

EUROPEAN UNION



Committee of the Regions

Комитет на регионите
Comité de las Regiones
Výbor regionů
Regionsudvalget
Ausschuss der Regionen
Regioonide Komitee
Επιτροπή των Περιφερειών
Committee of the Regions
Alueiden komitea
Comité des Régions
Coiste na Réigiún
Comitato delle regioni
Reģionu komiteja
Regionų komitetas
Régiók Bizottsága
Kumitat tar-Reġjuni
Comité van de Regio's
Komitet Regionów
Comité das Regiões
Comitetul Regiunilor
Výbor regiónov
Odbor regij
Regionkommittén

EGTC
GECT

The European Groupings of Territorial Cooperation *What, how and why*

Europe in my region

Building Europe through cities,
regions and municipalities

Zagreb, 25 November 2014

Alfonso Alcolea

Committee of the Regions of the EU



Europe without borders?





Europe without borders?



The railway station of Nova Gorica,
at the border between Italy and Slovenia, till 2004 and today



Europe without borders?



Polish-German border
between Frankfurt am Oder and Słubice



Europe without borders?



Former checkpoint dismantled
between Frankfurt an der Oder (DE) and Słubice (PL)

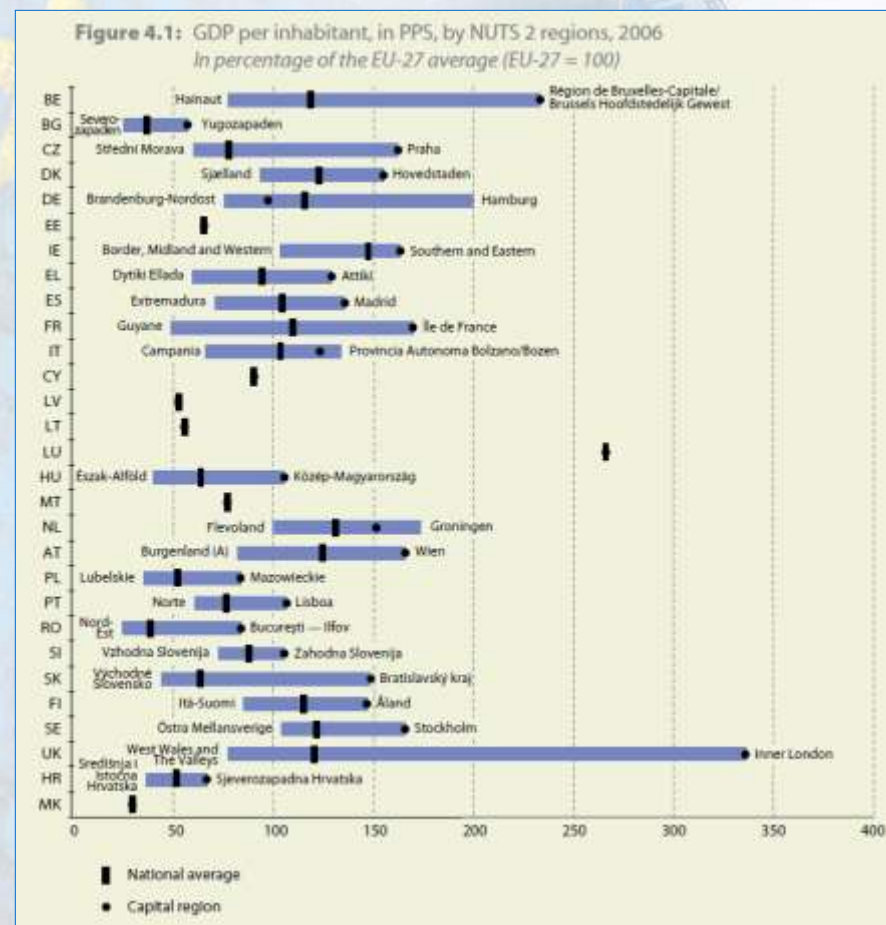
© A. Alcolea, 2008



Europe without borders?

❖ GDP per head poorest region: +/- 6.200 €

❖ GDP per head richest region: +/- 68.000 €

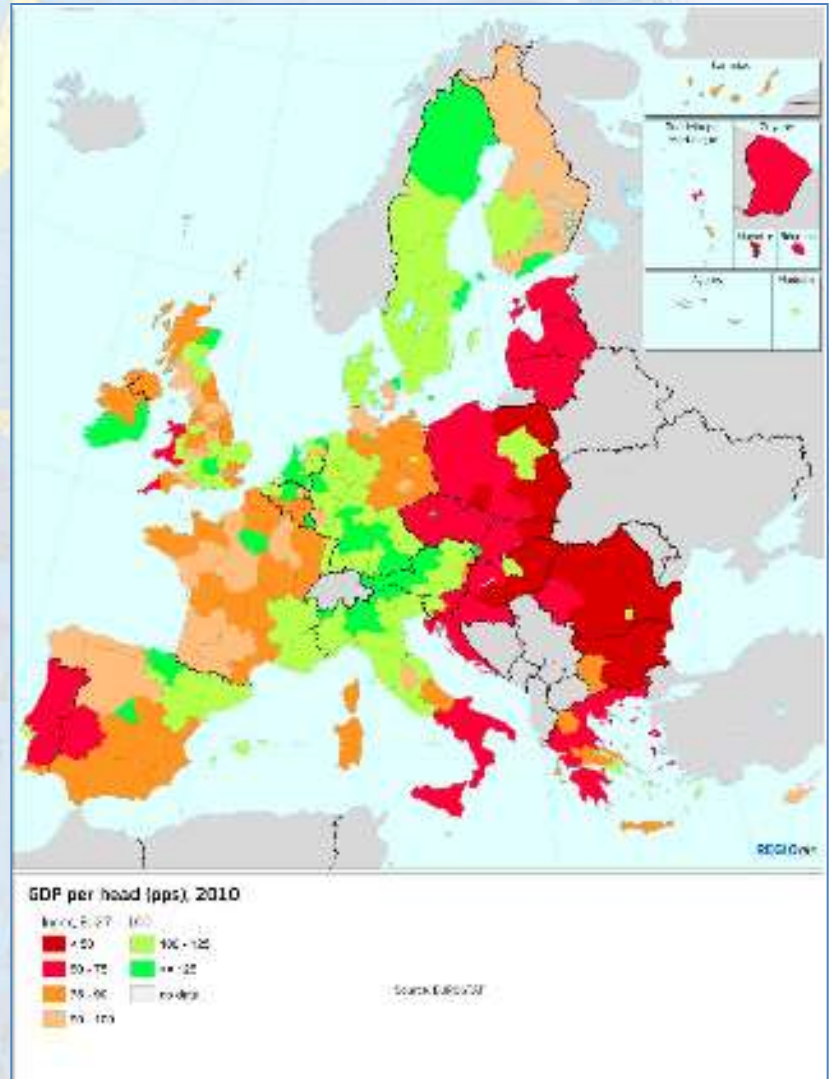




Europe without borders?

❖ Disparities in EU28

*European Commission
6th Cohesion Report*





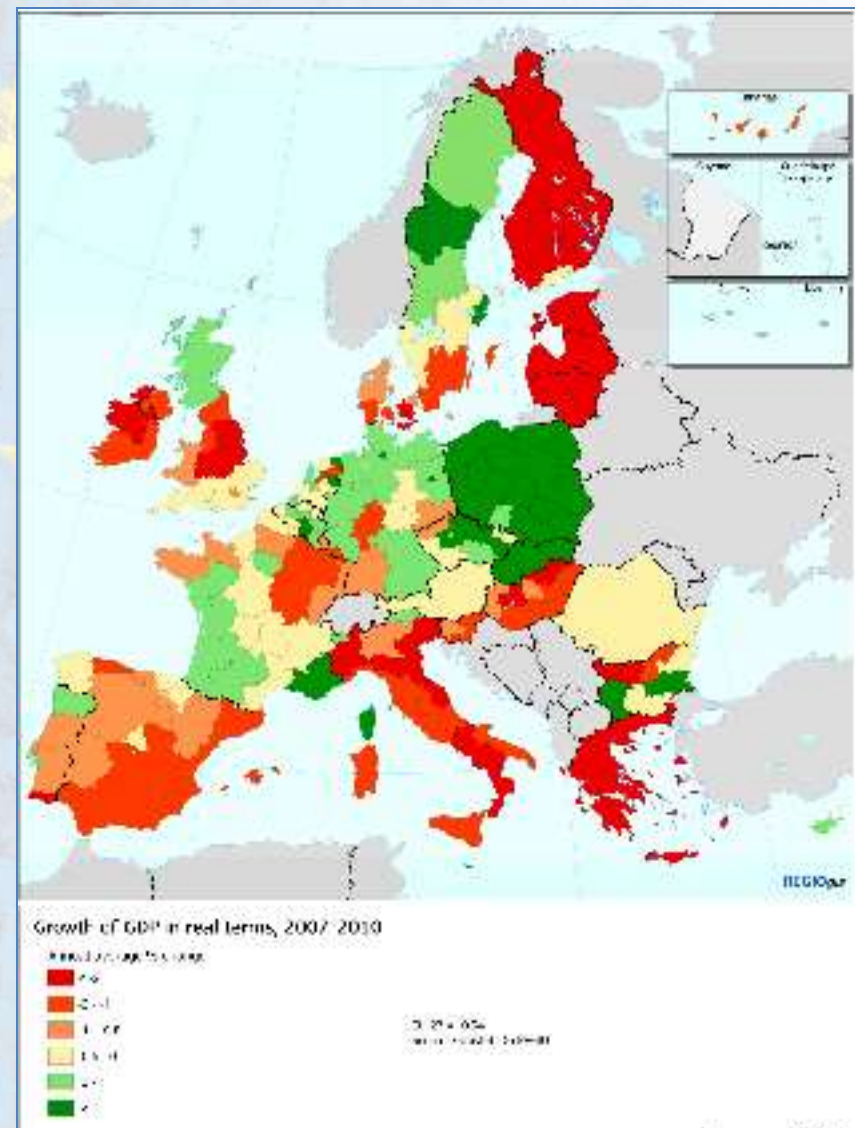
Europe without borders?

Impact of the crisis (2010)

Growth of GDP in real terms
in EU27

6th cohesion report. EC

* Negative growth in regions
in orange or in red

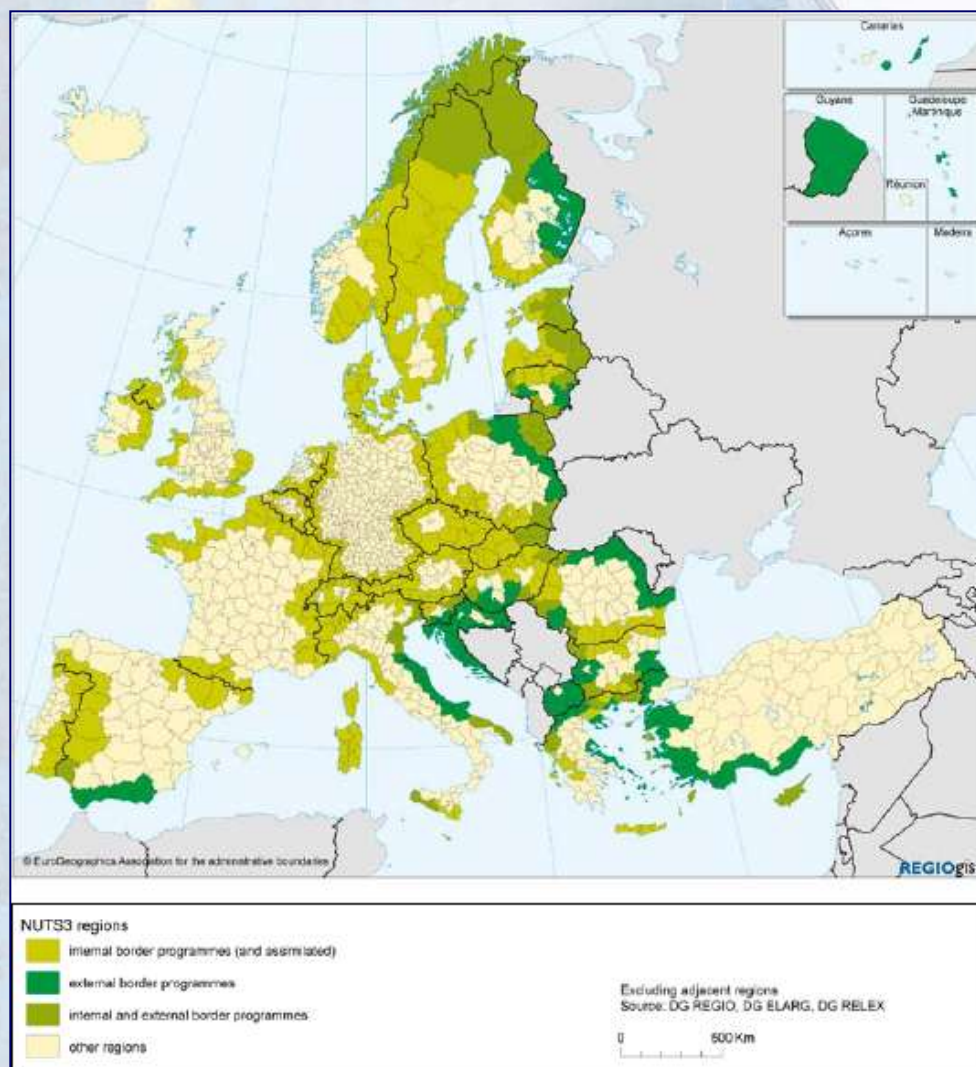




Europe without borders?

- ❖ EU cross-border cooperation programme areas

Eurostat



The European regions and cities have the right to cooperate

Recognised by the **Madrid Outline Convention** on
Transfrontier Co-operation between Territorial
Communities or Authorities

(1980, Council of Europe)

The acquis of the Madrid Outline Convention

- ❖ The **Madrid Outline Convention of 1980**
 - Right to sign cooperation agreements
 - Objective → General cooperation
 - Council of Europe → 47 States, all Europe except Belarus
- ❖ **Protocol No 1** (Strasbourg, 1995) adds the right to create structures of cooperation with legal personality → **Euroregions**
- ❖ **Protocol No 2** (Strasbourg, 1998) extends this right to **interregional** cooperation → Not only cross-border
- ❖ **Protocol No 3** (Utrecht, 2009) creates the **Euroregional Cooperation Grouping** → Ratified so far by Cyprus, France, Germany, Slovenia, Switzerland and Ukraine



The European Grouping of Territorial Cooperation

EGTC

GECT

GECL



What is an EGTC?



EGTC means European Grouping of Territorial Cooperation

- ❖ Initially promoted by the Committee of the Regions
- ❖ **EU instrument** → Created by **Regulation (EC) 1082/2006** amended by **Regulation (EU) 1302/2013**
- ❖ Objective → Economic, social and territorial **cohesion**
- ❖ Public entities from different Member States can get together under an entity with **European legal personality** → The EGTC has its own **organisation, budget and staff**.
- ❖ The EGTC may implement **programmes and projects** of territorial cooperation, with or without EU funding.
- ❖ Entered into force on **1 August 2007**. The Member States adopt **national provisions** of implementation. The amended Regulation applies since **22 June 2014**



What for?



Missions

- ❖ Art. 7 (2) "An EGTC shall act within the confines of the **tasks** given to it, namely the facilitation and promotion of territorial cooperation to strengthen Union **economic, social and territorial cohesion**, and the **overcoming of internal market barriers**."
- ❖ Art. 7 (3) Tasks of the EGTC:
 - *specific actions of territorial cooperation between its members [...] with or without financial support from the Union.*
 - *Primarily [...] the implementation of cooperation programmes, or parts thereof, or the implementation of operations supported by the EU through the ERDF, the ESF and/or the CF.*
- ❖ **Limits:** Powers of the State such as police, regulation, justice or foreign affairs.



Who can participate?



- ❖ Entities of **Public Law** (authorities, and reference to the Directive 2004/18/EC on public procurement) and associations

NEW

Some entities of **Private Law** (Directive 2004/17/EC and Services of General Economic Interest)

- ❖ Participation of entities from **third countries**:

NEW

At least 1 Member State needed

- The headquarters must be located in the EU
- The third country adopts similar legislation or signs an agreement with the country of seat of the EGTC
- The EU Member States involved authorize it



How to set up an EGTC



- ❖ Identification of the **headquarters**
 - The seat determines the applicable Law
- ❖ Constitutive documents → **Convention** and **statutes**
 - The Convention has primacy over the national legislation
 - The Convention can foresee exceptions to the rules of applicable law: staff – procurement – audit – others
- ❖ **Authorization** by the national authorities
 - **Tacit approval** after **6 months**
 - Explicit approval required by the country of headquarters
- ❖ **Register** and **publication** at national level → Legal personality
- ❖ Notification to the **Committee of the Regions** and publication at the **OJEU**

CLARIFIED

NEW



The revised EGTC Regulation



New elements – Operational

❖ EGTCs can be:

- **Managing authorities** of programmes or their **beneficiaries**

Intermediate authorities of **Integrated Territorial Investments**

NEW

Implementing bodies of **Joint Action Plans** and of **CLLD**

- ❖ Operational Programmes can foresee **cross-border, transnational and interregional cooperation** (Art. 96.3 (d) CPR)

- ❖ The EGTCs **are interested in** (Monitoring Report 2013):

- Joint Action Plan (JAP): **10 EGTCs**
- Community-Led Local Development (CLLD): **9 EGTCs**
- Integrated Territorial Investment (ITI): **15 EGTCs**

- ❖ The EGTC may help to implement **macroregional strategies**

NEW

The revised EGTC Regulation



Three joint statements

The European Parliament, the Commission and the Council added:

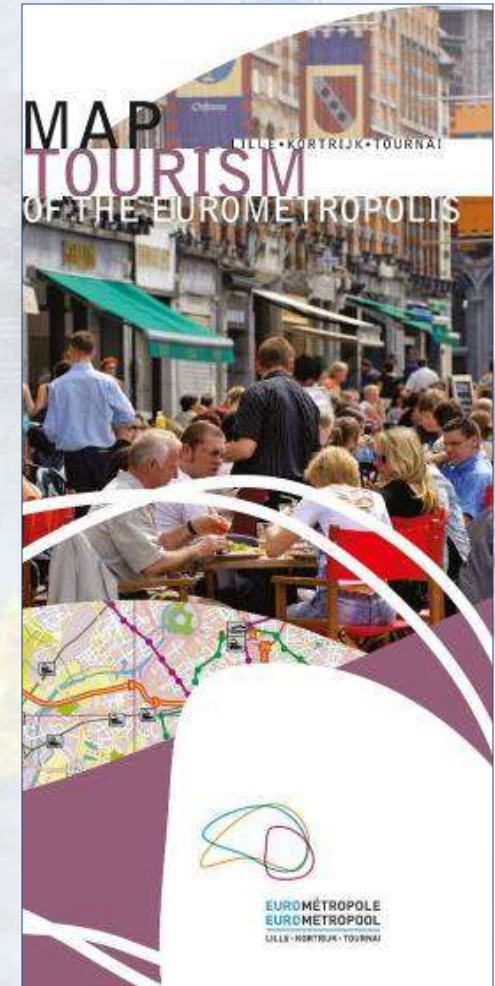
I. The Institutions intend *"to improve the visibility of the possibilities to use EGTCs as an optional **instrument for territorial cooperation available in all EU policy areas**"*.

II. The institutions engage themselves to undertake *"actions of coordination and communication among national authorities and between authorities of different Member States in order to ensure **clear, efficient and transparent procedures of authorization** of new EGTCs"*.

III. The Member States will endeavour to **apply the rules of the Regulation** on law applicable to contractual obligations for the **staff hired under private law** and the principle of territoriality for staff hired under public law.



Trends and developments



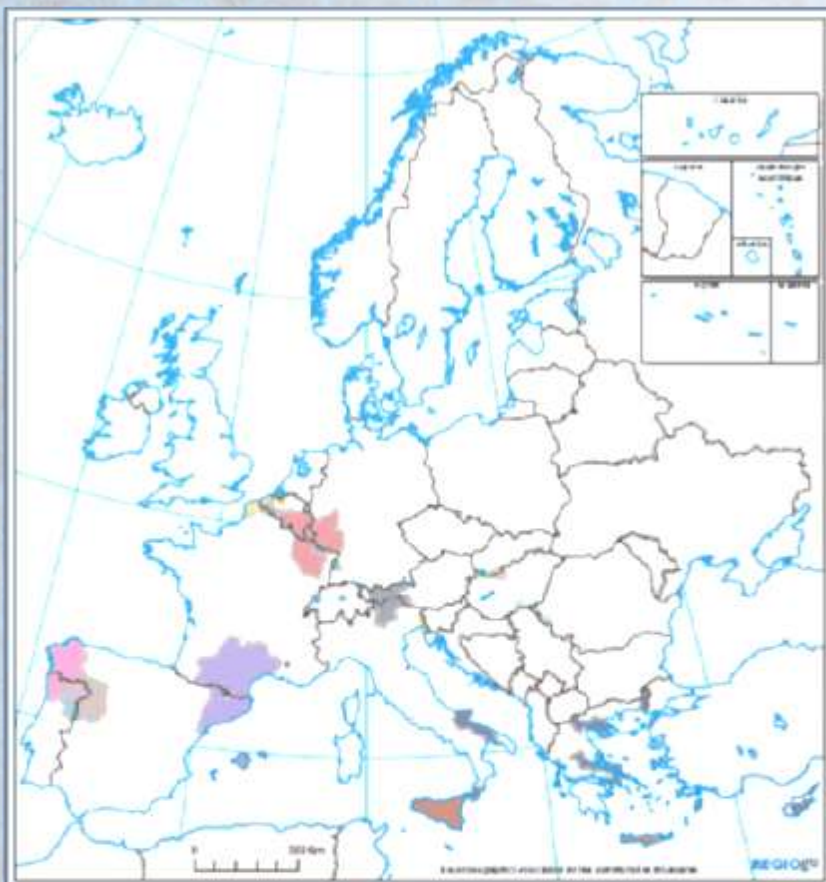
EGTC trends and developments



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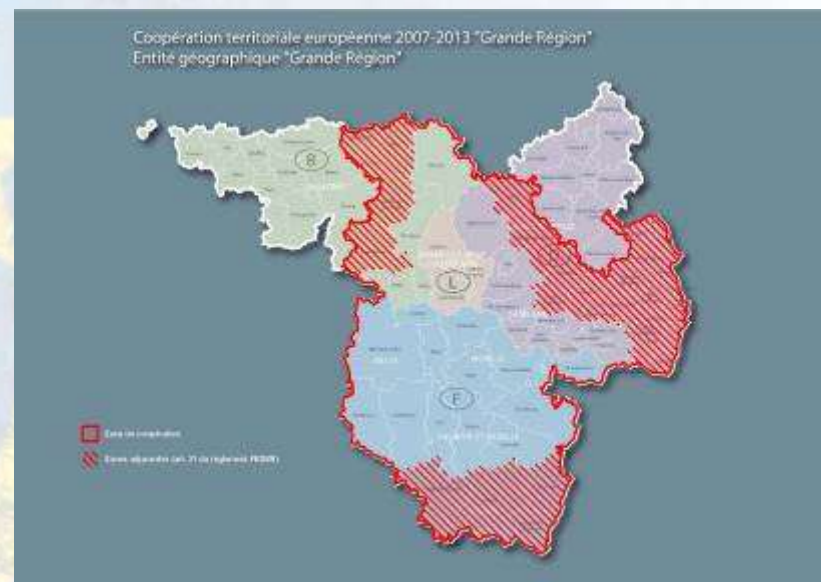


Figures

- ❖ **49 EGTC** set up, according to the Register of the CoR
- ❖ More than **600 LRA** involved
- ❖ A reality in **19 Member States**
- ❖ Impact on the life of **30 Mo** Europeans



Examples of EGTC



Grande Région

- ❖ First EGTC to become management authority of a programme
- ❖ Involves FR, DE, LU, NL, BE
- ❖ www.interreg4a-gr.eu

Examples of EGTC

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Archimed

- ❖ Cooperation structure among Mediterranean islands
- ❖ Joint defence of common interests



Examples of EGTC



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Cerdanya cross-border hospital

- ❖ Service to 60,000 inhabitants in the Pyrenees
- ❖ www.hcerdanya.eu





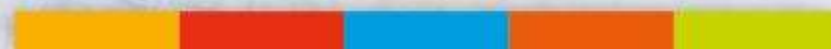
Examples of EGTC



Duero-Douro

- ❖ Rural development: 187 municipalities with an average population of <500 inhabitants
- ❖ Projects:
 - Central purchase of equipments (public lighting)
 - Econometric model for investments
 - Goat livestock to prevent forest fires and create jobs
 - Culture, education
 - 'Vital tourism': Turn the border area into a touristic destination of excellence

www.duero-douro.com



Examples of EGTC



Euroregion Pyrénées Mediterranean

- ❖ Euroregional development in one of the economic poles of Europe
- ❖ Project CreaMed: creating networks between the business incubators www.eurocreamed.eu
- ❖ Winner of the EGTC AWARD 2014

www.euroregio.eu



Examples of EGTC



EGTC Euro-GO

- ❖ Cities of Gorizia, Nova Gorica and Šempeter-Vrtojba.
- ❖ Consolidate a cooperation dating from 1964
- ❖ The EGTC is needed to overcome the recession in the territory
- ❖ Fields: Hospitals, traffic, energy, environment, transport, etc.

www.euro-go.eu



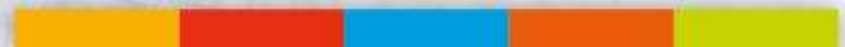
Examples of EGTC



Euregio Tirol – Suedtirol – Trentino Euroregione Tirolo – Alto Adige – Trentino

- ❖ Euroregional development in the Alpine region
- ❖ Very strong and integrated cooperation in many fields
- ❖ Honourable mention of the EGTC AWARD 2014

www.europaregion.info



Croatia is active!



Implementation in 2013

→ Parliamentary decision (Odluku) 01/07/2013

Euregio Ohne Grenzen / Senza Confini Euroregija Bez Granica

- ❖ In May 2014, Istria (HR) joined Carinthia (AT), Veneto and Friuli-Venezia Giulia (IT)

<http://www.regione.veneto.it/web/decentramento-e-federalismo/euroregione-senza-confini>



Central European Transport Corridor

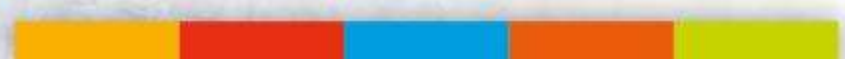
- ❖ From Skane (SV) to Rijeka (HR)
- ❖ Based in Szczecin (PL)
- ❖ Currently, members from SV, PL and HU

<http://www.cetc.pl>





Trends and lessons





EGTC trends and developments



- ❖ National implementation varies, but also national approaches
- ❖ Only one EGTC implements programmes: 'Greater Region'
- ❖ Although 'laboratory for multi-level governance', most of the EGTC group only regions or only municipalities
- ❖ Main focus on cross-border cooperation
- ❖ Main areas: Axis Benelux-FR-DE, around HU and Mediterranean
 - Precedent cooperation started in the 90s.
- ❖ The financial crisis is affecting them
- ❖ Laboratories of the Single Market → Many problems reported
- ❖ Need of awareness among LRA, public and EC services



EGTC trends and developments



Advantages:

- ❖ Permanence, visibility and accountability
- ❖ Long-term strategic vision
- ❖ Less bureaucracy → Single signature suffices



Problems detected (and solutions):

- ❖ The Single Market is not easy → Good conventions are needed to overcome problems of staff, procurement, insurances, taxes, etc.
- ❖ Big effort of establishment → It is better to start cooperation and create the EGTC in parallel
- ❖ Lack of awareness → The EGTC is unknown by Ministries, by LRAs and even by some European institutions



Lessons: The factors of the EGTCs



Vision



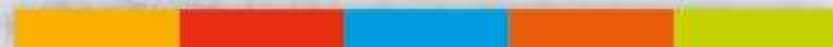
Trust



Negotiation



Choice





The role of the Committee of the Regions

CoR opinions



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- ❖ CoR Opinions of Bresso (2008), Núñez Feijóo (2011), Delebarre (2012), Bureau decision 2012
- ❖ 'Preferential instrument for cooperation'
- ❖ Remove bureaucratic obstacles
- ❖ Not only regional policy → Strategy Europe 2020, mainstream all EU policies
- ❖ Awareness at all levels
- ❖ External dimension → Non-EU countries
- ❖ Participation of the civil society



The EGTC Platform

EGTC
GECT



- ❖ **Platform of EGTC** since 2011, grouping all players in EGTC and cross-border

- Annual monitoring report and studies
- Assistance and support
- Political input on cross-border issues

European register of EGTC in the CoR

- ❖ **Face-to-face** communication:

- Annual meeting → March 2015
- Open Days → 8/10/2014
- Thematic portal

www.cor.europa.eu/egtc

- Social networks  





The challenge of implementation



Participation in Operational Programmes

CoR-AEBR Seminar “***The participation of citizens from border regions in the Operational Programmes – The Case of the EGTC***”, Brussels, 19/11/2013:

- ❖ Border regions and EGTCs need to be consulted in the **programming** as part of a structured dialogue (cf. Art. 5 Code of Conduct)
- ❖ The **national authorities** should consider the specific needs of border areas and the potential of the EGTCs for the ETC





The challenge of implementation



Dialogue with National Authorities

CoR-Greek Presidency Workshop on “***Implementing the New Legislation on EGTC – Dialogue with National Authorities***”, Brussels, 26/06/2013:

- ❖ Need for **awareness**
- ❖ The aspects of **cooperation are neglected** in most of the 28 PAs and around 300 Ops
- ❖ Need of **participation and effective involvement** of the EGTCs



The award 'Building Europe across Borders'



- ❖ Bi-annual **EGTC award of the CoR**
Focus on implemented actions related to growth and jobs
- ❖ Awardee: **Pyrenees Mediterranean**
Honourable mentions to '**Gate to Europe**' and '**Tyrol-South Tyrol-Trentino**'

... Last reminder

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"Europe will not be made all at once, or according to a single plan. It will be built through concrete achievements which first create a de facto solidarity".

Declaration Schuman – 9 May 1950

Hvala!



Committee of the Regions

Direction of horizontal policies
and networks

Alfonso Alcolea Martínez

Administrator EGTC & territorial
cooperation

[*www.cor.europa.eu/egtc*](http://www.cor.europa.eu/egtc)

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Twitter: [*@EGTCPlatform*](https://twitter.com/EGTCPlatform)

FB group: [*EGTC*](#)

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