connecting Europe Facility
CIVEX	Commission of Citizenship, Governance, Institutional and External Affairs of the Committee of the Regions
CLLD	Community-led Local Development
CoR	European Committee of the Regions
COTER	Commission of Territorial Cohesion Policy of the European Committee of the Regions
CPMR	Conference of Peripheral Maritime Regions
EAFRD	European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development
ECON	Commission for Economic Policy of the European Committee of the Regions
ECOS	Commission of Economic and Social Policy of the European Committee of the Regions
EGTC	European Grouping of Territorial Cooperation
ENVE	Commission of Environment, Climate Change and Energy of the European Committee of the Regions
ERDF	European Regional Development Fund
ESF	European Social Fund
ESIF	European Structural and Investment Funds
ETC	European Territorial Cooperation
EU	European Union
Europe 2020	Europe 2020 Strategy
EUSAIR	European Strategy for the Adriatic and Ionian Region
EUSALP	European Strategy for the Alpine Region
EUSBSR	European Strategy for the Baltic Sea Region
EUSDR	European Strategy for the Danube Region
FTE	Full Time Equivalent
GHG	Green-house gas
ITI	Integrated Territorial Investment
JAP	Joint Action Plan
LRA	Local and Regional authorities
MA	Managing Authority

MS	Member State
MOT	Mission Opérationelle Transfrontalière
NAT	Commission for Natural Resources of the European Committee of the Regions
OEM	Orient-East-Med Corridor
POCTEFA	Interreg Programme VA Spain-France-Andorra
POCTEP	Interreg Programme VA Spain-Portugal
R&D	Research & Development
SEDEC	Commission for Social Policy, Education, Employment, Research and Culture of the European Committee of the Regions
SME	Small and medium-sized enterprises
SGEI	Services of general economic interest
SPF	Small Project Fund
SŽDC	Správa železniční dopravní cesty (Czech railway infrastructure administration)
RIS3	Research and Innovation Strategies for Smart Specialisation

List of EGTC acronyms and abbreviations

All listed EGTCs are in the CoR register. Those in bold are described in detail.

No	Acronym/ Abbreviation	Full name (in English or local language of the registered office)
1	Lille-Kortrijk-Tournai	Eurométropole Lille-Kortrijk-Tournai
2	Ister-Granum	Ister-Granum European Grouping of Territorial Co-operation Ltd
3	GNP	Agrupación Europea de Cooperación Territorial Galicia – Norte de Portugal
4	Amphictyony	EGTC Amphictyony of Twinned Cities and Areas of the Mediterranean
5	UTTS	Ung-Tisza-Túr-Sajó (Hernád-Bódva-Szinva) Limited Liability EGTC
6	Karst-Bodva	Limited liability European Grouping of Territorial Cooperation Karst-Bodva
7	Duero-Douro	Agrupación Europea de Cooperación Territorial Duero-Douro
8	Flandre-Dunkerque-Côte d'Opale	Groupement Européen de Coopération Territoriale West Vlaanderen/Flandre-Dunkerque-Côte d'Opale
9	ArchiMed	GECT ArchiMed
10	Pyrénées-Méditerranée	GECT Pyrénées-Méditerranée
11	Eurodistrict Strasbourg-Ortenau	GECT Eurodistrict Strasbourg-Ortenau
12	ZASNET	Agrupamento Europeu de Cooperação Territorial ZASNET, AECT
13	HC	Agrupació Europea de Cooperació Territorial Hospital de Cerdanya
14	Grande Région	GECT INTERREG "Programme Grande Région"
15	SaarMoselle	Eurodistrict Saarmoselle
16	ABAÚJ - ABAÚJBAN	ABAÚJ - ABAÚJBAN European Grouping of Territorial Co-operation Ltd
17	Pons Danubii	Pons Danubii EGTC
18	BTC EGTC	Bánát - Triplex Confinium Limited Liability EGTC
19	Arrabona	Arrabona Korlátolt Felelősségű Európai Területi Együttműködési Közhasznú Csoportosulás
20	LinieLand van Waas en Hulst	"LinieLand van Waas en Hulst" Europese Groepering voor Territoriale Samenwerking
21	Euregio Tirolo - Alto Adige - Trentino	GECT Euregio Tirolo - Alto Adige - Trentino
22	GO	Territorio dei comuni: Comune di Gorizia (I), Mestna Občina Nova Gorica (Slo) e Občina Šempeter-Vrtojba (Slo)
23	Pirineus - Cerdanya	GECT Pirineus – Cerdanya
24	Espacio Portalet	Agrupación Europea de Cooperación Territorial "Espacio Portalet"
25	RDV	Rába-Duna-Vág European Grouping of Territorial Cooperation with Limited Liability
26	Eurorégion Nouvelle Aquitaine-Euskadi-Navarre	GECT Eurorégion Nouvelle Aquitaine-Euskadi-Navarre
27	Poarta Europa GECT	Gruparea Europeană de Cooperare Teritorială Poarta Europa cu Răspundere Limitată (Poarta Europa GECT)

28	BODROGKÖZI	BODROGKÖZI Korlátolt Felelősségű Európai Területi Együttműködési Közhasznú Csoportosulás
29	Novohrad-Nógrád	Novohrad-Nógrád European Grouping of Territorial Cooperation with Limited Liability
30	Pannon	Pannon European Grouping of Territorial Cooperation Ltd.
31	Efxini Poli – SolidarCity Network	EGTC EFXINI POLI - Network of European Cities for Sustainable Development
32	EUKN	European Grouping of Territorial Cooperation European Urban Knowledge Network Limited
33	Euregio Senza Confini	GECT "Euregio Senza Confini r.l."
34	TRITIA	European Grouping of Territorial Cooperation TRITIA limited
35	Sajó-Rima / Slaná-Rimava	Sajó - Rima / Slaná - Rimava European Grouping of Territorial Cooperation with Limited Liability
36	Via Carpatia	European Grouping of Territorial Cooperation Via Carpatia Limited
37	Parc européen Alpi Marittime – Mercantour	Parc européen / Parco europeo Alpi Marittime - Mercantour
38	P.M.I.B.B.	Gruppo Europeo di Cooperazione Territoriale (G.E.C.T) Parco Marino Internazionale delle Bocche di Bonifacio (P.M.I.B.B)
39	Secrétariat du Sommet de la Grande Région	GECT "Secrétariat du Sommet de la Grande Région"
40	TATRY	EGTC TATRY Ltd.
41	Spoločný región	European Grouping of Territorial Cooperation Spoločný región limited
42	Torysa	Torysa European Grouping of Territorial Cooperation
43	Svinka	Svinka European Grouping of Territorial Cooperation
44	Alzette Belval	GECT Alzette Belval
45	AEuCC	Agrupación Europea de Cooperación Territorial Ciudades de la Cerámica, AECT limitada
46	Eurocity of Chaves-Verín	European Grouping of Territorial Cooperation Eurocity of Chaves-Verín
47	European Common Future Building	European Common Future Building European Grouping of Territorial Cooperation with Limited Liability
48	CETC-EGTC	Central European Transport Corridor Limited Liability European Grouping of Territorial Co-operation
49	HP-HP	Huesca Pirineos – Hautes Pyrénées
50	AECT-FPI	Agrupación Europea de Cooperación Territorial Faja Pirítica Ibérica
51	European Border Cities	European Border Cities European Grouping of Territorial Cooperation Limited Liability
52	ESPON	ESPON EGTC – European Node for Territorial Evidence
53	PAHT	GECT Pays d'Art et d'Histoire Transfrontalier Les Vallées Catalanes du Tech et du Ter
54	Interregional Alliance for the Rhine-Alpine Corridor	Interregional Alliance for the Rhine-Alpine Corridor EGTC
55	MASH	MASH European Grouping of Territorial Cooperation
56	Mura Region	Mura Region European Grouping of Territorial Cooperation Limited Liability

57	Tisza	Tisza European Grouping of Territorial Cooperation Limited Liability
58	INTERREG Grande Région	GECT-Autorité de gestion programme INTERREG V A Grande Région
59	NOVUM	European Grouping of Territorial Cooperation NOVUM Limited
60	León-Bragança	Agrupación Europea de Cooperación Territorial León-Bragança
61	PONTIBUS	PONTIBUS European Grouping of Territorial Cooperation Limited Liability
62	Eucor The European Campus	Eucor – The European Campus
63	EMI	European Grouping of Territorial Cooperation “European Mycological Institute”
64	PROUD	Eisenbahnneubaustrecke Dresden Prag EVTZ
65	Eurodistrict PAMINA	Groupeement Européen de Coopération Territoriale Eurodistrict PAMINA
66	Ipoly-völgye	Ipoly-valley European Grouping of Territorial Cooperation with Limited Liability
67	DIETAMED	DIETA MED EGTC
68	HELICAS	European Grouping of Territorial Cooperation HELICAS
69	MURABA	MURABA European Grouping of Territorial Cooperation Limited

1. Introduction

European territorial development objectives date back to the European Spatial Development Perspective and were further detailed in the Territorial Agenda 2020 (TA 2020). TA 2020 highlights that integrating territories is crucial to fostering competitiveness. Barriers can inhibit the full use of resources in border regions, which increases their peripheral position. The European Grouping of Territorial Cooperation (EGTC) was introduced in 2006 to overcome these barriers and assist public authorities in different Member States looking to implement actions across national boundaries.

The EGTC instrument enables public actors to establish an international entity under European law. This legal instrument complements funding instruments for European Territorial Cooperation (ETC), as known as Interreg, to strengthen economic, social and territorial cohesion. The legal entity provides a stable structure for public actors at different levels to cooperate, which helps multi-level governance within the EU and with Third countries.

As of December 2017, there were 68 EGTCs in the EU, with several more being set-up¹. These EGTCs fulfil many different purposes, all of which aim to add value through long-term territorial cooperation, going beyond the project horizon. EGTCs contribute to implementing ETC programmes and Cohesion Policy pro-

jects as well as other European, national and regional projects, enhancing economic, social and territorial cohesion.

EGTCs are often multi-level governance instruments, bringing together authorities from different countries, administrative levels and policy sectors. This happens both within the EGTC membership and through involvement in the project or other activities. EGTCs are suitable as cross-border micro laboratories to develop public services, new public transport and new approaches for cross-border education.

EGTCs also play an important planning role in functional areas such as environmental protection, transport planning, integrated tourism and economic cooperation. They less frequently manage ETC programmes, in whole or part, or cross-border infrastructure.

The many examples in this booklet highlight strengths of the EGTC instrument. Firstly, communication is key and multilingual communication often creates new opportunities for cross-border integration. Secondly, with their European legal basis EGTCs tend to be more visible than comparable structures. Thirdly, not least because of the legal form, EGTCs are increasingly acknowledged as strategic players and suitable for promoting the interests of local and regional authorities at EU level, mostly this through their networks. They can also have better access to

information compared to their individual members. Finally, EGTCs can combine multiple tasks and functions mirroring the versatility of the instrument. Public stakeholders can develop their EGTC in line with their joint needs, at local or national level, focusing on small projects or networking, managing infrastructure or facilitating policy processes.

To shed light on the different functions and strengths this booklet illustrates good practices of 21 EGTCs and selected projects managed by EGTCs across Europe. These examples are based on the 2016 and 2017 CoR EGTC monitoring reports and additional close communication with the EGTCs. Seven sections of this publication cover typical policy fields and actions in which EGTCs are engaged. The last three sections look at funding sources and functions beyond project implementation and service delivery.

This is not an exhaustive list. There are many more good practices of EGTCs and especially projects, some of which are mentioned in less detail. Cross-references between different sections of the booklet illustrate the integrated approaches of many EGTCs.

These approaches highlight a few general points:

- Good collaboration in EGTCs usually builds with experience.

¹ CoR, 2018, p. 127 ff.

- Careful integration step-by-step and focusing on what is most important helps.
- Put the joint interest up front. The interests of individual members should not be at the centre of the EGTC. The difference is in the joint effort.
- Professionalism, clarity and transparency help make the EGTC a reliable partner in European matters.
- Define a clear task for the EGTC. The EGTC is not an end in itself and cannot cover everything. Especially at the beginning it is important to have a list of tasks and priorities.
- Reaching operability takes time. Very often all efforts are put into the foundation process so on day one expectations are high. However, it is important to make sure the EGTC has the capacity to function properly, from premises, phones and computers to employment contracts, internal forms and archives.
- EGTCs should use their stable structure. They can develop long-term strategies and visions, but EGTC members usually expect to see value-added also in the short-run. Though institutionalised co-operation becomes more durable with further projects.

2. EGTC Good Practices

2.1. Cross-border healthcare and emergency services, cross-border access to public services and European citizenship

TA 2020 states that better access to services of general interest is key for territorial cohesion and aims for cheaper and fairer access to services throughout Europe. Decreasing infrastructure barriers to services will increase competitiveness and help to sustainably develop the European Union territory².

Cross-border cooperation can often result in better quality, more effective and more efficient emergency and health care services. Directive 2011/24/EU addresses the application of patients' rights as it "... aims to establish rules for facilitating access to safe and high-quality

cross-border healthcare in the Union and to ensure patient mobility [...] to promote cooperation on healthcare between Member States..."³.

Amendment of the EGTC regulation in 2013 made it easier for EGTCs to provide public services. This included the explicit possibility that undertakings providing services of general economic interest (SGEI) may be members of an EGTC. Secondly, managing infrastructure and providing SGEI have been noted as EGTC tasks. Thirdly, EGTCs can generate revenues and income from the services.

Many SGEI are offered in small local areas. So, cross-border EGTCs tend to be better placed to provide SGEI, including for health. EGTCs with a transnational or interregional focus may be less suitable.

EGTCs as cross-border legal bodies can manage infrastructure and can also contribute to cross-border SGEI indirectly. EGTC supporting services can give citizens better access to SGEI and can initiate collaboration between stakeholders that leads to cross-border services.

² TA 2020, 2011, para. 35

³ European Parliament and the Council of the European Union, 2011, Article 10




Francesc Bonet, director of the EGTC

“The first bi-national hospital in Europe. Bringing cross-border, specialised healthcare, closer to the community.”

 Name of the EGTC

**AECT-Hospital de Cerdanya/GECT-
Hôpital de Cerdagne (HC EGTC)**

 Duration of the EGTC

Since 26 April 2010

 Registered office and MS covered

Spain (base) and France

The real success of this bi-national hospital is providing equal access to healthcare for citizens in both Member States.

The economy of the Cerdanya/Capcir region in the Pyrenees is highly dependent on tourism, so there are significantly more people in the region during the summer and ski seasons. The region had poor hospital facilities, as the hospital in the Spanish town of Puigcerdà was outdated and not available to French residents except for emergencies and high risk births. French residents had to travel more than 100 km to the nearest French hospital. HC EGTC was founded to build a cross-border hospital, to provide better hospital care with equal access for inhabitants and tourists in both Member States.

The main HC EGTC stakeholders are the public healthcare systems of France and Catalonia. Representatives of the two

health agencies, Catalan Health Service (CatSalut) and Regional Health Agency (ARS) are in all the governing bodies, especially the Executive Bureau, responsible for managing the hospital.

There were administrative and legal difficulties in situations and procedures not covered by European law, but which needed to be addressed by Spanish legislation as the EGTC is based in Spain. Administrative and cultural problems have been overcome or at least reduced with agreed, simplified procedures.

The hospital creates EU added-value through a jointly managed facility in the region with greater cooperation between the two regions. Since its opening in

September 2014, the EGTC has become the hospital of choice for French residents, with the number of French patients steadily growing since 2014. Initial difficulties of multilingual communication between doctors and patients have been overcome.

The HC EGTC is perceived by the Catalan public as offering much better facilities and being better equipped than the old hospital. The French public appreciates the improvement in access to specialised hospital care, closer to home and with shorter waiting times.

An important lesson of the HC EGTC is that interested parties should thoroughly study all legal and practical obstacles be-

fore opening a jointly managed facility as complex as a hospital. Bilateral task forces should investigate labour conditions and recruitment as well as information

technology compatibility. They should also map all possible partners and associates in the region. A good transition plan covering existing organisations that may

be replaced by an EGTC, complete with training for staff at all levels, is critical and should be implemented well before the new facility opens.



So far, HC EGTC is the only example of an EGTC managing a cross-border hospital. The joint approach allowed improved health care access by tackling two different interests. The Spanish side suffered from an outdated hospital and the French population was forced to drive for two hours to access hospital care. The new hospital became feasible also through ERDF co-funding.

The EGTC was founded in 2010 and provides hospital services to a permanent population of some 33,000 inhabitants, plus many visitors during the tourist seasons. The EGTC had to tackle some challenging obstacles when it started operating. For example, registration of new-born babies of French residents and the transfer of deceased French citizens presented an issue as the hospital is located in Spain. The original administrative procedures were time consuming and complicated, so dif-

ferent solutions had to be developed. For registration of newly born French nationals, the hospital entered into an agreement with the French regional health insurance authorities to permit new-borns to be covered by the insurance of their parents. Simplifying the transfer of deceased French residents required a bilateral agreement between the two Member States. Not all everyday problems have been solved yet, however these examples illustrate how different challenges can be overcome step by step through very different solutions. This is confirmed by the high satisfaction of French patients.

The second interesting example is the Eurocity of Chaves-Verín on the Spanish-Portuguese border. The immediate proximity of the two cities Chaves and Verín encourage cooperation on a vast range of topics. Cross-border relations were intense between the cities' insti-


tutions and citizens before the EGTC was founded, however the EGTC created added value through practical effects on the day-to-day lives of local inhabitants. This would not be achieved through domestic services or by an EGTC with regional authorities only. Development and implementation of the "Eurocitizen Card" is the flagship project of the EGTC.

This is one of the projects the EGTC implements under the Interreg VA Spain-Portugal Cooperation Programme. ETC funding also helps its members to collaborate on public services. Sector working commissions are crucial as technicians from both municipalities work together on specific areas. This facilitates other joint municipal services, including culture, sports, education, waste and tourism.




Pablo M. Rivera Búa, Executive Manager of the EGTC

“The Chaves-Verín EGTC has established itself as a laboratory for European integration, making the border an opportunity for economic and social development that has increased the happiness indicator of its citizens.”

 Name of the EGTC
**Eurocity
of Chaves-Verín**

 Duration of the EGTC
**Approved on
17 July 2013**

 Registered office and MS covered
**Based in Verín,
Spain and Portugal**

 EGTC members
**Spain (base) and
France**

Despite limited responsibilities at local level, the EGTC has implemented joint management mechanisms that tackle costs related to the cross-border context.

The idea of creating the Eurocity of Chaves-Verín was born in 2007 from the need to find ways of adding value to the area by coordinating municipal services and facilities across the border. Its objective is to promote institutional, economic, social, cultural and environmental convergence for people in both cities. This implied a new perspective on the border to see a joint development opportunity. In 2010, the two municipalities began establishing the EGTC which received approval on 17 July 2013.

The EGTC is supported by the Xunta de Galicia, in Spain and the Comissão de Co-

ordenação e Desenvolvimento Regional do Norte (CCDR-N), in Portugal. The co-operation with other networks and local stakeholders in the economic, social, cultural, educational and environmental sectors make the Eurocity a unique space for European integration, which is called the “Free Social Border”.

Obstacles and barriers that challenge local daily life have been identified, from the lack of harmonised regulations and simplified transport, to difficulties in accessing health care and different levels of civil protection, public security and emergency medical services. Despite the limited responsibilities assigned to the EGTC

and its members (in many cases competence lies with the Member States), Eurocity of Chaves-Verín has implemented joint management mechanisms that help reduce costs normally incurred due to the cross-border context.

The fundamental added value of the EGTC Eurocity of Chaves-Verín is its position as a laboratory for European integration. Citizens have a feeling of belonging to the same community. It also makes the subsidiarity principle a reality. Citizens participate in decision-making based on the concept of “Euro-citizenship”.

Inhabitants, the “Eurocitizens”, live in a “free social zone” and have more public

services, while enjoying the same advantages and benefits. For example, the “Eurocitizen Card” (Winner of the Regio Stars Award 2015) allows inhabitants of the two neighbourhoods to enjoy discounts for public services, including

swimming pools, hot springs, facilities and school sports, computer rooms, training activities and much more. There are currently over 10,000 Eurocitizen Card holders, some 18% of the Eurocity's 58,000 inhabitants.

The Eurocity has made it possible to convert both municipalities into an attractive area for public and private investments that, in turn, promote the common and efficient use of existing resources by “Eurocitizens”.



Both examples show that cooperation on public services, including health, can be facilitated by EGTCs, bringing immediate and visible added value for local citizens. These examples highlight EGTCs that implement SGEI either by managing infrastructure or by providing supporting services that ease access to public services. The Eurocity of Chaves-Verín is an example for applying an experimental approach. Many other EGTCs also contribute to providing SGEI, though often this takes place more indirectly.

GNP EGTC is investigating innovative ways to develop joint public services across the northern border of Spain and Portugal. The Eurodistrict SaarMoselle develops joint strategies for social cohesion through cross-border health care. As a first step, emergency cardiovascular patients from France can access the cardiology centre on the German side of the border, which has considerably reduced their travel time. The EGTC Eurodistrict PAMINA, founded in 2017 between France and Germany in the Upper Rhine valley, is initiating an Interreg

project targeted at service provision in the cross-border region.

EGTCs contribute to service development by testing new tailor-made approaches to answer local needs such as the new service highlighted by the Duero-Douro EGTC (see section ‘nature disaster prevention’). This has initiated a day care service for elderly people in rural municipalities that does not include medical care, but provides daily assistance at home and offers leisure activities for the elderly to allow them to remain in the rural municipalities.

2.2. Cross-border nature disaster prevention and solidarity

Natural hazards do not stop at national borders. TA 2020 points out that the risk for natural hazards is ever increasing as an effect of the climate change. This includes not only rising sea levels but droughts, desertification, floods and other hazards⁴. Because of the multiple aspects of climate change, individual policy responses are needed in specific areas. Often this requires cooperation across national borders, because many borders have geographic barriers such as bodies of water or mountain ranges. Solutions may need to be cross-border or even transnational. ERDF investment priorities for 2014-2020 support adaptation to climate change, including ecosystem-based approaches and investments to address specific risks, enhance disaster reliance and develop disaster management systems⁵. In addition, support for developing and coordinating

macro-regional and sea-basin strategies is an explicit investment priority for transnational cooperation⁶.

Prevention measures to mitigate natural disasters are mostly organised through domestic policies in the EU, though an EGTC can facilitate cross-border cooperation and assist bridging borders if natural hazard prevention is a matter of national sovereignty. Cross-border cooperation can help by joining forces, providing quicker access to an affected area from across the border as well as more information about hazards.

One example is the self-organisational model developed by the Duero-Douro EGTC, founded on the Spanish-Portuguese border in an arid area with a high risk of forest fire. Recurring forest fires are mostly caused by uncleared, highly in-

flammable biomass. Grazing goats could help reduce the risk of forest fires by cleaning the forest of the dead biomass and, at the same time goats can fertilise the soil and contribute to better income opportunities for rural farmers. The so-called 'Self-Prevention'⁷ project could bring multiple stakeholders together.

A self-organisational model has been developed in the EGTC Duero-Douro that brings together more than 200 municipalities whose limited individual resources limit their actions. The EGTC is a tool in the rural region to identify common challenges for members and develop joint solutions that are under the responsibility of the local authorities. Participatory mechanisms, such as sector committees, manage the different themes and determine priorities for cross-border cooperation.

⁴ TA 2020, 2011, para. 20

⁵ Regulation (EU) No 1301/2013, Art. 5(5)

⁶ Regulation (EU) No 1299/2013, Art.7(1)(b)

⁷ See: <http://www.self-prevention.com/index.php?pagina=projecto&lang=uk&tit=%20Self-Prevention.com%20%7C%20The%20Project>



José Luis Pascual, Director General of Duero-Douro EGTC

“The EGTC Regulation in 2006 was an opportunity for the territories to take decisions on their day-to-day concerns and make the subsidiarity principle a reality.”

Name of the project
Self-organisational model, developed by the Duero-Douro EGTC

Duration
The project was developed during 2017. The EGTC was founded on 21 March 2009.

Registered office and MS covered
Portugal (base) and Spain. The project addresses stakeholders from both sides of the border.

Project partners
The EGTC includes more than 200 municipalities in the Spanish-Portuguese border area. The project should be managed by a company to be set-up by the EGTC and external partners.

Duero-Douro is working to manage services for people on both sides of the border.

Duero-Douro EGTC was established to take decisions as close to citizens as possible. It planned to have an active role in managing ETC programmes as Managing Authority or as a member of the Monitoring Committee. For several reasons that was not possible, including subsidiarity. Duero-Douro is made up of local authorities and would like to take decisions across the whole area, though local or regional authorities are clearly responsible.

Duero-Douro members include over 200 local authorities, 65% of which are municipalities of less than 250 inhabitants and 85% are municipalities of less than 1,000 inhabitants. Duero-Douro has succeeded

in continuously attracting new municipalities as members.

The EGTC focuses on services for member municipalities and their inhabitants. A major activity is managing the electricity supply in 162 municipalities which are small. This contract should save 86% of electricity supply cost, allowing the municipalities to use funds for other priorities. In addition, households get electricity significantly cheaper, as the EGTC cannot make a profit. Duero-Douro is now organising a similar structure for water distribution in the area.

In past years, Duero-Douro created a self-organisational model of public-pri-

vate participation for fire prevention in forests. The idea is for goats to clean the forests and avoid fires in areas inaccessible for machinery. Raising goats would also provide meat and dairy products, and the project would encourage people to remain in the area. However, the high investment needed and low participation of public administrations and land owners means the project has not been implemented so far.

Citizens in the cross-border area are aware that some services are provided to municipalities in both Member States. They may not know the specifics of an EGTC but they see that activities are realised with other municipalities.

The EGTC faced the issue of contracting staff in two Member States. For a long time, it was not possible to contract staff in Portugal as the EGTC is Spanish, but this was solved in the end.

The main lesson for Duero-Douro is the unrealised expectation that the EGTC Regulation opened. The EGTC wanted to support decision-making in rural areas. However, bringing municipalities together through

the EGTC did not achieve the intended impacts, which is partly due to different parties governing at local and regional level.



The next example is a project of EGTC Euregio Tirolo - Alto Adige - Trentino. The EGTC was founded in 2011 and is a collaboration of three regions from Italy and Austria. The EGTC has a yearly work programme with 20-25 projects financed and managed by the EGTC itself. Working topics in recent years were based on the Euregio Science Fund, Mobility Fund for university students and teachers, Music Camp, Summer Camp and Sport Camp and the Euregio Academy. Complementing this, the EGTC also covers energy, the environment and nature.

The EGTC is implementing an avalanche monitoring system, together with its project partners. The ALBINA project is co-financed by the Interreg VA Italy-Austria Cooperation Programme. It acknowledges the threat from avalanches

and the need to provide information in different languages across borders. The three member regions of the EGTC are popular skiing resorts where tourists and locals travel between the regions depending on weather conditions. The project website summarises the underlying problem: A Tyrolean who likes to ski off-piste in Trentino often lacks the latest data on weather conditions and avalanche risks, except Tyroleans speak Italian fluently. The joint avalanche monitoring report will create added value for citizens and tourists in the three regions and shows how connectedness of Euregio Tirolo - Alto Adige - Trentino benefits people.

Both examples highlight the experimental character of EGTC actions and illustrate the versatility of the EGTC instrument. The EGTCs create or contrib-

ute to tailor-made approaches, from project implementation to an approach for future action. The example of the avalanche monitoring project also highlights how EGTC and cross-border cooperation have introduced a rationale for change. Facilitating cross-border tourism and mobility involves coordinating the avalanche monitoring systems in three regions. The EGTC instrument has provided the necessary governance structure.

Another example worth mentioning is an Interreg project of the Eurodistrict PAMINA targeting the acquisition of amphibious vehicles and training facilities for civil protection volunteers in Germany and France. So far, there are few other concrete EGTC projects for civil protection and natural hazard prevention.



Dr Christoph Mitterer, Avalanche Warning Services Tyrol, Regional Government of Tyrol

“Avalanche danger ignores administrative boundaries. With the help of the EGTC we can strengthen, modernise and improve avalanche forecasting in the heart of the Alps.”



Name of the project

**EUREGIO AVALANCHE
WARNING FORECAST
ALBINA, with Euregio
Tirolo - Alto Adige -
Trentino EGTC as project
partner**



Duration

**30 months,
since
October
2016**



Registered office
and MS covered

**Austria (the
region of Tyrol),
Italy (the regions
of South Tyrol
and Trento)**



Project partners

**Project partners: EGTC Euregio Tirolo - Alto Adige -
Trentino with the Avalanche Warning Services of Tyrol,
South Tyrol and Trento as associated partners and
University of Vienna, Department of Geography and
Regional Research, Working Group Cartography and
Geoinformation Science**

The ALBINA project allows the project partners to offer a single, multilingual state-of-the-art avalanche warning and forecasting system for Tyrol, South Tyrol and Trento.

The ALBINA project, funded by the cross-border cooperation programme Italy-Austria, is currently setting-up a joint avalanche warning system for Tyrol in Austria and the autonomous provinces of South Tyrol and Trento in Italy. In recent decades, cross-border mobility between the three regions has increased especially for backcountry recreation. Tourists and locals select a ski area for the next day depending on the weather, snowpack and skiing conditions. Avalanche warnings play an important role,

but administrative boundaries do not stop avalanches and the danger varies from valley to valley. The project partners are therefore merging and modernising the existing, separate, warning and forecasting systems to cover the entire Euregio with one system. The project partners are the EGTC (lead partner) with three Avalanche Warning Services as associated partners and the University of Vienna. Three additional institutions were subcontracted to support the project with specific expertise, for interpre-

tation, modelling weather conditions, and design and communication.

One crucial problem is related to cultural differences between Germanic and Latin countries regarding colour codes and colour perception. A design and communication agency helps project partners to understand these differences and develop solutions. Another problem is the schedule and validity of warnings that vary between the three services. In Tyrol the warning is published at 7.30

and valid for the entire day; in South Tyrol at 16.00 and valid for the next day; and in Trento at 13.00 and valid for the next two to three days. The project partners have now harmonised the three schedules so warnings will be published at 17.00 and be valid for the next day (0.00-24.00) with a morning update at 8.00. To develop a joint approach and convince authorities was time consuming.

Other solutions include the new software, which is already being tested in Trento. There is also an online portal that covers the entire region, with different layers concerning snow cover and local weather conditions. This portal is under

development and is currently only used internally. Experts can enter warnings in their respective mother tongues and these are automatically translated into German, Italian and English through a catalogue of predefined sentences. In the future, the system will also cover French. The new website will be launched in October 2018 during a congress on avalanche research in Innsbruck and will be accessible to tourists and locals for the 2018/2019 skiing season.

The ALBINA project merges three separate systems into one multilingual system, allowing tourists and locals to receive warnings for the entire Euroregion

in their respective languages. The project also enables the partners to update the content of their warning systems (real warnings and forecasts instead of now-cast reports), methodologies (micro-regions can be aggregated flexibly and dynamically) and communication methods (for mobile devices). The new system will meet most current requirements. In technical terms, single modules can be exported to other regions and more regions can be integrated into the system. The warning system may even, one day, cover the entire Alpine region, offering detailed warnings for all regions in all Alpine languages.

Another transnational example is the involvement of the EGTC Euregio Senza Confini as president of the Alpine Convention "Mountain Forest" working

group (see section 'integrated tourism'). This group contributes to protection against natural disasters, mitigation of climate change and ecosystem con-

servation. Despite these few examples, other EGTCs are interested in the field as they pointed out during preparation of the 2017 EGTC monitoring report.

2.3. Cross-border nature protection and environmental preservation

Well-functioning and protected ecosystems as well as the preservation and development of natural, landscape and cultural heritage is key to stable and sustainable development. Excessive use can cause irreversible damage to these areas, hampering territorial development and the quality of life for citizens⁸. Nature protection, however, does not exclude capitalising resources and ecosystem services can add value to the territory and unlock resources. The EU Biodiversity Strategy adopted in 2011 has a headline target to halt “the loss of biodiversity and the degradation of ecosystem services in the EU by 2020, and restoring them in so far as feasible ...”⁹.

Many European ecosystems such as mountain ranges, coastal areas and water bodies cross national borders (e.g. Carpathians, Alps, Pyrenees, Adriatic Sea,

Rhine valley). Though belonging to the same ecosystem, management and protection is subject to different national policy regimes. In addition, responsibilities may be at different administrative levels on either side of the border. Different national priorities can negatively affect the cross-border ecosystem.

The EGTC instrument can not only combine efforts to protect and conserve but also can coordinate policies of Member States sharing the cross-border ecosystem, as highlighted in the following three very different examples.

ZASNET EGTC helps to coordinate, develop and steer responses to common challenges along the northern border of Portugal and Spain. The EGTC manages the cross-border Meseta Ibérica Biosphere

Reserve, which in 2015 was approved as one of the 20 UNESCO transboundary biosphere reserves worldwide.¹⁰ Biosphere reserves promote nature conservation while also facilitating development and supporting education and scientific research. Meseta Ibérica Biosphere Reserve includes a wide variety of landscapes, from 100 to 2,000 metres above sea level and contains many flagship species. Similarly important are the forts and castles from Roman times and the Middle Ages that create a rich cultural heritage.

This combination of environmental protection and integrated development provides the basis for the EGTC that covers the cross-border territory. The EGTC is not only a networking platform for its members but it also implements biosphere reserve projects.

8 TA 2020, 2011, para. 23

9 COM(2011) 244 final, p.2


10 <http://www.unesco.org/new/en/natural-sciences/environment/ecological-sciences/man-and-biosphere-programme/>



Ana Carvalho, Director of Zasnet EGTC

“Zasnet was created to give a structure to the work on the common territory and common challenges.”

 Name of the project
Zasnet EGTC

 Duration
Since 19 March 2010

 Registered office and MS covered
Portugal (base) and Spain

 Project partners
Municipality of Zamora, Province of Salamanca, Province of Zamora, Association of Municipalities of Terra Fria Transmontana, Association of Municipalities of Terra Quente Transmontana, Municipality of Bragança

Zasnet adds value to the natural and cultural heritage of the cross-border area, focusing on attracting new economic activities to encourage local people to stay.

Zasnet was created to give structure to the work and the common challenges of the cross-border territory (Spain and Portugal), which has huge potential in terms of natural and cultural heritage. Several cooperation bodies were active in the area and the EGTC was established to give stability in promoting sustainable tourism, sustainable employment and other aspects to help development of the cross-border territory.

Zasnet has very good connections with the stakeholders, who provide expert help for specific topics such as tourism and employment. The good will of Span-

ish and Portuguese authorities helped a lot in creating and implementing the EGTC.

The EGTC manages the UNESCO Biosphere Reserve of Meseta Ibérica, a cross-border area that covers all authorities involved in the EGTC except for one. The Biosphere Reserve prompted other project ideas, such as ‘Cultural Heritage, native products, nature and tourism’, which is now financed by the Interreg CBC Spain-Portugal programme. One part promotes ‘Mascaradas de Inverno’ (Winter Masks) for UNESCO recognition. Another cultural

heritage project recently submitted to the Interreg CBC Spain-Portugal programme is “Sustainable lighting and Starlight Destination”. This will enable sustainable and scenic lighting of landmark buildings, which should contribute to increased tourism.

If the project is approved, it will include telescopes for looking at stars, which are more visible with the reduced glare of sustainable lighting. This combination of projects linked to Biosphere Reserve management illustrates how natural and cultural heritage can be preserved in an integrated way using the EGTC. Zasnet

gives additional value to the natural and cultural heritage of the cross-border area and the focus on attracting new economic activities to the territory should encourage people to stay.



The media do not usually cover activities of the EGTC. Although the EGTC aims to increase the region's attractiveness, this is difficult to grasp for an older population. On the other hand, many elements



related to cultural heritage are well preserved, including traditions, a culture of slow food and other aspects with a lot of potential to promote sustainable tourism.



The second example is an Integrated Territorial Investment (ITI) initiated and implemented by EGTC GO on the Italy-Slovenia border. The EGTC was set-up by the three cities of Gorizia, Nova Gorizia and Sempeter-Vrtojba to strategically coordinate policies for the area. This includes transport and logistics, management of energy and environmental resources as well as other sectors strengthening cohesion in the territory. Consequently, the EGTC is involved in jointly managing natural and cultural heritage services in the three cities. The ITI project "Cross-border natural park Isonzo-Soca" capitalises on natural assets in the border region. The ITI was designed to support several objectives of the EGTC territorial strategy.

The third example is the Parc européen Alpi Maritime-Mercantour EGTC between Italy and France, which builds on more than 20 years of cooperation. It was founded to facilitate and promote cooperation among its members in protecting, promoting, and managing the natural, cultural and landscape heritage of the area including the French national park Mercantour and Italian nature

park Alpi Maritime. It is a rare example of an EGTC with an exclusive focus on park area preservation and development, which is linked to the members, who are the two parks.

The parks have a unique natural and cultural heritage that can be best preserved by close collaboration. The EGTC has a joint mission regarding the protection and enhancement of cultural, landscape and natural wealth. For the 2014-2020 period, commonly defined objectives are detailed in an action plan which is implemented through projects that are partly co-funded by the Interreg VA Alcotra Cooperation Programme.

These examples illustrate different ways to facilitate stable collaboration for natural protection and environment preservation. A stable working structure that coordinates the interests of its members can ease decision-making and improve policies that affect the protected areas with truly joint approaches. This unlocks new potential through combining the preservation of natural and cultural heritage or facilitating soft tourism de-


velopment, adding value to the natural capital of the protected areas. EGTCs can manage, act as implementation bodies for projects, develop networks for specific issues and coordinate strategic plans for a territory's development.

Nature protection and preservation of the environment are topics of interest for many other EGTCs. Most often these are cross-border EGTCs with a cross-thematic regional development focus. They are involved in very different ways, including cooperation on tourism, cultural heritage, rural development, forestry and others. The GNP EGTC on the Spanish-Portuguese border, for instance, develops multiple cross-border topics on behalf of its members, including improving environmental quality and protecting natural heritage. Together with other partners, TRITIA EGTC started implementing the Interreg CENTRAL EUROPE project AIR TRITIA in 2017. The project targets improved air quality by developing a unified spatial information database, new management, pollution prediction tools and air quality strategies.



Sandra Sodini, director of the EGTC GO

“Beyond Interreg: EGTC is the tool to strengthen cross-border cooperation investment and services.”

 Name of the project

ITI project “Cross-border natural park Isonzo-Soca”, managed by the EGTC GO

 Duration

From May 2017 to March 2021

 Registered office and MS covered

Based in Gorizia (Italy) and members from Italy and Slovenia

 Project partners

EGTC as single beneficiary

The cross-border ITI supports the development of joint services and infrastructure in municipalities on both sides of the border.

The ITI project carries out territorial intervention under priorities of the Interreg VA Italy-Slovenia Cooperation Programme. It finances support for several CBC programme objectives to address the territorial strategy of EGTC GO planned in 2013. The ITI project was created as a regulatory and territorial instrument to develop multi-specific and cross-border actions in different districts.

Stakeholders work in six commissions with thematic focus on the strategic topics of health care, urban planning, culture, sport and youth, energy and transport. These fields are considered of utmost strategic importance for EGTC activities, as they are an opportunity to strengthen economic and social cohesion in the cross-border area. According to the specific needs of each field, specialised experts such as representatives of universities, municipalities, local sport and culture associations and hospitals, carry out the work.

Each phase of the project has its own obstacles. At the beginning, the main obstacle was cultural, as the three municipalities had never been involved in a programme with wider territorial coverage. There were technical problems in understanding how to transfer the EGTC territorial strategy into the intervention logic of the Interreg Italy-Slovenia Programme. This was also linked to decision-making and control procedures as well as co-financing. Implementation was affected because the EGTC as single beneficiary needs to invest in Italy and Slovenia, respecting the national legislation of each investment.

Prior to the project, development plans of the three municipalities were never merged. This has now been achieved, along with a joint tourism marketing plan for the Isonzo Soča cross-border park.

The project has analysed the difference between Italian and Slovenian health care

legislation, i.e. medical responsibilities and insurance coverage, and compared services in the different districts. EU added-value is through cross-border services and investments. The project enables joint services and infrastructure beyond the borders of the two Member States. Furthermore, the project proposes concrete actions, such as a bike path that connects the different districts.

The ITI is well known and the public expect that the EGTC and the project will generate new services and infrastructure beneficial for the cross-border area.

The ITI project shows how cross-border investments and services can be connected and applied through an EGTC. In this case, the EGTC has widened the perspective of the municipalities and enabled services and investments benefitting the whole region rather than a single municipality.




Christophe Viret and Giuseppe Canavese, director and vice-director of the EGTC

“A European Park from the Alps to the sea.”

 Name of the project
**Parc européen Alpi Marittime –
Mercantour EGTC**

 Duration
**From 2013 for 50
years**

 Registered office and MS covered
**France (base) and
Italy**

 Project partners
**The Alpi Marittime Park and
the Mercantour National Park**

EGTC is a vehicle for a new economy and knowledge creation about the Alpine culture.

The EGTC was founded to strengthen cross-border collaboration between Alpi Marittime Park and Mercantour National Park that goes back to a first collaboration agreement in 1997. The collaboration covers territorial management of the parks and involvement of different stakeholders. The EGTC aims to create a network for the cross-border area.

The EGTC involves a broad range of stakeholders depending on the different activities and projects detailed in the 2014-2020 action plan. Two examples illustrate the variety.

Firstly, for a UNESCO World Heritage site application, stakeholders include the transnational association of tourism operators, such as the Italian Ecotourism Association and French Mercantour tourism association, other Mediterranean Alps natural parks as well as regional and na-

tional entities who all helped to develop the application and draft the dossier.

The Integrated Cross-border Plan project includes public authorities from the regions and districts as well as the local cross-border Italian and French Chambers of Commerce (Cuneo, Nizza and Imperia). The EGTC and the 14 partners promote and boost actions to enhance natural and cultural heritage, territorial planning, ecotourism, sustainable mobility and environmental education. The main obstacles are differences in French and Italian legislation.

The main outcomes are the dossier on the Mediterranean Alps UNESCO World Heritage Site candidature and the action plan 2014-2020. The EGTC's general action plan defines guidelines for activities between the cross-border area and national entities, and management of

the Integrated Cross-border Plan project. This is an integrated project that works on items in the action plan, especially related to natural and cultural heritage, sustainable mobility, climate and innovation, which creates EU added-value. It is also adding value to the Alpine areas of the parks, since mobility and transport make them particularly vulnerable from the social and economic points of view. The EGTC has become a vehicle for economic development and knowledge about the disappearing Alpine culture.

The EGTC is seen locally as a new approach to develop integrated cross-border actions. Its webpage highlights cross-border activities and has created a cross-border network in the parks that strongly impacts the area, in particular through nature conservation, economic development and mobility.



The EGTC Efxini Poli – SolidarCity Network with members from Greece, Cyprus and Bulgaria is an example of how a network EGTC can contribute to environmental protection. It facilitates

exchanges on topics such as the circular economy, energy efficiency, waste prevention and reduced GHG emissions. The EGTC supports members through networking and capacity building rath-

er than by providing a concrete service. It is also involved in EU-funded projects and supports its members in implementing these.

2.4. Cross-border investments and cross-border transport

A priority of TA 2020 is improving territorial connectivity, including fair and affordable mobility. Transport networks “linking the main European centres, such as capitals, metropolitan regions and TEN-nodes and improving linkages between primary and secondary systems should be an essential component of the integrated network”¹. This requires cross-border transport infrastructure investment and new transport services in cross-border areas.

Given their cross-border or transnational character EGTCs can facilitate both transport infrastructure and service development beyond national borders, contributing to improved connectivity and mobility at different territorial levels. Several cross-border regional development EGTCs with a multi-sectoral approach include transport related activities and some EGTCs have a specific

transport focus. This has led to different ways of supporting cross-border and transnational connectivity.

Eurodistrikt-BUS under the EGTC Eurodistrict Strasbourg-Ortenau illustrates a local approach to developing a public transport service in the southern area of the Eurodistrict. The EGTC can only operate a ‘special regular’ bus service rather than a regular bus line. By testing the service, the EGTC acts as an experimental laboratory for a possible regular regional bus across the border. After one year of the special service, establishing a normal service is being reviewed. This needs to consider that there is currently no individual actor with the necessary responsibility and capacity.

This project combines Eurodistrict themes beyond improving mobility. Firstly, it puts the labour market high-


er up the agenda since the bus service supports cross-border commuting, answering needs on both sides of the border. The French Département Bas-Rhin supports the bus line, making it easier for people to work across the border. This reduces unemployment in the area and the cost of unemployment benefits. Many companies on the German side need French workers, which some companies are willing to support through a contribution to the monthly bus ticket. The EGTC also contributes to improved environmental conditions in the Eurodistrict area. Public transport is also normally better for the environment, so the Eurodistrict has allocated more than 10% of its budget for two years to test this bus service. This considerable allocation together with other related Eurodistrict projects show how mobility is considered by the Eurodistrict to enhance regional development.

¹ TA 2020, 2011, para. 36



Frank Scherer, District chief executive of the Ortenaukreis and President of the Eurodistrict Strasbourg-Ortenau


“First and foremost, we need to address issues that are noticed by the people. This bus answers a direct need of citizens.”

 Name of the project

**Eurodistrikt-BUS
ordered by
the Eurodistrict
Strasbourg-Ortenau EGTC**

 Duration

**Since
April 2017,
for a test phase
of 2 years**

 Registered office
and MS covered

**France (base)
and
Germany**

 Project partners

**Département Bas-Rhin, local authorities' association
Canton d'Erstein, Région Grand Est, Ortenau
District Office, local companies and the cities
of Erstein and Lahr**

The Eurodistrikt-BUS project shows that EGTCs can take new paths and create something new if there is an unanswered need.

The Eurodistrikt-BUS is a ‘special regular’ bus service connecting the cities of Erstein and Lahr for French employees working in German companies. The two year test phase should show the need for such a bus line. In 2015 Eurodistrict Strasbourg-Ortenau initiated a study that identified a lack of public cross-border transport links in the southern part of the Eurodistrict area as the area has many cross-border commuters, with French workers employed in German companies. The demand for French workers continues to increase, notably in the expanding airport and business park “startkLahr”. For instance, in 2016, Zalando, an electronic commerce company set-up a warehouse there.

To develop the bus service the EGTC and its members cooperated with several other stakeholders. The EGTC, the Département Bas-Rhin and the Canton d’Erstein local authorities association are key stakeholders, funding the bus together, with the EGTC as the main financer and contracting authority. To develop the bus service, the Ortenaukreis district office, representatives of the startkLahr business park and the cities of Erstein and Lahr jointly assessed interest in a bus service. Other players include the Région Grand Est, the Eurometropole of Strasbourg, the Maison de l’emploi de Strasbourg, as well as German companies benefiting from the service. Some stakeholders contribute through expert knowledge and

others publicise the benefits to potential users and the public.

The biggest challenge was the legal framework, which led to a special regular service rather than a normal service. In addition, EC cabotage regulation limits the use of the bus line, restricting its efficiency. Other challenges are linked to different degrees of interest and engagement from benefiting companies as well as the route as it was hard to define the ‘best’ way to cover as many potential customers as possible without risking extensive detours.

The bus has connected Erstein and Lahr with two bus journeys in each direction per day in line with the needs of workers on dif-

ferent shifts at the big employers. This has been extended to a third daily service as of 01 April 2018 to address the needs of office workers. The number of monthly tickets sold has increased steadily since introduction of the service in April 2017.

The EU added-value of the Eurodistrict-BUS is in improved commuting across the border. Even though the service is limited, in this situation, only the EGTC had sufficient responsibilities, capacity and resources to act as principal for such a cross-border bus line in this area of the Eurodistrict.

Public perception of the project is raised by the bus itself as it advertises the Eurodistrict, pointing out the role of the EGTC. Successful implementation was accompanied by very positive coverage in local newspapers, several regional TV portraits and by regional radio stations.

The project shows that an EGTC can try new tasks, experiment and fill gaps not answered by other stakeholders. Constructive collaboration is crucial between all players with individual responsibilities in the area.

The Eurodistrict contributed, for instance, to the tram between Strasbourg and Kehl through two small projects. A budget was allocated directly after the decision for the tram line was taken in 2012. Due to the limited resources of the Eurodistrict it could not contribute to hard infrastructure but facilitated with soft measures in line with EGTC specific competences and was also responsible for the bilingual communication campaign. In a second project it facilitated an art competition to decorate the tram. These examples show that the EGTC's role is strongly linked to the identity of the Eurodistrict. Both projects build on specific capacities of the EGTC, namely communication and bilingualism, despite very limited financial resources.

Another example is the EGTC Eisenbahnneubaustrecke Dresden-Prague – an EGTC established to facilitate the planning and development of a cross-border railway link in the TEN-T Core Network. This is an example of a cross-border EGTC with a specific fo-

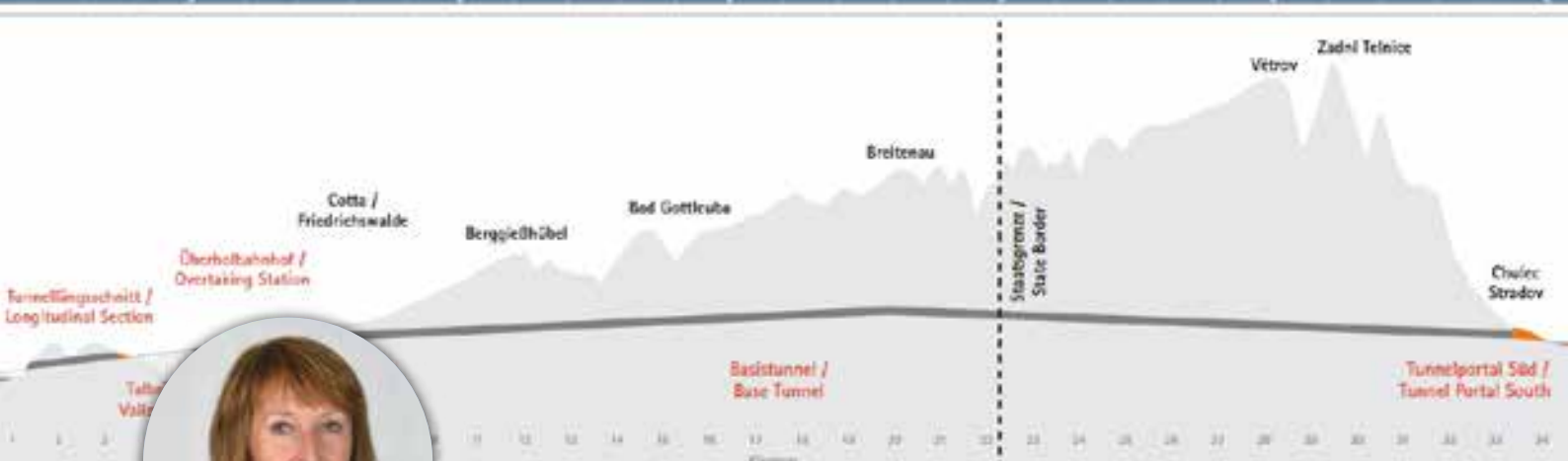


cus on transport. The EGTC instrument was considered particularly useful as it allows different administrative levels of different Member States to be integrated into one legal entity. So, the EGTC is used as a multi-level governance instrument, which allows the potential for more stakeholders to join during development of the cross-border railway link. The multi-level structure includes the districts directly affected by the railway line to ensure that their perspective is integrated in the planning process. This allows the EGTC to act as an intermediary between planners and citizens.

Since this is the first EGTC established in Saxony it has received considerable attention, both from people curious about what an EGTC is and through media coverage. While good media coverage is important it can also negatively affect

planning for a railway link, since it takes many years from the first pre-planning to actual building and then the service.

Both transport examples show that it is important to join forces and contribute to the mutual objective in line with the common interest rather than focusing on individual interest on either side of the border. They also show that it is important to include all stakeholders – when setting-up the EGTC for Eisenbahnneubaustrecke Dresden-Prague or when initiating a transport project such as the Eurodistrict-BUS. Furthermore, simple structures help to get started, even if this implies that more members may have to be integrated later or that the ultimate objective (i.e. the regular regional bus line) is not yet achieved but a step towards this objective is made.



Petra Heldt, director of the EGTC

“The EGTC needs a clear objective. It acts as platform for communicating mutual interests of the cross-border region. That way it can touch sensitive themes.”

Name of the project
Eisenbahnneubaustrecke
Dresden - Prag EVTZ
(New railway line
Dresden - Prague EGTC)

Duration
Founded 2016,
until the new
railway line
is built

Registered office and MS covered
Based in Dresden
(Germany), members
from Germany and
the Czech Republic

Project partners
Free State of Saxony, Czech Republic,
Saxon Switzerland
East Ore Mountain District,
Ústí nad Labem District

Trust, a good strategy and working actively with all stakeholders are the basis for achievements.

The EGTC was set-up to create a European institution that is acknowledged when communicating the interests of the Free State of Saxony and the Czech Republic while developing a new railway line. Through the EGTC it was possible to integrate different administrative levels, from national to regional district level. Including the districts ensured sound communication while developing a new railway line in coherence with local interests.

The EGTC and its members have different roles that are further complemented by external stakeholders. The ministries of Saxony and the Czech Republic encourage the plan. The districts act as multipliers in their regions,

as they are most affected by the planning and should support acceptance by their citizens. Both perspectives are brought together by the EGTC, which organises exchanges and communication and integrates the different perspectives. DB Netz and SŽDC, the German and Czech railway infrastructure managers respectively, complement the EGTC and its members. They are responsible for railway planning and have a guest status in the EGTC.

Obstacles were mainly encountered during set-up. Critical questions were how to take decisions, the extent of contributions from different members and defining the tasks and duration of the EGTC. Search for consensus is

at the heart of unanimity and ensures all interests are represented. Individual member contributions are founded on a clear strategy outlining the main objective to be achieved together. Tasks are defined in line with the different responsibilities of EGTC members, taking into account different legal rules for rail infrastructure in Germany and the Czech Republic.

The EGTC started work in September 2016 and, based on previous efforts, the first results are visible. The EGTC managed to involve the railway companies, funds from Interreg VA were raised for an accompanying cross-border study and, most importantly, the railway

line project is now ranked as a priority in the German Federal Transport Plan. These results point to the EU added-value, by giving cross-border interests a more prominent role. This is complemented by the EU perception of the railway project, as it is a Connecting Europe Facility (CEF) priority measure eligible for funding. There was also positive feedback from the Orient-East-Med (OEM) corridor coordinator.

The EGTC is active in presenting itself and the railway project. Complementing the internet presentation, a new office makes the EGTC highly visible to the public, especially for passing citizens. An exhibition has been organised together with the city of Pirna, in an area concerned by the planning. The EGTC presents itself at TEN-T days and on the German national holiday in 2016 the EGTC had its own presentation in Dresden.

Trust based on previous sound collaboration between the stakeholders is crucial for successfully establishing and working with an EGTC. The EGTC highlights how different administrative levels with different responsibilities can effectively work together supporting an objective of mutual cross-border interest. The legal personality helps in providing expert knowledge, acquiring EU funding and initiating new projects.



Apart from these two examples other cross-border regional development EGTCs facilitate cross-border mobility connected to their wider regional development objectives. Yet again, they do so in very different ways, often through the implementation of Cohesion Policy projects co-funded by Interreg programmes. For example the EGTC Flandre-Dunkerque-Côte d'Opale focuses on improving access for inhabitants dependent on public transport in a very recent Interreg VA project under the France-Wallonie-Flanders Cooperation Programme. Services target the needs of young, elderly and disabled people as well as people in poverty. Together with other partners the Eurodistrict SaarMoselle helps facilitate cross-border public transport in the region. Several activities have been co-financed by the Interreg programmes of the Greater Region. These include a feasibility study to better connect Saarbrücken (DE) and Forbach (FR) with a new tram-train, a cross-border ticket system and public relations for

the cross-border bus between Saarbrücken (DE) and Hombourg-Haut (FR).

EGTCs showcased for other activities in this booklet also engage in transport related activities. One example is the Eurorégion Nouvelle Aquitaine-Euskadi-Navarre (see section 'economy, jobs and growth') involved in developing the POCTEFA co-funded cross-border mobility planner "Transfermuga". Also the Eurocity of Chaves-Verín (see section 'services') is implementing a pilot for cross-border passenger transport. This is part of a cross-thematic Interreg project promoting cooperation in the cross-border urban agglomeration across sectors to increase proximity for citizens in the Eurocity. While all these examples focus on passenger transport, the EGTC Euregio Senza Confini (see section 'integrated tourism') focuses on freight transport. With the "SMARTLOGI" project the EGTC aims to enhance operational and institutional cooperation on sustainable multimodal freight transport to decrease pollution.

In addition, European transport objectives as outlined in TA 2020 are also supported by EGTCs with transnational membership and a focus on a transport corridor. One example is the Interregional Alliance for the Rhine-Alpine Corridor (see section 'attract EU funding'). Its objective is to facilitate and promote territorial cooperation among its members and to jointly strengthen and coordinate the territorial and integrated development of the multimodal Rhine-Alpine Corridor from a regional and local perspective. One central activity was the development of a joint strategy for the Rhine-Alpine Corridor. Another transnational EGTC with a clear focus on transport is the Central European Transport Corridor EGTC, whose aim is to ensure harmonised stakeholder management among the regions in the corridor. Both examples can be seen as EGTCs contributing to planning in functional (transport) areas.

2.5. Cooperation for integrated tourism

In recent years tourism has become a key sector for regional and local development across the EU. The European Commission acknowledges tourism as “a powerful tool in fighting economic decline and unemployment”², although it faces many challenges. In 2015, 5% of EU GDP could be directly linked to tourism. Including indirect activities the share more than doubles to over 10% and in some Member States can account for some 20% of GDP³.

Border regions play an important role in fostering tourism. The section ‘nature protection’ illustrated the functional role of ecosystems across borders and the specific geographical features often

characterising border areas. Preservation areas, mountain ranges, lakes, rivers, sea basins, etc., all have significant potential for tourism, which is better developed jointly than individually. CESCO states that developing “tourism activities jointly can represent often a first step in improving the sense of social cohesion along the borders”⁴. Cross-border tourism cooperation can enrich the attractiveness of a destination and the natural and cultural landscape may be preserved more coherently.

EGTCs can contribute to cross-border integrated tourism when responsible for developing a project, or as a networking

platform supporting policy and activity coordination. This opens multiple possibilities for EGTCs. Strategies can be jointly developed, coordinated or implemented in a specific border region, tourism facilities can be unified and actions better targeted to improve service quality and lower costs in border areas. Although tourism cooperation is mostly at regional level, EGTCs can also contribute to integrated transnational tourism development if a larger territory shares unique features, such as the Alps. Such approaches may be interesting for areas with macro-regional or sea-basin strategies.

² https://ec.europa.eu/growth/sectors/tourism_de

³ CESCO, 2016, pp. 2-3

⁴ Ibid, p. 9



Zoltán Bara, director of the EGTC

“INSiGHTS is an international cooperation developing slow, green and healthy tourism strategies in the Danube region.”

<p> Name of the project</p> <p>INSiGHTS (INtegrated Slow, Green and Healthy Tourism Strategies), Pons Danubii EGTC</p>	<p> Duration</p> <p>Starting date: 01 January 2017 (until 30 June 2019)</p>	<p> Registered office and MS covered</p> <p>Slovakia (base) and Hungary. The project includes also regions in Austria, Bulgaria, Croatia, Germany, Romania, Serbia and Slovenia</p>	<p> Project partners</p> <p>Lead partner: Pons Danubii EGTC (Slovakia)</p> <p>ERDF partners: University of Natural Resources and Life Sciences Vienna (Austria), Development centre of the Heart of Slovenia (Slovenia), Zala County Government (Hungary), Local Action Group “Central Istria” (Croatia), Regional Development Agency with Business Support Centre for Small and Medium-sized Enterprises (Bulgaria), Donautal-Aktiv e.V. Registered Association (Germany), CEEweb for Biodiversity (Hungary), Harghita County Council (Romania)</p> <p>IPA partner: Regional Economic Development Agency for Šumadija and Pomoravlje (Serbia)</p> <p>Associated partners: Plovdiv District Administration (Bulgaria), Komárom-Esztergom County (Hungary), Istrian Region - Administrative Department for Tourism (Croatia)</p>
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Integrated tourism strategies help raise the attractiveness of the Danube region.

The EGTC’s involvement in the SWARE project under the Interreg Europe Programme triggered an application for a project under the Interreg Danube Programme where the EGTC looked for tourism and culture project proposals. The EGTC wanted to participate in related projects since tourism repeatedly turned up as a key issue. The Danube region is crucial for the EGTC and offered a suitable

call. During the project development, the EGTC conducted workshops with local stakeholders and member municipalities. The result was the decision to apply for calls connected to tourism.

Apart from the project partners, other stakeholders of the INSiGHTS project are tourism SMEs, destination organisations, municipalities, non-profit organisations

and local and regional media. Different types of stakeholder workshops were organised. One of the workshops aimed to create a regional SWOT analysis and prepare a green and healthy tourism vision or strategy for the regions. Other examples are ‘picnic workshops’ with regional stakeholders and local residents promote projects and pilot activities and enable media coverage for a specific region.

Obstacles concerned financing. In Slovakia there is no financial contribution from the state. Therefore, the EGTC had to pre-finance its own contribution. Originally, the Croatia Institute for Tourism was also a project partner, but they could not cover their staff costs so the tasks of this partner were redistributed, creating additional administrative and refinancing efforts for the EGTC. Originally, the EGTC was expected to have an external expert coordinating project management, so EGTC staff could focus on thematic issues. Despite budgeting for the costs, project management had to be implemented by EGTC staff due to delays in public procurement (ex-ante assessment and other issues).

There were several deliverables and outputs in the first year, including pilot partner status reports with regional analysis re-

ports, good practices as well as documents about workshops and management methodology. The outputs are complemented by multilateral meetings with lectures on topics such as digital tourism, site visits or critical classrooms, where SWOT analyses are conducted or strategies and visions developed. These multilateral meetings of all partners helped to transfer ideas and results between regions.

For EU added-value, Pons Danubii EGTC plays a crucial role in regional development in the Slovakian-Hungarian border area. It has the contacts and regional development insights and is a useful instrument for implementing such projects. It can help link regions along the Danube with the same objectives for natural and cultural heritage and resources. In this context, tourism is a hot issue in Central Europe.

Media coverage of the project is good, including through local television as well as local and regional newspapers from all project partners. A project website with a newsletter, social media, leaflets and roll-ups inform continuously about the project. The information is available in English and the national languages of project partners on their institutional websites. Further dissemination includes participation in international conferences.

The project illustrates how it is possible to bring together stakeholders from different administrative levels and from different socio-economic backgrounds in Central and Eastern Europe to work together on a common objective.



The cross-border Pons Danubii EGTC was founded in 2010 to implement territorial development projects in the Slovakia-Hungary border area. The EGTC implements projects that tackle policy fields such as entrepreneurship, tourism, environment and accessibility. Projects use different funding resources, i.e. EU and national funds and members resources.

The EGTC previously focused on cross-border tourism. The INSIGHTS project broadens this perspective to the Danube Region by involving partners from eight Member States and Serbia. It combines local activities with a transnational perspective. Pons Danubii EGTC as lead partner of the INSIGHTS project combines local, cross-border and transnational perceptions of tourism development. The project aims to make regions on the Danube more attractive to

tourists, benefitting local citizens. The unique natural and cultural resources near the river are protected as they encourage slow, green and healthy tourism. The main outcome will be eight integrated sustainable tourism strategies for partner regions, adaptable to conditions in other parts of the Danube Region.


The Senza Confini EGTC, established in 2012 aims to encourage, facilitate and promote cross-border, transnational and interregional cooperation in support of economic, social and territorial cohesion. Project implementation covers a broad range of topics, from energy and environment, tourism and local infrastructure, to work and vocational training. The EGTC offers its partners a more structured approach to implement ETC projects compared to their individual approaches.

The EGTC is implementing several ETC projects, including FIT4Co (strengthening cooperation in the cross-border area), EUMINT (strengthening cross-border institutional cooperation), HEALTHNET (defining innovative health and social intervention models through shared organisational approaches) and others. Expertise from such projects creates the basis for the EGTC's involvement beyond its territory, including coordinating two Alpine Convention working groups during 2017-2018. Tourism is at the heart of the EGTC's interest and the most recent project, EMOTIONWay, was approved in December 2017 and is co-financed by the Interreg VA Italy-Austria Cooperation programme. The project looks into improving access to sites of natural and cultural interest for walkers and cyclists and aims to improve information and visibility for untapped natural sites.



Carlo Fortuna, director of the EGTC Euregio Senza Confini

"I did not see the shadow of a foreign land beyond the gate"
(cit. Giovanni Caproni)

 Name of the project

Working group 'Sustainable Tourism' under the Alpine Convention, Euregio Senza Confini EGTC

 Duration

EGTC: 30 years – renewable; Working group coordination 2017-2018

 Registered office and MS covered

Italy (base) and Austria. The EGTC is currently open for Istria (Croatia) and Slovenian regions to join.

 Project partners

Carinthia Region, Friuli Venezia Giulia Autonomous Region, Veneto Region

Integrated tourism strategies, networks and innovative tourism products have to be considered for the territorial quality of tourist destinations.

The EGTC Euregio Senza Confini was founded in an area with different cultures, traditions and languages that share a common history albeit with changing national borders. The area is at the intersection of two TEN-T core network corridors, the Mediterranean and Adriatic Baltic corridors, which also impacts tourism development.

EGTC members are three regional authorities who, together with their local authorities, are the main stakeholders in the EGTC's activities. In addition, the EGTC collaborates with the

local branches of Ministries, research institutes and universities, regional scholastic offices, health authorities and hospitals as well as tourism promotion agencies.

Part of the wider networking and cooperation is the work for the Alpine Convention. For 2017-2018 the EGTC coordinates the Alpine Convention Mountain Forests and Sustainable Tourism transnational working groups. The Sustainable Tourism working group covers the core issues of greening alpine tourism through

reduced CO2 emissions and the identification of strategies for innovative tourism products. The working group brings together many players for whom sustainable tourism in the Alps is important. This includes national, regional and local authorities, universities and research centres, the transnational Interreg VB Alpine Space Cooperation Programme as well as associations and NGOs such as Alparc, CIPRA and ProMont-BLANC.

As coordinator of the Sustainable Tourism working group, the EGTC

established a network of seven destinations in the Alpine Convention region based on the final report of the 2015-2016 working group. Recommendations look at the feasibility of an award to recognise sustainable Alpine tourism destinations and strategies for innovative tourism products to encourage a more sustainable,

competitive and accessible network of destinations.

Apart from EGTC activities in the relatively large cross-border territory it covers, the EGTC's involvement in other networks creates EU added-value. The EGTC is recognised as a strategic partner of the territory. It can

create synergies with both Alpine and Adriatic-Ionian macro-regional strategies. Through cross-border projects in different fields, including tourism, the EGTC accumulates knowledge and expertise that enhances other cross-border projects and transfers to the transnational level in the Alpine and Adriatic-Ionian Regions.



Both examples highlight the multi-level governance approach in support of integrated tourism. This involves creating links between wider tourism strategies and local cross-border implementation. EGTCs often have more capacity to search for appropriate funding sources than their individual members. The examples illustrate this through combining funding sources and activities, respectively. As with other policy fields the stable institutional structure is suitable for long-term cooperation requiring different activities to achieve overarching objectives.

Many cross-border EGTCs with a regional development objective refer in their documents to tourism. For example, the Espacio Portalet EGTC between France and Spain promotes private-public collaboration for tourism activities to enhance sustainable development and improve the quality of life. The Eurocity of Chaves-Verín is involved in developing and managing tourism services in the Eurocity area (see section 'services'). The Mura Region EGTC between Hungary and Croatia is implementing the project "Two Rivers, One Goal" co-funded by the Interreg VA Hungary-Croatia

Cooperation Programme 2014-2020. This project focuses on sustainable water tourism along the Mura and Drava rivers to benefit from the area's natural and cultural assets. The Efxini Poli-SolidarCity Network EGTC has another approach as partner of the Interreg VB Mediterranean co-funded project CONSUME-LESS. The project promotes smart and sustainable growth in Mediterranean coastal tourism cities through integrated sustainable energy, water and waste management strategies and tourism models promoting less consumption.

2.6. Cooperation in education and culture

In the Europe 2020 Strategy, education is a central pillar to creating growth and jobs. Through broader and better education, life-long learning and enhanced cross-border and international exchange, the EU's structural economic weaknesses can be overcome and competitiveness improved. This is at the heart of the strategy's flagship initiatives "An agenda for new skills and jobs" and "Youth on the move". Interventions in education should increase employment, boost R&D, reduce the number of early school leavers, increase the share of people with higher education levels and reduce poverty⁵. Actions are detailed in the EC communication "Rethinking Education: Investing in skills for better socio-economic outcomes"⁶. This requires building skills, stimulating flexible learning and promoting collaboration. Across Europe it calls

for greater coherence for "recognition of academic qualifications across borders, acquired in vocational and higher education."⁷ This requires domestic policies and improved conditions for international mobility at EU level and in cross-border and transnational regions.

Preserving and fostering Europe's cultural heritage is highlighted in the Strategic framework "European Agenda for Culture"⁸, while acknowledging the responsibility of Member States to implement culture sector policies. As stressed by the TA 2020 valuable cultural heritage does not consider borders.⁹ So, cross-border or transnational cooperation may produce greater benefits.

Given this wide framework, EGTCs can contribute in very different ways to ed-

ucation and cultural heritage objectives. The EGTC 2017 monitoring report shows that several EGTCs promote cross-border education and exchange projects and support cultural activities and heritage through events as well as preservation activities. Contributions from EGTCs range from facilitating coordination and bundling education and research institution activities, to project implementation. EGTC activities could also consider transnational areas.

The Eurométropolis Lille-Kortrijk-Tournai EGTC, established in 2008 between Belgium and France, facilitates cross-border cooperation to improve everyday life for citizens. It is a platform to exchange the views of political decision-makers from both Member States.

5 COM(2010) 2020 final, pp.12-13, 17-19

6 COM(2012) 669 final

7 COM(2012) 669 final, p.8

8 COM(2007) 242 final

9 TA 2020, 2010, para. 31



Loïc Delhuvence, director of the EGTC

“The Eurometropolis Lille-Kortrijk-Tournai is a truly cross-border living area aimed at facilitating the daily life of Belgian and French citizens”

 Name of the project
TALATA project (talent pour les langues / talent voor talen)

 Duration
From 2017 to 2019

 Registered office and MS covered
Belgium (base), members are from France and Belgium.

 Project partners
Eurométropole Lille-Kortrijk-Tournai EGTC, VIVES, HELHa, Espe LNF, Académie de Lille, Apnes, Université de Lille, Howest

Promotion of better knowledge of regions in Europe is key for European integration.

The TALATA project is building an axis for primary and secondary education to teach Dutch and encourage French in the Lille-Kortrijk-Tournai region. The project also promotes the mobility of teachers, trainees (language internships) and students. The project has been promoted by political representatives and civil society stakeholders of the Eurometropolis Action Group ‘Language learning’.

A wide variety of stakeholders includes Haute École Louvain en Hainaut (HELHa), VIVES University College, Académie de Lille, Association des Professeurs de Neerlandais de

l’enseignement secondaire du Nord de la France (APNES), Université de Lille, Howest University College, École Supérieure du Professorat et de l’Éducation (ESPE) and Lille North of France (district LNF). They are involved in the interregional exchange of expertise on ways to learn languages. This in turn strengthens project methodologies and sustainable cooperation. Schools from France, Wallonia and the Flemish region are also stakeholders directly involved in TALATA activities. They participate in bilateral cross-border or trans-regional exchanges and actions such as student meetings via social media or in schools, exchange

of experiences about sustainable themes, or a trip to Gavers in Flanders.

At the very beginning, the most important obstacle for the project was its administration. The Eurométropole and its partners set up a school axis involving three different regions, developing a partnership between France and Belgium. Including three regions from different Member States created complexity and during implementation, the project also faced cultural obstacles.

The main outcome is the promotion of cohesion to young people and

teachers in the cross-border area. It also contributes to integrating young people (9-14 years) across the border. This mirrors EU added-value since the project supports knowledge creation in the regions, as well as learning another EU language, the cross-border network, exchanges and cross-border

work. The project is valued highly by the public who are informed about project activities through the website, social media, a newsletter and forum.

The project has developed a toolbox for twinning schools, targeted at students, teachers and stakeholders.

The toolbox, developed by the EGTC Steering Committee, helps bridge gaps between languages, cultures and methods and should facilitate the exchange process. The TALATA project illustrates how to stimulate European integration in primary and high schools.

The EGTC also applies for, and implements ETC projects on behalf of its members. Culture is a key topic addressed in the pluri-cultural Eurometropolis and cultural activities are based on bilingualism, mixed cultures and European citizenship. Projects focusing on education stimulate cooperation for education institutions including exchanges between schools and universities. The TALATA micro-project promotes learning the neighbouring country's language, bringing together different teaching cultures. Its overarching goal is to make younger generations more communicative and more European.

Until now Eucor – The European Campus is the sole EGTC with only universities as members. Other EGTCs with a comparable structure are under development. The members are five universities from France, Germany and Switzerland in the Upper Rhine valley. Focus is on joint research in quantum physics and quantum technology, precision medicine, sustainability sciences and cultural studies. The universities contribute to a

joint funding instrument to initiate innovative joint projects in research and training. Cooperation has led to binational and trinational bachelors and masters courses. Most projects focus on cooperation in the Upper Rhine valley.

Since 2017, the EGTC has been a partner of the Erasmus+ project "European Cross-border Skills (ECBS)" which brings together universities from six Member States. This entails a geographically wider perspective than most other EGTC activities. Some partners also represent university co-operations so the project is embedded in a multi-lingual education and research environment. The project objective is to set-up a joint reference framework accrediting cross-border skills in all participating universities, including an online platform.

These two examples illustrate how EGTCs can support cross-border co-operation for very specific and local aspects, such as cooperation between primary schools in the TALATA project,

but also high-level collaboration between universities. With the University of Basel, Eucor – The European Campus is one of the few EGTCs with a member from a Third country. The EGTC provides opportunities for the University of Basel to collaborate in international research and education projects giving the cooperation more consistency.

There is a wide variety of other EGTC activities dealing with education or culture. This includes cross-border EGTCs with a general regional development focus and EGTCs based on networking or transnational structures.

A few examples can highlight the variety of activities. One is the EGTC Alzette Belval (see section 'economy, jobs and growth'). While addressing several thematic fields, the EGTC considers training and education to be key drivers for employment and mobility. It offers cross-border school exchange scholarships to teachers and has organised a conference for young people on European mobility.



Mr Janosch Nieden, director of the EGTC Eucor – The European Campus

“The project ‘European Cross-border skills’ enables member universities to take stock and to capitalise on the skills students gained through an exchange programme.”

 Name of the project	 Duration	 Registered office and MS covered	 Project partners
Erasmus+ Project ‘European Cross-border skills’ with the Eucor – The European Campus EGTC	2017 – 2020	Germany (base), members from France and Switzerland, project members from France, Germany, Luxembourg, Italy, Spain and Switzerland	Université du Pau et des Pays d’Adour (UPPA), Franco-Spanish grouping with UPPA, Universidad de Zaragoza (UNIZAR) and The University of the Basque Country (UPV/EHU), Franco-German-Luxembourgish-Belgian grouping with Université de la Grande Région and Universität des Saarlandes, Eucor EGTC and Franco-Italian grouping with Université Savoie Mont Blanc and Università della Valle D’Aosta.

The project tests how the Erasmus+ programme and eventually the Bologna process can be developed further.

The ‘European Cross-border skills’ project jointly runs a process enabling universities to certify and recognise student and staff cross-border skills. These skills are developed through cross-border exchange programmes such as Erasmus+ and other bilateral and multilateral exchanges. The project will help capitalise on these skills and allow the universities to assess how student and staff development can be better supported.

The project is set up through three chronological work packages; 1) Data collection of ways for students, researchers and staff

gain cross-border experience offered by the universities, 2) Catalogue skills that could be learned through student mobility programmes and 3) Implement a platform where project results can assist further development and discussion with third party universities (e.g. exchange best practices).

The project started in 2017 and is currently in the early implementation phase. A multi-lingual survey was launched among member universities to create an inventory of the student exchanges, mobility services and programmes that are

currently offered by the universities. In a subsequent step, the results will be used to draw up cross-border competences to be developed under existing mobility services.

The project is financed by the European Union with support from the Erasmus+ programme (key action 2). Eucor – The European Campus EGTC is involved in the project on behalf of its five member universities of Basel, Freiburg, Haute-Alsace, Strasbourg and Karlsruhe. Each project member is represented operationally by their international exchange depart-

ments and in the steering committee by the university presidents.

The project is neither a classic research project nor a project focussed solely on coordination, so the partners had different expectations for the project. A balance between operational coordination and intellectual output was already anticipated in the design of the project. Eucor – The European Campus, faces challenges in evaluating the funding absorption capability. Erasmus+ funding usually pre-supposes a strong formal or contractual link between the institution

and its staff. The EGTC works with delegated staff and without headcount so the capability to absorb funding is usually evaluated poorly. Whether the EGTC's share of the Erasmus+ funding could possibly be allocated to the grouping is not yet decided.

It is still too early to widely publicise the project and little information is currently accessible, but the project should gain more attention with the changing alignment towards interconnecting universities in a "European Universities Networks", as advanced by both French President

Macron and the new Erasmus+ programming cycle starting in 2021.

The EGTC is a relevant partner at EU level, because the project has international partners, cross-border associations and instruments, as well as an international topic. The results should help universities in other border areas to capitalise and develop on the cross-border skills of their students gained through an exchange programme

The PAMINA EGTC covers several related activities such as education and training, education and bilingualism, culture as well as focussed support involving skilled workers and employers increasing their cross-border opportunities. One of many project examples is "Weltenbummler" (globetrotter), which invites young people (9+) to explore the border area online. The Eurodistrict Strasbourg-Ortenau (see section 'transport') is also a partner in this project which covers the whole Upper Rhine area. Another project implemented by the Eurodistrict Strasbourg-Ortenau EGTC was targeted at refugee children. The project was implemented as the in-

tegration of refugees in Europe can be better managed through cross-border and international cooperation. In 2017, the EGTC provided about EUR 50,000 to support refugee children up to 25 years old to integrate in the territory¹⁰. Other EGTCs have a stronger cultural focus as seen in the link between environment protection and cultural heritage preservation for the ZASNET and Parc européen Alpi Marittime – Mercantour EGTCs (see section 'nature protection').

One example of a territorially wider approach for education is the EUKN EGTC. Its objective is to exchange knowledge on economic, social and

urban issues between European Member States and provide knowledge support to the Urban Agenda for the EU. An additional example for research and education on transnational issues is the ESPON EGTC. This functions as a research platform to foster the European territorial dimension in development and cooperation (see section 'programme management'). Finally, the Amphictony EGTC is a partner in the Erasmus+ project DEN-CUPID, which brings education and culture together. It is a digital educational network implementing cultural projects and offering training for cultural management.

¹⁰ See: <http://www.eurodistrict.eu/de/projets/die-ausgew%C3%A4hlten-projekte-des-unterst%C3%BCtzungsfonds-f%C3%BCr-fl%C3%BCchtlingskinder-2017>

2.7. Cross-border cooperation for the economy, jobs and growth

Economic cooperation, jobs and growth are at the heart of European policy, including through endorsement of the Europe 2020 Strategy in 2010. The strategy puts forward smart, sustainable and inclusive growth as three interlinked priorities. These overarching priorities have been translated into the thematic objectives of European Structural and Investment Funds (ESIF) for the 2014-2020 period¹¹ under the investment for growth and jobs goal. This political objective has been further reinforced by adopting the Investment Plan for Europe (the Juncker Plan) in 2015.

TA 2020 provides links to these documents with its focus on the role of the territory. Several TA 2020 territorial priorities are based on economic cooperation, jobs and growth, including the third priority "Territorial integration in cross-border and transnational functional regions". Here TA 2020 stresses the role of territorial cooperation for fostering competitiveness. Accordingly, territorial "integration and cooperation can create a critical mass for development, diminishing economic, social and ecological fragmentation, building mutual trust and social capital."¹²

The EGTC regulation amendment in 2013 broadened the tasks of EGTCs. According to EGTC Regulation Article 7, EGTCs can contribute to economic, social and terri-

torial cohesion and also act to overcome internal market barriers. Many cross-border EGTCs follow a general regional development approach, which often includes economic development of the cross-border region that may be seen in the light of cohesion objectives as well as reducing internal barriers. This is visible in several EGTC conventions if they state that the EGTC shall support sustainable development in the cross-border area (e.g. SaarMoselle) as an objective, if they refer to activities for improving everyday life of the border area population, or activities that reduce border difficulties (e.g. Strasbourg-Ortenau). Typically, EGTC activities supporting economic cooperation, jobs and growth cannot be presented through EGTCs but are implemented through individual projects that may complement the activities of an EGTC.

The EMPLEO AE project implemented by the Eurorégion Nouvelle Aquitaine-Euskadi-Navarre in 2016/17 is an example of developing a cross-border area as a single employment area. The project is embedded in priorities and measures identified as crucial for strategic development of the Euroregion. One of the weaknesses was the lack of a common employment area due to various asymmetries hampering cross-border worker mobility and economic cooperation. Potential was identified regarding a diverse industrial fabric,

the availability of highly qualified workers and industrial sector complementarities between Aquitaine and Euskadi. Considering weaknesses and potentials together highlighted that the Euroregional area could develop an integrated economic zone in some sectors and that combining the labour market across the regions would improve prospects for local citizens.

The EMPLEO AE project started by comprehensively analysing cross-border worker flows to specify ways to support an integrated labour market in the Euroregion. Such integration should be achieved when more job creation is expected, though border territories have an aging population and language barriers as well as discrepancies in tax and social systems persist. To overcome these challenges, two methodological approaches are crucial. Firstly, the project applies open governance that continuously engages all stakeholders. Secondly, the EGTC has been active in exchanges with Euroregions with a more integrated labour market, such as the Upper Rhine or the France-Belgium border.

The second example is the project "Alzette Belval, vivons ensemble!" – Alzette Belval, living together! The EGTC acts as lead partner of the project co-funded by the Interreg VA Programme of the

¹¹ Regulation (EU) No 1303/2013, Art.9

¹² TA 2020, para 31

Greater Region. It is one of the projects supporting a shared vision that enables cross-border integration of people on the border between France and Luxembourg. Education, sports and culture institutions play a central role in bringing people from both sides of the border together. The vision of living together is supported by meetings between local stakeholders, events and exchanges and through local meetings with citizens promoting “cross the border”.

Implementation of the project through the EGTC gives it a neutral perspective building trust in the activities. Since the EGTC was founded only in 2012, it is still perceived as a new partner that can create new dynamics.



The two examples illustrate different ways that EGTCs can contribute to economic cooperation, jobs and growth. One project has a strong labour market focus, whereas the other takes a broader approach that invites inhabitants to cross

the border, especially targeting young people. Despite these differences, the projects show the importance of continuously bringing together many local and regional players, so they are an instrument for multi-level governance. Whether aiming to better integrate the labour market or to develop a cross-border agglomeration, both EGTCs show that projects supporting economic development and jobs need a long term perspective for which an EGTC, being a durable structure, can be suitable. Often EGTCs help implement Cohesion Policy projects.



Leyre Azcona, project manager of EMPLEO AE

“Foster cooperation to achieve a balanced and sustainable territorial development”

 Name of the project EMPLEO AE	 Duration From 2017 to 2018	 Registered office and MS covered Members from Spain and France	 Project partners Lanbide- Servicio Vasco de Empleo (Basque Employment Service), Pôle Emploi Aquitaine (Aquitaine Employment Service) and Directorate Aquitaine Agence Nationale pour l'Emploi (Aquitania Regional Directorate for Enterprises, Competition, Consumption, Labor and Employment). Inclusion of Navarra as a member of the EGCT, also brought the Navarran Employment Service (Servicio Navarro de Empleo – Nafar Lansare).
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Reinforced worker mobility should improve territorial cohesion in the region and requires shared statistical data about the cross-border jobs market.

Establishment of the Euroregion EGTC Aquitaine-Euskadi in November 2011 was an important political commitment. This was reinforced and consolidated in December 2014 with a Euroregional Strategic Plan and in 2017 with the inclusion of Navarra, when the name also changed to Euroregion Nouvelle Aquitaine-Euskadi-Navarre. Based on the strategic plan, the development of a Euroregional employment area fostering a dynamic area of opportunity for companies and citizens became a priority. The EMPLEO AE project was conceived as an

instrument to overcome challenges and take advantage of synergies.

The project, worth 250,000 euros has been 65% co-financed by ERDF through the Interreg VA Spain-France-Andorra Programme (POCTEFA 2014 -2020). The EMPLEO AE project not only aimed at analysing cross-border commuting, but also at addressing cross-border employment from a multidisciplinary point of view. This included analysis of double taxation, social security coverage, retirement rights and problems companies face with work on the other side of the

border. The aim was to identify ways to overcome the difficulties and achieve greater fluidity for cross-border workers and business relations.

EMPLEO AE has included multiple public and private agents. It was designed to incorporate not only the views of a large group of stakeholders, but to make them part of the project itself, through open governance supporting stakeholder ownership. This required working closely with the industrial sector and workers to identify their needs, understand the realities they face and identify solutions. At the

same time, cooperation and coordination is enhanced with stakeholders (associations, chambers of commerce, trade unions, local development agencies, youth forums, workers' representatives, statistical institutes) and public bodies from the three regions. This includes tax and social security departments and agencies.

Obstacles mainly related to administrative burdens and a lack of information and comparable data. The geographical delineation changed when the Foral Community of Navarre joined the Euroregion,

and Aquitaine region merged with the regions of Limousin and Poitou-Charentes. This caused delays in the project development, including engaging and involving stakeholders from the new territories.

The study points out several recommendations to develop cross-border mobility. This includes promoting the "neighbouring" language, administrative and tax support for cross-border workers, improved availability of statistical information and training for public sector workers. By the end of July 2018

the information web portal should be deployed, allowing workers, companies and students to find relevant and reliable information, also on job opportunities. Several training courses are planned to connect the public bodies in the three regions, and train them on cross-border topics. These actions should impact the cross-border labour market beyond the project duration. EMPLEO AE should contribute to European employment strategies by permanently removing legal and practical obstacles to the free movement of workers. The EGTC is particularly suitable to ensure the success of the project, as it can mobilise and engage actors across the three regions, uniting national, regional and local levels to ensure the cross-border character of the project.

Development and implementation of the project has been seen positively by social sector actors and inhabitants in the three regions and was well covered by the media.

One key aspect of the project has been the involvement and commitment of local, regional and national actors. This was essential to collect information and data facilitating long-term support for integrating the cross-border labour market.



EGTCs more frequently tend to be involved in strategy development, building the basis for actions supporting jobs and growth. This is often why softer tasks are typically assigned to EGTCs by their members. For example, GNP EGTC manages cross-border cooperation for competitiveness and employment on the border between Galicia (Spain) and North Portugal. The EGTC is involved in delivering the cross-border smart specialisation strategy of Galicia-Northern Portugal (RIS3T) and the regional common investment plan. In other cases, EGTCs combine projects, as with RDV

EGTC (see section 'programme management'). Different projects support the creation of new jobs, reducing unemployment in the border area. Some projects focus on economic sectors such as the consumer market for people aged 50+ and the herbal economy to show new development potential. Another project supported the empowerment of young people by developing skills, knowledge and experience in ecological production.

AEuCC EGTC has another sector specific approach, focusing on interregional

networking rather than cross-border regional development. It was established by national Associations of Ceramics Cities to foster relations across Europe for artistic and craft ceramics. The EGTC's main objectives support the ceramic sector through cultural heritage, tourism, training, product and process development. With the Erasmus+ project approved in April 2018, AEuCC together with project partners wants to elaborate new vocational training models to support the ceramics sector's development.



Dorothée Habay-lê, director of the EGTC Alzette Belval

“Alzette Belval is an EGTC to facilitate cooperation in a rapidly changing cross-border context”

 Name of the project “Alzette Belval, vivons ensemble!”	 Duration From 2016 to 2018	 Registered office and MS covered France (base) and Luxembourg	 Project partners EGTC Alzette Belval, Kulturfabrik Esch-sur-Alzette, AGORA sàrl & Cie (both Luxembourg), Inspection de l’Education Nationale (IEN) Thionville 3 Hayange (France). The project is targeted at administrations, associations, schools, high schools and citizens.
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Building a shared vision of the cross-border agglomeration and its future will make cross-border integration real for its inhabitants.

The “Alzette Belval, vivons ensemble!” project was created to promote cross-border agglomeration of the area. It was established to develop the “feeling of belonging” to the same cross-border city and to help local actors develop cross-border projects in sport, tourism, culture, agriculture, education, etc.

Stakeholders of “Alzette Belval, vivons ensemble!” are education authorities from France and Luxembourg, who encouraged teachers to participate in a cross-border project, local actors, who implemented activities such as the Kulturfabrik cultural centre, schools, youth

and sport associations and tourism stakeholders. Finally, the local municipalities share projects and communicate with citizens.

The main obstacle during implementation concerned the different authorisation processes, which prohibited efficient implementation of the projects. Since local authorities are involved in the project, it is supported by local politicians.

“Alzette Belval, vivons ensemble!” creates bridges between French and Luxembourg sport, culture and tourism organisations to encourage cross-border coopera-

tion. During the first year of the project, there were four cross-border networks focused on sport, leisure, culture and tourism as well as education. There were also several cross-border meetings and events covering race, judo, school exchanges, Alzette Belval heritage day, etc. Finally, the Alzette Belval project set-up a platform to inform citizens about local meetings and events. The project directly involved inhabitants, using press articles, as well as radio and TV interviews, so feedback has been positive.

The project is not seen as French or Luxembourgish, which is a key factor in giv-

ing the neutrality needed to develop the cross-border agglomeration. In terms of EU added-value, the project creates feel-

ings of inclusion in cross-border areas. In terms of transferability, local actions involving local municipalities and as-

sociations could be replicated in other cross-border areas to promote life in an area without borders.



2.8. Cooperation to attract EU funding

Strengthening economic, social and territorial cohesion requires funding. Due to their cross-border or transnational nature, with members from at least two Member States and their focus on territorial cooperation, EGTCs may benefit above all from ETC programmes, also known as Interreg. ETC regulation (EU) No 1299/2013 specifies roles of EGTCs in implementing ETC, including the option to be the sole beneficiary of a programme or parts thereof.

Nevertheless, ETC funding opportunities may not be sufficient as they do not offer funding for all topics tackled by EGTCs in their efforts to contribute to economic, social and territorial cohesion. EGTCs may also benefit from other Cohesion Policy programmes or even other EU policies and programmes.

EGTCs may not only apply for project funding but can also implement ETC programmes or parts thereof, generating funding for programme management and facilitation.¹³ This specific role is further illustrated below in section 'programme management'. The following examples focus on how EGTCs raise funds to implement their projects. They do so as project partners of ETC programmes, partially leading projects, or acting as the single beneficiary of an ETC project. But EGTCs can also raise funds from other Cohesion Policy programmes and other EU sector policies. Outside ETC, however, EGTCs are not entitled to apply as sole beneficiary but may apply in the same way as any other public institution.

The following example illustrates how EGTCs can be part of ETC programmes, tapping on resources and functions, as well as contributing to the implemen-

tation of Cohesion Policy projects. The second example shows how funding outside Cohesion Policy may be relevant for EGTCs with a specific thematic focus.

EGTC TATRY joined the Polish and Slovak associations that make up the Euroregion in the Tatry Mountains. This institutional development was supported through the Polish-Slovakian cross-border cooperation programme 2007-2013. Creating a joint institution required overcoming existing administrative and legal barriers. The EGTC originally aimed to implement the Interreg VA Programme Poland-Slovakia Small Project Fund. Since this did not materialise the EGTC refocused on implementing projects financed either through Interreg or without EU co-funding. In the Interreg VA Programme Poland-Slovakia the EGTC is lead partner in one project and single beneficiary in another.

¹³ Regulation (EU) No 1299/2013, Art. 22



Agnieszka Pyzowska, director of the EGTC

“EGTC TATRY is an opportunity for the further development of Polish-Slovak cross-border cooperation of Euroregion ‘Tatry’”

 Name of the project
EGTC TATRY Ltd.

 Duration
Founded in 2013

 Registered office and MS covered
Based in Nowy Targ (Poland), members from Poland and Slovakia

 Project partners

Members from Poland are: Euroregion “Tatry” Association, with 30 counties, towns and municipalities from the Małopolska Region.

Members from Slovakia are: Region “Tatry” Association, which brings together 100 towns and villages from: Kežmarok, Levoča, Poprad, Sabinov, Stará Ľubovňa in the Prešov Region; Dolný Kubín, Liptovský Mikuláš, Námestovo, Ružomberok, Tvrdošín in the Žilina Region, and Spišská Nová Ves in the Košice Region.

As a single beneficiary EGTC TATRY can implement EU funded projects effectively and efficiently.

EGTC TATRY was established by the Polish Euroregion “Tatry” Association (Związek Euroregion “Tatry”) and the Slovak Region “Tatry” Association (Združenie Región “Tatry”). The founders of the EGTC have cooperated since 1994, when Polish and Slovak local authorities created Euroregion “Tatry” with the two associations. The Euroregion is the initiator, participant and coordinator of numerous cross-border initiatives and projects implemented with funding from the European Union. Polish and Slovak cooperation for Euroregion “Tatry” motivated the creation of EGTC TATRY. Another reason was to develop Polish-Slovak cross-border cooperation at a qualitatively higher and

quantitatively more intensive level. This especially regards more effective and efficient implementation of projects in the Interreg V-A Poland-Slovakian 2014-2020 Programme. The EGTC should contribute to solving various cross-border problems of local border communities. The EGTC concentrates on activities and projects for its members and the municipalities in the area.

When setting-up EGTC TATRY there was no applicable Polish experience, especially with Euroregions as EGTC members. Cooperation and consultation with ministries responsible for approving the

EGTC convention and statutes were very useful in avoiding potential mistakes and lengthy processes. At the beginning the EGTC had problems when trying to participate in the management of the Small Project Fund as a single beneficiary under one of the three planned umbrella programmes. Despite being supported by the Managing Authority of the the Interreg VA Programme, this was not broadly supported and the EGTC refocussed its ETC related activities.

Despite these shortcomings, EGTC TATRY participates actively and with different roles in the implementation of

Interreg V-A Poland-Slovakia 2014-2020 Programme. EGTC TATRY is the lead partner of the flagship project “Cycling route around the Tatra Mountains – stage II” with nine Polish and Slovak local governments. The EGTC is the sole beneficiary of the micro-project “Cross-border specialist and vocational training in EGTC TATRY”. The director of the EGTC is a member of the Monitoring Committee of Interreg V-A PL-SK 2014-2020. These tasks are complemented by support for local governments preparing and implementing cross-border projects. This way EGTC TA-

TRY has led to innovative approaches for territorial cooperation.

The EGTC can act as a single beneficiary in ETC projects, which can be independently prepared, implemented and coordinated. This contributes to more effective and efficient coordination, management and administration of common cross-border projects for local governments.

Not least because of the projects and its support, the EGTC is positively perceived by the public. The most significant influence is from the flagship project “Cycling route

around the Tatra Mountains”. The infrastructure offering cyclists comfortable and safe cycle paths is very popular in the region. Representatives of Polish and Slovak media also participate in the conferences, meetings and events organised by EGTC TATRY.

To be effective in developing and implementing territorial cooperation, EGTCs require the involvement of their members at every stage of creation and operation. EGTC Tatra acts closely at local level. The Member States could make even better use of its functions and potentials by involving it in managing ETC programmes.



The Interregional Alliance for the Rhine-Alpine Corridor EGTC was founded to ensure continued cooperation beyond the Interreg 2007-2013 programming period. The overarching objective of the EGTC is to facilitate cooperation between partners along the corridor axis to strengthen integrated spatial development along the multimodal transport corridor. The EGTC brings together local and regional administrations as well as other stakeholders, such as several ports. One task is to inform EGTC members about funding opportunities in relation to corridor development and to manage EU funded projects on behalf of members.

The EGTC is project coordinator of the RAISE-IT project and in 2017 was the only project funded under the CEF implemented by an EGTC. By using CEF funding the EGTC taps on an instrument specifically designed to support the development of interconnected trans-European networks. The project applies a multi-scale approach to explore high speed rail integration and travel time savings. It considers elements of corridor development including infrastructure and operational aspects such as station configuration, route finding, integrated ticketing and facilities for transferring passengers, to create seamless connections between trains of different speeds and distance. The project also explores the suitability of an

International Integrated Timed Transfer (IITT). This project aims at improving connections between urban nodes as well as regional accessibility to foster regional development.

These two examples illustrate that EGTCs are a suitable instrument for easing cooperation across a national border, as well as between different stakeholders and levels, from local to multiple Member States. Obtaining the appropriate funding in line with individual EGTC tasks and objectives is crucial to facilitating this cooperation. Nevertheless, these and other examples also show that EGTCs still have to overcome difficulties as they are not always immediately recognised as eligible applicants.



Jörg Saalbach, Interregional Alliance for the Rhine-Alpine Corridor EGTC

“The EGTC as project coordinator of the CEF-funded project RAISE-IT organises the project process and moderates between all involved partners.”

 Name of the project
CEF funded project RAISE-IT

 Duration
January 2017 – December 2019

 Registered office and MS covered
Germany (base), Belgium, France, Italy, Netherlands, Switzerland

 Project partners
Interregional Alliance for the Rhine-Alpine Corridor EGTC with five affiliated members: Verband Region Rhein-Neckar, Regionalverband FrankfurtRheinMain, Uniontrasporti, Provincie Gelderland, Regionalverband Mittlerer Oberrhein), Higher Institute on Territorial Systems for Innovation (SiTI), Institut für Landes- und Stadtentwicklungsforschung gGmbH (ILS), Comune di Genova (CDG), Istituto Internazionale delle Comunicazioni (IIC)

The RAISE-IT project allows cities and regions along the Rhine-Alpine corridor to improve connectivity within and between urban nodes, and promotes local and regional perspectives related to corridor development.

The RAISE-IT project, funded by CEF, aims at better connectivity between major urban nodes along the Rhine-Alpine corridor. The project is based on a recommendation of the CODE24 Interreg project (2010-2015) to increase access by high-speed rail along the Rhine-Alpine corridor. This raised the question of

what can and needs to be done to improve rail transport and create alternatives to flights.

RAISE-IT takes up this recommendation with a study about improving accessibility on three scales:

urban nodes and adjacent areas; how to improve links between long-distance and local transport;

greater regional node areas; how to improve links between long-distance and regional transport,

corridor-wide connections between nodes; how to improve links between nodes along the corridor.

The Interregional Alliance for the Rhine-Alpine Corridor EGTC is project coordinator, moderating between the partners and overseeing all project activities. Other project partners with more specific roles are the city of Genoa and three Italian and German research institutes; SiTI (Italy), IIC (Italy), and ILS (Germany). Five EGTC members contribute to the project as affiliated partners, namely the regions of Rhine-Neckar (DE), Frankfurt Rhine-Main (DE), Middle Upper Rhine (DE), the Province of Gelderland (NL) and Uniontrasporti (IT). The research institutes focus on science and research while local and regional partners represent the urban

nodes with their surroundings, which are the subject of the study (e.g. Arnhem and Nijmegen in Gelderland, Karlsruhe in the Middle Upper Rhine and Mannheim in the Rhine-Neckar region).

A specific problem for the EGTC as project coordinator was the application procedure as CEF forms do not list the option “EGTC”. Another question was how to integrate the five EGTC members in the project as eligible, yet not direct project partners. With support from the German Federal Ministry for Transport and Digital Infrastructure and the Innovation and Networks Executive Agency of the European Commission (INEA), these problems could be solved. Reflecting the consortium's complexity, in addition to the Grant Agreement between the EGTC and INEA,

one contract was made with the four external project partners and another with the EGTC members.

The project includes research on bottom-up corridor development by applying a multi-scale approach from a local-regional perspective. The partners conjointly work on different issues that are relevant at local, regional and transnational level but which would not be addressed from a local-regional perspective without the involvement of the EGTC. Although the project content focuses on the Rhine-Alpine corridor, the project approach, partnership structure and methodology could also be used in other TEN-T core network corridors.



In the middle of the 2014-2020 programming period about half of all EGTCs benefit from ETC funding. Most of these act as project partners or coordinators, only a few have succeeded in raising ETC funding as single beneficiaries. EGTCs also benefit from a wide variety of ETC programmes including many cross-border, several transnational and two interregional cooperation programmes. There is a broad use of ETC funding by EGTC as indicated by the thematic practices illustrated in previous sections. A few examples are a heritage project implemented by ZASNET and co-funded by the POCTEP cooperation programme (see section ‘nature protection’), a tourism related project with funding from the transnational Danube cooperation programme

implemented by the EGTC Pons Danubii (see section ‘integrated tourism’), the TALATA micro-project co-funded by the Interreg VA programme France-Wallonie-Vlaanderen of the Eurométropole Lille-Kotrijk-Tournai in the field of education (see section ‘education and culture’) and the EMPLEO AE project of the Eurorégion Nouvelle Aquitaine-Euskadi-Navarre co-funded by the POCTEFA cooperation programme (see section ‘economy, jobs and growth’).

Several EGTCs have succeeded in raising other EU funding. A few make use of other ESIF funding, such as the Linie land van Waas en Hulst EGTC that implements a LEADER project linking agricultural character and tourism potential in the region. Other policies

tapped by EGTCs include Horizon 2020 with Efxini Poli – SolidarCity Network participating as project partner of DE-SIGNSCAPES. This is a project covering user-driven value creation through design-enabled innovation. Several EGTCs receive funding from Erasmus+ including Pyrénées-Méditerranée, AEuCC, León-Bragança and Eucor – The European Campus (see section ‘education and culture’).

EGTCs attract EU funds not solely for their own activities. Frequently one of their tasks is to support their members in applying for EU funding. Examples are EGTC TATRY and the EGTC ABAÚJ – ABAÚJBAN.

2.9. EGTC as facilitator / mediator

In support of a more harmonious and balanced European territory, TA 2020 states that all types of territories and sector policies of different administrative levels need to cooperate effectively to tackle key European challenges.¹⁴ This requires facilitating and intensifying cooperation at various levels. The need to enhance cross-border cooperation has been acknowledged for the 2014-2020 programming period. Correspondingly, Article 7(a) iv of Regulation (EU) No 1299/2013 foresees for cross-border territorial cooperation the support for “promoting legal and administrative cooperation and cooperation between citizens and institutions”.

As legal instruments, EGTCs are suitable wherever cross-border or transnational cooperation is required and institutionalising cooperation is often an underlying

objective. They implement cooperation through projects with different themes and often have other roles, including facilitating cooperation between members or between members and other stakeholders in a project. EGTCs frequently act as facilitator when they are the project manager. They bring stakeholders together through their very nature and are often considered as a natural coordinator. Apart from this more implicit facilitation role, some EGTCs were designed to coordinate members’ activities or mediate for projects that require support beyond the principal agents.

The Secrétariat du Sommet de la Grande Région EGTC builds on nearly 50 years of inter-institutional cooperation between its members from Luxembourg, Belgium, France and Germany. The EGTC was es-

tablished to enhance the Greater Region’s identification as a truly integrated and European region. Institutionalising the secretariat’s functions enabled a more stable approach compared to tasks being handled by the Member State chairing the summit. The secretariat supports summit working groups and is responsible for the strategic coordination of members on behalf of the chairing presidency. These tasks include supporting individual stakeholders with their summit related work. The EGTC facilitates everyday problems during cooperation between the members. As a result, the EGTC is the visible ‘face’ of cooperation between members of the Greater Region’s summit and the continuity of secretariat functions creates synergies.


14 TA 2020, 2011, para. 10



Florence Jacquey, executive director of the EGTC

“Trust is the pre-condition for and the result of members working together in an EGTC.”

 **Name of the project**
GECT “Secrétariat du Sommet de la Grande Région” - EVTZ “Gipfelsekretariat der Großregion”

 **Duration**
Since 2013 – unlimited duration

 **Registered office and MS covered**
Luxembourg (base), Germany, Belgium and France

 **Project partners**
Grand Duchy of Luxembourg (Luxembourg), Saarland and Rhineland-Palatinate (Germany), Wallonia, Federation Wallonia-Brussels, German-speaking community of Belgium (all Belgium), the French Republic (through the prefecture of Région Grand Est), Region Grand Est, Department Meurthe-et-Moselle and the Department of Moselle (all France). In 2019, Department of Meuse (France) will join.

The EGTC facilitates cooperation for Summit members.

The EGTC is the result of cooperation between Luxembourg, Belgium, France and Germany for nearly 50 years. The members are national and regional public authorities of the Greater Region's cross-border metropolitan area. A total of 10 (soon to be 11) members of the Summit of the Greater Region are also members of the EGTC. The general assembly ('assemblée générale') decides on the main questions and working programme of the EGTC and also performs a control function. When the decision to found a stable working structure to support the 'Summit of the Greater Region' was taken, the members were undecided on whether to use an association or an EGTC. Since the Greater Region identifies itself as a European Region, the political representatives finally

decided in favour of the European instrument EGTC.

The 'Summit of the Greater Region' started in 1995 and brings together executive representatives from the German federal states of Saarland and Rhineland-Palatinate, the Grand Duchy of Luxembourg, the former French region Lorraine (since 2016 integrated into the region Grand Est) and the Belgian region Wallonia including the German-speaking community of Belgium. In the past, the secretariat was run by the member holding the presidency that changed every second year. In 2013, the EGTC was established to consolidate a common secretariat supporting the Summit. The decision to create a stable organisation for administration, internal and

external communication and general follow-up of the political cooperation brought a clear added-value in terms of synergy.

The major function of the Secretariat is to facilitate cooperation within and between the Summit working groups. This applies to horizontal, vertical and transversal coordination in and between working groups and topics. Additionally, the EGTC organises public outreach and is in charge of disseminating Summit news. The EGTC is the interface between Summit members and citizens of the Greater Region, which helps to bridge the communication gap. Through the EGTC the Secretariat has become a multi-dimensional communication and facilitation institution that is recognised inside and outside the region as im-

portant for the Greater Region's cross-border cooperation. Facilitating internal communication and workflows is more important than the public perception of the EGTC.

The EGTC also coordinates cooperation with other European actors. These include the main partners in the Greater region but

also EU organs and neighbouring cross-border cooperation structures such as the Upper-Rhine Conference and the Euregio Maas-Rhein.

The EGTC has increased the visibility of the Summit and its work is acknowledged from local to EU level, including in a recently pub-

lished position paper on the current debate about the future of Cohesion Policy¹⁵. By facilitating communication between members, the EGTC helps to build trust as well as identification with the Summit's political targets.



The second example highlights a specific action of the PONTIBUS EGTC which shows how a cross-border EGTC focussing on regional development covering many different sectors, can facilitate communication between partners in a specific project. A primary objective of the EGTC is to strengthen transport links between EGTC members, who are neighbouring regions in Hungary and Slovakia.

The Ipel river is a geographical divide between the two regions. To support an improved transport link between Chlaba (SK) and Ipolydamásd (HU) the EGTC acted as facilitator for communication between the prospective project partners. This required stimulation and mediation as well as guiding the partners through complex communica-

tion processes which was possible given the flexibility of the EGTC instrument.

The examples show how differently the EGTC instrument can be used just within the field of facilitating cooperation. This typical soft task can be naturally embedded in an EGTC. While it is often one of many tasks, it is also linked to other soft tasks. The Secrétariat du Sommet de la Grande Région EGTC shows that an EGTC can be even designed to facilitate cooperation.

EGTCs can do this in many different ways, including organising joint activities and ensuring the information flow between administrative levels, such as informing members about


EU level policy development and developing joint positions. Examples are the Interregional Alliance for the Rhine-Alpine Corridor (see section 'attract EU funding') and the Euregio Tirolo - Alto Adige - Trentino (see section 'disaster prevention'). Apart from the Euregio project illustrated above, the EGTC carries out many other tasks related to information collection and dissemination, networking through cooperation and dialogue with EU institutions as well as advocating Euregional interests through the regional representation in Brussels. The Eisenbahnneubaustrecke Dresden Prag EGTC was driven by a facilitation issue, namely the creation of a platform giving information about the new railway line initiative and the political position of the state of Saxony and the Czech Republic (see section 'transport').

¹⁵ See: <http://www.grossregion.net/Aktuelles/2018/Der-Gipfel-der-Grossregion-setzt-sich-fuer-die-EU-Kohaesionspolitik-ein>




István Szabó, president of the EGTC

“Pontibus means bridges. Bridges join and let us move onward.”

 Name of the project
PONTIBUS EGTC
Limited Liability

 Duration
Date of constitution:
08 January 2016

 Registered office and MS covered
Hungary (base)
and Slovakia

 Project partners
Pest County (Hungary) and Nitra
Self-governing Region (Slovakia)

Open communication is key for successful and sustainable cross-border cooperation.

Pontibus was established as an EGTC to institutionalise cross-border cooperation between its two founding members - Pest County and Nitra Self-governing Region. It builds on the historical and cultural neighbourhood of the two regions, elevating past experience to higher quality and more concrete cooperation. Their interest was mutual as the preferred areas of cooperation would benefit both partners. The founding members are regional authorities who can ensure economic and social development in their regions including regional development, land-use planning and tourism as well as social welfare and transportation. These competences frame their mutual interest in closer cooperation.

Pontibus means “bridges” in Latin. It symbolises a tool for cooperation and convergence, which allows each party to obtain a better understanding of the other and to transfer and share experiences and ideas between the regions of the two Member States. “Bridges” has a literal meaning, too, with the recent effort for the construction of a bridge across the Ipeľ River, which forms the border in this part of Slovakia and Hungary.

The period spent preparing and establishing the EGTC was very challenging because neither partner had much experience in setting up an EGTC. Inspiration was provided by other EGTCs.

Cooperation is further emphasised by the many decisions Pontibus EGTC takes,

which are contingent on the two member governments. This is time consuming and administratively challenging, and requires thoughtful planning. Open communication between each other daily and the enthusiasm of everyone involved has helped overcome these obstacles.

This makes the EGTC a good mediator, which was an important role during planning and preparation for the construction of a bridge over the Ipeľ River. Efforts to build this bridge between Chlaba (SK) and Ipolydamásd (HU) go back to 2000 when an icy flood destroyed the former bridge. However, only recently could the partners develop a joint project and submit a project proposal in the framework of the Interreg VA Slovakia-Hungary Cooperation Pro-

gramme. The EGTC mediated, facilitated and sped up communication between the partners, helping to overcome implementation problems.

For some EGTCs facilitation roles and activities are mirrored in a variety of actions. In Eurodistrict Strasbourg-Ortenau, apart from operating a transport service (see section 'transport') the EGTC facilitates cooperation through cross-border working groups for a 'Bürgerkonvent' and different forums. One example is a working group to re-

Intensive communication between the EGTC members, the applicants (the National Development of Infrastructure Private Limited Company in Hungary) and

duce the waste from takeaway coffee cups. Apart from the members of the EGTC, the working group involved offices for foodstuff control, chambers of commerce and bakery guilds to develop a joint approach encouraging reusable cups in the region and applying unified hygiene recommendations. The biennial citizen Eurodistrict 'Bürgerkon-

the Local Government of Nitra County, along with cooperation with the authorities illustrate the benefit of creating mutual understanding across borders.

vent' enables discussion of new topics. For instance, the most recent one provided a platform for youth to discuss future culture and mobility projects. With other events the EGTC facilitates discussions for the region's people on policy issues such as clean air, geothermal energy or security.

2.10. Programme management

The EGTC instrument was part of Structural Funds regulations for the 2007-2013 period. ERDF Regulation (EC) No 1080/2006 specified that Member States could make an EGTC responsible for managing an operational programme either as managing authority or as joint technical secretariat. For the 2014-2020 programming period the roles of EGTCs were specified in ETC Regulation (EU) No 1299/2013. This added their potential use for implementing specific ETC instruments and the option to be a sole beneficiary of an operation. Common Provision Regulation (EU) 1303/2013 complements these functions adding the possibility for EGTCs to be members of ETC programme monitoring committees.

In addition to these functions, as highlighted in previous sections, EGTCs contribute to the implementation of Cohesion Policy in many other ways, including as beneficiaries of other ESIF projects.

The following examples focus on programmes where EGTCs contribute with management and support rather than by implementing projects.

Until 2018, the only ETC programme for which an EGTC is responsible as managing authority for a whole programme was the former EGTC Grande Région for the 2007-2013 period, which was replaced by EGTC INTERREG Grande Région for the 2014-2020 period. However, other options for EGTCs to manage and support ETC implementation are used more often in the 2014-2020 period.

One example is management of part of an ETC programme. In 2011 EGTC Rába-Duna-Vág (RDV) was founded by regional authorities of the western part of the Hungarian-Slovakian border area. This supports national and regional cooperation in regional development, mainly through cross-border projects


and programmes. Among its objectives is strengthening cooperation among local authorities and promoting EU funding sources for regional development activities. Managing the SPF helps achieve these objectives.

The Interreg VA Slovakia-Hungary Cooperation Programme prepared a call for the management of SPF Umbrella Projects in 2017. After a 2-step procedure SPF implementation starts in 2018. The SPF has been designed for micro, local and regional projects in fields such as culture, education and environmental protection. These support objectives to increase the attractiveness of the border area and support cross-border cooperation between public authorities and residents. EGTC and its partners' knowledge of the target groups and the regions should increase the quality and effectiveness of the small projects.



Ema Vasiová, director of the RDV EGTC

“The small project fund is the perfect tool to implement cross-border projects.”

 Name of the project

“The Small Project Fund in the Western programme area”

 Duration

Date of constitution: 08 January 2016



Registered office and MS covered

Members from Hungary are: Tatabánya (base), Győr-Moson-Sopron county, Komárom-Esztergom county, Pest county, Budapest. Members from Slovakia are: Bratislava region, Trnava region, Nitra region



Project partners

Trnava self-governing region (Slovakia) and Széchenyi Programiroda Nonprofit Kft (Hungary)

Management of the Small Project Fund umbrella project enables project implementation close to the target group.

The Interreg VA Slovakia-Hungary Cooperation Programme was prepared with the participation of the general public. The SPF was elaborated under the cross-border programme and RDV EGTC could potentially manage one of the SPF umbrella projects. The EGTC thoroughly prepared for the opportunity with consultations and meetings. In 2017 the Hungarian Prime Minister's Office acting as the Managing Authority of the Interreg V-A Slovakia-Hungary Cooperation Programme and the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development of the Slovak Republic acting as the National Authority announced the call for Small Project Fund Umbrella Projects. RDV EGTC applied for the Western programme area.

The project involves the lead beneficiary, RDV EGTC, and its partners Trnava Self-governing Region and Széchenyi Program Office Non-profit LLC. They submitted their project covering the first and fourth priority axes of the programme, for the western part of the programme area. The project partners' responsibility is to supervise implementation of SPF projects and manage the umbrella project using their expertise and experience. They should also increase the projects' effectiveness.

A longer agreement process to develop the umbrella project was required. EGTC members had different ideas, which did not always comply with the framework of the EU programme. Overcoming

these differences and other obstacles was made possible by continuous communication including many face-to-face exchanges. The common objective to manage the SPF umbrella project resulted in a successful cooperation. The EGTC developed a strategy and joint implementation plans not only for the umbrella project but also to meet accreditation conditions.

The activities supported by the SPF have met a great deal of interest. Moreover, with the new management structure small projects can even be more responsive to local needs and requirements. Promoting projects in line with local needs is essential to maximise activity and to emphasise the support. The EGTC plans

to use tools developed by Interreg projects such as bilingual (Slovak-Hungarian) printed and electronic advertisements, press releases, a website and a Facebook page.

More successful small projects in the Western programme area are expected. EGTC experience and expertise will help increase the quality and effective-

ness of these projects, strongly focused on regional and cross-border impact. Cross-border social, economic and territorial cohesion will be strengthened by promoting long-term cooperation for public authorities and citizens on both sides of the border including joint cultural activities, as well as protection and preservation of the natural environment. The regions' endogenous, natural and cultur-

al potential will be effectively used, local economies supported and more visitors in the programme area are expected.

The umbrella project shows benefits such as involving various regions in project implementation, enhancing professional expertise and skills as well as improving the visibility and promotion of cross-border Interreg cooperation in the regions.

The second detailed example is the ESPON EGTC. This has a very specific approach, using the EGTC instrument to implement an interregional ETC programme. As with the managing authority EGTCs for Interreg programmes of the Greater Region, the ESPON EGTC is designed to implement ETC as sole beneficiary of the single operation of the ESPON programme. So the ESPON EGTC is not the managing authority or sole beneficiary of a 'typical' ETC project. Based on past experience, EGTC membership is limited to four members to cover the entire territory of the ESPON 2020 Cooperation Programme. All Member States and participating countries jointly decide and monitor implementation of the single operation in the ESPON Monitoring Committee. The objective for this new structure was to optimise implementation of activities related to the ESPON 2020 Cooperation Programme.

The examples illustrate different approaches to organising EU funded activities with support from EGTCs to

achieve greater efficiency. This may be a more targeted approach (as with RDV) or to reduce administrative burden and aid programme implementation.

Implementation of Small Project Funds is also supported by other EGTCs. As with RDV, EGTC Via Carpatia is implementing the SPF Umbrella Project in the eastern part of the Interreg VA Slovakia-Hungary Cooperation Programme. A different approach has been chosen by the Interreg VA Upper Rhine Cooperation Programme where there are four Eurodistricts including two EGTCs, Eurodistrict Strasbourg-Ortenau (see section 'transport') and Eurodistrict PAMINA. To ensure implementation of small projects close to the target groups, the four Eurodistricts are in charge of direct communication with applicants for small projects in their region. The responsibility for developing and opening calls, etc. remains with the managing authority while the Eurodistricts are responsible for all small projects implemented by institutions in their respective territory. Each Eurodistrict has its

own evaluation committee to assess the projects in its area. So, the two EGTCs and their neighbouring Eurodistricts have supportive roles in implementing the Upper Rhine SPF.

Another example for implementing part of a cooperation programme is a specific instrument. EGTC GO is sole beneficiary of the ITI operation to develop multi-specific and cross-border actions in the area (see section 'nature protection'). Euregio Tirolo - Alto Adige - Trentino (see section 'disaster prevention') is helping establish the CLLD process of the three regions under the Interreg VA Italy-Austria Cooperation Programme.

Although rarely applied so far, EGTCs are also recognised as beneficial for ETC programme monitoring. Both EGTCs in the Interreg VA Poland-Slovakia programme area vote in the 2014-2020 programme monitoring committee, namely EGTCs TRITIA and TATRY (see section 'attract EU funding').



Ilona Raugze, director of the EGTC

“ESPON EGTC has a crucial role in supporting better policy-making and good governance in European Member States, cities and regions with territorial evidence and tailored policy advice.”

 Name of the project
ESPON EGTC

 Duration
**2015 – ending date not defined
(the EGTC will exist until closure
of the ESPON 2020 programme by
the European Commission)**

 Registered office
and MS covered
**Luxembourg
(base) and
Belgium**

 Project partners
**The Region of Brussels Capital,
the Region of Flanders, the
Region of Wallonia, the Grand
Duchy of Luxembourg**

Reducing administrative burden in implementation of the ESPON 2020 Programme and overcoming differences were driving EGTC set-up.

The EGTC was established to implement the ESPON Single Operation under the ESPON 2020 Cooperation Programme. Strictly speaking, the main stakeholders are three Belgian regions (Flanders, Wallonia and Brussels Capital) and Luxembourg. These make up the Assembly, which is the decision-making body of the EGTC, responsible for amending the convention and statutes, dissolving the EGTC, approving the integration or exclusion of members, confirming the Assembly Chair and Vice Chair, adopting the annual budget and financial control system, approving annual reports, as well as signing the grant agreement with the Programme Managing Authority. In a broader sense,

all countries involved in the ESPON 2020 Programme are stakeholders of the EGTC. These are the 28 Member States and the 4 Partner States of Iceland, Liechtenstein, Norway and Switzerland. These stakeholders are responsible for the “content” side of the ESPON Single Operation that is implemented by the EGTC. They decide on the content of activities and monitoring of implementation.

The ESPON EGTC reduces the mainly administrative obstacles to implementation of the ESPON programme. It separates the legal and administrative side of the programme (with the EGTC as the Single

Beneficiary, Managing Authority and Certifying Authority) from the content side. Content is mainly delivered by researchers under service contracts.

This results in a wide range of research, focused on very different topics such as SME development, employment, migration, territorial governance, spatial planning, low carbon economy, circular economy, etc. On the basis of the research, ESPON supports policy design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation, offering policy advice to improve the quality of policy-making and governance capacities of stakeholders at national, re-

gional and local levels. The EGTC is much better known for its activities, rather than its legal set-up.

The EGTC creates EU added-value as a legal body that can be tailored to the specific needs of cross-border collaboration. It gives legal certainty to members and staff and avoids getting caught in national rules, especially oversight or staff rules,

which might be right from a national perspective, but which restrict cross-border activities. The EU added-value is also related to a consistent reduction of administrative burden in implementing the ESPON 2020 Programme.

The ESPON EGTC is a successful example of how the management of EU funded activities can be organised to reduce ad-

ministrative burden and ease programme implementation. This example of successful organisation is also supported by the liability support mechanism which ensures that all stakeholders (28 Member States + 4 non Member States) share responsibility for covering ineligible expenditure or additional costs.



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Annex

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Footnotes

1 See: <http://www.ecoturismoimarittime.it/>

2 See: <http://www.mercantourecotourisme.eu/>

3 See: <http://www.grossregion.net/Aktuelles/2018/Der-Gipfel-der-Grossregion-setzt-sich-fuer-die-EU-Kohaesionspolitik-ein>



European Committee of the Regions

Created in 1994, after the entry into force of the Maastricht Treaty, the European Committee of the Regions is the EU's assembly of 350 regional and local representatives from all 28 Member States, representing over 507 million Europeans. Its mission is to involve regional and local authorities and the communities they represent in the EU's decision-making process and to inform them about EU policies. The European Commission, the European Parliament and the Council consult the Committee in policy areas affecting regions and cities. It can appeal to the Court of Justice of the European Union if its rights are infringed or it believes that EU law infringes the subsidiarity principle or fails to respect regional or local powers.

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