

EDITORIAL

During nearly 4 years of cooperation within this RFO, the partnership has released many valuable impulses for cross-border cooperation leading to the realisation of cross-border pilot actions in the respective partner regions.

Therefore, the 10th RFO-Newsletter focuses on the termination and closing conferences of several SWGs which took place during the last months. In addition, an overview on the upcoming Final Conference of the RFO "Change on Borders" will be given in this issue.

The common work within sixteen sub-theme working groups (SWGs) has shown that the aims of cross-border cooperation have to reflect all partners' needs. Only a "win-win situation" providing benefits for all partners involved can be a stimulus for cross-border cooperation. Hence, the further integration of cross-border cooperation structures was fostered and new knowledge was gained and communicated into regional administrative structures of the partner regions by means of e.g. workshops, site visits, regular meetings or Thematic Forum events.

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FINAL CONFERENCE "Change on Borders"

The RFO "Change on Borders" will celebrate its Final Conference on **23 October 2007** in Düsseldorf which will be hosted by the Ministry of Economic Affairs and Energy of North Rhine-Westphalia (DE).

The registration for this event is opened and you are kindly invited to join this conference taking advantage of the unique opportunity to share experience and results. Please, feel free to forward the invitation to any person involved or interested in cross-border cooperation in Europe.

The conference will on the one hand outline the most significant results of this interregional partnership. Efficient cooperation methods for border regions have been developed and staff exchanges took place in order to mutually improve the knowledge transfer and help dismantle cross-border related barriers. The outcomes of the common work will, at the same time, be published in a "Best Practice Manual" serving as a guide by also giving good examples and recommendations for cross-border cooperation. On the other hand, the conference will give an outlook on cross-border co-

operation in the framework of the Structural Funds period 2007-2013 aiming at the implementation of the Lisbon and Gothenburg strategy for a sustainable and competitive Europe.

You will find the

- invitation
- agenda
- registration form

and more information on the RFO on our website:

www.change-on-borders.net

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**"Threats of the past -
assets for the future:
The development of
the heritage of border
regions"**

From 14-15 May 2007, a Thematic Forum 1 meeting hosted by the Border Region Delta Rhodopi took place in Xanthi in the region of East Macedonia and Thrace (GR). The meeting mainly focused on strategies for maintaining cultural heritage of past centuries and transforming military heritage of recent times in border areas.

Mr Alexandros Horinos, Secretary General of the Prefectural Authority of Drama-Kavala-Xanthi, opened the meeting and underlined the importance of cross-border cooperation for the region while reminding of the excellent collaboration with the Association of Rhodope Municipalities on the Bulgarian side and the manifold projects that were implemented jointly with the partners from Bulgaria.

At first, Mr Stratos Manos took the floor whose work as architect strongly focuses on the transformation of military camps into civil facilities. He explained major problems related to the revitalisation of military camps in the area of Thessaloniki, but also presented some good examples of the transformation strategies, e.g. around Athens.

On the second day, the participants had the opportunity to learn more about the difficulties and challenges which border regions with abandoned military camps have to face while visiting the facilities of the former American radio station "Voice of America" in the surroundings of Kavala.



Study visit to a military camp

The Greek Ministry of Defence decided to dispo- nese the former military properties to the com- munes. The process of transforming these as- sets into facilities for the civil population is very long and not that easy. The ownership structures need to be clearly de- termined, the value of the assets and proper- ties needs to be esti- mated and a correspond- ing use zoning plan needs to be developed.

The second part of the Thematic Forum meeting focused on the preserva- tion of cultural heritage in border regions. Mr Markos Dembas, Vice President of the Cham- ber of Industry and Commerce of Kavala, demonstrated that an integrated approach ensur- ing the complemen- tarities of urban devel-

opment and cultural heritage policy is of cru- cial importance for his- torical places. Thus, cul- tural heritage of the past can be maintained in a sustainable way and can become an asset for the future. For the city of Kavala such an asset is the Imaret, a unique Islamic monument host- ing a luxury hotel that was restored with re- spect to its religious char- acter and history.

Finally, Mrs Zlatka Niko- lova gave an overview on different INTERREG- projects implemented in the city of Xanthi and in the Euroregion Rhodopi. The Euroregion has the aim to promote this area and enhance cross- border cooperation in tourism, culture, educa- tion and business. Many projects have been im- plemented so far, e.g. the publication of joint tourism information, the organisation of language courses and study visits. In the future, more at- tention should be paid to the promotion of cross- border business activi- ties which are still very limited due to the lack of well-developed infra- structure in this area.



Participants of the meeting in Xanthi

"Administrative and Programme Structures along internal and external borders of the EU"

The region Lubelskie (PL) organised a Thematic Forum 1 meeting taking place from 21-22 June 2007 in Lublin. This meeting focused on the cooperation between institutions on the external borders of the EU. Mr Krzysztof Grabczuk, board member of the Marshall's Office of Lubelskie, opened the meeting and pointed out that since Poland's accession to the EU, the Polish borders have changed a lot: it now has not only borders to old and new member states, but also external borders.

A detailed overview on the development of cross-border cooperation in Poland was given by Mr Tomasz Dyląg, Implementing Authority for European Programmes in Warsaw. He briefly described the first experiences with INTERREG and the preparation of the New Neighbourhood and Partnership Instrument (ENPI) which is the first instrument enabling the implementation of real cross-border projects at external borders of the EU.

Mrs Monika Przeniosło, Marshall's Office of Lower Silesia, reported on her experiences in cross-border cooperation

at the internal border with Saxony (DE) and the Czech Republic. In the second programming period PHARE CBC/INTERREG (1999-2006), the administrative and financial management of the programme were improved, cooperation on a political level was intensified and remaining infrastructural gaps were closed.

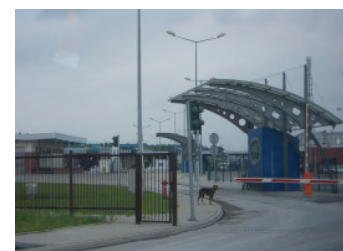


Mr Kiljan explained cooperation projects with the region of Lubelskie (PL)

Mr Bert Kilijan, Province of Gelderland, briefly presented the experiences of Gelderland with international cooperation structures. Gelderland has already been cooperating for 14 years in various programmes like e.g. in a bilateral partnership with the Lubelskie region in the field of rural development strategies. In this context, Mr. Kilijan also gave examples for the bilateral partnership with the Lubelskie region e.g. in the field of rural development strategies. Closing the working session, Mrs Małgorzata Langiewicz, European Centre for Integration and Self-Government "House of Europe", presented some examples for successful

projects which were implemented with partners from Belarus and the Ukraine, like e.g. the "Polish - Trans - frontier Agency" which resulted in the elaboration of a joint Polish-Ukrainian Strategy defining the key priorities and activities for the cross-border development in that region.

The second day of this Thematic Forum was dedicated to a study visit to the border crossing point in Dorohusk. Mr Wołoch, Deputy Commander of the border guard in Chelm, explained and illustrated the work related to illegal immigration, detection of smuggling and other daily challenges of the border guard units at the external border to the Ukraine and Belarus. The participants continued their study visit to the town of Chelm where the Euroregion Bug - a cross-border structure - is based. It promotes cross-border cooperation between the three states (PL-BY-UA) and provides a platform for cross-border exchanges of ideas and know-how (www.euroregionbug.pl).



Study visit to the Polish-Ukrainian border in Dorohusk

Closing event "Youth 4 Innovation"

The SWG "Youth 4 Innovation" closed its activities with the organisation of a Final conference which took place on 15 June 2007 in Oldenburg (DE). "Youth 4 Innovation" is a pilot project dealing with the development and testing of training and educational tools to foster an intensive and sustainable cross-border cooperation to increase the regional innovation capacities. One major objective of the project was the exchange of know-how and experience concerning the utilization of schools and universities as instruments for regional development in the context of innovation.

In the framework of the final conference, the overall project was presented and the participating partner regions shared their experiences with the implementation of the innovation curriculum and the elaboration of 52 cross-border mini innovation projects which represent a core element of this SWG.

Pupils, students and teachers came together and introduced some selected mini innovation projects to the public, like e.g. "Groningen as guest in Oldenburg", a project in which the students developed a flyer addressed to 16-25 aged youngsters from

Groningen offering Oldenburg specials in order to make the city more attractive for them to visit. The best 16 mini projects were awarded for the realisation of an outstanding mini innovation project.



Award for 16 excellent mini innovation projects

"RiverCross" Closure

The closing conference of the SWG "Many rivers to cross" was held from 18-20 April 2007 in the Dutch-German border region "Euregio Rhein-Waal" in Kleve (DE).

Throughout Europe there are new challenges as regards river management: Climate change, water pollution, water supply problems or sea intrusion are problematic developments. In order to face these challenges through an integrated and interactive water management approach, the concept of "river basin management" has been developed at many rivers. If border areas share the same river basin, the cooperation between the neighbouring countries is essential as flooding or droughts always affect both sides of the border.

"RiverCross" focused on exchanging experiences in cross-border water management, analysing factors which determine the success or failure of cross-border cooperation in this area and elaborating proposals for improvements and new methodologies. In the scope of this conference, several case studies on Water Quality Management and Flood Management of different rivers were introduced. Cross-border cooperation policies and results were presented to interested stakeholders, (inter)national water managers, related institutions and representatives of water authorities.

The results of this SWG, the experiences with cross-border water management, cultural and institutional barriers were reviewed in the framework of a panel discussion. Finally, the Portal Water Management as a platform for exchanging information on cross-border water management was portrayed.

For further information, please see:

www.rivercross.nl.



Representatives of the SWG "RiverCross"

Publicity of the RFO "Change on Borders"

In the framework of a regional information event on "trans-national and interregional cooperation in Europe" (INTERREG IVB and IVC) which took place on 21 May 2007 in North Rhine-Westphalia (DE), the RFO "Change on Borders" was represented with a stand.

Within the scope of this congress, the new IVB-Programme on trans-national cooperation in North-West Europe and the IVC-Programme on interregional cooperation in Europe were presented. The chances and challenges of trans-national and interregional cooperation in the future were pointed out in a common panel discussion.

One integral part of this event was the organisation of three workshops offering support for a successful participation in projects of European territorial cooperation (as regards e.g. eligibility criteria, application, practice etc). An overview on the results of some current INTERREG IIIB and IIIC projects was given on 13 different stands where each project exhibited its hitherto achievements. The RFO "Change on Borders" took advantage of this opportunity to regionally spread its achievements so far.

SWG "e-health" at Health Council

A "Summit Conference of the European Health Ministers" was held on 20 April 2007 in Aachen (DE). Among other cross-border initiatives, the SWG "e-health" was represented at this conference with a project stand.



Dr. Guy Peeters and Dr. Piet Daemen in front of the stand

In the framework of this event, Dr. Guy Peeters, CEO of the University Hospital Maastricht AZM (NL) and Prof. Henning Sass, University Hospital Aachen (UKA), had the possibility to join a meeting with the Federal Minister Ulla Schmidt and EU-Commissioner Markos Kyrpianou. A central topic of their discussion was the far-reaching option of UKA and AZM to realize a cross-border merger of the two university clinics in the future and to have the support from the Council which is necessary for such an unprecedented enterprise in European health care. The application of modern telematic tools as worked on within the SWG "e-health" will play an important role herein.

Closing conference SWG "MENT"

The SWG "Memory Environment and Tradition Trails on Borders" closed its activities with a closing conference which took place on 28 June 2007 in Syros, South Aegean Region (GR).

The key issue of the project was to work out a method to use cross-border cooperation in order to develop a common tourist product. Tourists should be attracted by the special features of the region no matter on which side of the border they are to be found. As results, the partner 'Kreis Borken' (DE) e.g. presented his Internet website as well as his application for the REGIONALE 2013-2016 (regional structural programme in North Rhine-Westphalia) which both aim at increasing the attraction of the region as a tourist destination. The SWG was mainly focused on key aspects in cross-border tourism development like e.g. memorials of the past, natural sites and landscapes as well as multi-cultural environment.



Katerina Kalkavoura and Julie Kersten during the conference

**Workshop of the SWG
"Rhine Bicycle Path"**

The SWG "Rhine Bicycle Path" organised its final workshop on 24/25 May 2007 in Basle (CH). Within this workshop, the target of the product "Rhine Bicycle Path" was illustrated and the new flyer and the project's website (both available in 4 different languages) were presented. Furthermore, an outlook on the future cooperation of this project was given.



Participants of the SWG
"Rhine Bicycle Path"

In the framework of this workshop, it was finally determined to let several touristic organisations, local authorities as well as cooperating associations commonly sign the "Declaration for supporting the realisation of the touristic product Rhine Bicycle Path". This declaration shall promote the realisation of the communication and marketing concept Rhine Bicycle Path, the establishment of the premium product Rhine Bicycle Path at the touristic market as well as its continuous advancement.

More information will soon be available under:
www.rhine-bicycleroute.eu

**Closing conference
"Knowledge Roadmap"**

The SWG "Knowledge Roadmap" finalised its activities in a closing conference which took place on 26 June 2007 in Aachen (DE). All project partners had a closer look at the potentials of their border region aiming to foster their knowledge-based development.

In the framework of this meeting, the European Institute for Comparative Urban Research (EURICUR) outlined the results of five case studies raising fruitful discussions with all partners on consequences for the regions and on how these results can be transferred to a practical "Roadmap". Key speaker Dr. Martin Hinoul, Technology Region Leuven, gave an interesting input with his presentation outlining essential conditions for the success in the knowledge economy in Europe.

For more information, please see:
www.change-on-borders.net/activities/knowledge_roadmap.php



Participants during the closing
conference

IMPRESSUM

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