

Report of the CECICN workshop at the OPEN DAYS 2013

“Territorial Cooperation and Single Market: how to create tangible added value for citizens in cross-border territories and interregional networks”

9:00 am – 10:45 am, Code 09B02, 9 October 2013,
Committee of the Regions, Jacques Delors building, room
JDE 62

Introduction

The CECICN (Conference of European Cross-border and Interregional City Networks) workshop that took place the 9th of October 2013 at the Committee of the Regions in the framework of the OPEN DAYS 2013, gathered more than 230 people on the theme of “Territorial Cooperation and Single Market: how to create tangible added value for citizens in cross-border territories and interregional networks”.

President of the session - Bernard SOULAGE, Member of the Committee of the Regions and Vice-President of the Rhône-Alpes Region



Bernard SOULAGE opens the session and welcomes the participants at the workshop organized by CECICN on the theme of “Territorial Cooperation and Single Market: how to create tangible added value for citizens in cross-border territories and interregional networks”.

This workshop debates the contribution of European Territorial Co-operation (ETC) to realize the single market for the benefit of the citizens.

While introducing the topic Bernard SOULAGE confirms his engagement to the questions of territorial cooperation for many years, firstly in the framework of the Rhône-Alpes Region as the vice president of the French region bordered by the Italian regions of Aosta Valley and Piedmont and the Swiss cantons of Vaud, Valais and Geneva.

The territory of the region is characterised by the relief that makes the cooperation much more difficult related to that of other borderland regions where no natural obstacles can be found (like for example in the case of the France-Belgium border).

Nevertheless, in the agglomeration of Geneva the cooperation is more simple. Within the Schengen Area there is no more distinction between France and Switzerland. The agglomeration develops with no regard for the border.

Another emblematic place of the cooperation is the Mont Blanc Zone (Espace Mont-Blanc) involving France, Switzerland and Italy in the territorial cooperation.



Finally, more classical projects are managed in the framework of France-Switzerland INTERREG and ALCOTRA INTERREG Programmes.

Apart from the spaces of proximity, he puts forward the spaces of larger territories such as that of the Alpine Space in the framework of the Alpine Macro Region Strategy.

The single market is particularly visible in the

Great Geneva agglomeration (Grand Genève), characterized by a high level of continuity and unity despite the fact that Switzerland is not a member state of the European Union. On the contrary, for example in Grenoble, in spite of the exchanges with Turin and the advanced commercial and cultural practices, the different aspects of the single market are less visible.

Among the existing tools enabling a deeper integration between the spaces of cooperation can be counted the EGTCs (European Grouping of Territorial Cooperation). Bernard SOULAGE regrets their complexity that makes it difficult for nonspecialists to understand them.

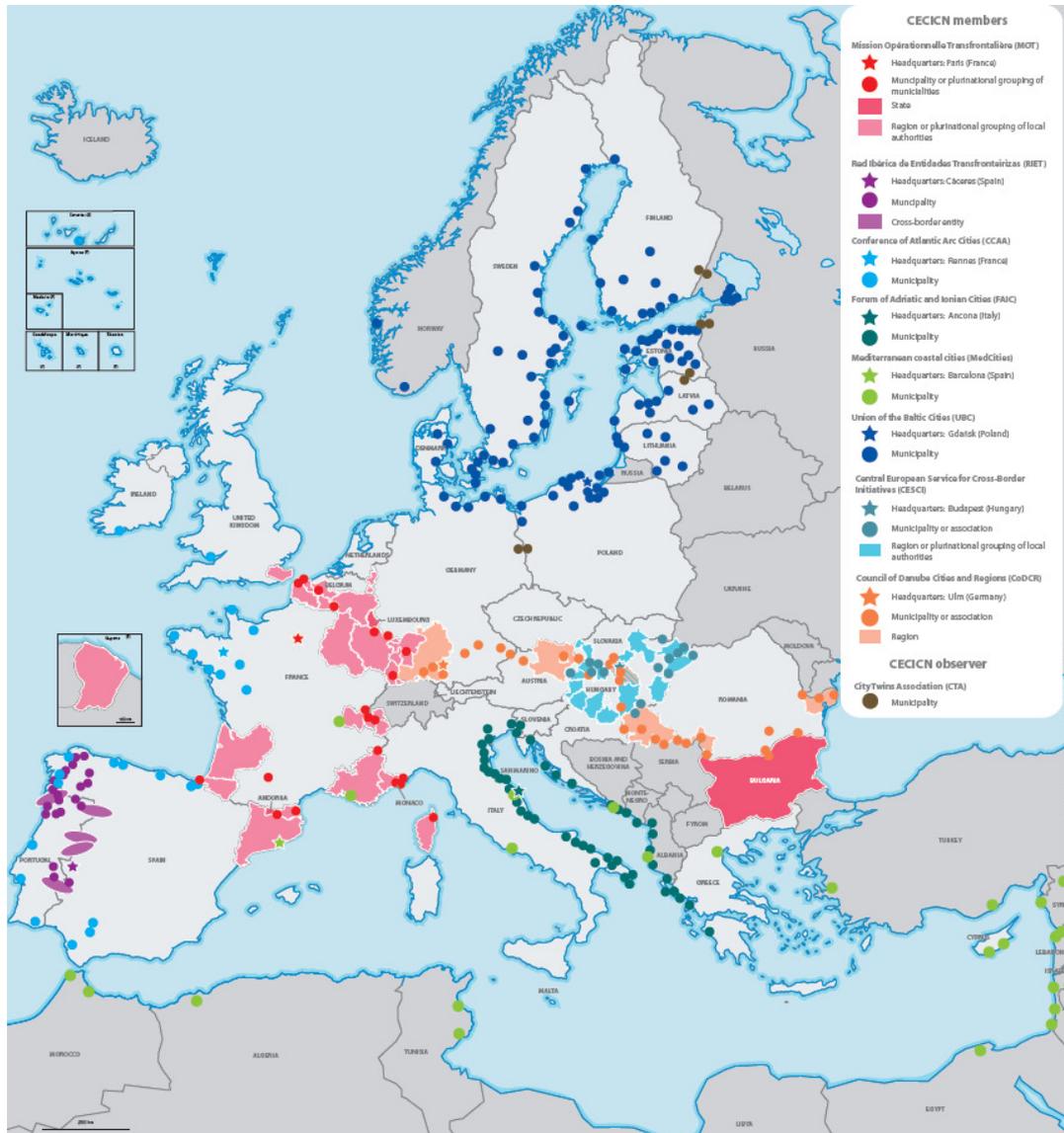
The first function of Europe is to bring people who don't speak to each other (in the best case because of language differences or in the worst case because of war conflicts) to speak to each other. Cross-border cooperation is one of the most symbolic policies of the European Union. These cooperations prove that Europe produces real outcomes for the citizens and there are numerous good examples throughout Europe. Therefore, great importance must be given to the part of the budget destined to territorial cooperation.

Bernard SOULAGE concludes with a concrete example illustrating the single market in the Franco-Vaud-Geneva agglomeration (the Great Geneva agglomeration), an emblematic achievement that saw the light of day after a hundred years of cooperation. A cross-border tram runs every 10 minutes between France and Switzerland..

Moderator - Jean PEYRONY, Executive Director of the European Conference of Cross-border and Interregional City Networks (CECICN), and Director General of the Mission Opérationnelle Transfrontalière (MOT)

Jean PEYRONY introduces CECICN, the European Conference of Cross-border and Interregional City Networks that represents eight networks and more than 500 cities situated on the internal and external borders of the European Union throughout Europe. Its objective is to integrate European Territorial Cooperation at the very heart of European policies in the programming period 2014-2020. Its members are:



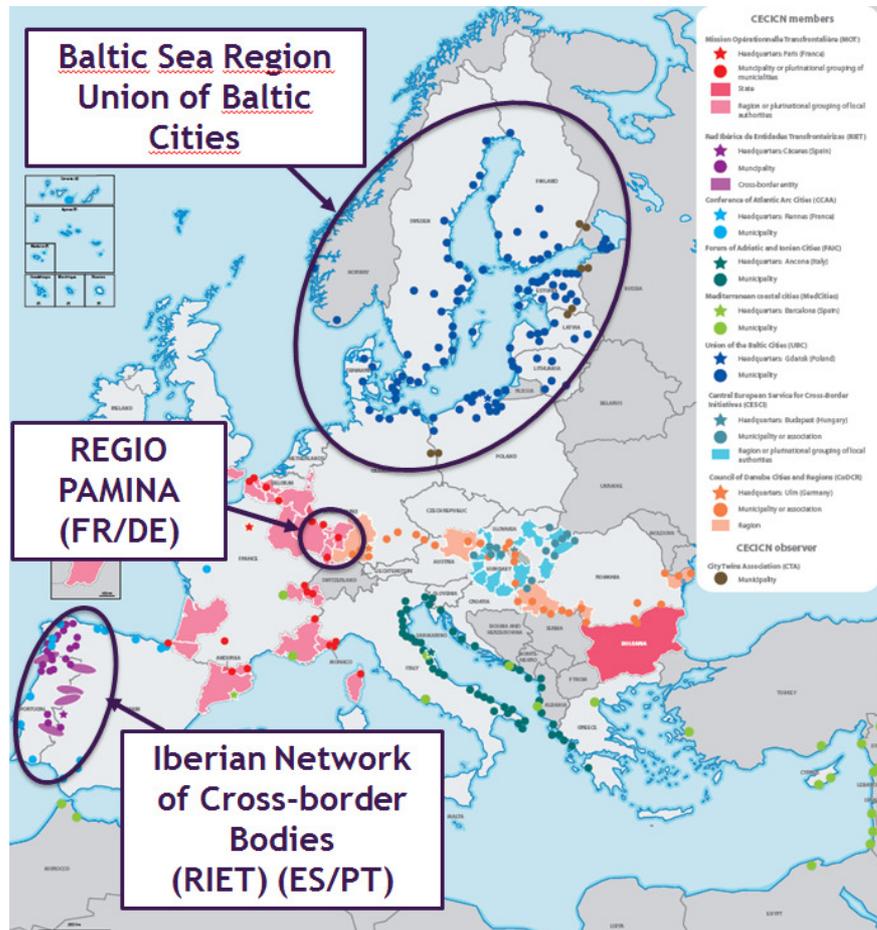


- MOT (Mission Opérationnelle Transfrontalière),
- RIET (Iberian Network of Cross-border Entities),
- MedCités (Network of Mediterranean Coastal Cities),
- FAIC (Forum of Adriatic and Ionian Cities and Towns),
- UBC (Union of Baltic Cities),
- CAAC (Conference of Atlantic Arc Cities),
- CESCO (Central European Service for Cross-border Initiatives),
- CoDCR (Council of Danube Cities and Regions),
- CTA (City Twins Association) - observer.

Part 1 - Projects contributing to the Single market and Europe 2020

Jean PEYRONY presents the first sequence of the workshop, aiming to present the cooperations contributing to the single market through the evidence of three local actors of CECICN member networks: in terms of concrete achievements, difficulties and expectations regarding “higher-level” authorities (states, EU):

- ≡ Marcus ANDERSSON, of the Union of Baltic Cities presents how migrant workers, enterprises and the territories of the macroregion benefit from the cooperation between cities concerning professional mobility.
- ≡ Xoan VAZQUEZ MAO, of the Iberian Network of Cross-border Entities refers to the border effects of the Spanish-Portuguese border and some necessary interventions to remove existing barriers.
- ≡ Patrice HARSTER, of the EURODISTRICT REGIO PAMINA, member of the network of MOT (Mission Opérationnelle Transfrontalière) presents the stakes of the cross-border labour market at the French-German border and the actions of the Eurodistrict.



How to go from brain drain to brain circulation? Improving talent mobility through cooperation among cities in the Baltic Sea Region

Marcus ANDERSSON, Head of International Projects, Tendensor, Partner of UBC, Union of Baltic Cities, www.ubc.net



Marcus ANDERSSON represents the Union of Baltic Cities (UBC), that is made up by about a hundred of cities, and intervenes for Tendensor, one of its partners.

Talents and brains are the most important resources for the growth of enterprises and they are therefore a decisive economic element of the 21st century. Workforce and talent mobility is of basic importance for the European single

market. Through « circular migrations » this mobility shows a triple benefit : responding to the needs of the labour markets of the destination countries, promoting the development in the countries of origin and helping mobile people (the so-called "triple benefit"). It is important to welcome these people to make them feel at home. We need the advantages of mobility in Europe at least as much as in the United States for example.

However, there are still numerous obstacles for the mobility of talents in the Baltic cities. Just a few examples of them: the lack of appropriate information, the necessity of visa and permanent resident status, the bureaucracy, the difficulties to find a job for the partner or a school for the children of the mobile person, the difficulties of integration and creating social networks, language barriers, etc.

Different initiatives are in progress between the cities of the Baltic region with the aim of improving brain circulation. These initiatives aim for the improvement of the preliminary information and marketing, the welcome and the problem-free arrival of mobile people, the support in the search for accommodation, (international) school, career (for the partner), social and professional integration and also support in the departure (global mobility, preparation of the mobile people, language courses, etc. while keeping in sight that these people will be the ambassadors of the place where they lived).

He puts two projects forward. The first is the « International House Copenhagen », inaugurated in 2013, that enables to ease the welcome and the problem-free arrival by proposing a certain number of services for the new arrivals in one single place ("one-stop-shop").

The second project is “Demola” that enables to mobilise and keep international students in the territory of the Baltic region by creating networks between the different actors, and by networking of ideas. The project also aims the creation of an explicit link between students and enterprises. The proportion of foreign students is significant and more than 10 % of students are followed by headhunters. One of the least expected effects of the project is the social networking of foreign students among each other.

To sum up, it is essential to follow mobile people all along the whole process, from the preparation, the arrival, the social and professional integration until the departure.

Erasing border effects in the single market - the concerns of the Spanish-Portuguese border regions

Xoán VAZQUEZ MAO, Secretary General of the CECICN, and Secretary General of the Iberian Network of Cross-border Bodies (RIET), www.rietiberica.eu

Xoán VAZQUEZ MAO specifies that he has been secretary general in the field of territorial cooperation for 18 years.

Cooperation of the first generation is now considered to be finished. Its aim was to bring about peace where there was war and to make the first steps to remove the barriers of the cooperation. In this context territorial cooperation, supported by INTERREG and DG REGIO, accomplished an extraordinary work.



Today the second generation of cooperation must be clearly that of the single market. What kind of Europe are we building ? In the southern countries Europe is often associated with control, tax systems, etc. But Europe is more than that: the Europe 2020 Strategy is an excellent strategy needing that all policies follow this direction in the aim of restoring growth, competitiveness and employment. It was already the objective under Jacques DELORS.

In terms of transport, its territory is the first where one can move freely on the motorways since last year with the same tollbooth system on both sides of the border. To achieve this, one needs a cooperation between governments and private companies. And if we don't manage to come up with an agreement between the different actors then it is up to the government to defend the interests of citizens. As for a second example he cites a common card that enabled citizens to jointly use facilities.

But numerous issues on the Spanish-Portuguese border still require solutions. A first issue concerned the cooperation between phone operators so that the region becomes a single zone in terms of phone and Internet. It is necessary to find a solution to decrease cross-border charges. A second issue is a single postal service throughout the entire Iberian Peninsula that would represent a real competitive advantage. Concerning public transport euro-cities need buses that cross the border. Students must also be able to easily cross the border. Therefore their diplomas must be better recognized. In terms of health, it is imagined to share the same medical system and to ease the access to the services. How can we treat forest fires only 10 km from the border ? An ambulance cannot enter another country due to the differences of norms (signals, siren, etc.) on both sides of the border. Finally, different industrial policies must be harmonised in order to avoid unnecessary competition.

It is necessary to work on more integrated approaches. The messages of commissioner Michel BARNIER are encouraging with the idea that the President of the European Union should be elected in a democratic way by the European citizens. Europe needs an approach similar to that of the United States. Until Europe doesn't choose this way, we continue lying to the citizens.

The joint action plan for the cross-border labour market within PAMINA - a project for employment at the German-French border

Patrice HARSTER, Director General of the Eurodistrict REGIO PAMINA (FR/DE),
www.eurodistrict-regio-pamina.eu

Patrice HARSTER presents the Eurodistrict REGIO PAMINA and refers to the context of this French-German territory where one of the issues is to help the French labour force to benefit from the opportunities of the German side which is economically more dynamic. For this it is necessary to pilot the labour force market in a proactive way notably through a coordination between existing tools.



The territory of the Eurodistrict REGIO PAMINA represents 16 000 mainly French frontier workers who cross the border every day. The highest unemployment rates affect young people and people of more than 45 years. The problem is the following: on the German side qualified workforce is in demand (because of the demographic deficit) but not necessarily that of the frontier workers who return home in the evening.

In 2009 a French-German political steering committee was established on the question of cross-border labour market. Its aim was to improve the information for people concerned. There was also a need to go further, for example with special offices. What mainly interested the Eurodistrict is that European draft regulations foresaw the implementation of joint action plans. The Eurodistrict also discussed the question and envisaged a joint action plan to organise its cross-border labour market by pooling ERDF (INTERREG-ETC) and ESF (FR-DE) funds.

How to make sure that a person can enter the labour market of the other side of the border? The mobility of French young people towards Germany is difficult, the major obstacle remains lacking language skills in German. Another problem is that the German consular chambers rather search for young Greek or Spanish people with the aim of integrating them in Germany.

Today it is still very difficult to get all the concerned actors around the table like the partners of ESF (European Social Fund) and ERDF (European Regional Development Fund) and to find partnerships and local stakeholders who are familiar with the cross-border context.

The French Region of Alsace plans to provide four million euros to deliver German courses to young French apprentices in order to enable them to work on the other side of the border. There are numerous tools promoting this mobility like for example a unique investment office for employment situated in Strasbourg-Kehl that intervenes all along the French-German border. The EURODISTRICT REGIO PAMINA intends to coordinate the existing tools (ERDF cross-border programme, ESF regional programmes, EURES-T, etc.), in order to avoid both a dispersal of resources and the phenomenon of double financing. There must be an exchange between all actors concerned so that the available funds would be well used. The four million euros allocated to the language courses can only affect about 1 000 people and there is a lack of jobs in four economic sectors concerning 19 professions in total.

To conclude, the role of the Eurodistrict is to improve the existing situation and not to criticize it (or at least in a constructive manner). Cross-border territories need advices from the part of the European Commission in order to convince the elected representatives of the necessity of cooperation.

Part 2 - Cross-border and interregional cooperation, laboratory of the Single market at the service of citizens

Point of view of the Commission

Olivier GIRARD, Responsible for the Implementation of the Internal Market in the Cabinet of Michel BARNIER, European Commissioner for Internal Market and Services, http://ec.europa.eu/commission_2010-2014/barnier/index_en.htm



Olivier GIRARD of the cabinet of Commissioner Michel BARNIER recalls the issues of the single market and gives the viewpoint of the European Commission on these territorial cooperation projects as well as on the contribution to the single market in the service of the citizens.

The European Commission wants to give a boost to the single market. Firstly, it will involve the better usage of given potentials with a better application of the Services directive.

It is important to create an interior market that is as close to citizens, small enterprises and territories as possible. The major cause for concern of the European Commission is to give morals and responsibility to the action in the financial sector with the care for solidarity and the issue of proximity.

When it comes to cross-border territories, the stakes and potentials are considerable. At European level there are about 800 000 frontier workers and about 650 000 when strictly counting the territory of the 28 member states.

The single market is a proven reality for the citizens and the small and medium enterprises (SME). In a political context in the approach of the European elections it is necessary to give another vision of the too often criticized single market. For this purpose we need to say that there are problems but we are working to resolve them and that things are being brought forward in the interest of the citizens and the small and medium enterprises.

Looking at the rail interconnections, locomotives for example can already obtain a common certification. There is also a directive on the recognition of professional qualifications but this only concerns about 25 000 people every year in the areas of healthcare as well as architects. There are numerous areas where the recognition is still more complex. However it becomes possible with a mechanism of automatic recognition that was set up before the summer in the framework of EURES. There is a will to establish an interior market closer to the territories and citizens.

It is important to ensure the correct application of the rules in the field and to work on the application of existing directives. He reminds in this context that there is a labour court regulatory system for citizens and SMEs and there are also other available tools for citizens such as « SOLVIT », single contact points, etc.

There is also an issue concerning the question of the financing of SMEs by banking institutions. The telecom sector in Europe needs to find a solution for roaming to erase national borders. In terms of postal services this means the promotion of interoperability in the delivery of packages, and the development of electronic commerce. Cross-border territories and their pilot projects in terms of cooperation must be the laboratories of the interior market. There is a great need to show another image of Europe and of the single market.

Part 3 - Round table and exchange with the audience



with the participation of:

Marcus ANDERSSON, Head of International Projects, Tendensor, Partner of UBC, Union of Baltic Cities

Xoán VAZQUEZ MAO, Secretary General of the CECICN, and Secretary General of the Iberian Network of Cross-border Bodies (RIET)

Patrice HARSTER, Director General of the Eurodistrict REGIO PAMINA (FR/DE)

Olivier GIRARD, Responsible for the Implementation of Internal Market in the Cabinet of Michel BARNIER, European Commissioner for Internal Market and Services

Q&A with the audience

With the many mentioned challenges for territorial cooperation Bernard SOULAGE raises the question of priority. It is necessary to prioritize key issues to be able to erase border effects. Is it about the questions of transport, communication, etc.? He quotes the example of the Greater Geneva agglomeration where the territory is unified in terms of transport but not yet in terms of telecommunication.



Philippe DOUCET of GEPHYRES wishes to make a distinction between the problems of internal and external EU borders. Cross-border news at external borders is very present in the press at the moment (drama of Lampedusa) and show the total inefficiency of the European Union in the field of immigration policy and the reception of refugees. He regrets that cross-border programmes do not treat this question.

In the framework of the single market he recalls also the project of the Services directive that had provoked a sharp public debate in France (“Polish plumbers”). The Services directive enabled the detachment of workers from countries with low income towards other countries where incomes are higher. On the French borders French regions were emptied of workforce for the benefit of countries where social and fiscal legislation is more attractive for enterprises. How can cross-border cooperation tackle these questions?

Marie-Pierre CABANE, Vice President of the Pyrénées Atlantiques General Council, thanks the previous speakers for having raised substantial questions concerning the future of Europe. In complementarity with Philippe DOUCET she recalls the arrival of numerous Spanish people on the French territory for the matters of healthcare and education that do not get any answers in Spain anymore. In cooperation with the state, the department and the region as well as with the Spanish provinces, the General Council tries to find solutions. But the bottlenecks still exist. It is necessary that Europe provides some answers via directives on healthcare, family, family benefits, education, etc. The question is how to provide answers to the problems of cross-border inhabitants at European level knowing that finances of local authorities cannot answer them alone.

Bernard SOULAGE presents his view as Professor of Economics. The dynamic of the euro was at first linked to the Single European Act, then to the Maastricht Treaty. Within an economic and monetary zone there must be free circulation of production factors. In Europe there were numerous obstacles for this, which led to crisis and asymmetric clashes. The countries had to confront these considerable asymmetric clashes, which need to be overcome. There was not only the movement of capital but also the movement of people. This happens brutally however as there is no fluidity in the circulation of production factors. Inside of Europe the circulation is not yet on the same level as in the United States. Politically speaking this is dangerous: we can reencounter old intra-European clashes. We are not conscious enough about the progress that we still have to make. The solution is to do this as Bismarck did, who established a free-trade zone within a state.



Olivier GIRARD explains that a certain number of rules are foreseen by the Services directive. The administrative simplification for SMEs is one of the principal effects (countries have for example put online electronic forms for SMEs). Concerning the question of social dumping, foreign workers must respect the entire legislation of the Member States when coming to work in one of these countries. It is up to the Member States to assure this. In France the problem is the following: there are 2 000 labour protection inspectors for 20 million employees. Concerning the unemployment of young people it is absolutely normal that they search for short-term jobs even if they find this work on the other side of the border. In long term the issue concerns cross-border economic development. Regional and local authorities are facing this influx of European citizens. On the level of Europe, this is not necessarily very important but locally in some areas it is.

Xoán VAZQUEZ MAO adds that this year in Spain, there were four times more death cases among illegal immigrants in the internal waters than in Lampedusa, but no one mentions this. It is very urgent that Europe adopts an appropriate policy. Concerning the intervention of Marie-Pierre CABANE, he asks the question: how can one create employment which contributes to a voluntary mobility and not to a forced mobility. People who move within Europe must be able to do this without being forced to flee the situation of their home country, but because they want to do this.

Marcus ANDERSSON puts an emphasis on subsidiarity. He believes that national and European policies are necessary, but citizens can also do things by themselves and everything decided at the European level must be complementary to the national and regional levels.

Patrice HARSTER concludes that there is an important need for anticipation and complementarity. Mobility remains an important topic in a cross-border context.

**Conclusion by Bernard SOULAGE,
Member of the Committee of the Regions and Vice-President of the Rhône-Alpes
Region**

Bernard SOULAGE thanks the speakers for their contributions, the participants for their presence and CECICN for the organization of this workshop. He concludes that territorial cooperation remains a major political issue, an essential building block in the construction of the European political and democratic space. Its aim is to remove all remaining barriers, notably those that prevent close contact between the inhabitants in the cross-border territories.

Jean PEYRONY points out that the CECICN workshop is complementary to the workshop of the EGTC Platform of the Committee of the Regions “The EGTCs: cross-border players in the Single Market” that takes place in the same room at 11:15. He invites all participants to take part in the “common networking event” of the 2 workshops that will take place at 13:00 in the atrium of the 5th floor to continue the discussions.

End of the workshop

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