

EDITORIAL

In the framework of the RFO "Change on Borders", 25 border regions have worked together pursuing the common target to overcome bottlenecks in cross-border cooperation. A wide range of stakeholders has profited from this interregional network and in some cases, even citizens and pupils of border regions were directly involved in project activities so that significant contributions to finding solutions on how to improve the citizens' life in border regions could be made. New regional partnerships were built, reliable networks were created and specific platforms of experts were initiated. Despite the RFO's substantial achievements, cross-border cooperation still needs enhancement and continuous political and regional support.

We would like to thank all of you for the sustained engagement you dedicated to the project during its lifetime. On behalf of the Lead Partner, we wish all of you a

**Merry Christmas
&
a Happy New Year
2008!**



FINAL CONFERENCE of the RFO "Change on Borders"

During four years of cooperation (November 2003 – October 2007), 25 border regions from 15 European countries have successfully worked together within the RFO "Change on Borders" by sharing know-how and experience on an inter-regional level which was helpful for the development of new solutions to economic, social and environmental challenges in border regions. Thanks to financial support from the INTERREG IIIC West Programme, the partnership has released many essential, thought-provoking impulses for cross-border cooperation which led to the realisation of cross-border pilot actions in the respective partner regions.

All activities within the RFO "Change on Borders" were arranged around three core themes, each comprising several sub-projects in which a limited number of partners worked closely together. All in all, 16 sub-projects have successfully contributed to finding answers to recent cross-border related challenges by developing efficient cooperation methods for border regions, thus, helping to dismantle cross-border related barriers. The outcomes of the common work were pre-

sented at project stands in the framework of the Final Conference of the RFO "Change on Borders" which took place on 23rd October 2007 in Düsseldorf, Germany.



Sub-project stands in the framework of the conference

The conference was open to all interested stakeholders of cross-border cooperation in Europe and was attended by approx. 200 participants also from Albania and Bulgaria.

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After some welcoming remarks by Ms Christa Thoben (Minister of Economic Affairs and Energy of the State of North Rhine-Westphalia, DE) on behalf of the Lead Partner, Mr. Colin Wolfe (DG Regio, European Commission) rose to speak about future challenges of cross-border cooperation and the potential for interregional exchange in this context.



Colin Wolfe during his speech

In the framework of this event, an introductory film on the work and achievements of the RFO "Change on Borders" was presented briefly describing the 16 sub-projects emphasizing the unique character of this cooperation. Moreover, the finalised Best Practice Manual on cross-border cooperation was also introduced to the public. This manual whose main parts are summarized in a brochure is a user-friendly and concise guide for cross-border cooperation which was elaborated based on the experiences gained in the course of the implementation of the RFO. Afterwards, concrete examples of interregional cross-border cooperation

were given by the exemplary presentation of three sub-theme working groups (SWG) in the field of harmonisation of cross-border geo data infrastructure of border regions (Cross-SIS), the joint marketing initiative for the cycle path along the river Rhine (Rhine Cycle Path) and the increase of regional innovation capacities through the testing of training and educational tools (Youth for Innovation). The common work within the SWGs has highlighted that the aims of cross-border cooperation have to reflect all partners' needs, as only a "win-win situation" providing benefits for all partners can be a real stimulus for cross-border cooperation.



Participants of the SWG
"Youth for Innovation"

In the following panel discussion between European cross-border experts and partners of the RFO, border specific challenges and future strategies of handling these were discussed and advantages as well as learning effects of interregional cross-border cooperation were pointed out. This partnership helped to raise

the awareness for common problems and favoured the elaboration of possible solutions in border regions. It has become evident that the presence of regional networks and partnerships is crucial for effective mutual learning and the transfer of knowledge.

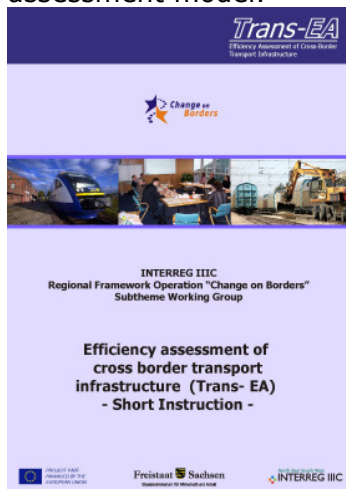


Participants of the panel discussion

Finally, the Dutch cabaret artist Karin Bruers vividly demonstrated the importance of "networking" in order to build European partnerships. The conference emphasized that cross-border cooperation is still going to be a matter of major importance in the future by outlining the most significant results of the partnership. This event also gave an outlook on the future in the framework of the Structural Funds Period 2007-2013 supporting the implementation of the Lisbon and Gothenburg strategies for a sustainable and competitive Europe. All "Change on Borders" partners are united in their view that this cooperation has widely opened up a door towards a more intense and sustainable exchange between border regions.

Handbook SWG "Trans-EA"

One of the key results of the SWG "Trans-EA" is an efficiency assessment model for cross-border transport infrastructure. The Trans-EA partners have based this calculation model on MS Excel supplemented by a comprehensive instruction document. In order to promote the assessment model in other European regions, the Saxony Ministry of Economic Affairs and Labour – as Lead Participant of the SWG – has issued a short instruction paper for the assessment model.



Handbook "Trans-EA"

The focal point of the SWG was the development of a universal model to assess the efficiency of cross border transport infrastructure for road, rail and waterway transport. The assessment model can be used to analyse the current infrastructure performance or to evaluate operative processes as

well as to illustrate the effects of improvement measures.

The Trans-EA model can be easily adapted to other border regions, e.g. to border crossings at the new external borders of the European Union. The "Trans-EA" model is a tool addressing the following questions related to cross border transport infrastructure (CBTI):

- How can investment funds be used in the most efficient way for cross border transport infrastructure?
- What advantages can be achieved by an improved cross border coordination of development and use of infrastructure?
- How can companies and inhabitants benefit from the upgrading of cross border traffic routes?
- Which measures can increase the competitiveness of cross-border rail transport?

The Efficiency Assessment Model jointly developed by the partners of the SWG "Trans-EA" represents a tool which helps to intensify the collaboration of public authorities on both sides of a border.

The handbook is available in PDF-format by contacting the SWG coordinator: nestler@lub-consulting.de).

Handbook "Risk & Innovation"

The SWG "Risk & Innovation" mainly targeted the exchange of know-how and methods in order to cope with cross-border risks related to globalisation with the aim to raise the awareness about industrial, environmental, health- or human-related cross-border risks. One major result is the consolidation of the SWG's achievements in a handbook of best practice called "*Handbook on cross-border globalisation risks: EU views and experiences*". It is addressed to all actors at local, regional and national level dealing with different aspects of industrial, environmental or human related risks who would like to get to know more about it and exchange their experience and best practices.



Handbook "Risk & Innovation"

It is available under:
www.riskandinnovation.eu/best_practices.

Regional Review Magazine

The RFO „Change on Borders“ placed a two-pages article within the ‘Regional Review’ issue of October 2007 published by the Parliament Magazine. The ‘Regional Review’ is a regularly published magazine (5 times a year) providing an authoritative forum to examine the impact of EU investment in the regions. It gives EU institutions and decision makers the opportunity to read about developments and best practice examples in regional policy and gives regional policy stakeholders and projects a platform to inform EU decision makers about the work they do.



Regional Review issue 10/2007

Thus, the ‘Regional Review’ explores and showcases best practice presenting a forum where projects can introduce information directly to decision-makers in Brussels. The RFO “Change on Borders”

took this opportunity to inform about the project’s main activities and to spread its outputs and results beyond the partnership throughout Europe, like e.g. the significant number of transferable examples and tangible results which were generated or several pilot projects which were implemented and finally brought new insights in different fields of cross-border cooperation.

The Regional Review magazine is available for download under:
www.theparliament.com/EN/RegionalReview/

Launch event “INTERREG 4 YOU”

In the framework of a regional launch event for the INTERREG IVA programme “Germany- The Netherlands” which took place on 19 September 2007 in the premises of the Euregio Rhein-Waal in Kleve (DE), the RFO “Change on Borders” was represented with a project stand.

Within the scope of this event which was called “INTERREG 4 YOU”, the new INTERREG IVA-Programme on cross-border cooperation was presented striving for a sustainable, regional cross-border development which is mainly focused on the pillars of the Lisbon and Gothenburg agendas. One inte-

gral part of this event was the organisation of three thematic workshops putting emphasis on the topics (a) economy, innovation and technology, (b) sustainability and infrastructure as well as on (c) society and integration. These workshops offered practical support for a successful participation in projects of European territorial cooperation by presenting concrete cross-border related project ideas and establishing networks among the participants and beyond in order to find the right partners for cooperation.



“Change on Borders” representatives in a conversation

Moreover, an INTERREG workshop for beginners was held where experienced project managers and persons in charge of INTERREG at the Euregio Rhein-Waal shared their experience with interested newcomers offering advice on how to set up a project or on how to get the relevant co-financing. The RFO “Change on Borders” took advantage of this opportunity in order to exhibit its main activities and to regionally spread its achievements so far.

**Best Practice Manual
for cross-border co-
operation**

In the framework of the RFO "Change on Borders", the achievements and results of this project were compiled in a comprehensive manual for cross-border cooperation including a check-list for cross-border project development. The manual which was introduced to the public during the Final Conference is based on the main objective of the RFO which is to help further dismantling borders and border-related barriers in Europe through a stimulation of new cooperation opportunities in all aspects of daily life. This manual provides a holistic approach and primarily focuses on the criteria and conditions for cross-border cooperation based on the experience gained by the RFO stakeholders.



10-pages brochure on cross-border cooperation

The manual was elaborated in English and is now being translated into seven other languages (German, Dutch, Spanish, Polish, Finnish, Greek and Lithuanian) which will all be published on the project's

website as soon as available. The most important findings of this manual are summarized in a brief brochure providing an overview on the experiences gained in the course of the implementation of the RFO. This concise brochure is a user-friendly guide for all who are interested or already involved in cross-border cooperation. The brochure will be available for download under: www.change-on-borders.net.

**Film on the RFO
"Change on Borders"**

In the final stage of the project, a film on the work and achievements of the RFO "Change on Borders" has been produced. This film gives an overview of the RFO activities carried out during the project's lifetime and summarises outputs and results. It emphasizes the importance of inter-regional exchange about cross-border cooperation and shows that this unique partnership has been the basis of shared know-how and expertise with a high potential for mutual learning regarding topics ranging from cross-border river basin management to the harmonisation of cross-border geo data infrastructure. The film is available under: www.change-on-borders.net.

IMPRESSUM

The RFO-Newsletter is a 4-monthly publication of the INTERREG IIIC project "Change on Borders".

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