

Expertising Governance for Transfrontier Conurbations

European Action Plan
of the "EGTC" URBACT project



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Lexicon

The “EGTC” URBACT project:

It refers to the EGTC project, “Expertising Governance for Transfrontier Conurbations”, cofinanced by the URBACT II programme.

The EGTC instrument:

It refers to the European Grouping of Territorial Cooperation, the instrument for territorial cooperation created by the EC Regulation 1082/2006.

Lead Partner (LP):

It refers to the public authority (local authorities, association of local authorities, universities, development agency...) that lead an URBACT project. All URBACT projects are led by a Lead Partner that is responsible for coordination, implementation and financial management.

Lead expert:

A city professional (practitioner, researcher, academic, etc.) who uses his/her expertise to help an URBACT project. Every project has a “Lead Expert” who helps the project for its entire duration by providing support in terms of both content and working methods.

The Lead expert of the “EGTC” URBACT project was Christian LAMOUR, CEPS/INSTEAD (Luxembourg).

Local Action Plan (LAP):

URBACT partners develop a LAP in response to local issues. It aims at increasing the impact of URBACT exchanges on local policies and practices. It should provide pragmatic, precise solutions based on the results of the transnational exchanges. It should be jointly produced with the Local Support Group.

Local Support Group (LSG):

All URBACT project partners commit to establishing and leading an URBACT Local Support Group to make sure that exchanges have an impact on local practices and policies.

Introduction

The European Action Plan of the “EGTC” URBACT project

In the framework of the “EGTC” URBACT project and after two years of working together, the cross-border agglomerations partners of the project reached some common conclusions, lessons learned on governance of cross-border agglomerations. The key question they were willing to respond is as follows:
which partnerships to define in order to overcome border-effects and design and implement efficient and legitimate cross-border policies?

Assessing common problems and obstacles, identifying some innovative solutions at local level, the EGTC” URBACT project partners identified a **range of lessons, proposals** they are willing to share with other cross-border agglomerations and all cross-border territories in Europe (part 1).

They also pointed out a certain number of **recommendations** to be taken into account by regional/national or European authorities, according to the area of competence and the political organization of the States (centralized or federal) that are concerned, in order to facilitate close cooperation between border cities (part 2).

A synthetic table has been elaborate to highlight the link between the needs of cross-border agglomerations in terms of cross-border governance and the actions that could be undertaken by them, by the regional/national authorities and European authorities (part 3).

The “EGTC” URBACT project

The “EGTC” URBACT project was led by Mission Opérationnelle Transfrontalière (MOT) and involved six cross-border conurbations in Europe, which shared experiences, good practices in order to improve their cross-border governance. The partners of the “EGTC” URBACT project were:

- Basel for the Trinational Eurodistrict Basel (France/Germany/Switzerland),
- the Urban Community of Strasbourg for the Eurodistrict of Strasbourg-Ortenau (Germany/France),
- Slubice for the agglomeration Frankfurt (Oder)-Slubice (Germany/Poland),
- Lille Metropole for the Eurometropole Lille-Kortrijk-Tournai (Belgium/France),
- Esztergom for the Euroregion Ister-Granum (Hungary/Slovakia),
- Chaves for the Eurocidade Chaves-Verin (Spain/Portugal).

The partners aimed to:

- improve their governance models by exchanging experiences, with the support of the Lead Expert,
- capitalize best practices, spread models of cross-border governance throughout Europe and,
- promote the recognition of cross-border agglomerations in national and European policies.

The new opportunities provided by the European Grouping of Territorial Cooperation (EGTC), the European instrument¹, whose use is still under experimentation, constituted an interesting case study. Besides, the first two European Groupings of Territorial Cooperation in Europe² were involved in the “EGTC” URBACT project and an EGTC was established during the project³. Nevertheless the reflection within the “EGTC” URBACT project went beyond the assessment of the EGTC instrument and covered more generally organizational and functional aspects of cross-border cooperation.

For more details on the partnership see page 17 onwards.

¹ EC Regulation n°1082/2006 creating the European Grouping of Territorial Cooperation, adopted in 5 July 2006 by the European Parliament and the Council of the European Union.

² The Ister-Granum EGTC (HU/SK) and the Eurometropole Lille-Kortrijk-Tournai (F/BE).

³ The Eurodistrict Strasbourg-Ortenau.

The URBACT II Programme (2007-2013)

The “EGTC” URBACT project (Expertising Governance for Transfrontier Conurbations) is a European working group co-financed by the URBACT II programme (2007-2013). This programme aims to encourage the sharing of experiences between European cities and to disseminate knowledge on sustainable urban development throughout Europe.

In order to make sure that the URBACT projects lead to concrete and realistic outputs, the URBACT II programme requires specific results from the URBACT project partners:

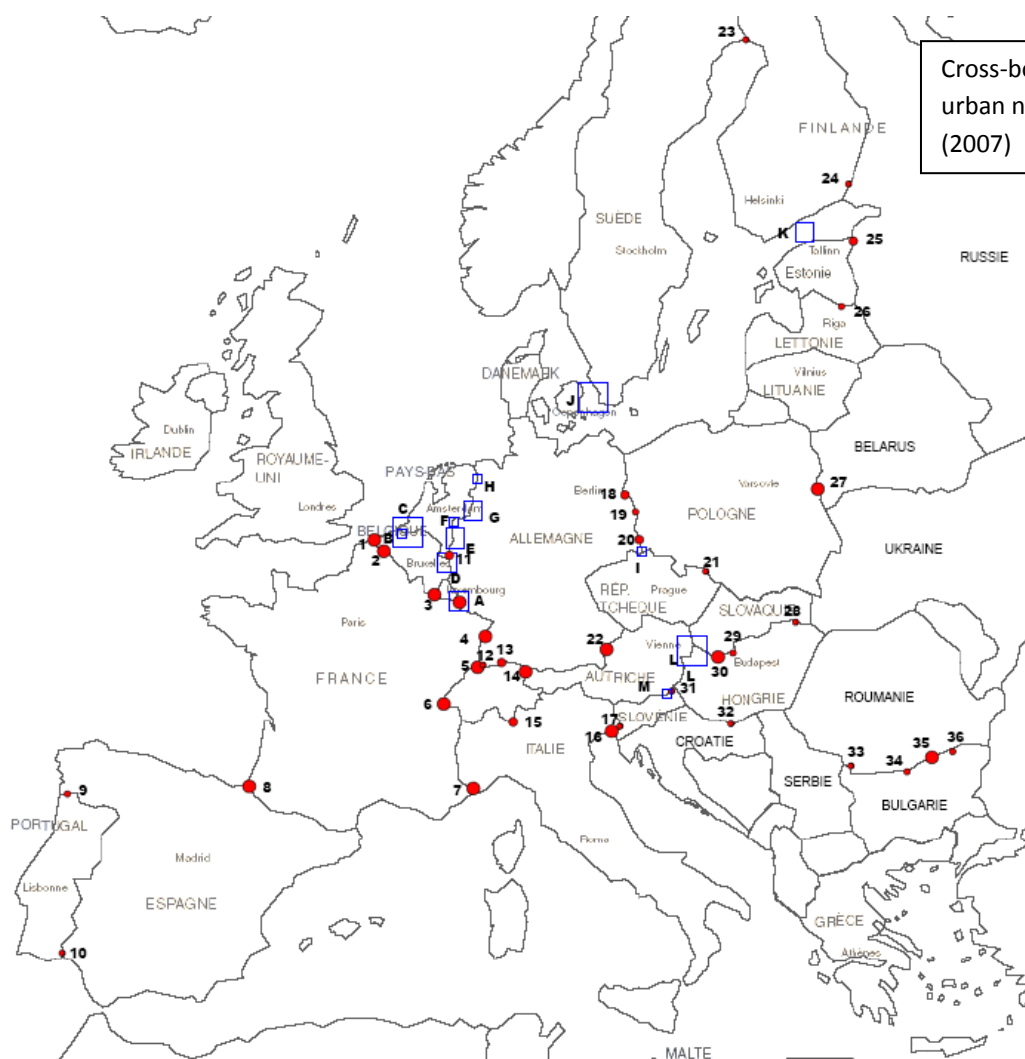
- Each partner realizes a **Local Action Plan** which identifies the measures and actions which will be implemented in order to improve the running policies. It should provide pragmatic, precise solutions based on the results of the transnational exchanges. It should be jointly produced with the Local Support Group on the local level.
- All URBACT project partners commit to establishing and leading an **URBACT Local Support Group** to make sure that exchanges have an impact on local practices and policies. This group assembles the main interested parties and local actors concerned by the project topic and the issues the partner is looking to resolve; the groups include local elected officials, representatives of various local administrative departments, representatives of residents/users, etc.

URBACT Local Support Groups contribute to producing the Local Action Plan that each partner has to produce as the result of participation in the programme.

For more information: <http://urbact.eu>

The theme "Cross-border agglomerations governance"

80% of population in Europe lives in urban areas. More than 60 cross-border agglomerations have been identified in Europe. They represent almost 25 million people.



Cross-border agglomerations and urban networks in Europe, MOT (2007)

Agglomération transfrontalière

- plus de 100 000 hab.
- plus de 80 000 hab.
- moins de 80 000 hab.

Réseau urbain transfrontalier

- plus d'1 million d'hab.
- plus de 500 000 hab..
- moins de 500 000 hab.

- 1 Agglomération de Dunkerque
- 2 Agglomération lilloise
- 3 Pôle Européen de Développement (Longwy)
- 4 Strasbourg/Kehl
- 5 Agglomération bâloise
- 6 Agglomération genevoise
- 7 Métropole Côte d'Azur
- 8 Hendaye/Irun-Fontarrabie
- 9 Valença/Tui
- 10 Vila Real de Santo Antonio/Ayamonte
- 11 Kerkrade/Herzogenrath
- 12 Rheinfelden/Rheinfelden
- 13 Konstanz-Kreuzlingen
- 14 Buuchs/ Vaduz-Schaan
- 15 Como/ Chiasso-Mendrisio
- 16 Trieste/Koper
- 17 Gorizia/Nova Gorica
- 18 Frankfurt(Oder)/Slubice
- 19 Guben/Gubin
- 20 Görlitz/Zgorzelec
- 21 Cieszyn/ Cesky Tesin
- 22 Salzburg/Freilassing
- 23 Tomio/Haparanda
- 24 Imatra/Svetogorsk
- 25 Narva/Ivangorod
- 26 Valka/Valga
- 27 Brest-Litovsk/Terespol
- 28 Satoraljaujhely/Slovensko Nove Miesto
- 29 Esztergom/ Sturovo
- 30 Komarno/ Komarom
- 31 Bad Rackersburg/ Gornja Rada
- 32 Terezino/Barcs
- 33 Calafat/Vidin
- 34 Zimnicea/Svistov
- 35 Rousse/Giurgiu
- 36 Oltenita/Tutrakan

- A Quattropole Metz/Saarbrücken
- B Stekeken/Beveren
- C Anvers/Breda-Tillburg
- D Maastricht/Aachen/Liège
- E Mönchengladbach/Eindhoven
- F Nijmegen/Kleve
- G Enschede/Osnabrück-Münster
- H Zwolle/Cloppenburg
- I Zittau/Bogatynia
- J Copenhagen/Malmö
- K Helsinki-Tallinn
- L Vienne/Bratislava/Győr
- M Graz/Maribor

The European integration process has facilitated the emergence of cross-border conurbations. Cross-border flows of goods, capital, information and workers have led to the creation or reinforcement of functional urban spaces spreading over States' limits. This process has been accompanied by a **global changing pattern in terms of urban management**. Governance is becoming the fundamental system powering city development, notably for cross-border ones that face specific cross-border related issues (multiplication of actors, heterogeneity of legal and institutional frameworks, need for coordination of policies, etc).

Cross-border conurbations form genuine living areas, **laboratories for a European citizenship** in the making. They are places where multiculturalism and European citizenship are expressed in practical terms. They are also **places of experimentation of European policies**. Confronted to disparities in terms of legislations, cultures, languages, they call for specific partnership models to be able to address populations' needs and reach a “win-win” situation for territories from both sides of the border.

Extending into two or even three countries, their cross-border situation exacerbates the complexity of the problems faced by “national” conurbations, but also increases their potential for innovation. They present several configurations: they may be either urban area separated by a natural barrier or a cross-border territory with an urban continuity.

Specific challenges of cross-border agglomerations are various:

- **Transport:** cross-border flows of people (workers, scholars, consumers...), leading to the daily use of individual cars that causes problems of congestion of road infrastructures and environmental problems; this requires solutions based on land planning and public transport coordination tools.
- **Environment:** the environment does not recognize any borders. Cross-border agglomerations are already or must become spaces of responsibility for: pollution control (air, groundwater, etc), technological hazard prevention and management, waste management, energy efficiency and development of sustainable energy. The elaboration of joint plans or the coordination of urban plan on environment is a key-solution.
- **Public services:** the existence of “costs of non-agglomeration”, that are the costs induced by the duplication of services, equipments, infrastructures caused by the lack of a cross-border approach of living areas calls, for a coherent development of such activities.
- **Economic development:** the economic interdependency of border areas with the mobility of people living on one side and working on the other side of the border, the necessity to adapt the workers’ qualifications to the employers’ needs or the complementarities of enterprises from both sides of the border call for solutions enabling the establishment of cross-border employment areas (more equivalence of qualification, coordination of tax systems and technical standards, signature of joint-agreements between enterprises,...).
- **Culture/citizenship:** the diversity of cultures and the importance of young people lead to the encouragement of intercultural exchanges, source of enrichment and of attractiveness (organization of cultural and sports events, for example).
- **Territorial marketing:** the branding of cross-border agglomerations, through territorial marketing strategies, is a key issue to position these urban spaces in the national, European and international environment.

The specificities of cross-border agglomerations entail a need to define experimental governance models and common integrated strategies leading to sustainable development.

Until now they have not been recognized enough as specific entities by European policies and national legislations, contractualization and financing, even though they call for an innovative approach to go beyond national boundaries (political, linguistic, institutional, legal, and cultural). To overcome these border effects, the public authorities from both sides of the border elaborate cross-border strategies and projects based on a shared diagnosis. More or less formal solutions are considered to pilot these actions.

In the context of the European integration process, and particularly with the enlargement of the EU in 2004 and in 2007, and with the enlargement of the Schengen area (2007), cross-border agglomerations face the need to manage their territory beyond States' boundaries. In this perspective, they need to cooperate with local actors from the other side of the border and also from upper-local levels (Region and State levels) in order to implement efficient policies.

Cross-border agglomerations have engaged in a **long-haul process of institutionalization in order to develop efficient policies**. Either **formal or informal partnerships**, they can rely on several instruments: from an organization based on trust (no legal statutes) to a convention or a common structure with legal personality (association, European Grouping of Territorial Cooperation, etc), **the legal framework for cross-border governance is at the service of the project**.

The **involvement of the civil society in cross-border cooperation ensures the legitimacy** of such policies, thus leading to strong partnership models.

Considering the different local contexts of each cross-border agglomeration, there is **no universal model of cross-border governance system** responding to cross-border challenges. Nevertheless, key issues remain common to all cross-border territories and some solutions may be source of inspiration.

Key-topics of the “EGTC” URBACT project

By “cross-border governance”, the project partners have agreed on dealing with the following two major themes:

1) Internal governance or “Leadership” issues:

The way a cross-border conurbation is managed from a technical, political, legal and financial point of view:

- How can public leaders and cross-border organizations frame and implement efficient policies?

2) - Involvement of the civil society or “Community” issues:

The way a cross-border conurbation earns its legitimacy to intervene beyond national borders, i.e. through the development of mobilization projects aimed at citizens, through the development of services dedicated to the citizens, through the emergence of cross-border media, which enable dialogue with the inhabitants, and through the creation of participative democracy mechanisms:

- How can the involvement of the civil society guarantee the legitimacy of cross-border agglomerations’ policies?

The European Grouping of Territorial Cooperation (EGTC) instrument within the legal toolbox dedicated to cross-border cooperation:

“Cross-border cooperation, supported to a great extent by the European cohesion policy, is one of the most successful actions undertaken on the European territory. However, over the last years it has become more and more clear that a legal framework is needed to structure it and to enhance its positive results. [...]The European Grouping of Territorial Cooperation (EGTC) provides a legal basis to apply to external activities of local and regional authorities. As a new legal instrument, it enables a grouping of bodies from different Member States to implement cross-border, transnational and interregional activities either with or without European financial support. The set-up of such a legal body responsible for different tasks leads to a more effective implementation of cross-border activities such as common transport, sustainable development, regional promotion or environmental protection” (see Cahiers “EGTC”, MOT, 2008).

In his statement, Jan Olbrycht, Member of the European Parliament, clearly points out the added value of this new instrument, the EGTC, with respect to territorial cooperation.

This European instrument was introduced in 2006 by the European regulation n°1082/2006. It forms part of a “legal toolbox” containing all the legal instruments that can be used in national law (conventions, associations, etc.), international agreements (local grouping for cross-border cooperation, LGCC), and Community law (European Economic Interest Grouping, EEIG) to formalize cross-border cooperation.

The EGTC offers the following possibilities:

- it is a legal structure with a legal personality : with the capacity to act for and on behalf of its members, to place contracts, to employ personnel and to acquire movable and immovable property,
- it acts in the common areas of competence of its members, excluding their police and regulatory powers,
- it can be used for : managing operational programmes for territorial cooperation, cooperation projects cofinanced or not by European funds,
- it is open to a broad partnership (“contracting authorities” within the community meaning⁴) and, thus, allows unprecedented cooperation between state and regional or local authorities on common competences, such as health,
- it can also include, among its members, partners from non-EU member states, subject to certain conditions,

⁴ “Contracting authorities” are the entities that are ruled by the directive 2004/18/EC of 31 March 2004 (coordination of procedures for the award of public contracts).

- it provides an important visibility at EU level.

Considering the experimentation phase in which the EGTC instrument is situated, and considering the questions arising from cross-border agglomerations on this specific instrument, the “EGTC” URBACT project aimed to address, among other topics, the added value of this instrument with respect to cross-border governance for implementing common strategies.

The partners of the "EGTC" URBACT project



1. Paris - MOT • 2. Eurometropole Lille-Kortrijk-Tournai • 3. Eurocidade Chaves-Verín
 4. Eurodistrict Strasbourg-Ortenau • 5. Frankfurt (Oder)/Slubice conurbation
 6. Trinational Eurodistrict Basel • 7. Ister-Granum EGTC

Mission Opérationnelle Transfrontalière, MOT (France)

MOT is an association, which facilitates the implementation of local cross-border projects. The MOT network has 56 members in 10 countries, including 8 EU Member States, ranging from local authorities, cross-border bodies and federations to large

enterprises. Its activities are developed both at national and European levels, and can be divided into four main headings: operational assistance, networking, organizing exchange of experience and training, support in defining overall strategies. It also acts as an intermediary between local players, and national and European authorities.

MOT has already carried out several activities and reflections on cross-border agglomerations and governance: see the study untitled “The governance for cross-border agglomerations in Europe”, 2006 and the results of the workshop on cross-border agglomerations within the framework of the European conference on cross-border cooperation organized in 2007.

By leading the “EGTC” working group, MOT has satisfied its expectations: to contribute its expertise in the field of cross-border governance to the benefit of cross-border agglomerations in Europe, to improve its know-how and the sharing of experiences on this topic, and to identify a number of appropriate recommendations addressed to national and European authorities.

More particularly, MOT is undergoing development of its European activities and will integrate the results of the “EGTC” project in its European strategy.

For more information: <http://www.espaces-transfrontaliers.eu>

Basel (Switzerland)

The city of Basel is the administrative centre of the Swiss canton of Basel-City. It is located at the centre of an economic space and a coherent cross-border living space. Its conurbation, with approximately 600,000 inhabitants, extends onto three countries (Switzerland, France, Germany). The historic development of the transfrontier cooperation was first proposed in 1963 in Basel by establishing the REGIO BASILIENSIS association with the initial participation of representatives from local government, science and industry. The institutional cross-border conurbation project dates from 1994, with the launching of the Trinational Agglomeration Basel (TAB) project. The TAB association was formed in 2002. In 2006, the political representatives of the conurbation decided to engage in the formation of the Trinational Eurodistrict Basel (TEB). Today there are 64 members representing four Swiss cantons, two German Landkreise and three French intermunicipalities.

The essential aim of the cross-border conurbation project is to strengthen the role of the central city and of the Trinational Eurodistrict Basel in the network of major European cities while ensuring a genuine quality of life, the main objectives being

expressed in terms of urban development and housing, transport, economic development, environmental protection and a political organization working to set up an effective cross-border territorial structure. Nowadays, the TEB has the form of a French association. In this perspective, the TEB has developed the 2020 Development strategy (multisectoral strategy).

At the beginning of the project, the Canton of Basel Stadt expected to exchange with the other Project Partners on the improvement of metropolitan governance. It included the articulation with the Upper Rhine level of cooperation.

The specific added value of the URBACT project derives from the fact that cross-border interregional co-operation always adds value to local measures. This added value results from cross-border networking and from the exchange of best practices and know-how. The Local Action Plan will constitute an important basis for the further strategic orientation of TEB. The TEB Overall Development Strategy 2020 contains unambiguous statements regarding targets in the areas of the economy, population, settlement development, transportation, financing and governance. In this respect, the Local Action Plan will provide support and identify possible ways of proceeding, especially in the areas of better communication, improved governance and project development.

For more information: <http://www.eurodistrictbasel.eu>

City of Chaves (Portugal)

Chaves (Portugal, 44,186 inhabitants) and Verín (Spain, 14,433 inhabitants) are two towns located on the Portuguese-Spanish border between North Portugal and the Autonomous Community of Galicia. Located at a distance of 15 km from each other, they both have great historical importance. Since 2007, they have together formed the Eurocidade Chaves-Verín, a conurbation of almost 59,000 inhabitants. The Tâmega River forms a natural corridor between the two towns and countries. Both towns have developed the strategic agenda for the Eurocidade, which was launched in July 2008 and was elaborated by external experts, university researchers and members of the civil society. Today, the Eurocidade has no established legal structure but is committed to the establishment of an EGTC.

At the beginning of the project, and based on the recommendations elaborated by the experts who drafted the strategic agenda, the partners of the “Eurocidade Chaves-Verín” wished to assess the best governance organization, such as an EGTC, in order to implement their common strategy, including the development of a “free social area”. By taking part in the EGTC project, they expected to exchange with

cross-border conurbations already involved in the process of establishing a structure of governance.

The participation of the Eurocidade in the “EGTC” URBACT project has brought many benefits at different levels. With respect to the governance structure, the Eurocity is working on acquiring the legislative character of a European Grouping of Territorial Cooperation. The experiences of Ister-Granum and Eurometropole Lille-Kortrijk-Tournai will contribute significantly to the elaboration of the Eurocity’s strategy.

With regard to the visibility of the Eurocity, a seminar dealing with leadership issues was held in the town of Chaves in March 2009, bringing together politicians and representatives from the civil society and local stakeholders from the Eurocity. The presence of the other partners of the EGTC-URBACT project offered the opportunity to show the other partners the achievements and future plans of the Eurocidade.

The requirement to set up a Local Support Group (LSG) led to further mobilization of local players in the Eurocity area. Indeed, the establishment of a permanent consultative committee (local support group) composed of members from both towns (politicians and civil servants), representatives from the supra-local governance levels of both countries (regional and national), and representatives of the civil society who normally take part in the organization of the activities of the Eurocity, provided the Eurocity with interesting feedback on how to improve the way the Eurocity acts. In addition, the meetings of the LSG have meant that civil servants are keen to work together in those areas where this is possible under the legal and administrative rules.

The active involvement of a broad range of different stakeholders in conurbation governance means that working together to learn about and define development needs will undoubtedly lead to the success of the Eurocity’s objectives for the reason that the participants “own” the benefits and results of the projects developed by the Eurocity.

Website: <http://www.chaves.pt/?path=/Portugu%EAs/Eurocidade>

City of Esztergom (Hungary)

The towns of Esztergom (Hungary, 30,261 inhabitants) and Štúrovo (Slovakia, 11,290 inhabitants) are located on the Hungarian-Slovak border, which is marked by the Danube and Ipoly/Ipeľ rivers. They form a conurbation that is the centre of the cross-border Euroregion Ister-Granum, which is composed of 102 municipalities and has around 218,000 inhabitants. The history of cross-border collaboration is recent. The

Ister-Granum region has recently decided to intensify cross-border governance in order to secure the efficient integration of the conurbation by setting up an EGTC in May 2008. The Euroregion has decided to establish a global policy for the Ister-Granum area. A cross-border strategic development plan was approved by the local authorities in 2005 for the 2007-2013 period. The implementation of a development plan has required a more integrated structure of co-operation.

The implementation of future policies requires innovative systems of co-operation. The Ister-Granum EGTC forms the political framework for future governance. The detailed content of that governance still needs to be defined. Changing national legislation in response to local needs in border areas is a long and uncertain process. However, a cross-border area having an EGTC could be seen as a spatial laboratory of legislative experimentation. At the beginning of the project, the Ister-Granum EGTC city partners sought to find out about the experiences of other cross-border conurbations facing the same issues.

Cross-border cooperation is a new and challenging territorial process that Hungary has been facing recently. The territorial policy of the European Union and the historical heritage of the new Member State Hungary together call for a unique and fast developing cross-border policy along the Hungarian border. The Ister-Granum EGTC was one of the pioneer euroregions which stepped further and legally bounds the territorial cooperation between Hungary and Slovakia. This new cooperation structure, the EGTC, provides several challenges, opportunities and sometimes obstacles. The EGTC project gives best practices, real, operating methods for the everyday cooperation in well developed cross-border territories, cooperation formulations, euroregions. The results of the project will contribute to develop a well functioning multilevel governance model and practice, and implement via the Local Action Plan (LAP) such actions which contribute to the call of the civil society and involve those in cross-border governance.

Website : <http://www.istergranum.hu/>

Lille Metropole (France)

The cross-border area of Lille-Kortrijk-Tournai has a specific geographical situation, right in the heart of a dense network of medium-sized French and Belgian towns. It is thus in a French-Belgian metropolitan area of 3,550 km² with 2 million inhabitants and therefore it is the first uninterrupted cross-border conurbation in Europe. The great number of local authorities and the specific nature of the national and regional development and planning policies in France, Wallonia and Flanders force to set up a

form of governance adapted to a polycentric, tricultural and bi-national urban area. Lille Métropole has a long tradition of cooperation with its Belgian neighbors. As early as 1991, the COPIT/GPCI, or Cross-border Standing Conference of Intermunicipal Organizations, brought together five local authorities from France, Wallonia and Southern Flanders in Belgium. In order to strengthen this cooperation, an EGTC was created in January 2008 by 14 stakeholders including Lille Metropolis and gathering all the competencies within the Eurométropole Lille-Kortrijk-Tournai, following the recommendations made by the French-Belgian interparliamentary group.

At the beginning of the “EGTC” URBACT project, Lille Metropolis expected to discuss the implementation of the EGTC regulation with other cross-border conurbations and thus elaborate recommendations for the creation of EGTCs elsewhere in Europe. After the official creation in January 2008 of the first EGTC in Europe, the time was right for setting-up the operational organization that would enable effective development of ambitious projects within a multi-level governance framework. Lille Métropole expected to identify how the EGTC could invigorate the cross-border region and assist in the implementation of specific projects, in particular by using Structural Funds.

The “EGTC” URBACT project helped Lille Métropole to understand the specificities of its governance model but also the difficulties to implement it, such as the capacity to deliver flexible, short term projects and to address the issue of the civil society. Lille Métropole used the network created and some reflections proposed by partner cities to connect the Eurométropole with the European dimension, in terms of networking and positioning (for example, contribution to the green book on multilevel governance). The organization of the seminar on community issues in Tournai was a big opportunity for Lille Métropole to link the Eurométropole, different project partners of the territory and some partners in Europe.

The local action plan is designed as a roadmap to improve the implementation of the EGTC and insists on the points to be strengthened (forum of the civil society, conference of mayors...)

Website : www.lillemetropole.fr

City of Slubice (Poland)

The towns of Frankfurt (Oder) (Germany, 62,000 inhabitants) and Slubice (Poland, 19,000 inhabitants) originally formed a single city. These municipalities are located on the German-Polish border, marked by the river Oder. Together, they form a cross-

border conurbation of about 81,000 inhabitants. Cross-border cooperation between Frankfurt (Oder) and Słubice began in the early 1990s following the German reunification and the relaxation of border controls. It has always relied on informal cooperation.

This cross-border agglomeration faces the challenge of enhancing the coordination of all players and policies, which may be made possible by establishing a local cross-border governance structure aimed at finding a common answer to urban challenges such as population decline, unemployment, social tensions, the “energy question”, and the citizens’ lack of identification with the cross-border urban area.

Becoming part of the EGTC-URBACT project, Frankfurt (Oder) and Słubice were willing to learn from best practices and the experiences of other cross-border urban areas in Europe, particularly on how to establish and develop sustainable cross-border structures so as to formalize the cooperation, and on approaches in favor of a common urban development concept.

The “EGTC” URBACT project showed evidence of the importance of strong, elaborated cross-border governance structures in order to implement efficient, sustainable cross-border cooperation.

Some results of the Local Action Plan:

- Establishment of cross-border governance structures, including four different levels: administration, political, civil society and implementation.
- Design of a long-term strategic and operative planning document: Frankfurt-Słubice Action Plan 2010-2020 (joint development vision 2020, 24 strategic goals, 23 projects).
- Involvement of civil society: Future Conference in June 2009, from now on public forum on cross-border issues once a year.

Website : www.slubice.pl

Urban Community of Strasbourg (France)

The cross-border conurbation of Strasbourg (France) and the Ortenaukreis (Germany), located on the West and the East bank of the Rhine river, covers about 850.000 inhabitants. In 1995, cross-border strategic planning became a central objective so as to facilitate a cross-border spatial cohesion: the white paper on strategic planning was the first political will to get a global co-ordination on spatial use in the area. The search for efficient governance enabling the implementation of the strategy became more and more central in the political process.

The decision was then taken to formalize a network of French and German local authorities: a convention was signed by local authorities to establish a Eurodistrict in 2005, in order to organize the cooperation between political and technical levels without a structure with legal personality.

In parallel to the thematic actions, a strategic framework has been built-up during the past few years to have a global view of issues and expectations for the cross-border area: the Strasbourg-Ortenau Metropolitan Project (2004-2007).

At the beginning of the project, the key issue was to facilitate the organization of that metropolitan area in order to intensify cooperation and have structural actions strengthening a sustainable conurbation in a competitive world-wide environment. The two national spokesmen leading the Eurodistrict had agreed on the necessity to explore new methods of governance so as to pass from the existing cooperation to a more integrated form of collaboration, through the establishment of a co-decision process, notably with the establishment of an EGTC. As a result, the EGTC was created on 4 February 2010.

By taking part in the “EGTC” URBACT project, the partners of the Eurodistrict Strasbourg-Ortenau were willing to exchange innovative methods with the other partners in order to get new ideas for the future EGTC. The challenge was also to intensify visibility for the inhabitants and to enhance the involvement of civil society.

Globally, participating in the « EGTC » URBACT project has allowed the Eurodistrict Strasbourg-Ortenau to deepen its reflection on the new orientations it will give to its territorial development, its governance methods, and its readability in order to move from a cooperation logic to a co-decision logic.

Moreover, since the project ran parallel to the setting-up of the EGTC “Eurodistrict Strasbourg-Ortenau”, the sharing of information, know-how, and best practices in terms of governance and community within the cross-border conurbations who are partners of the project, has proved to be particularly enriching.

More specifically, the Local Action Plan, which represents the concrete outcome of the project, will serve as a source of information for the political entities which will find in it some examples of good practices and compared experiences that will feed new approaches in terms of involvement of the civil society, without which the EGTC “Eurodistrict Strasbourg-Ortenau” could not become established in the lasting.

Website: <http://www.eurodistrict.eu>

The results of the “EGTC” URBACT project

The work carried out by the project partners resulted in the development of several outputs, all aiming to provide useful tools for improving the governance of cross-border agglomerations.

At the beginning of the project, the Lead Partner and the Lead Expert drafted a **baseline study** aiming to provide an overview of all partners (state of the art, needs and expectations) and define key issues.

Consistently with the URBACT requirements, each “EGTC” URBACT project partner has drawn up a **Local Action Plan (LAP)** that addresses the measures that will be taken, the projects that could be developed, and the recommendations that are to be expressed to the national and Community authorities in order to improve governance. The partners benefited from individual support from the Lead Expert and the Lead Partner (methodological framework and support). The LAPs address the two main topics previously defined: “Leadership” and “Community” issues.

Local Support Groups existed among all partners even before the “EGTC” URBACT project was launched. They form the frameworks for consultation in cross-border agglomerations. Their structures are different from one conurbation to the other, but in all cases they bring together players from both sides of the border. Depending on the local situation and needs, they involve: technicians from the relevant public administrations (from local to regional and national level), local elected representatives and representatives from the civil society.

The LSGs sometimes comprised two levels of discussion: one at the institutional level to guarantee follow-up of the project by the elected representatives, and another at the technical level. The formation varied during the project for some project partners.

The URBACT Secretariat elaborated a toolkit and a stakeholder analysis, which was useful to municipalities for assessing the most appropriate composition of the Local Support Group.

The exchange of experiences and the identification of best practices, which fed into the reflections leading to Local Action Plans, were made possible during technical meetings and public thematic seminars: a first seminar in Chaves (Portugal) on “Leadership” issues and a second seminar in Tournai (Belgium) on “Community” issues. **Reports** and **all materials related to these events** (PowerPoint presentations, project sheets, framing notes) were useful for enabling the partners to learn from one another, address their needs and pass on examples of good practice.

The **booklet** is a communicative document that details the main results of the project. It contains a CD-ROM with all Local Action Plans, the European Action Plan and the Handbook.

The **Handbook** aims to provide some tools to cross-border territories to assess their cross-border governance: a methodological framework, the synthetic table on the needs of cross-border agglomerations in terms of governance and the recommendations of actions (at local, regional/national and European levels) and a range of case studies.

The present document, the **European Action Plan**, presents the project results: the lessons learned from the project and the recommendations addressed to national and European authorities.

These documents may be a relevant source of information for other cross-border territories in Europe.

1. Lessons learned at local level

1.1 How can public leaders and cross-border organizations frame and implement efficient policies (“Leadership” issues)?

Governance is mainly characterized by the sharing of responsibility in the definition and implementation of spatial cohesion policies. The efficiency and sustainability of those public policies are strongly conditioned by a good knowledge of the whole area which allows to get an accurate diagnosis of the cross-border territory (socio-economic, geographic, institutional features, etc) in order to respond to the population’s needs. Such a process, from the development to the implementation and adaptation of cross-border policies, must be based on a multi level partnership, a web of all relevant and competent public and private stakeholders from both sides of the border.

Public-led coordination processes in cross-border conurbations cannot just be a replica of models existing within national boundaries. Original ways of governing a cross-border conurbation must be identified and experimented. There is no “ideal” cross-border decision-making body to be copied all over the European Union but an ensemble of attitudes and methods embedded in regional cultural environment.

The project partners of the “EGTC” URBACT project exchanged on the following key-issues:

- 1) Which tools to assess the needs and potentialities of the cross-border territory?
- 2) Why and how to formalize cooperation between border cities?
- 3) How to organize the cooperation between the decision-makers and the civil servants who are dedicated to the development of cross-border agglomerations?
- 4) How to finance cross-border projects?
- 5) How to articulate the cross-border agglomeration with upper local policies?

1.1.1 Analysis and observation tools

Cross-border agglomerations face difficulties in assessing their economic, social, and environmental situation in absence of cross-border statistic data, a precondition for the design of a common multi-sectoral strategy.

The lack of coordination of national and regional observatories, and the absence of cross-border observatory and of common indicators do not facilitate the identification of common problems and potentialities of cooperation through a shared diagnosis based on comparable data. On this basis, cross-border agglomerations can define an integrated strategic document for the cross-border territory, which defines the priorities and the corresponding actions for the coming years in order to respond to the population’s needs.

Proposal 1: Develop statistic data at cross-border level facilitating the design of relevant and accurate policies

Good practice:

The Trinational Eurodistrict Basel has set-up a cross-border observatory (Geoportail), in collaboration with local authorities, which delivers cross-border data, mapping on the TEB territory regarding several topics (environment, planning, transport, etc).

Proposal 2: Design a common and shared strategy for the cross-border agglomeration, declined into actions

Good practices:

All project partners a shared cross-border strategy (multi-sectoral and lasting over several years):

- the Trinational Eurodistrict Basel partners adopted in 2009 its “Spatial Development Strategy 2020”;
- the Eurocidade Chaves-Verín developed its Strategic Agenda in 2008 with the assistance of outside experts, researchers and the members of civil society;

- a cross-border strategic development plan was approved by the local authorities of the Ister-Granum EGTC in 2005 for the 2007-2013 period with the assistance of eight cross-border committees regrouping a total of 150 experts. The strategy will be updated in a near future;
- the municipalities of Frankfurt(Oder) and Slubice designed the Common strategy for Frankfurt and Slubice 2010-2020 on the basis of the inputs given by the members of the civil society who took part to the Future conference in June 2009;
- the partners of the Eurodistrict Strasbourg-Ortenau adopted the Strasbourg-Ortenau Metropolitan Project in 2007.

1.1.2 Governance institutionalization

The reality of integrated and sustained cross-border projects necessitates a prior expression of strong shared political will on either side of the border, enabling the definition of joint strategies and actions.

In this context, the formalization of cross-border cooperation may appear as means to deepen and facilitate partnerships. Legal tools for cross-border cooperation (agreement and/or joint structure) are serving these cross-border strategies and projects. They are set-up to facilitate their implementation and to secure commitments and investments on a long-term basis.

The “legal tool box of cross-border cooperation” is different from one border to another and is tailored according to the nature of the project, the partnership and maturity, and also cultural identity of cross-border territories. It contains all the legal instruments that can be used in national law (conventions, associations, etc.), international agreements (local grouping for cross-border cooperation) and Community law (European Economic Interest Grouping).

The process of legal structuring cross-border projects must proceed step by step, without short-cuts.

Up to now, formalization of cross-border partnerships in Europe has mainly led to “soft” institutions producing knowledge, identifying common interests and formulating projects potentially implemented by domestic bodies.

The establishment of a common structure, with legal personality, offers several advantages to cross-border cooperation that have been identified by the project partners of the “EGTC” URBACT project : it has a legal personality (may have its own budget, staff, capacity to pass contracts), it enables its members to pass

from simple coordination to a cross-border decision-making process, it provides a more efficient organization with a common staff dedicated to cross-border cooperation, and a greater visibility.

The European Grouping of Territorial Cooperation⁵ (EGTC) supplements rather than it replaces the existing instruments: it is available to all 27 Member States of the European Union, it is open to a very broad partnership (including the States) and it authorizes the participation of entities from non EU Member States under conditions. The EGTC works in accordance with the principle of subsidiarity: the Community regulation defines a common base and leaves many points to be covered by the domestic law of the EGTC members. This instrument is of particular interest for the local authorities that do not have a long experience in managing borders and decentralisation and have not benefited from the Madrid Outline-Convention. Consequently, since 2006, many cross-border areas have expressed their wish to establish an EGTC.

Regarding the partnership of such cross-border structure, all cross-border agglomerations agreed that municipalities should pilot these cross-border entities. Nevertheless, the implication of national and regional authorities has been considered as being crucial to put forward the cooperation in cases where the competences of these public authorities would enable projects to be launched.

In this context, how to make governance structures the motor for efficient and integrated cross-border urban strategies and an efficient platform of complex networks engaged in spatial cohesion?

Proposal 3: Create and adapt a specific cross-border institution to cross-border agglomerations' projects with the aim of structuring the dialogue and decision-making process used by public leaders

The “legal toolbox” for cross-border cooperation allows cross-border agglomerations to adapt legal tool to their own projects. The partners of the Eurometropole Lille-Kortrijk-Tournai, of the Eurodistrict Strasbourg-Ortenau and of the Ister-Granum EGTC set-up a European Grouping of Territorial Cooperation to respond to their ambitions: more visibility, greater efficiency of the

⁵ See the MOT's publication, Cahiers EGTC, 2007.

cooperation (a unique decision-making-process, a team dedicated to cross-border cooperation, a proper budget), and in the case of the Eurometropole and the Eurodistrict Strasbourg-Ortenau, the implication of the State as partner. The Eurocidade Chaves-Verín is currently working on the convention and the statutes of an EGTC. The Trinational Eurodistrict Basel is an association under French law. Up to now, this legal form has satisfied the TEB partners. Frankfurt (Oder)-Slubice will launch in a near future a reflection on the adaptation of the governance structure. It currently lies on a convention.

Proposal 4: Involve different institutional levels, including State authorities, to the cross-border governance according to their competences

Before the creation of the European Grouping of Territorial Cooperation (EGTC), the State could not sit next to local authorities in a structure dealing with cross-border cooperation. This new European instrument allows doing so. It allows to have a long-lasting platform of discussion between local and national authorities and to facilitate the implementation of cross-border projects responding to local needs that require the State’s competencies.

Good practices:

The Eurometropole Lille-Kortrijk-Tournai EGTC involves regional and State authorities on both sides of the border. The French State will become member of the Eurodistrict Strasbourg-Ortenau EGTC in a near future.

1.1.3 Political and technical leadership

Leadership, in cross-border context, is based on the free-will of elected representatives eager to put in place a system of cooperation with their counterparts on the other side of the border.

Competences, interest and time-dedication of leaders, politicians and key professionals, in cross-border urban arrangements are specific ones. National-first attitudes, short-term concrete achievements and expectations are unconceivable in a cross-border environment. Openness towards the “otherness”, knowledge of the culture, language, institutional framework..., time availability for a visionary approach of tomorrow’s Europe and horizontal relationships are probably the most secure ways to achieve results.

Proposal 5: Develop ambitious cross-border projects and institutional mechanisms requiring in-depth local political involvement

The mobilization of decision-makers on the cross-border cooperation debate is crucial to reach concrete implementation of projects. The “EGTC” URBACT project partners identified two ways to raise the interest of local elected representatives:

- Launch ambitious projects with a visible and positive impact on the population.

Good practices:

For example, the cross-border tramway or the IBA (International exhibition of Architecture) project of the TEB; the “free social zone” concept of the Eurocidade Chaves-Verín, whose aim is to provide all Eurocidade’s citizens the same social advantages; the project of the cross-border tramway between Frankfurt (O) and Slubice was a campaign argument during the municipal elections in Frankfurt (Oder) at the beginning of the year 2010.

- Establish institutional mechanisms within the governance structure such as working groups chaired by some elected representatives, a turning presidency, the designation vice-presidents.

Good practice:

The Eurometropole Lille-Kortrijk-Tournai has set-up six thematic working groups (Mobility/accessibility, Economic development, tourism, Services to the population, Territorial Strategy and sustainable Development, culture) bringing together elected representatives to discuss specific topics.

Proposal 6: Set up a permanent team dedicated to the cross-border agglomeration, with skills adapted to its needs

A total involvement from civil servants is required to give a sense of reality to the cross-border agglomeration’s ambitions: coordination of the involved local authorities, organization of the political bodies of the governance structure (assembly, board), implementation of projects on topics of interest (transport, culture...), and communication and press relations activities, are some of the

tasks which can to be taken in charge by technicians working on cross-border cooperation.

Considering the time-demanding and the very specific skills required for such activities (languages, knowledge of administrative and cultural contexts...), the setting-up of an efficient team capable of facing such challenges must be considered as a priority to guarantee the quality of the cooperation.

The “EGTC” URBACT project partners expressed the following needs regarding their staff:

- need to guarantee a continuity of the technical work;
- need to have a staff with very specific skills required for cross-border cooperation: languages, knowledge of administrative and cultural contexts...
- need to have sufficient human resources for time-demanding missions;
- need to recruit some specialists for specific missions and projects;
- difficulty to recruit a team in presence of different legal frameworks (unclear conditions of recruitment in terms of social security rules, salary, retirement, etc).

Good practices:

Most of the “EGTC” URBACT partners have a team dedicated to cross-border cooperation with a formation that is different from a territory to another. For all cross-border agglomerations, the civil servants of the public authorities, partners of the cooperation, are still involved and work closely with the dedicated team when it exists.

The question of training was considered as an important matter. The convention and the statutes of the Eurometropole Lille-Kortrijk-Tournai EGTC establish a minimum level of language capacity for the team of the EGTC.

Proposal 7: Define communication and cooperation channels between the staff of the cross-border structure and the civil servants of the local authorities

The setting-up of a new entity dedicated to cross-border cooperation changes radically the functioning and the management of the technical work. In all cases, the civil servants of the public authorities partners of the cooperation remain strongly involved in cross-border cooperation and work very closely with the dedicated team when it exists.

In order to guarantee an efficient collaboration in presence of a multitude of actors, it is crucial to clarify the way cross-border cooperation is managed and define the respective tasks of the different entities: who does what? How do the technicians communicate with each other?

For example, the Trinational Eurodistrict Basel’s team, set-up since 2002, carries out the following tasks: connecting with local administrations, coordination of the Coordination group (composed by all local administrations), of the thematic working groups, organization of the political bodies meetings, regular contacts with the chairman and the vice-chairmen of the TEB, and communication activities.

Proposal 8: Define communication and cooperation channels between the political and technical organs of the cross-border structure

The definition of the relations between the political bodies and the technical office of the cross-border structure is essential in order to ensure an appropriate technical response to political demands.

Good practice: The appointment of a director, as the main interlocutor for the political representatives, has been demonstrated to be an operational solution for TEB.

The Eurometropole Lille-Kortrijk-Tournai and the Eurodistrict Strasbourg-Ortenau have also recruited their director for their EGTCs.

1.1.4 Securing and innovative financial resources

In general, cross-border cooperation is not sufficiently taken into consideration by national and regional funds. The Swiss and French programmes dedicated to metropolitan areas constitutes in this sense an exception.

European funds have constituted for some years a strong lever for public funding to support cross-border projects.

Nowadays, public authorities, who still consider EU fundings as a crucial financial resource for cross-border cooperation, are willing to find complementary ways

to regional, national and European funds for financing the implementation of projects on a long-term basis.

Proposal 9: Develop financial solidarity mechanisms at cross-border level

Good practice: The Ister-Granum EGTC has developed the Solidarity Fund to compensate some border-effects due to the mobility of workers: many Slovakian residents work in Hungarian enterprises in Esztergom (Hungary). In order to compensate this loss of tax resources for the Slovakian municipalities, Esztergom agreed to transfer 1% of the tax resources coming from the benefits of enterprises established in Esztergom to the Slovakian and Hungarian municipalities through a call for proposals. This experimentation is the expression of the solidarity of the partners of the Ister-Granum EGTC. This mechanism could inspire other cross-border territories in Europe, consistently with their respective national legal frameworks.

1.1.5 Articulation with upper-local levels

The development of cross-border agglomerations is largely affected by the policies and strategies developed at a higher level: regional, national and European. For this reason, they must take into account the concerns of cross-border agglomerations and support their development.

Proposal 10: Raise awareness of cross-border agglomerations in regional, national and European policies in order to facilitate cross-border cooperation

The development of cross-border agglomerations depends on all levels of production of public policies. The establishment of a framework of cross-border cooperation facilitating the implementation of projects that meet the needs of populations requires a recognition of the specificities of cross-border urban areas in sectoral and planning policies at regional/national and EU levels.

Good practice: The French policy dedicated to metropolitan areas (“Coopération métropolitaine”) recognizes several cross-border metropolitan areas such as the

Eurodistrict Strasbourg-Ortenau and the Trinational Eurodistrict Basel (TEB), as well as the Swiss policy for the TEB.

Proposal 11: Promote linkage between the levels of cross-border conurbations and euroregions, in order to have coherent policies covering a common area

The development of cities must be coordinated with that of the regions; it is also true for cross-border agglomerations regarding Euroregions. In this perspective, it is important to make sure that the realities of cross-border conurbations are taken into consideration in other strategies covering their area. The imbrications of territories must be synonymous of coherent strategies and policies, and no contradictory or competitive ones, to guarantee a sustainable development of cross-border areas.

This issue is a preoccupation for several cross-border agglomerations.

Good practices: The Eurocidade Chaves-Verín has set-up a very strong partnership with the Working Community of Galicia-North-Portugal. This guarantees a good articulation between the strategies and the priorities at the different levels and, for the Eurocidade Chaves-Verín, and a strong political and technical support from the regional and national authorities. The TEB is represented in the organs of the Upper Rhine Conference⁶ and in the technical and political bodies of INTERREG IV A Upper Rhine. The City of Frankfurt (Oder) hosts the headquarters of the Euroregion Pro Europa Viadrina⁷ but the link between this structure and the cross-border agglomeration remains weak because of the difference of the spatial scale and the priority actions.

⁶ The Upper Rhine Conference provides the institutional framework for cross-border cooperation in the Upper Rhine region. More information: <http://www.conference-rhin-sup.org>

The Euroregion Pro Europa Viadrina was created in order to strengthen regional economy and identity and the improvement of the living conditions within the area on the German-Polish border. More information : <http://www.euroregion-viadrina.eu/>

1.2 How can the involvement of the civil society guarantee the legitimacy of cross-border agglomeration policies (“Community” issues)?

Today, more than a third of the European citizens lives in border areas. The appropriate response to specific cross-border challenges lies down on the development of new systems of governance aiming to conduct policies at a cross-border scale. With the absence of a cross-border elected government, such governance systems, seeking effectiveness, must also take into consideration the requirements of transparency and legitimacy, particularly by promoting strategies favoring the involvement of the civil society.

“Civil society” refers to a large range of stakeholders, those who are not public administrations: from citizens, to socio-economic actors, such as enterprises, associations, universities or trade chambers.

There is a risk of a gap between these actors, representing the living forces of the territory, who belong to different national democracies, and, the public authorities involved in the cross-border cooperation and in the governance structure.

It is important to question the possibility to establish cross-border communities giving legitimacy to cross-border public entities and to its actions. The structuring factors of a community are of diverse nature: popular projects, public services, media...

- 1) How can public authorities promote a mobilization of the population in cross-border conurbations?
- 2) How can media be used to facilitate a greater visibility and a common identity for cross-border conurbations?
- 3) Which are the possible levels of participative democracy to be developed at a cross-border scale?

1.2.1 Develop cross-border projects dedicated to the civil society

The development of cross-border projects dedicated to the civil society, creating places of sharing and exchanges for the inhabitants and responding to their needs in terms of public services is crucial. The membership of citizens to cross-border cooperation must go through the development of visible and concrete projects. Nevertheless, public administrations are not the exclusive players in a cross-border agglomeration: projects must be thought to respond to the citizens’ needs but not only; the civil society must be encouraged to be the driving force of cross-border cooperation.

Proposal 12: Develop cross-border popular projects aiming to provide places for sharing and exchanges for the inhabitants

All cross-border agglomerations have developed cross-border projects aiming to bring together inhabitants from both sides of the border and to contribute to a cross-border identity: leisure activities such as sports, culture, tourism are the best vectors for such events contributing to a better “living together”.

The challenge for cross-border agglomerations is nowadays to attract more and more inhabitants to these popular events. The partnerships with other organizers (associations, schools...) must also be strengthened.

Good practices: The Eurodistrict Strasbourg-Ortenau organizes each year during the Month of Europe, a European picnic and a Bicycle day.

The TEB supports the Basel-Dreiland slowUp project on the trinational area: the idea is to close off the streets to motorized traffic for one whole day and provide a leisure programme (music, children and sport activities, etc).

Since 2004, Frankfurt (O) and Slubice organize every year a common city fete celebrating the Hanse City. During three days, many leisure activities take place on both sides of the border.

Proposal 13: Develop cross-border services and infrastructures that answer to the population’s needs

All cross-border agglomerations have supported the development of cross-border services responding to their population’s needs: transport, education health... Such policies improve the life of citizens and demonstrate the added value of cross-border cooperation.

Good practices: For example, on the French-Belgian border, several entities (public and private) working on job issues from both sides of the border organize yearly a cross-border job forum with job seekers and enterprises from Belgium and France. The Eurodistrict Strasbourg-Ortenau has also launched this initiative for the first time in 2009.

A French-Belgian agreement on train transportation has been signed in order to improve prices, quality of services and to set up the first direct trains which connect Lille, Tournai and Kortrijk every hour. It is the first concrete action of the Eurometropole Lille-Kortrijk-Tournai.

The Trinational Eurodistrict of Basel supports the extension of some tramway lines Basel/Saint Louis (France) and Basel/Weil-am-Rhein (Germany).

The Urban Community of Strasbourg gave its authorization for the extension of the tramway line between Strasbourg and Kehl. This project will be finished in 2014.

The municipalities of Frankfurt (Oder)-Slubice have developed since 2000 the German-Polish kindergarten (Euro-Kita) in Frankfurt and are reflecting on the extension of the tramway line to the German side.

Proposal 14: Help the civil society to become a promoter of cross-border projects

The current challenge of cross-border agglomerations is to enable civil society to be promoters of projects. To do so, cross-border agglomerations are invited to provide support to these actors: technical, logistics, communication, financial supports. The idea of establishing financial programmes dedicated to the financing of cross-border projects led by civil society through simplified procedures, was mentioned (request for “free money”).

Good practices: The Eurodistrict Strasbourg-Ortenau already provides a logistic support to primary schools for the solidarity course and to the sports and environmental associations for the Bicycle day.

The TEB communicates on cross-border projects led by the civil society on its website. The Eurocidade Chaves-Verín supports the trade associations in the implementation of the “citizenship card” that provides discount to the Eurocidade’s citizens in shops situated in the Eurocidade area.

The Ister-Granum EGTC has set-up a web portal for NGOs. It provides various services for the visitors and registered NGOs: partner search for EU calls and projects; information on events; presentation of regional civil organizations; link to civiljtube.hu (civil video-share portal).

1.2.2 Communication and media-related actions

Media and communication can contribute to the building of a cross-border feeling: by acting as intermediaries from public actors towards the population in order to communicate on the cross-border conurbation and its policies, and as means to confront opinions among the cross-border population.

In this view, how to define the content of such media and communication tools, how to address a large audience, and choose the appropriate tool? To which extend can cross-border agglomerations promote the idea of a cross-border e-democracy?

Proposal 15: Adopt a communication strategy for cross-border agglomerations for having a greater visibility

The identification of the population to the cross-border agglomeration passes through the building of a specific image with a logo, a website, a mapping, the production of regular newsletter, and the building of connections with the media, for instance.

Good practices: The Ister-Granum EGTC, the Eurodistrict Strasbourg-Ortenau and the Trinational Eurodistrict Basel have their own logo and a dedicated

website. The Eurocidade Chaves-Verín has created a logo. The Eurometropole Lille-Kortrijk-Tournai is currently working on such a communication strategy. Most of the border cities partners of the “EGTC” URBACT project have put on their website a part concerning the cross-border activities and a link to the website of their partner city.

Proposal 16: Communicate towards citizens concrete information relating to their daily life as cross-border citizens

Communicating on governance issues, the institutional aspects of cross-border cooperation, is not very popular. In order to interest and involve citizens in cross-border cooperation, as well as local and regional media, cross-border agglomerations’ experiences highlighted that communicating on the effects of cross-border cooperation, on the advantages offered by a life on borders (numerous leisure activities, public services,...) and on the cross-border projects that will have an impact on their daily life (cross-border public transport, job...) is attractive for the population.

Proposal 17: Develop the e-democracy in order to promote a large debate among populations

The internet is a very interesting tool in order to address the largest audience as possible.

Good practices: The “Journal des 2 Rives”, an on-line newspaper based on a private initiative, or the future chat forum of the Eurodistrict Strasbourg-Ortenau, are some key experiences that demonstrate the increasing interest for the e-democracy. Frankfurt (O) and Slubice have also launched a common public forum on internet where the population of both cities can express its opinion on the cross-border cooperation.

1.2.3 Participative democracy tools

The involvement of the socio-economic players and of the population in cross-border public governance is crucial for several reasons: they give legitimacy to policies implemented by the cross-border agglomerations and also have the knowledge of the needs of the ground, which enables public authorities to develop appropriate policies.

There is not legally binding rules regarding the involvement of the civil society in public policies. All systems of involvement of the civil society rely on the political will of the elected representatives.

The design of participative democracy systems is a contextually-based process: it depends on cultural habits, the role which is given to the civil society, the population by public authorities (consultative role, assessment of policies, proposal of projects...) and the actors who are concerned. The identification of the relevant actors and the establishment of a clear linkage between them and the public institutions are key issues. Cross-border agglomerations can choose to establish formal and/or informal mechanisms to involve the civil society.

Proposal 18: Develop discussion and consultation platforms involving institutional and the appropriate civil society players

All cross-border agglomerations partners of the “EGTC” URBACT project have developed mechanisms to involve the civil society in cross-border cooperation through formal or informal tools. There is a tendency to formalize such partnership. These practices are still under experimentation.

Good practices:

Informal mechanisms to involve the civil society:

- The municipalities of Frankfurt (O) and Slubice organized in June 2009 a Future conference that brought together over 200 participants from all parts of the civil society coming from both cities. The result is a common vision for 2020. An event will be organized each year to launch a continuous dialogue with the population.
- The Eurocidade Chaves-Verín has not set-up any formal collaboration with the civil society but works on strengthening its relations with it by consulting

it (for the Strategic Agenda for instance), organizing activities with it and analyzing and transforming its proposals into real projects.

- The Trinational Eurodistrict Basel has built-up strong partnerships with two organizations representing private interests: Metrobasel is an association which represents the interests of companies, institutions and key civil society players for the purpose of promoting the tri-national metropolitan region of Basel. The vision "metrobasel 2020" was drawn up as a "paper for the future" in the year 2006 by 50 personalities drawn from all parts of the tri-national metropolitan region of Basel. Regio Basiliensis is a Swiss association with 600 individual and collective members, dedicated to promoting cross-border cooperation.
- The Eurodistrict Strasbourg-Ortenau has scheduled to organize discussion forums organized in different fields of activities. The first projected round table will deal with health issues.

Formal mechanisms to involve civil society:

- The Forum of the Eurometropole Lille-Kortrijk-Tournai was created in September 2009 and gathers members representing the civil society from the whole cross-border area. The Forum comprises 60 voluntary members who already belong to the existing development councils of the local and regional administrations.
- In 2006, Esztergom and Sturovo have set up a "civil parliament" under the form of an association. Its role is to: strengthen the relation between Hungarian and Slovakian civil organizations; articulate common interests; launch common programmes, events and projects; operate the Service Network for Non-profit Organizations of Ister-Granum EGTC; participate in the work of the Expert Board of Ister-Granum EGTC.

2.

Recommendations addressed to the regional/national and the EU levels

2.1 Recommendations addressed to the regional/national level

Successful cross-border cooperation depends above all on political will at local level. Nevertheless, regional and policies have an impact on the capacity of local authorities to deepen the cooperation: legal framework, financial tools, sectoral policies, planning strategies, coordination of policies at both sides of the border or their participation in some projects requiring their participation... All these aspects that depend on State and regional authorities demonstrate the key role they play in the development of cross-border agglomerations.

In this context, the “EGTC” URBACT project partners make the following recommendations which are addressed, according to the political organization (decentralized or federal), to State or regional authorities. These recommendations must be discussed with the appropriate authorities:

2.1.1 Adaptation of regional and national policies to the needs of cross-border agglomerations

RECOMMENDATION 1:

Recognition of cross-border agglomerations’ specificities in sectoral and planning policies at regional and national levels

Cross-border areas are very often marginalized and not taken into consideration in national and regional initiatives. The “EGTC” URBACT project partners highlighted the need to adapt certain regional and national policies to their needs (staff rules, planning strategies,...).

Good practice:

The French policy “metropolitan cooperation” and the Swiss policy in favour of metropolitan areas recognize cross-border ones as territories of intervention.

RECOMMENDATION 2:

Take into account priorities of cross-border agglomerations in the Cohesion policy programming documents at regional and national levels

The impact of Cohesion policy on territorial cohesion on EU borders must pass by a better recognition of specific areas, such as cross-border agglomerations, in the strategic documents at regional and national levels. European policies must be tools for a territorial integration and enable municipalities to respond to their populations' needs.

Good practices:

For the period 2007-2013, all the Operational programmes on cross-border cooperation on French borders mentioned in their priorities the following cross-border agglomerations: Trinational Eurodistrict Basel, Eurodistrict Strasbourg-Ortenau, Eurometropole Lille-Kortrijk-Tournai. If these cross-border sites are mentioned in the operational programmes, they do not participate to the monitoring committees and the working groups. They have a consultative role as Trinational Eurodistrict Basel or Eurodistrict Strasbourg-Ortenau for the Upper-Rhine Operational Programme.

RECOMMENDATION 3:

Recognition and articulation of the different scales of cooperation, local and euroregion, in regional and national policies

The development of cross-border agglomerations is impacted by the development of larger spaces of cooperation such as euroregions. In this context, regional and national policies must recognize both scales of cross-border cooperation, which cover partly a common territory, and connect the development of these two areas in a coherent manner in their documents, including programming document for cohesion policy.

RECOMMENDATION 4:

Promote a direct management of structural funds by EGTCs that cover cross-border territories, and have a cross-border integrated strategy (under pre-defined conditions)

The General Community regulation on cohesion policy for 2007-2013 authorizes the Member states to delegate a global grant to intermediate bodies to implement a part of the Operational programme. These intermediate bodies are “designated by the Member State or the managing authority, including local authorities, regional development bodies or non-governmental organisations, in accordance with the provisions of an agreement concluded between the Member State or the managing authority and that body”. They must “provide guarantees of its solvency and competence in the domain concerned as well as in administrative and financial management”⁸.

In this context, European Groupings of Territorial Cooperation could manage directly structural funds to implement their cross-border strategy that would be in compliance with the Operational programme, and under the conditions mentioned in the regulation. This possibility has not been developed until now since no EGTCs was created at the beginning of the programming period.

This possibility should be promoted for the next period 2014-2020 in order to favour the emergence of cross-border projects really articulated with the cross-border strategy.

RECOMMENDATION 5:

In order to support cross-border projects in the framework of cross-border territorial strategies, articulate national/regional policies and financial tools from both sides of the border by:

- a) establishing cross-border platforms (joint committees, intergovernmental conferences...) in order to facilitate discussion and obtain consistency of the domestic legislations on either side of borders;**
- b) promoting the signing of inter-state agreements;**
- c) guaranteing a special statute to cross-border agglomerations. In French Law, the use of the right of experimentation should be promoted;**

⁸ Article 42 of the EC Regulation laying down general provisions on the European Regional Development Fund, the European Social Fund and the Cohesion Fund and repealing Regulation (EC) No 1260/1999.

d) promote a complementary use of national funds to support cross-border projects.

Cross-border projects are not confined within national systems. National and regional legal, political, financial frameworks at both sides of the border have an impact on their feasibility. Coordination, articulation of such regional and national frameworks and financial tools must be guaranteed in order to support coherently and complementarily such projects (common equipments, infrastructures, public services), indispensable to improve the quality of life of the inhabitants:

- a) Cross-border platforms of discussion and of exchange between national entities, in relation to regional and local authorities, are key solutions to raise awareness of national authorities on cross-border cooperation and to obtain consistency of the domestic legislations on either side of border.

Good practices:

The French-Belgian Parliamentary working group was created in 2006. It was composed of State parliamentarians (French and Belgian), regional parliamentarians (Belgian) and a European parliamentarian. The objective was to make a census of the various projects and subjects of common cross-border interest; to identify the main legal obstacles to effective cross-border cooperation in the Lille metropolitan area, and more generally on the French-Belgian border; to define conditions of experimentations for adapted organisational patterns. The Working Group insisted on the need to converge the French and Belgian legal and administrative mechanisms.

- b) Inter-state agreements could for example concern the harmonization of social rules to facilitate the recruitment of a staff for cross-border structures.
- c) The right of experimentation of local authorities is provided for by the French Constitution since 2003. It could be used for the recruitment of the staff of a cross-border structure.
- d) The Swiss and French national programmes dedicated to metropolitan areas can finance, complementarily, a same cross-border infrastructure.

RECOMMENDATION 6:

Give the concerned ministries and regional entities a budget line dedicated to cross-border cooperation

The development of regional and national policies supporting cross-border cooperation (financing of cross-border projects, technical assistance, or seminars on cross-border cooperation...) implies the adoption of specific budget lines dedicated to cross-border cooperation.

The elaboration of appropriate policies at regional/national level requires also a better dialogue between the administrations concerned by cross-border cooperation.

2.1.2 A better dialogue between ministries on cross-border policies to develop policies responding to cross-border agglomerations' needs

Cross-border cooperation is a cross-cutting topic and concerns as much transport, planning, and environment as job policies. A good understanding and an appropriate response to the specific challenges faced by cross-border agglomerations by public administrations requires thus an integrated approach in the way the administrations work internally. More dialogue between administrations and deeper knowledge of cross-border issues are some preconditions.

RECOMMENDATION 7:

Organize an interdepartmental reflection between Ministries on cross-border issues

The “EGTC” URBACT project partners highlighted the lack of dialogue at the highest level on cross-border issues, which is an obstacle to the development of integrated policies in favour of cross-border areas.

Good practice:

The Mission Opérationnelle transfrontalière organizes an interdepartmental reflection between French Ministries on cross-border issues dialogue through its monitoring committee.⁹ Such an initiative aims to find synergies between sectoral national policies having an impact on cross-border areas (transport, planning, environment, inter-municipality law, etc).

RECOMMENDATION 8:

Within each State organization, identify contact persons on cross-border issues in the concerned ministries, coordinated by one person at the highest political level

The “EGTC” URBACT project partners mentioned the importance to identify a contact person at national level to bring-up the problems they would encounter on borders. This contact person could be in charge of coordinating ministries’ policies on cross-border issues.

Good practice:

In Switzerland the contact-point on cross-border issues is the Federal Office for territorial development (ARE). In France, the French Interministerial Delegation for Spatial planning and Regional attractiveness (DATAR) is the contact administration on cross-border matters. The French government launched a parliamentary mission at the end of 2009 with the aim of identifying the main obstacles on French borders and formulating recommendations to facilitate cross-border cooperation. One of the recommendations arising from the report is to name a Secretary of State in charge of cross-border cooperation.

⁹ The MOT monitoring committee involves: the Ministries for Foreign and European affairs, for Internal affairs, Over-seas and Territorial collectivities, for Ecology, Energy, Sustainable development and Sea, for Health and Sports, for Culture and Communication, for Budget, Public accountancy and Civil service, for Higher education and research, for Economy, Industry and Employment, Caisse des Dépôts (French public financial institution) and the administrations representing the state authorities at regional level (SGAR, General Secretariat for Regional action).

2.1.3 A better knowledge of cross-border issues and the development of technical support to cross-border agglomerations by the national authorities

RECOMMENDATION 9:

Launch a large reflection on cross-border cooperation at national level to have an overview of problems and potentialities

The development of appropriate national policies requires a good knowledge of the needs on the ground by the State authorities. The launch of a large reflection, consultation and assessment of cross-border areas' situation at a national level might help the national authorities to point out the key challenges and respond to them in a proper manner.

Good practice:

In 2009, the French Prime minister entrusted a mission on cross-border cooperation to members of the French Parliament. Upon an appraisal of cross-border cooperation, proposals will be formulated in order to better exploit the opportunities of the border territories: reinforce the economic attractiveness of the French territories, improve the use of the cooperation tools implemented by the European Union, and identify the expectations of the authorities in the border countries. It benefits from a strong support of the French Secretary of State in charge of European affairs and the French minister of Territorial planning and of the Countryside. Local consultations take place within this mission. A report will be delivered in May 2010 with a range of recommendations. This initiative could inspire other countries.

RECOMMENDATION 10:

Create, at a national scale, an entity dedicated to cross-border cooperation and aimed at setting-up a network of cross-border actors, providing technical assistance, and bringing-up the needs from the local level to the national level

In the Western Europe, cross-border areas have experimented cross-border cooperation for a long time and have, generally speaking, the prerequisite skills and competencies to develop projects. Nevertheless, still some very technical cross-border projects may require a certain expertise (governance structure, infrastructure projects, etc). Besides, the “new” Member States have a younger experience of cross-border cooperation and call for sources of inspiration, even though very interesting practices have emerged in some of these territories (see the solidarity fund of the Ister-Granum EGTC).

Providing technical to local authorities, networking between experimented actors and those in search for good practices, relays of local needs to the national level, constitute relevant actions that support cross-border areas in their cooperation.

Good practice:

The Mission Opérationnelle Transfrontalière has played this role since 1997 under the form of an association: providing technical assistance to border municipalities (legal expertise, development of a territorial strategy,...), networking cross-border actors, organizing seminars and participating to training session, its activities have evolved since its creation, becoming more and more European. It constitutes, nowadays, a unique model in Europe; MOT has been invited by some countries to share its experience with them.

RECOMMENDATION 11: Develop specific data on cross-border agglomerations at national level

Cross-border agglomerations need cross-border statistic data in order to assess their economic, social, and environmental situation, a precondition for the design of a common multi-sectoral strategy. The development of statistic data at national level would enable the cross-border areas to develop such strategies and raise the knowledge of national authorities on cross-border areas’ needs.

Good practice:

The French Interministerial Delegation for Spatial planning and Regional Attractiveness (DATAR) performs the observatory of cross-border territories, a statistical observation of the agglomerations on French borders to improve the knowledge of such cross-border territories. It networks local observatories and development agencies in order to identify common indicators. This action must allow the application of optimal public policy they need.

2.2 Recommendations addressed to the European level

The European institutions play a crucial role in the promotion of cross-border cooperation, politically, financially and legally speaking. Some obstacles met by cross-border agglomerations cannot be solved at local level or at national level. In order to enhance the European responses to cross-border needs, it is recommended to coordinate better European policies, to improve the dialogue between administrations, the knowledge of cross-border issues, and to promote the sharing of experiences. These recommendations must be discussed with the authorities concerned.

2.2.1 Adaptation of European policies to the needs of cross-border agglomerations

EUROPEAN RECOMMENDATION 1:

Promote recognition of cross-border agglomerations’ specificities in European policies.

Cross-border cooperation is covered by the objective “Territorial Cooperation” within the Cohesion policy 2007-2013. Nevertheless, European policies and strategies still do not integrate sufficiently the

territorial dimension, including cross-border cooperation (for example, the strategy “Europe 2020”).

EUROPEAN RECOMMENDATION 2:

Launch a reflection on the creation a European statute of cross-border staff in order to overcome complexity due to the different national legal statutes

Cross-border agglomerations face the difficulty to find a highly-qualified staff in absence of a clear and attractive statute. Indeed, the statute of the staff of cross-border structures results from the articulation of the different laws from both sides of the border and depends on the personal situation of the person concerned (place of residence, of work, ...).

In this context, it is recommended to launch a reflection on the creation of a European statute of cross-border staff.

EUROPEAN RECOMMENDATION 3:

Guarantee the access to structural funds for cross-border territories for the period 2014-2020

In the prospect of the negotiations on the Cohesion policy post-2013, it is crucial to recall the positive impact of structural funds on the development of cross-border areas, which is necessary to the EU integration process. The recognition of cross-border areas in the future European Cohesion policy is uncertain. The partners “EGTC” URBACT project recommend that the EU funds continue to play an active role and a substantial lever for public financing and for the deepening of cross-border cooperation.

The European grouping of Territorial Cooperation (EGTC) constitutes one of the tools dedicated to cross-border cooperation. In perspective of the revision of the European regulation on EGTC in 2011, and in order to make this tool as useful as it should be, the “EGTC” URBACT project partners make the following recommendations:

EUROPEAN RECOMMENDATION 4:

Open the participation in EGTCs to third countries without any restriction of partnership and adopt guidelines at European level to clarify the conditions of participation

The European grouping of territorial Cooperation is open to the participation of entities from third countries but under conditions, notably: the EGTC must comprise members coming from at least two EU member states.

This constraint may constitute an obstacle to the development of cross-border projects requiring a governance structure between an EU member State and a non EU member State; for example on the border France/Switzerland.

Besides, the conditions of participation of third countries remain unclear and call for some European guidelines to clarify them, and in order to make sure that these conditions are the same from a border to another.

EUROPEAN RECOMMENDATION 5:

Guarantee that the competent authorities for the creation or the participation to an EGTC, on either side of border, find a common position before turning in their decision. The EC regulation could set-up a specific procedure at State level.

Up to now, the EGTC Community regulation does not state any formal procedure between the competent authorities on EGTC. The national procedures apply and are not always articulated.

Consequently, some local authorities received official responses from national authorities that were not coherent with each other. This could possibly concern the “EGTC” URBACT project partners who wish to establish a EGTC in the future.

2.2.2 A better dialogue between the Directorates General of the European Commission

Cross-border cooperation is a cross-cutting topic and concerns as much transport, planning, and environment as job policies. A good understanding and an appropriate response to the specific issues of cross-border agglomerations by public administrations requires thus an integrated approach in the way the administrations work internally. More dialogue between administrations and deeper knowledge of cross-border issues are some preconditions.

EUROPEAN RECOMMENDATION 6:

Organize a dialogue between cross-border agglomerations and the inter-service group for the urban dimension led by the DG REGIO, which should cover cross-border urban issues

In 2006, DG REGIO launched the inter-service group on “Urban development” with all the Directorates General concerned by this topic¹⁰. It has contributed to a better recognition of territorial approach in EU policies and demonstrated the synergies that could be found between European policies. This inter-service group drafted a guide on the Urban dimension in the European Union policies (last update in 2010). This inter-service group should integrate cross-border urban issues and organize a dialogue with cross-border agglomerations to identify their needs for action at the European level. A guide on the cross-border dimension in the European Union policies could be elaborated.

Moreover, the inter-institutional work on cross-border cooperation should be promoted between the European Commission, the Committee

¹⁰ Directorates General involved in the inter-service group on “Urban development”: DG Agriculture and Rural Development, DG Competition, DG Education and Culture, Employment, Social Affairs and Equal Opportunities, DG Energy and Transport, DG Enterprise and Industry, DG Environment, EuropeAid, DG Health and Consumer Protection, DG Information Society and Media, DG Internal Market and Services, DG Justice, Freedom and Security, DG Research, Secretariat General.

of the Regions and the European Parliament (particularly with the inter-group on urban and cross-border issues).

EUROPEAN RECOMMENDATION 7:

Designate a European commissioner in charge of cross-border cooperation

The improvement of the dialogue between the Directorates general of the European Commission could be improved with the designation of a European Commissioner for cross-border cooperation. This person could be in charge of coordinating, at the highest level, the interested Commissioners on cross-border issues and would lead to a better recognition of cross-border specificities in EU policies. The other Commissioners would keep on dealing with cross-border issues related to their own policies.

2.2.3 A better knowledge of cross-border issues and the development of technical support to cross-border agglomerations by the European level

EUROPEAN RECOMMENDATION 8:

Develop statistic data on cross-border agglomerations within the European tool Urban audit and Eurostat

The development of statistic data at European level would provide cross-border areas with some tools to assess their needs, to develop strategies and to raise the knowledge of national and European authorities on cross-border cooperation.

Such a tool would also enable cross-border agglomerations to position themselves in the European Union and to find other territories with similar territorial features with whom to share experiences.

EUROPEAN RECOMMENDATION 9:

Promote the creation of a specific ERASMUS programme, which supports the exchange of elected representatives and technicians from a cross-border conurbation with another cross-border conurbation on governance themes

This exchange programme would allow local elected representatives and technicians to share their experiences and exchange good practices on governance issues. This recommendation is based on a resolution of the European Parliament¹¹.

The following themes of sharing of experiences have been identified by the “EGTC” URBACT project partners: financial solidarity mechanisms, development of the e-democracy, of participative democracy platforms, elaboration of a communication strategy, etc.

These sharing of experience and good practices could also take place within the framework of other European programmes such as Interreg IVC.

EUROPEAN RECOMMENDATION 10:

Make sure that the European network of EGTCs of the Committee of the regions will address the specific needs of EGTCs in charge of cross-border territorial strategies

The “EGTC” URBACT project partners structured into an EGTC are willing to contribute to the EGTC (European grouping of territorial Cooperation) network led by the Committee of the Regions.

In this perspective, they recommend the Committee of the Regions to organize a specific sub-group that would deal with cross-border territories having a territorial strategy.

Indeed, it seems difficult to organize a sharing of experience between EGTCs that deals with very different missions (managing Operational programmes, operational projects, cross-border territorial strategies or networks) and partnerships (local authorities, universities, etc).

¹¹ European Parliament resolution of 21 -October 2008 on governance and partnership at national and regional levels and a basis for projects in the sphere of regional policy.

EUROPEAN RECOMMENDATION 11:

Establish a linkage between the European network of EGTCs led by the Committee of the Regions and the Euroregional Cooperation Grouping, the new instrument of the Council of Europe, in order to share experiences

The Euroregional Cooperation Grouping (ECG) is the newly created instrument for territorial cooperation based on the third protocol to the Madrid outline-convention on Transfrontier Co-operation between Territorial Communities or Authorities. It was adopted in 2009.

This new tool is open to the 47 member states of the Council of Europe and has been modeled on the European grouping of Territorial Cooperation (EGTC). It will complement the already existing “legal toolbox”, particularly important on European borders and will contribute to a better integration of external borders of the EU.

Whereas the participation of entities from third countries is constrained in the case of the EGTC, the ECG could be set-up to implement bilateral cross-border projects between French and Swiss partner for example.

3. Synthetic table on the lessons learned at local level and the recommendations of action

The following table establishes the link between the needs of cross-border agglomerations in terms of cross-border governance and the proposals that are made to answer to these identified needs. It also highlights the possible obstacles to the implementation of these proposals and identifies the recommendations of actions that should be addressed to the local, regional/national or European levels to overcome these obstacles (link between part 1 and part 2).

LESSONS LEARNED AT LOCAL LEVEL			RECOMMENDATIONS OF ACTIONS IN ORDER TO IMPLEMENT THE PROPOSALS		
Needs at local level	Proposals to respond to the needs	Possible obstacles to the implementation of the proposals	Local level	Regional/national level	European level
Need to develop cross-border statistic data in order to assess cross-border agglomerations' economic, social, and environmental situation and to design a common multi-sectoral strategy	1. Develop statistic data at cross-border level facilitating the design of relevant and accurate policies	1.1. Absence of statistic data on cross-border agglomerations and lack of coordination of European, national and regional observatories	Set-up cross-border observatories : mobilize the existing local statistic institutions, encourage the dissemination of information and harmonize indicators	Develop specific data on cross-border agglomerations and harmonize indicators at national levels	Develop statistic data on cross-border agglomerations within the European tools Urban audit and Eurostat
Need to define a shared and common cross-border strategic document, which defines the priorities and the corresponding actions for the coming years	2. Design a common and shared strategy for the cross-border agglomeration, declined into actions	2.1. Absence of cross-border statistic data	<i>See proposal 1</i>	<i>See proposal 1</i>	<i>See proposal 1</i>
		2.2. Lack of expertise to carry out a cross-border strategy	Develop a shared and common cross-border strategy with the assistance of experts if necessary		
		2.3. Lack of support from the citizens to implement the strategy	Involve the citizens by consulting them on the cross-border strategy		
Need to : Secure commitments and investments on a long-term period. Establish a shared and transparent	3. Create and adapt a specific cross-border institution to cross-border agglomerations' projects	3.1. Difficulty to have a political consensus	Explain in a pedagogic way the legal frameworks of cross-border cooperation to the elected representatives.		

LESSONS LEARNED AT LOCAL LEVEL			RECOMMENDATIONS OF ACTIONS IN ORDER TO IMPLEMENT THE PROPOSALS		
Needs at local level	Proposals to respond to the needs	Possible obstacles to the implementation of the proposals	Local level	Regional/national level	European level
<p>functioning of the cross-border cooperation.</p> <p>Structure the dialogue and the decision-making process used by the elected leaders.</p> <p>Set-up an operational tool for facilitating the implementation of cross-border projects.</p>			<p>Reach a political consensus between the elected representatives on: the principle to make the governance structure evolve, the system of representativeness (number of votes, Presidency...), the financial sharing, etc</p>		
		<p>3.2. Lack of know-how to set-up a cross-border governance tool</p>	<p>Carry out a feasibility survey: translate the political agreement in legal terms and choose the most appropriate tool (convention, association, European Grouping of Territorial Cooperation, European Economic Interest Grouping...)</p>	<p>The competent authorities for the establishment of cross-border structures should assist local authorities and facilitate the establishment of cross-border structures.</p> <p>Create, at a national scale, an entity dedicated to cross-border cooperation [and aimed at setting-up a network of cross-border actors], providing technical assistance, and bringing-up the needs from the local level to the national level.</p>	<p>Organize a sharing of experiences at EU level on methodologies, legal obstacles, etc, to set-up governance structures.</p> <p>For the Community tool EGTC, it could take place within the framework of the EGTC network of the Committee of the Regions</p>

LESSONS LEARNED AT LOCAL LEVEL			RECOMMENDATIONS OF ACTIONS IN ORDER TO IMPLEMENT THE PROPOSALS		
Needs at local level	Proposals to respond to the needs	Possible obstacles to the implementation of the proposals	Local level	Regional/national level	European level
		3.3. Legal and administrative obstacles to set-up governance structures		<p>The legislators should:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - adapt the domestic legal frameworks to cross-border cooperation, border by border; - shorten the length of time used for administrative authorization and the forming of cross-border structures. <p>The competent authorities for the establishment of cross-border structures from both sides of the border should find a common position before turning in their final decision to local authorities.</p>	<p>Concerning the Community tool EGTC, the legislators should amend the regulation to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - allow the EGTC to be used for bilateral operational projects by authorizing the establishment of EGTCs between a single EU Member State and a non EU Member State; - specify a procedure at EU level to make sure that the competent authorities for the establishment of EGTCs, on either side of border, coordinate each other before turning in their decision. <p>The European Commission should adopt guidelines at European level to clarify the conditions of participation of non member countries to EGTCs.</p>
Need to involve all the competent public authorities in the governance structure in order to be able to implement projects in	4. Involve the different institutional levels, including State authorities, in the cross-border governance according to their competences.	4.1. Incapacities of local authorities to implement cross-border projects outside of their scope of competencies		Participation of regional and national authorities to cross-border structure when it is needed regarding their competencies and legally possible.	

LESSONS LEARNED AT LOCAL LEVEL			RECOMMENDATIONS OF ACTIONS IN ORDER TO IMPLEMENT THE PROPOSALS		
Needs at local level	Proposals to respond to the needs	Possible obstacles to the implementation of the proposals	Local level	Regional/national level	European level
different fields.					
<p>Need to develop initiatives with the aim to raise the interest of local elected representatives on cross-border cooperation.</p> <p>Need to develop initiatives with the aim to raise the interest of local elected representatives on cross-border cooperation.</p>	<p>5. Develop ambitious cross-border projects and institutional mechanisms requiring in-depth political involvement</p>	<p>5.1. Lack of political will from elected representatives to support cross-border cooperation due to a lack of support from the population for cross-border cooperation</p>	<p>Develop cross-border projects that have a visible impact on the population: infrastructure, public services... and communicate on these projects</p>		<p>Organize the sharing of experiences at EU level on cross-border cooperation between elected representatives and civil servants of a cross-border agglomeration with another one (cf. ERASMUS-style programme). This could lead to a better acceptance of cross-border cooperation by the concerned elected representatives</p>
		<p>5.2. Short lasting electoral mandate.</p>	<p>Set-up thematic committees and working groups chaired by the elected representatives; establish a turning presidency and designate vice-presidents</p>		
		<p>5.3. Legal obstacles to develop ambitious cross-border such as infrastructures or public services</p>	<p>Set-up the most adapted legal tool to the implementation of each cross-border project</p>	<p>Establish cross-border platforms (joint committees, intergovernmental conferences...) to facilitate</p>	

LESSONS LEARNED AT LOCAL LEVEL			RECOMMENDATIONS OF ACTIONS IN ORDER TO IMPLEMENT THE PROPOSALS		
Needs at local level	Proposals to respond to the needs	Possible obstacles to the implementation of the proposals	Local level	Regional/national level	European level
				<p>discussion on possible obstacles and obtain consistency of the domestic legislations on either side of border.</p> <p>Adapt the legal framework border by border, with the signature of the necessary inter-state agreements.</p> <p>Recognize a special statute of cross-border agglomerations (for example: the French Constitution recognizes the right of experimentation of local authorities).</p>	

LESSONS LEARNED AT LOCAL LEVEL			RECOMMENDATIONS OF ACTIONS IN ORDER TO IMPLEMENT THE PROPOSALS		
Needs at local level	Proposals to respond to the needs	Possible obstacles to the implementation of the proposals	Local level	Regional/national level	European level
Need to develop initiatives with the aim to raise the interest of local elected representatives on cross-border cooperation.		5.4. Lack of financing to develop ambitious cross-border projects such as infrastructures or public services	Launch a reflection on financial solidarity mechanisms , enabling cross-border agglomerations to be less dependent on regional, national and EU funds.	Promote a complementary use of regional and national funds to support cross-border projects, border by border. Identify the opportunities provided by regional and national funds for financing cross-border infrastructures or public services. Give the ministries concerned by cross-border issues a budget line dedicated to cross-border cooperation .	
		5.5. Lack of expertise to develop ambitious cross-border projects such as infrastructures or public services.		Create, at a national scale, an entity dedicated to cross-border cooperation that provides technical assistance for setting-up projects and brings-up the needs from the local level to the national level	

LESSONS LEARNED AT LOCAL LEVEL			RECOMMENDATIONS OF ACTIONS IN ORDER TO IMPLEMENT THE PROPOSALS		
Needs at local level	Proposals to respond to the needs	Possible obstacles to the implementation of the proposals	Local level	Regional/national level	European level
<p>Need to guarantee a continuity of the technical work.</p> <p>Need to have a staff with very specific skills required for cross-border cooperation: languages, knowledge of administrative and cultural contexts...</p> <p>Need to have sufficient human resources for time-demanding missions.</p>	<p>6. Set up a permanent team dedicated to the cross-border agglomeration, with skills adapted to its needs</p>	<p>6.1. Difficulty to find a highly-qualified staff in absence of a clear and attractive statute for personal within cross-border structures (necessity to articulate the different laws from both sides of the border)</p>	<p>Adapt the composition of the staff to the needs of expertise of the cross-border agglomeration</p>	<p>Promote the use of the right to experimentation in order to recognize a specific statute of the staff of cross-border structures (based on the French experience).</p> <p>Signing inter-state agreements to harmonize the relevant social rules and to promote recognition of diploma.</p>	<p>Launch a reflection at EU level on a European statute of the staff of cross-border structures</p>

LESSONS LEARNED AT LOCAL LEVEL			RECOMMENDATIONS OF ACTIONS IN ORDER TO IMPLEMENT THE PROPOSALS		
Needs at local level	Proposals to respond to the needs	Possible obstacles to the implementation of the proposals	Local level	Regional/national level	European level
Need to find synergies and complementarities between all technicians dealing with cross-border cooperation	7. Define communication and cooperation channels between the staff of the cross-border structure and the civil servants of the local authorities	7.1. Problem to find competent technicians who can communicate in a common language and have a good understanding of the cultural and institutional context on both side of the border	Develop language trainings and courses on the institutional and cultural environments on the other side of the border. Clearly define tasks between the cross-border structure and the public authorities involved.	Identify the opportunities provided by regional and national funds for financing trainings	Identify the opportunities provided by EU funds for financing trainings
Need to ensure an appropriate technical response to the political demands	8. Define communication and cooperation channels between the political and technical organs of the cross-border structure	8.1. Difficulty to identify one technical interlocutor in the cross-border structure for the political level	Appoint one director to the cross-border structure		
Need to find complementary financial resources to regional, national and European funds for cross-border projects	9. Develop financial solidarity mechanisms at cross-border level	9.1. Difficulty to reach a political consensus on common financial solidarity mechanisms.			
		9.2. Legal obstacles to the setting-up of financial		Overcome legal barriers: adaptation of the existing	

LESSONS LEARNED AT LOCAL LEVEL			RECOMMENDATIONS OF ACTIONS IN ORDER TO IMPLEMENT THE PROPOSALS		
Needs at local level	Proposals to respond to the needs	Possible obstacles to the implementation of the proposals	Local level	Regional/national level	European level
		solidarity mechanisms (depending on national legal frameworks)		domestic law , signing of inter-State agreements , border by border, and use of the right of experimentation (based on the French experience)	
		9.3. Experimentation phase of such practices and needs for expertise			Organize a sharing of experiences at EU level for elected representatives and civil servants within the framework an ERASMUS-style programme (see point 5.1)
Need for an appropriate framework facilitating the implementation of cross-border projects	10. Raise awareness of cross-border agglomerations in all policies in order to facilitate cross-border cooperation	10.1. Lack of recognition and of knowledge of cross-border agglomerations in regional, national and EU policies		Promote recognition of cross-border agglomerations' specificities in regional and national policies (sectoral, planning strategies). Create an entity at a national scale dedicated to cross-border cooperation and aimed at setting-up a network of cross-border actors, providing technical assistance, and bringing-up the needs from the local	Promote recognition of cross-border agglomerations' specificities in European policies

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Needs at local level	Proposals to respond to the needs	Possible obstacles to the implementation of the proposals	Local level	Regional/national level	European level
				level to the national level. Launch a large reflection on cross-border cooperation at national level.	
		10.2. Lack of dialogue at the highest level		Identify a contact person on cross-border issues in the concerned ministries, coordinated by one person at the highest political level. Launch an interdepartmental reflection between Ministries on cross-border issues	Designate an EU Commissioner in charge of cross-border cooperation who would coordinate actions of all DGs concerned by cross-border cooperation. The inter-service group on "Urban development" led by DG REGIO should deal with cross-border urban issues, with a link with cross-border agglomerations

LESSONS LEARNED AT LOCAL LEVEL			RECOMMENDATIONS OF ACTIONS IN ORDER TO IMPLEMENT THE PROPOSALS		
Needs at local level	Proposals to respond to the needs	Possible obstacles to the implementation of the proposals	Local level	Regional/national level	European level
Need to guarantee coherence and articulation between strategies and actions that cover a common cross-border area	11. Promote linkage between the levels of cross-border conurbations and euroregions	11.1. Potential competition between the different scales of cross-border cooperation	<p>Exchange of information between the actors of different scales of cross-border cooperation.</p> <p>Participation of representatives of one cross-border entity to the technical and political bodies of the other entity and vice-versa (as observer for example).</p>	<p>Promote recognition of levels, local and euroregion, in regional and national planning strategies and policies and articulation of both scales of cooperation.</p> <p>Promote the direct management of structural funds by EGTCs that cover cross-border territories and have a cross-border integrated strategy (under pre-defined conditions). This will lead to the emergence of cross-border projects really articulated with the cross-border strategy.</p>	Promote recognition of both levels, local and euroregion , in EU policies, and articulation of both scales of cooperation (micro and macro-regions)
Need to overcome prejudices, differences of languages, cultures... on the cross-border territory.	12. Develop cross-border popular events aiming to provide places for sharing and exchanges for inhabitants	12.1. Lack of human and financial resources dedicated to the organization of popular events	<p>Dedicate sufficient human resources to this task.</p> <p>Involve the civil society in the realization of such projects (associations, universities,...).</p>	Identify the opportunities provided by regional and national funds for financing popular events	Identify the opportunities provided by EU funds for financing popular events

LESSONS LEARNED AT LOCAL LEVEL			RECOMMENDATIONS OF ACTIONS IN ORDER TO IMPLEMENT THE PROPOSALS		
Needs at local level	Proposals to respond to the needs	Possible obstacles to the implementation of the proposals	Local level	Regional/national level	European level
Need to enable the population to share and know each other better.		12.2. Difficulty to attract many people to cross-border popular events	Communicate widely on cross-border popular events (see proposal 16)		
Need to respond to the needs of the population in cross-border areas	13. Develop cross-border services and infrastructures that answer to the population's needs	13.1. Difficulty to assess the needs of the population in absence of cross-border data	See proposal 1 Carry out studies to assess the needs of the population in terms of infrastructures and public services	See proposal 1	See proposal 1
		13.2. Incapacities of local authorities to implement cross-border projects outside of their scope of competencies		Involvement of regional and national administrations in cross-border projects , in fields that fall within their scope of competencies	
		13.3. Legal and financial obstacles to develop cross-border infrastructures and public services, and need of expertise	See points 5.3, 5.4, 5.5.	See points 5.3, 5.4, 5.5.	See points 5.3, 5.4, 5.5.
Need to involve the population in cross-border cooperation and to accompany the civil society in the implementation of	14. Help the civil society to initiate cross-border projects	14.1. Lack of human resources in cross-border agglomerations	Dedicate sufficient human resources to this task. The cross-border agglomeration can		Organize a sharing of experiences at EU level for elected representatives and civil servants within the framework an ERASMUS-style programme (see point 5.1)

LESSONS LEARNED AT LOCAL LEVEL			RECOMMENDATIONS OF ACTIONS IN ORDER TO IMPLEMENT THE PROPOSALS		
Needs at local level	Proposals to respond to the needs	Possible obstacles to the implementation of the proposals	Local level	Regional/national level	European level
cross-border projects			support civil society by providing: technical, logistic, communication, financial support (for example, creation of a programme of micro-projects dedicated to civil society with simplified procedures)		
Need to improve the visibility of cross-border agglomerations inside and outside the cross-border agglomeration	15. Adopt a communication strategy for the cross-border agglomeration	15.1. Lack of expertise in communication and of knowledge of best practices in Europe	Develop a communication strategy for the cross-border agglomeration : website, adopt a name, a logo, a mapping, and create a regular newsletter, etc. Develop press relations. Dedicate sufficient human resources to this task (a communication officer).	Identify the opportunities provided by regional and national funds for financing communication activities	Identify the opportunities provided by EU funds for financing communication activities. Organize a sharing of experiences at EU level for elected representatives and civil servants within the framework an ERASMUS-style programme (see point 5.1).

LESSONS LEARNED AT LOCAL LEVEL			RECOMMENDATIONS OF ACTIONS IN ORDER TO IMPLEMENT THE PROPOSALS		
Needs at local level	Proposals to respond to the needs	Possible obstacles to the implementation of the proposals	Local level	Regional/national level	European level
Need to earn the support of citizens on cross-border cooperation.	16. Communicate toward citizens concrete information relating to their daily life as cross-border citizens	16.1. Difficulty to define the content of the information disseminated to raise awareness on cross-border cooperation	Communicate on the positive effects of cross-border cooperation on the population's daily life : leisure activities, public services, impacting cross-border projects (transport for example)	Regional and national media should also cover cross-border news	European media should also cover cross-border news. Use concrete example of cross-border projects to communicate on a Europe closer to its citizens.
		16.2. Difficulty to attract local, regional and national media on cross-border issues	Communicate on visible cross-border projects and develop press relations with the media		
		16.3. Difficulty to reach a large audience	Use different types of media : internet, television, radio, newspaper		
Need to enable the population to express its opinion on cross-border cooperation. Need to mobilize the population around the cross-border debate.	17. Develop the e-democracy to promote a large debate among populations	17.1. Difficulty to find topics of interest for the inhabitants	Create a Chat forum open to all citizens for free discussions. Communicate largely on such initiatives (see proposal 16).	Identify the opportunities provided by regional and national funds for financing the setting-up of a chat forum	Identify the opportunities provided by EU funds for financing the setting-up of a chat forum
		17.2. Lack of experimentation of such practices			Organize a sharing of experiences at EU level for elected

LESSONS LEARNED AT LOCAL LEVEL			RECOMMENDATIONS OF ACTIONS IN ORDER TO IMPLEMENT THE PROPOSALS		
Needs at local level	Proposals to respond to the needs	Possible obstacles to the implementation of the proposals	Local level	Regional/national level	European level
					representatives and civil servants within the framework an ERASMUS-style programme (see point 5.1).
<p>Need to legitimate cross-border public policies.</p> <p>Need for expertise coming from the civil society to know the needs on the ground.</p> <p>Need to make elected representatives accountable to the population.</p>	<p>18. Develop discussion and consultation platforms involving institutional actors and the appropriate civil society players</p>	<p>18.1. Difficulty to choose the most appropriate system: depending on cultural contexts, on the actors concerned, on the role given to the civil society (consultative body...), formal/informal system, etc.</p> <p>18.2 Difficulty to identify the relevant actors to involve in such participative democracy processes</p> <p>18.3 Difficulty to establish a clear linkage between the platform involving the civil society and the public institutions</p>	<p>Adapt the system of involvement of the civil society to the local context</p>		<p>Organize a sharing of experiences at EU level for elected representatives and civil servants within the framework an ERASMUS-style programme (see point 5.1)</p>

LESSONS LEARNED AT LOCAL LEVEL			RECOMMENDATIONS OF ACTIONS IN ORDER TO IMPLEMENT THE PROPOSALS		
Needs at local level	Proposals to respond to the needs	Possible obstacles to the implementation of the proposals	Local level	Regional/national level	European level
		18.4 Lack of experimentation of such practices			

CONCLUSION

The “EGTC” working group is the only URBACT II programme to address cross-border issues, in particular urban management across national boundaries. This process aims to find new ways of establishing public actors’ connections at the international level between diplomacy and functional regulation in order to develop sustainable and common policies to respond to citizens’ needs throughout the entire area. The six cross-border agglomerations involved in the “EGTC” URBACT project have developed cross-border cooperation during the past few years focusing on three main objectives: the first relates to the definition of a cross-border governance; the second is the generation of spatial strategies based on rational data and common political will; finally, concrete actions have been progressively implemented to connect national territories and their actors, such as the civil society.

Cross-border politically driven areas do not have rigid boundaries. They are not equivalent to the administrative territories generated within states. Cross-border urban governance is not a system leading to a new containment of space in Europe, but rather enables a series of public actors to create alliances benefiting the population at which their policies are directed by regulating and facilitating new flows of information, people, goods, services and capital in order to exploit the full potential.

The “EGTC” URBACT project handbook demonstrates that the management of cross-border urban areas has three cyclic dynamics: first, the governance system used at the cross-border level is still based on soft procedures such as negotiation and consensus, without a common legal structure; it then enters a phase of intensification of cross-border institutionalisation over the years. Secondly, there is a constant renewal of integrated spatial visions nourishing strategic political debates but also trust and collective imaginaries among public

leaders. Finally, concrete actions are increasingly designed to relate to the daily lives of the inhabitants of border areas.

The best practices developed in the handbook are innovative methods linked to public leadership and community building in cross-border urban areas. They show that bringing about changes in the cross-border urban sphere consists in the collective ability to address issues at different scales. This depends on a wide array of public institutions, which must constantly define the meaning and spatial scope of their partnerships but also the most efficient communication standards to facilitate exchanges between one another. At the same time, leadership makes sense if it is related to communities. Consequently, a series of actions have been taken by public leaders to connect them to the civil society. Firstly, operations aiming to encourage the involvement of citizens in a cross-border area have been defined (e.g. popular events). Secondly, certain sections of civil society have been integrated in the cross-border decision-making process (e.g. participative democracy events). Finally, a number of mass media communication policies and tools have been set up to connect the work of governance networks to the public (e.g. internet platforms).

Each cross-border area shapes its cooperation according to the specific regional context. However, a certain degree of Europeanisation of cross-border governance can also be observed. European standards encouraging the presence of private actors in the realm of public affairs have, for instance, been adopted in the six areas. It can also be seen that three cross-border areas (Eurometropole Lille-Kortrijk-Tournai, Eurodistrict Strasbourg-Ortenau and Ister-Granum Euroregion) have already integrated the EU top-down governing structure entitled European Grouping of Territorial Cooperation (EGTC) and the three others have shown an interest in this new institution, in particular the Eurocidade Chaves-Verin that is currently working on it.

Finally, the partners involved in the EGTC URBACT II programme have been able to address collective recommendations made by European institutions in favour of Community level changes facilitating their individual cooperation as well as European exchanges taking place with other cross-border areas.

How to promote the common conclusions and the recommendations at the appropriate levels after the end of the “EGTC” URBACT project?

The partners involved in the “EGTC” URBACT project, all of whom are committed to improving their cross-border governance, have clearly expressed a strong interest in capitalizing the results of the “EGTC” URBACT project: by pursuing their exchanges on the tools to build-up efficient and legitimate partnership systems at cross-border level (i.e. cross-border governance) and by promoting cross-border territories at national and European levels.

The sharing of experiences with other similar European cross-border territories that have a territorial strategy is a common action that could be launched in the near future: the methodology to set-up a governance structure (including a European Grouping of Territorial Cooperation), the development of financial solidarity mechanisms, of actions to mobilize and activate civil society or the elaboration of communication strategies... are some key-issues that could be subject to an exchange of experiences.

Common actions of lobbying at European level could also be launched in order to promote the recommendations that have been addressed to the European authorities. It concerns mainly the contribution to the revision of the EGTC Regulation (through the participation to the Committee of the Regions EGTC network) and to the debate on the future of the Cohesion Policy 2014-202 (regarding the positioning of cross-border territories having a governance structure and a territorial strategy).

There is a shared interest of having a deeper discussion with European authorities about these recommendations.

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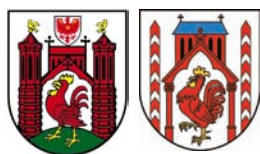
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