

CITIES IN COOPERATION

Follow up of the meeting between CECICN (Conference of European cross-border and interregional city networks) and DG Dirk Ahner, DG REGIO, 17/05/2011

CECICN is an EU platform of city networks representing almost 37% of the EU population and **500 cities involved in Territorial Cooperation** (parallel to AEBR –Association of European Border Regions representing regions), both

- in a cross-border context: cross border agglomerations and networks, represented by RIET (ES/PT border) and MOT (all borders involving France)
- in a transnational context: city networks within macro-regions, represented by the Union of Baltic Cities, the Conference of Atlantic Arc Cities, the Forum of Adriatic and Ionian Cities, and Med Cities.

The Lisbon Treaty reinforces the legitimacy of local stakeholders (subsidiarity) and territorial approach (territorial cohesion). The elaboration of the regulations for the future Cohesion Policy, for which both urban aspects and Territorial Cooperation are clear priorities for Commissioner Hahn and DG REGIO, is seen by CECICN as a major opportunity to **raise awareness about the added value of cooperation between cities, and among their networks, so as to pool resources and enhance the European identity.**

Summary of CECICN's views about the future Cohesion Policy, in the framework of EU 2020

For cities involved in territorial cooperation, CECICN requests for an increased support from future Cohesion Policy, and more broadly from other EU policies.

- **2nd generation co-operation between cities should be at the core of EU 2020**, because it favours **EU integration**, through the development of the **Single Market**, while also bringing **Europe closer to the citizens.**
- **European Territorial Cooperation** requires an increased budget, but also a **more integrated approach**: ETC, as part of the territorial cohesion approach, should be included into the **strategic documents** (Common Strategic Framework, national contracts). Member States should be encouraged to **coordinate strategies and funding across borders**, both in cross-border regions and macro-regions, which also involve cities. De-cohesion effect, produced when one area allocates more funds to cooperation than its border partner, should be avoided.
- Cooperation requires **multi-level governance**, in which **cities represent the level of proximity**, daily life and citizenship; implementing territorial cohesion through **place-based approach** and **reinforced partnership with cities**, is a top priority, **also in a cross-border and macro-regional contexts.**
- CECICN welcomes EC's proposition of an ambitious **Urban agenda within future Cohesion Policy**; it means a **stronger role for urban authorities** at the different steps (elaboration of strategic documents and programmes; implementation); support not only for thematic projects, but also for integrated local development approaches; **global grants, sub delegation** (for instance towards EGTCs) should be considered **also for ETC Operational Programmes**:
 - cross-border strand: cross-border agglomerations and networks
 - transnational strand: city networks within macro-regions

- CECICN thinks that it is crucial to create and recognize Macro/Euro Regional Development Agencies. These agencies should benefit from global grants to develop European actions through framework programmes with the European Commission.
- **EU support for stable networking of cities** at EU scale, through programmes such as **Urbact**, **Interreg C**, should be enhanced.
- Regarding cooperation programmes, **management procedures should be significantly simplified**, especially administrative procedures, as well as auditing and validation procedures.
- **Other EU policies** (such as transport and ICT, single market, employment and education, environment and energy, RTD and innovation, maritime policy, external cooperation...) should increase their awareness of territorial challenges and potentials, also in the case of cross-border agglomerations and city networks. **Horizontal coordination at EU level** (e.g. within **Inter-service groups** on Urban Development and Territorial Cohesion), **and vertical coordination** (through the multi-level process of Cohesion Policy) **is required**, and CECICN is ready to provide its contribution on different policy fields, and **test areas for new EU policies**.

All these views will be detailed in a White Paper that CECICN is preparing and which will be sent to all European Institutions involved in the process for the new Regulations for the next programming period 2014-2020.

Process proposed by CECICN

- Until end of 2011, CECICN will prepare a **White Paper on Territorial Cooperation**, involving the European Commission, the European Parliament, the Committee of Regions, at different stages of the process.
- A first meeting will take place on July 19 to 21 in the premises of MOT in Paris; DG REGIO is invited to take part.
- During 1st semester 2012, CECICN will organize a **European Conference about Territorial Cooperation**, ideally foreseen to be part of the programme of the future Danish EU Presidency. The conference will be the opportunity to present the White Paper, and to launch a debate with stakeholders, in the presence of Commissioner Hahn, DG REGIO, and other EU institutions.
- AEBR will be invited by CECICN to participate in the White Paper and Conference.
- CECICN is ready to take part in meetings or seminars organized by the European Commission.

Annex: contribution of CECICN to the 5th Report on Cohesion