

**EDITORIAL**

**This "Change on Borders"-year ends with a remarkable number of new sub-projects that have been approved. Moreover we look back on numerous meetings with many international participants. On behalf of the Lead Partner I am glad to see that the project is followed with interest by lots of different actors. In this edition of the newsletter the recent meetings and all new sub-projects will be briefly presented.**

**Ilka Meisel  
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**Thematic Forum on "Ecological tourism in border regions"**

The regional government of Andalucia organised a meeting on 25 - 26 November in Seville, Andalucia (ES), which was focused on ecological and sustainable tourism across borders. The region is well known as a coastal and cultural tourism destination. In addition, the region is aiming to develop its potential for ecological tourism in rural areas and is therefore also cooperating with its neighbouring countries.

During the meeting, for example, the ambitious "transcontinental biosphere reserve" project between the Andalucian Provinces Malaga and Cadiz and the North of Morocco was presented by Fernando Molina Vázquez of the Regional Ministry for Environment of Andalucia.

The project, involving several Ministries on both sides of the border, seeks to develop a common biosphere reserve with UNESCO standards which should help to jointly conserve biodiversity (including maritime areas), secure environmental protection and promote sustainable tourism as a basis for rural economic development. The Mediterranean regions involved are

characterised by similar and complementary geographical and cultural features which are the basis for a joint development strategy and co-operation plan. Some challenges still have to be solved e.g. regarding different protection levels and cooperation in the maritime parts which is more problematic.

Also experts from the Provinces Gelderland and Overijssel as well as Limburg (NL) and the Region Värmland (SE) had the opportunity to share their experience gained in cross-border tourism projects with the participants. In this context Mr Aad Blokland (Limburg) presented cross-border experiences with tourist cooperation within the INTERREG

**"MEB"**

**Multicultural Education on Borders**

**Objective:**

Promotion of multiculturalism and creation of a background to increase children's and youth's abilities to participate in cooperation activities

**Lead Participant:**

Regional Council of North Karelia (FI)

**Partners from:**

East-Macedonia Thrace (GR), Province of Bozen / Bolzano (IT), North Karelia / East Finland

IIIA project "Three-Countries Park" (DE, BE, NL). The park within the so called city network "MHAL-region" (Maastricht, Hasselt, Aachen, Liège) is considered as a joint long-term development concept combining nature protection, eco-tourism and recreation facilities in the Dutch-Belgian-German border area. More information about the project is available at: [www.3landenpark.org](http://www.3landenpark.org).

### **Ten new sub-projects**

During the last two Steering Committees in Bayreuth (6-10-2005) and Seville (25-11-2005) ten Sub-projects have been approved. Each of them is briefly presented in the boxes spread over the Newsletter.

#### **"Trans-EA"**

Efficiency assessment of cross-border transport infrastructure

#### **Objective:**

Enhance the use of spatial data, as a source for spatial decision-making in cross-border settings

#### **Lead Participant:**

Saxon State Ministry of Economic Affairs and Labour, Saxony (DE)

#### **Partners from:**

Saxony (DE), Lubelskie (PL), North Karelia / East Finland

#### **"RiverCross" - Many rivers to cross**

#### **Sub-project led by the Radboud University Nijmegen, Gelderland (NL)**

Five "Change on Borders"- regions from different countries (NL, DE, GR, PL, SE [observer]) which all have river systems crossing borders are working together in this sub-project. The partnership is focusing on improving cross-border cooperation in the field of river basin management.

Recently, the first results of the study-phase have been presented and discussed with relevant experts at an official opening conference held on 7<sup>th</sup>-9<sup>th</sup> December in Nijmegen. Based on a common approach, a so called "quick-scan" analysis has been carried out by all partners in the first phase of the project in order to identify the cultural and organisational framework of river basin management in the participating regions.

The sub-project, is trying to contribute to solutions for cross-border river basin management by analysing cross-border settings of the river basins, facilitating information exchange and policy learning about cultural and institutional barriers and opportunities.

The outcomes will be used to build up three educational modules to train water managers in different regions.

Moreover, the sub-project is also closely linked to other INTERREG projects led by the Radboud University such as an INTERREG IIIA - project which aims to establish a Dutch-German master degree programme in the field of transnational water management and the INTERREG IIIB project "Freude am Fluss".

More information about "RiverCross" and the results of the "Quick-scan" analysis can be found at the project's website [www.rivercross.nl](http://www.rivercross.nl) or at [www.change-on-borders.net](http://www.change-on-borders.net).

#### **"Y4I"**

#### **Youth for Innovation**

#### **Objective:**

Development of training & education tools to foster an intensive and sustainable cross-border co-operation in order to further encourage regional innovation capacities

#### **Lead Participant:**

City of Oldenburg, Lower Saxony (DE)

#### **Partners from:**

Lower Saxony (DE), South Aegean Region (GR), Lubelskie (PL), Andalucia (ES), North Karelia / East Finland

### Good Neighbourhood - Intercultural Competence

Bavaria was host of the Thematic Forum 3 meeting under the title "Promotion of socio-cultural integration". More than 30 participants, representing 9 countries met on 6 October 2005 in Bayreuth (DE). The meeting focused on "cultural competence, good neighbourhood, and cross-border 'people to people'-activities".

The hosting region, Upper Franconia, is situated in North-East Bavaria, adjoining the new EU member state Czech Republic. In this

area, two neighbouring regions with a common cultural background have been separated due to political reasons for more than four decades. This led to the fact that the neighbours only knew little about each other and developed a certain reluctance and reserve among the people living on the other side of the border.

The meeting therefore dealt with the following key cross-border issues:

- Increasing the social cohesion in border regions and intensifying socio-cultural contacts among the citizens
- Reducing the competition between border regions, creating a common awareness for the need of working together
- Improving the cross-border cooperation of public authorities

After a warm welcome by Mr Angerer (president of the district of Upper Franconia), Prof. Goppel from the Bavarian Ministry of Economic Affairs, Infrastructure, Transport and Technology explained that border regions have always been in the focus of regional planning in Bavaria, due to the objective to create equivalent living and working

conditions in all parts of this region.

Dr. Birgit Seelbinder, lord mayor of Marktredwitz presented the "Cross-border State Garden Show Marktredwitz - Eger" as an example for good neighbourhood relations and a successful cooperation. More information about this project is available under: [www.marktredwitz2006.de](http://www.marktredwitz2006.de).

A concrete cross-border project in the hosting region was presented by Professor Dr. Gabi Troeger-Weiß from the University of Kaiserslautern. She informed about the project "Good neighbourhood in the

#### "MENT"

The Memory Environment and Tradition trails on Borders

##### Objective:

Stimulate cross-border development opportunities and concepts in the field of tourism, based upon three pillars: memorials of the past, unique nature and traditions.

##### Lead Participant:

POLIS-Network of Municipalities Greece-Turkey-Bulgaria, East Macedonia-Thrace (GR)

##### Partners from:

Lubelskie (PL), Friuli-Venezia Giulia (IT), South Aegean Region (GR), Gelderland (NL), North Rhine-Westphalia (DE)

#### "B2S2B"

New concepts and processes for the whole innovation value chain in a cross-border environment

##### Objective:

Develop synergies among business and science, by studying different cross-border models in the partner regions

##### Lead Participant:

Confederazione Nazionale dell'Artigianato e della Piccola e Media Impresa, Friuli-Venezia Giulia (IT)

##### Partners from:

Friuli-Venezia Giulia (IT), Navarra (ES), Slovenia (SI), Hajdú-Bihar (HU), Overijssel (NL), Andalucia (ES), Alsace (FR)

Bavarian-Czech border region" ([www.gute-nachbarschaft.org](http://www.gute-nachbarschaft.org)). The guiding principle of this project is the belief that "understanding is the essential basis for friendship". This is implemented by cross-border children and youth programmes in order to reduce mental barriers. In this context e.g. school workshops or school exchanges take place.

"How to impact intercultural competence" was the topic of an interactive workshop led by Ms Christine Koch and Dr. Fritz Audebert from the consultancy ICUnet. The workshop dealt with intercultural awareness and the question about

how to intensify socio-cultural contacts. It was combined with an exhibition on the topic, discussions and an exchange of experience. The participants agreed that an intercultural training can help to increase the mutual understanding of people with different cultural backgrounds.



Dr. Fritz Audebert, ICUnet, giving a presentation on cultural competence.

The presentations from representatives of different border-regions dealt with:

- The development of cross-border transport between Saxony and its neighbours
- Administrative co-operation between cross-border regions
- The utilisation of cross-border infrastructure developments to further improve the co-operation between countries.

Ms Yvonne Schönlein, member of the Joint Technical Secretariat at the Saxon Development Bank, presented an ex-

### **"Labour Market"**

Labour market move possibilities across borders in Europe

#### **Objective:**

Increasing the dissemination of information among inhabitants of border regions on possibilities of using the labour market across borders and on stimulating the cross-border cooperation

#### **Lead Participant:**

Nemunas Euroregion Marijampole Bureau, PA (LT)

#### **Partners from:**

Nemunas Euroregion (LT), Regio Basiliensis (CH), Andalucía (ES)

### **Cross-border transport**

A Thematic Forum 1 was held on 7 October 2005 in Neumark, Saxony (DE). The topic of the meeting was cross-border transportation including the related infrastructure. More than 40 participants from seven countries attended the Forum.

The discussions were focused on cross-border transport projects, solutions to transport problems as well as the lasting cooperation between different border regions. Several examples of successful collaboration between different regions were highlighted.

### **"Rhine Bicycle Path"**

Communication and Marketing concept for the Rhine from the Spring to the Estuary

#### **Objective:**

Building a joint communication and marketing concept with common standards linking existing cross-border bicycle paths together

#### **Lead Participant:**

Euregio Rhein-Waal (DE)

#### **Partners from:**

Gelderland (NL), North Rhine-Westphalia (DE), Alsace (FR), Basiliensis (CH), Baden-Württemberg, Rhineland-Palatinate (DE), Utrecht (NL), South-Holland (NL) [associated partners]

ample of an INTERREG IIIA project in Saxony dealing with the possibilities for supporting cross-border infrastructure.

Besides the meeting a study visit in the Bavarian - Saxon / Czech border-region took place. As an example for cross-border transport, the participants had the opportunity to travel by re-



Study visit in the train while visiting Saxon's border-region.

### **"Knowledge Roadmap"**

Cross-border co-operation for knowledge based development: Towards a Roadmap

#### **Objective:**

Strengthen the non-metropolitan border-cities with high knowledge potentials through a promotion of cross-border cooperation in for knowledge-based development

#### **Lead Participant:**

City of Aachen (DE)

#### **Partners from:**

Gelderland (NL), North Rhine-Westphalia (DE), North Karelia / East Finland, Lubelskie (PL), Andalucia (ES)

gional train from Saxony to the Czech Republic and continuing to Bavaria. The so-called "Vogtlandbahn" is aiming at improving the public rail transport in this border-region. Several small German and Czech cities are now easy to reach in a day-trip. The public transport facilities are well-accepted and the number of passengers has risen.

### **Lead Partner day in Brussels**

On 29 November 2005 a Lead Partner day for all INTERREG IIIC operations took place in Brussels. The RFO Co-ordination Unit took part in the meeting on behalf of the RFO "Change on Borders". The objective of the meeting was to help INTERREG IIIC operations to bring lasting improvements to regional development and improve the work on regional cooperation through an exchange of experience with other Lead Partners. Furthermore it offered the possibility to share problems with other Lead Partners and discuss possible solutions. In individual workshops for different topics (e.g. such as finance and project management, partnership) difficulties have been discussed and possible

solutions developed. The results were presented to the audience as well as to representatives of the INTERREG IIIC Joint Technical Secretariats.

During the discussions it became clear that most operations are facing similar difficulties e.g. with national audit procedures and the equal involvement of regional stake-holders in sub-projects. Several project lead partners stressed that mostly individual partner specific solutions have to be found for these problems and that personal contact is vital to build up a relationship of trust.

### **"Working in Networks (WIN)"**

Knowledge and Technology Transfer in Cross Border Life Science Regions

#### **Objective:**

Connection of cross border operating life science regions to establish a transnational experience and know-how exchange platform in order to exploit synergetic effects and best practice solutions between the participating regions

#### **Lead Participant:**

Upper Austrian Research GmbH (AT)

#### **Partners from:**

Bavaria (DE), Regio Basiliensis (CH), North Rhine-Westphalia (DE), Province of Limburg (NL)

More information about the event and the presentations held are available at the INTERREG IIIC website at: [www.interreg3c.net](http://www.interreg3c.net).

#### **Next dates**

In March 2006, the third **Annual Conference** of the RFO will take place and this time the Main Partner South Aegean Region (GR) is the host. In cooperation with the Main Partner Region East Macedonia Thrace (GR) the Annual Conference will be combined with a **Thematic Forum 1 + 2** meeting.

#### **"E-Health and Telemedicine"**

Telemedicine and e-health in cross-border hospital co-operation and health care

#### **Objective:**

Exchange of good practices and recommendations for how to overcome the obstacles for cross-border care caused by differences in health care systems, in communication technologies and legal regulations

#### **Lead Participant:**

Province of Limburg (NL)

#### **Partners from:**

Province Limburg (NL), North Rhine-Westphalia (DE), Regio Basiliensis (CH), Upper Austria (AT), Lower Austria (AT), *Baden-Württemberg (DE) [associated partner]*

The schedule for the meeting will probably be as follows:

- **Wed., 22.03.06:**  
Thematic Forum 1/2
- **Thursday, 23.03.06:**  
Thematic Forum 2/1
- **Friday, 24.03.06:**  
Annual Conference
- **Saturday, 25.03.06:**  
Study visits

The content of the Annual Conference will mainly include the work of the sub-projects and their results as well as the activities of the Thematic Forums.

The topics of the Forums will be "Institutions and Financial instruments for transeuropean co-operation: New Perspectives and Solutions" and "Regional clusters". Further information will be provided on the RFO website as soon as available.

Another **Thematic Forum meeting** will be held in Papenburg, Lower Saxony (DE) on **16 / 17 June 2006**. The topic will be "cultural heritage and water tourism". In this area, the Dutch-German border region is characterised by historical canals, since moor has formed the landscape. Nowadays the canals have been renewed and are used for leisure activities. The cross-border water tourism is in the centre of the meeting.

#### **IMPRESSUM**

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