

VIEWPOINT

Evelyne Will

Director of the Kehl Euro-Institute - www.euroinstitut.org

Could you define for us the specific features of a body such as the Kehl Euro-Institute?



On the various borders, the Kehl Euro-Institute is the only fully binational cross-border training and consultancy body, in terms of both its structure (LTCG including French and German partners) and its working methods (bi- or even tri-national topic-based training courses developed by a French-German team).

The Kehl Euro-Institute has always been an active partner in the Interform project, since its establishment. What do you consider to be the usefulness of such a project?

Given this specific character of the Kehl Euro-Institute, it is completely natural that it is an active partner in the Interform network. It contributes to its applied experience of cross-border training the network.

This strong involvement is obviously related to the usefulness of such a project, which is intended to link training institutions such as ours with universities and research. The overall objective of the project is to work on the formal expression and the transmission of competencies in this particularly "operational" field of cross-border cooperation. This issue is important today because we are getting ready to move on to the next stage in cross-border training, passing from a generation of participants who are committed but trained "on-the-job" to a new generation of participants for whom professional training is indispensable.

The training of participants, the primary purpose of the project, involves modelling of practices, so that starting from a descriptive approach focusing on a given space "methods" can be developed that can be generalized and transferred to other borders, such as those of the new member countries of the European Union.

What advances were made at the recent test seminar on "training cross-border project leaders" which you co-organized with the MOT in Kehl last March?

The objective was to prepare a "teaching kit" intended as a practical tool for the trainers of project leaders in a confrontation between the operational approach in the field and research. During the two days the participants, cross-border cooperation protagonists and researchers, compared their points of view on the necessary "cross-border project management" competencies to be developed and expressed their expectations in terms of training. The purpose of this teaching kit is to take into account all the specific aspects of the cross-border situation and help project promoters move beyond their national reference framework to grasp the "transnational" and "intercultural" dimension of the situations.

The Interform project

Approved in December 2004 as part of the European INTERACT programme, the Interform project has enabled the formation of a European training and research network focusing on cross-border practices. Its objective is to develop the capability of territories to set up cooperation projects by organizing a scientific and technical corpus confronted with practices in the field through networking of training and research institutions specialized in this area.

Planned to last 3 years, it brings together partners from five different countries: the Mission Opérationnelle Transfrontalière as lead partner, the Kehl Euro-Institute, the University of Pau and the Pays de l'Adour, the University of Nice Sophia Antipolis, the University of Genoa, The International Communication Institute in Genoa, the University of Geneva and the University of Deusto (Spain).

The project is organized around three strands:

- First, the "resources" strand must establish a documentation centre (teaching base for training and reference base for research) and a network of experts (identification of competencies, networking of practices, etc.). Another objective of this strand is to organize the complementarity of training sites by optimizing the range of courses available and strengthening the specific features of each site.
- The "production" strand is dedicated to the design of methodological or topic-based "training modules". The new educational products developed within this framework are intended for transfer to all the borders of Europe. The first methodological module was the subject of a test seminar on 23 and 24 March in Kehl. The objective was to work on the training of cross-border project leaders. It is intended to lead to the production of a



"teaching kit". The next training seminar, scheduled on 25 and 26 October 2006, will be topic-based and devoted to health.

- Finally, the "professionalization" strand is based on the organization of an annual seminar, the "Entretiens du transfrontalier" (cross-border discussions). The objective is to increase the professional competencies of the protagonists by comparing viewpoints between practitioners in the field and researchers. The first "Entretiens" took place in December 2005 in Nice on the topic of economic development. The proceedings are on line on the MOT web site www.espaces-transfrontaliers.org.

The second "Entretiens du transfrontalier" will take place on 30 November and 1 December 2006 on the French-German border. The topic will be "trades and competencies in a cross-border setting".

In conclusion, note that an Internet site dedicated to the project is being set up. It should be available before the summer at the following address: www.interform-eu.org.



Towards a French-Italian "Euro-territory"

On March 3rd in Nice, the 10 departmental and provincial authorities associated since 2000 within the French-Italian Alps Conference decided to constitute themselves into a French-Italian "Euro-territory", with the ambition of becoming a recognized area of competitiveness in Europe.*

This decision marks the determination to lay the foundations of a strong political cross-border cooperation project, with the ambition of responding to the challenges of the new 2007-2013 European programming period. Four major priorities were defined:

- Strengthen the territorial cohesion of this Euro-territory and its political weight in Europe, with the objective of giving it a suitable legal structure (such as the European Grouping of Territorial Cooperation

proposed by the Commission).

- Shift the balance of economic activities towards the South of Europe through better interconnection of the territory with regard to transport infrastructure (Lyon-Turin railway line, etc.) and the new information and communication technologies.

- Work on the conservation and upgrading of the resources of the territories and establish transalpine competitiveness centres recognized in Europe.

- Integrate this Euro-territory into a broader transalpine Euro-region.

* Association comprising the French departments of Alpes-Maritimes, Alpes-de-Haute-Provence, Hautes-Alpes, Isère, Savoie and Haute-Savoie, the Italian provinces of Imperia, Cuneo and Turin, and the Autonomous Region of the Aosta Valley.

The 2007-2013 State-Region Project Contracts

The interministerial committee on territorial development and competitiveness, meeting on 6 March 2006 under the chairmanship of Prime Minister Dominique de Villepin, was devoted to the completion of the "2000-2006 State-region plan contracts" and the launching of the new "2007-2013 State-region project contracts". Through the setting up of this new mechanism, announced for 1 January 2007, the government has shown its determination to give a "new direction" to territorial development.

Coordination with the future European "2007-2013" programmes

The coordination between the future European programmes and the new project contracts for the period 2007-2013 indicates the determination to include these contracts within the European strategic guidelines of Lisbon and Gothenburg "in favour of innovation, competitiveness and sustainable development". The three priorities of the project contracts are thus competitiveness and attractiveness, the promotion of sustainable development, and social and territorial cohesion.

More focused topics

In addition to taking into account European community strategic guidelines, the new contract arrangements are characterized by a "closer focusing on a limited number of priority topics and large-scale structural investments". Priority will be given to projects "on a national scale, generating substantial knock-on effects for the regions". "The limited number of projects will be identified, characterized and costed when the contracts are signed. They will be able to call upon funding from the state and the public-sector establishments concerned". It should also be noted that development of the national road network will no longer be part of the new contracts, "so that a larger place can be devoted to public transport". Furthermore, the medium-sized cities will be the subject of special consideration. This closer focusing of the system has led to a revision of the contractual relations between the state and the regions, the latter becoming "priority", and no longer "exclusive", partners of the state in the negotiation. The objective is to bring in the other levels of local authorities, such as the departments (refer to phase II of the decentralization legislation).

Territorial strand maintained

The inclusion of a "territorial strand" in the future contracts has been maintained. The principle of an "overall contractualization", which characterized the preceding contracts, is nevertheless replaced by the principle of exclusive funding of projects: the projects, "forming part of subregional territorial approaches", will be chosen "in a selective manner to support territorial development progress on a finer scale". Mobilizing "certain resources of the state-region plan contracts (CPER), together with ministry resources outside the scope of the contracts and funding of state public establishments", these projects may concern the following topics:

- conurbation sustainable development policies, in particular contributing to the competitiveness strategies and better integration of the urban fabric;
- digital development of territories linked to economic competitive initiatives;
- territorial strategies for adaptation to climate change by the promotion of renewable energies and the control of energy demand;
- balanced management of water resources;
- prevention of natural risks;
- adaptation of services to the public, innovative initiatives in services to persons, [etc..]

Timetable

At the end of March two circulars were sent to the regional prefects defining the procedures for preparation of the future contracts. By 9 May the regional prefects must produce a territorial assessment, common to the CPERs and the European programmes, which will be used as a basis for the negotiation. It must identify the issues and the major projects likely to be contractualized, together with the major priorities of the territorial strand. Contract negotiations with the local authorities must begin in the autumn in order for the contracts to be signed before the end of the year.

■ 14 March - French-German council of ministers

• At this meeting the French and German transport ministers signed an international agreement for the rebuilding of the Kehl railway bridge at Strasbourg in order to connect the French TGV and German ICE high-speed train networks by 2010.

• In addition, the framework agreement of 22 July 2005 between France and Germany on cross-border health cooperation was supplemented by an administrative arrangement defining its application procedures, enabling entities in the Alsace and Lorraine regions and the Baden-Württemberg, Rhineland-Palatinate and Saarland states to sign cooperation agreements.

■ Cross-border application for UNESCO World Heritage status



The cross-border application of the "Rivage méditerranéen des Pyrénées" for UNESCO World Heritage site status was submitted on 31 January 2006.

Submitted by the Spanish government and supported by the French government, it is backed jointly by the Consell Comarcal de l'Alt Empordà and the Conseil de Développement du Pays Pyrénées-Méditerranée. The UNESCO decision will be taken in July 2007.

Further information: www.payspyreneesmediterranee.org

Press review

■ Euro MPs obtain a budget compromise, *Le Monde*, 5 April

"During the night of Tuesday 4 to Wednesday 5 April in Strasbourg, the European Parliament negotiators persuaded the Council to revise slightly upwards the agreement on the 2007-2013 financial perspectives made between the heads of state and government on 16 December 2005..."

■ Lille Metropolis sets up a new cross-border structure, *Les Echos*, 11 April

"Lille Urban Community has decided [...] to set up a Local Cross-border Cooperation Grouping (LCCG). This structure replaces the standing cross-border intermunicipal conference (COPI), which had a much narrower scope, with a view to wider integration with Flemish and Walloon local authorities..."

■ Centre Haut-Rhin LCCG: bridge completed in early May, *L'Alsace*, 11 April

"...The managing committee has been informed of the progress of construction work on the bridge that will link Fessenheim and Hartheim across the Rhine from May 20. [...] The inauguration of the bridge is scheduled for Saturday 20 May..."

■ Signature of the Unireso regional fare convention, *Etat de Genève*, 31 March

"...Two agreements of major significance for regional public transport have been signed in Geneva: the Unireso regional fare agreement, which integrates the French railway system into the Unireso fare community, and the memorandum of understanding on joint ticketing..."

■ Statistics: French-Swiss harmony, *Le Progrès*, 19 April

"...The CTJ [trans-Jura conference] has just established the OSTAJ (Jura arc cross-border statistics observatory) associating the INSEE (French national statistics and economic research institute) of Franche-Comté with four of its Swiss counterparts..."

■ Monaco draws closer to Alpes-Maritimes, *Nice-Matin*, 12 April

"...According to the new France-Monaco agreements of 2005, certain joint dossiers can now be settled without consulting Paris [...] With the establishment of a local committee co-chaired by the prefect of Alpes-Maritimes, the French ambassador to Monaco and the minister of state. First meeting [...] in June. On the agenda, subjects including the modernization of the Nice-Ventimiglia TER railway line, domestic waste..."