



11th European Week of Regions and Cities

OPEN Brussels

DAYS 7 - 10 October 2013

CECICN - workshop report

Code of the Workshop: 09B02

Title of the Workshop: Territorial Cooperation and Single Market - how to create tangible added value for citizens in cross-border territories and interregional networks

Date and time:

09 October 2013

09:00-10:45

Organiser/leader: Conference of European Cross-border and Interregional City Networks (CECICN)

Chair/moderator:

Chair: M. **Bernard Soulage**, Member of the Committee of the Regions, Vice-President of the Region Rhône-Alpes, France

Moderator: M. **Jean Peyrony**, Executive Director of the European Conference of Cross-border and Interregional City Networks (CECICN), and Director General of the Mission Opérationnelle Transfrontalière (MOT), France

Speakers:

M. **Marcus Andersson**, Head of International Projects, Tendensor, Partner of UBC, Union of Baltic Cities

M. **Xoán Vázquez Mao**, Secretary General of the CECICN, and Secretary General of the Iberian Network of Cross-border Bodies (RIET) Portugal/Spain

M. **Patrice Harster**, Director General of the Eurodistrict REGIO PAMINA, France/Germany

M. **Olivier Girard**, Responsible for the Implementation of Internal Market in the Cabinet of Michel BARNIER, European Commissioner for Internal Market and Services

Outline:

The European Territorial Cooperation (ETC) aims to bring about the territorial integration of cross-border regions and macro-regions. ETC projects therefore make a major contribution to the Single Market and the Europe 2020 strategy, while showing that Europe produces tangible results at the service of its citizens. The representatives of the Union of Baltic Cities, the Eurodistrict REGIO PAMINA and the Iberian Network of Cross-border Cities illustrated three examples of territorial cooperation contributing to the single market, in terms of realizations, difficulties to be tackled and expectations towards the “upper” authorities. An intervention from the Commission put the exchanges into a European perspective, cross-border territories must be laboratories of the Single Market. The workshop, gathering more than 230 participants, was complementary to the workshop of the EGTC platform of the CoR “The EGTCs: cross-border players in the Single Market”. Both workshops were followed by a common networking event.

Debate/Panel discussion:

Bernard Soulage opened the workshop by presenting territorial cooperation of the Rhône Alpes Region in the French-Suisse-Italian border territory. Cross-border cooperation is very present in the Grand Geneva area, where the Single Market is particularly visible, the Cross-border territory of the Mont-Blanc, Interreg projects - Rhône Alpes will be the managing authority of the ALCOTRA programme -, etc. A wider angle is covered by the Alpine Space and its planned macro-regional strategy.

Jean Peyrony, moderator of the workshop, presented the CECICN network with its eight member networks, the objective of which is to place European territorial cooperation at the heart of European policies in the 2014-2020 programming period.

Marcus Andersson discussed the mobility of talented persons between the Baltic cities to meet the needs of the employment market and promote the development of the territory to the benefit of mobile persons. Nevertheless, a number of obstacles to such mobility remain to be eliminated. People have to be accompanied in their mobility process. As best practice he presented two projects on grouped “welcoming” services and on student networking.

According to **Xoán Vazquez Mao** the second generation of cooperation must be the generation of the internal market. He highlighted the issues and needs on the Spanish-Portuguese border, particularly in terms of transport, telecommunications, postal services, training, the health sector etc. As best practice he presented a common toll system for motorways on both sides of the border and a common card for citizens to use cross-border services.

Patrice Harster presented the issues of the cross-border employment market on the French-German border. The Eurodistrict REGIO PAMINA proposes to coordinate the existing tools (ERDF cross-border programme, ESF regional programmes, EURES-T, Eurodistrict, etc.) in order to avoid spreading resources too thinly. It is crucial to anticipate evolutions and to be complementary. Mobility remains an important topic of cross-border cooperation.

Olivier Girard, member of the cabinet of Internal Market and Services Commissioner Michel Barnier, stressed the need, in the run-up to the European elections, to promote another vision of the single market, too often criticized: Although some problems remain, there is progress in the work reaching out to citizens and SMEs. First concrete progress has been done e.g. in train interconnections or in the recognition of diploma. Existing rules need to be applied in the territories.

Conclusions:

Bernard Soulage concluded the discussions by stating that territorial cooperation is a major political issue, an essential brick in the construction of a European political and democratic space. The aim is to remove all remaining barriers, including those that prevent close contacts between the inhabitants in the cross-border territories. Cross-border cooperation is one of the most symbolic policies of the EU with tangible results for the citizens.

More information, links:

www.cecicn.eu

www.espaces-transfrontaliers.eu

www.ubc.net

www.rietiberica.eu

www.eurodistrict-regio-pamina.eu

One representative quote from your workshop with author:

Olivier Girard, Responsible for the Implementation of Internal Market in the Cabinet of Michel BARNIER, European Commissioner for Internal Market and Services

“The cross-border territories and their pilot projects in terms of cooperation must be laboratories of the internal market.”