Macroregions

What is a macroregion?

A macroregion is a transnational area which brings together several European countries or regions around shared challenges and which is supported by the European Union within the framework of a jointly defined "macroregional strategy". The Council asks the Commission to draw up the strategy within the framework of a process of consultation between its different DGs, national governments, local and regional authorities and stakeholders. The strategy is then approved by the Council and is aimed at putting forward initiatives and projects that contribute to the harmonious development of the macroregional territory.

Macroregions can bring together member countries of the European Union as well as non-EU countries in order to create a space for exchanges and joint projects with the aim of strengthening territorial cohesion.
Macroregions do not receive European funding and do not have a specifically dedicated structure or legal status; they are designed to optimise the financing (whether European or otherwise) that is already available in the different countries and to pool and develop synergies between their initiatives in order to enhance the territory's integration.

Two macroregions in Europe

This new type of intervention in the European Union has developed since the launch in 2009 of the first macroregion: the Baltic Sea macroregion. To date, two macroregions have been created:

- **The Baltic Sea macroregion** brings together eight countries around the Baltic Sea representing a population of nearly 85 million. Its strategy is organised around three themes: protecting the marine environment, integrating and connecting the different regions, and developing common growth. Within this framework, each partner defines areas for priority actions and develops key projects.
  http://www.balticsea-region-strategy.eu

- **The Danube macroregion** brings together 14 countries and a population of 115 million. The strategy, which was developed by the European Commission, aims to develop

- synergies and to improve the coordination of local policies and initiatives. The environment and transport (notably with regard to the River Danube) are the priority areas in this strategy.

  http://www.danube-region.eu

Further information: see the evaluation of the macroregions on DG REGIO's website.

Other similar territorial cooperation initiatives

Other territories where there are cooperation initiatives are not specifically "macroregions" but they share many of their features.

SEA BASINS

This is the case of the regional strategies for sea basins implemented within the framework of the EU's integrated maritime policy:

- The maritime strategy for the Adriatic and Ionian Seas
- The Atlantic Action Plan

  More information on the DG MARE's website on sea basin regional strategies

TRANSNATIONAL PROGRAMMES

This is also the case of "transnational" programmes under the territorial cooperation objective, such as for example:

The Alpine Space, which since 2000 has brought together the seven Alpine countries – France, Italy, Switzerland, Slovenia, Liechtenstein, Germany and Austria – around three strategic priorities for the Alps: competitiveness and attractiveness, accessibility and connectivity, and the environment and risk prevention.

http://www.alpine-space.eu

More information on the page on "Strand B - transnational cooperation".

OTHER INITIATIVES

Finally, such cooperation, may result from the initiative of:

- **Governments**, like for example the Visegrad Group; the Benelux

- **Regions**, like the geographical commissions of the CPMR, with the example of the Atlantic Arc:

- **The Atlantic Arc**, which was set up in 1989, brings together 21 regions in five different countries (Ireland, the United Kingdom, France, Spain and Portugal). This area acts as a driving force for proposals to promote the interests of the Atlantic and puts in place active working groups and projects for the benefit of the populations and territories concerned. It constitutes a space to facilitate implementation of European policies, thus helping to promote more effective cross-border governance. http://arcatlantique.org

- **Cities**

Atlantic Cities : http://www.atlanticcities.eu

MedCities (network of Mediterranean coastal cities): http://www.medcities.org

Forum of Adriatic and Ionian Cities: http://www.faic.eu

The Union of Baltic Cities: http://www.ubc.net

The Iberian Network of Cross-Border Bodies: http://www.rietiberica.eu (in Spanish)

The MOT as part of the CECICN network: http://www.cecicn.eu