

Minutes of the CECICN experts meeting

December 15, 2011 in Paris

Participants:

Xoan VAZQUEZ MAO, Secretary General, RIET
Marta CABANAS, Eixo Atlantico (RIET)
Carlos BELTRAN, Eixo Atlantico expert
Jesus BEDOYA, Eixo Atlantico expert
Albert SORROSAL, Eixo Atlantico expert
Tamara GUIRAO, CAAC
Wolfgang SCHMIDT, UBC
Anna ALMIRALL CARNÉ, MedCities
Jean PEYRONY, Director General, MOT
Jean RUBIÓ, Policy officer, MOT
Sophie VALETTE, Policy officer, MOT

Observer:

José Antonio RUIZ de CAZAS, DG REGIO, Unit E1, European Commission

Excused:

Jens GABBE, AEBR

I) Strategic Paper

1) General comments on the strategic paper

- It was considered that the document is too long and too detailed. A synthetic (15 p. max+ executive summary 2p.) and structured document would be more readable.
- Key concepts might be developed in an annex.
- Thus, it was decided to establish a committee of 3 / 4 people who will be responsible for finalizing the document. This committee shall meet on the 13-14th February.

2) 5 strong ideas to convey in the document

- Financing of territorial cooperation in cohesion policy
- Strategy: improve strategic concept - the role of different levels - thematic / territorial
- Governance: Improving the links between programs and projects
- Better use of the EGTC, legal tools
- Single market: link with territorial cohesion and cooperation

A Sorrosal proposed to elaborate some slides, which could be a basis for the future part 3 of the document. It was also noted that diversity and balance between regions must be preserved, it should not lead to a hierarchy, but complementary. European territorial cooperation is one way of ensuring European integration and a good instrument for the implementation of the EU 2020 strategy.

3) Reflections on specific parts of the document

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- in the preface, focus on the authors and better clarify the intentions of the document.
- Part 2 should be fully reworked.
- Part 3: the formulation of an opinion on the regulations should not constitute a detailed legal analysis (because the technical discussion is on-going), but should focus on gaps and the contributions of the EC proposals on major aspects (the 5 ideas above).
- Present part 3 should be withdrawn from the document, but could be used as a basis for a meeting with DG REGIO in the weeks to come
- Discussion of the mention of the term "crisis" in the strategic document. It was pointed out that the crisis severely hits cities and border areas. It is important to promote competitive cities and border regions to overcome the effects of the crisis, in the context of the EU 2020 strategy.
- The title of the document should be more connected with the specificity of the CECICN / AEBC. **Ideas to improve the title are welcome.**
- The conclusion is not clear enough.

4) What to do: take into account the agenda of the EC

- It was decided that the first action should be taken in the 1st months of 2012: meet DG REGIO to discuss issues on regulations and program preparation.
- In the second trimester of 2012: a conference on European territorial cooperation

II) Conference CECICN

- Regarding the organization of the conference in June 2012, 2 options were proposed:
 - A conference in Brussels, co-organized by the Committee of the Regions - (room, interpretation, coffee financed by CoR)
 - A conference in Galicia supported by the regional government (care of all costs).

In the discussion, different points were made:

- Message: Cooperation is at the heart of cohesion policy; to overcome the crisis, regions should cooperate on the ground to have a multiplier effect, use cooperation to stimulate growth.
- Importance to have a conference on territorial cooperation located on a border
- Seek the support of various programs such as INTERREG IV Atlantic, SUDOE, Med ... to organize / support the conference
- For these reasons, a conference in Galicia should be preferred (option 2)
- It was also proposed that the conference may be followed by others steps. A second event (a smaller one) could be organized in Brussels.
- The first communication should be held in January. In February, it would be to develop a preliminary program, and open enrollment in March.

Calendar 2012:

- January 12th in Paris (MOT): next CECICN meeting: organization of the Conference
- February 13-14 in Paris (MOT): drafting team on the Strategic Paper
- March 8th, CECICN political bureau