



## Jean Ueberschlag

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*The territorial authorities of the Basle Trinational Eurodistrict (BTE) have decided to launch the "IBA Basel 2020" international architecture exhibition project. This is a unique initiative, as until now the IBA exhibitions have been organized only in Germany. With this trinational project, the Eurodistrict authorities are going to try to reinvent this IBA concept and build on it using the technical expertise of our three countries. It is a challenge, but one that we have decided to accept.*

*The IBA adventure began in 2005: five years of preparation have been necessary for the official launch of this major project. This preparation time has enabled a broad consensus to be reached in technical terms and the establishment of strong political support in France, Germany and Switzerland. The budget of the Interreg project that has been submitted to the Interreg managing authority in Strasbourg is € 2,090,000. This includes European co-funding of € 705,000 and co-funding of € 222,750 from the Swiss Confederation.*

*These last few months have been occupied with selection of the legal structure and setting up the operational project. A director has been recruited. The proposed legal set-up is the establishment of a branch of the Eurodistrict in Basle. Here we see the positive effects of this IBA project, which has motivated us to find a novel legal solution so that the project can become operational. I consider this a positive solution, for it shows that the Basle Trinational Eurodistrict is capable of adapting itself in order to back a major project.*

*The official launch of IBA Basel 2020 took place on 15 and 16 October. I invite you in particular to visit the exhibition "topias & Innovations - Cross-border architectures", at the Centre d'Art Contemporain Fernet Branca in Saint-Louis until the end of 2010, which is the French contribution to the launch of IBA Basel 2020. In this exhibition you will be able to discover world-renowned architectural models which have never been displayed to the general public.*

*The IBA Basel 2020 exhibition project is important for our trinational conurbation, because today I am convinced that cross-border cooperation must evolve towards the completion of practical infrastructure projects that improve the functioning of the Basle trinational conurbation.*

## Multiple prospects for the Basle Trinational Eurodistrict!

*The Basle trinational conurbation, located at the meeting point of three countries, is a highly diversified space. Thanks to its very favourable geographical situation, an attractive economic fabric and living area have been able to develop. Today about 830,000 inhabitants live in the 226 municipalities of the Basle Trinational Eurodistrict. Its 1,989 square km territory covers a wide range of highly interdependent landscapes.*

In 2007 the elected representatives of the three countries decided to establish the Basle Trinational Eurodistrict, a firm platform for trinational governance and for the development of cross-border projects intended to increase the integration of this trinational conurbation in the areas of public transport, spatial planning and any other topics bringing the inhabitants of the three countries together around joint activities and initiatives.

For five years the Basle Trinational Eurodistrict has been preparing and backing the Basel 2020 international architecture exhibition project, which was officially launched on 15 and 16 October 2010. This major project establishes a theme for cross-border cooperation over a period of ten years. The exhibition aims to reinforce the international influence and raise the profile of the initiatives intended to strengthen cross-border cooperation. Its motto "Au delà des frontières, ensemble - Gemeinsam über Grenzen wachsen" (Together over the borders) lays down a full programme which the Eurodistrict partners invite all to come and discover, in 2013 during the preliminary presentation year and in 2020 during the final presentation year.



After conducting economic feasibility studies on extending the cross-border tramway between Switzerland and Germany and between Switzerland and France, the Basle Trinational Eurodistrict is leading a three-year Interreg project on "reinforcement of public transport and park-and-ride facilities within the Eurodistrict".

2011 will see the preparation of an outline project covering "microprojects" for the population. After placing the emphasis on implementation of a 2020 development strategy, on the launching of the IBA exhibition and the launching of the public transport project, the elected representatives of the three countries have affirmed their strong determination to give a more practical theme to their work and facilitate the completion of practical cross-border projects carried out in collaboration with the towns and municipalities and their sporting and cultural associations.

Further information: [www.eurodistrictbasel.eu](http://www.eurodistrictbasel.eu)

## Twenty years of territorial cooperation

*The high-level conference on territorial cooperation, organized by Wallonia in Tournai as part of the Belgian presidency of the Council of the European Union, was a great success, attended by nearly 400 cooperation participants.*

The event was an opportunity for discussions between those involved in day-to-day cooperation in various ways. The accounts varied according to acquired experience: long for participants from the 15-country EU, shorter for the new member states but providing a new view related to other realities, contexts and needs.

Other than Rudy Demotte, president of Wallonia and host of the conference, the participants included regional policy commissioner Johannes Hahn, the chair of the European Parliament REGI committee, Danuta Hübner, the president of the Committee of the Regions, Mercedes Bresso, the president of the COTER commission of the Committee of the

Regions and president of the MOT, Michel Delebarre, as well as Stefaan De Clerck, vice-president of the Lille-Kortrijk-Tournai Eurometropolis EGTC, and the president of the AEBR, Karl-Heinz Lambertz.

European authorities and bodies and territorial authorities underlined the importance of territorial cooperation and its full contribution to the territorial cohesion policy.

They all agreed to advocate the maintenance and reinforcement of objective 3 for the next programming period, stressing the fact that this strand of the cohesion policy had an important role to play in the 2020 strategy. They therefore undertook to put all their weight into defending objective 3 in the upcoming negotiations, Rudy Demotte having also announced that he will do the same at the informal "Cohesion policy" Council meeting of the responsible ministers of the 27 Member States, which he will chair in Liege next November.

## Open Days 2010: workshop on the evolution of the EGTC

From 5 to 7 October the Open Days, a major European meeting of regions and cities in Brussels, were the occasion for a large number of topical workshops.

The workshop on "The European grouping of territorial cooperation - Towards a modification of the legal framework" was an opportunity to present the results of the public consultation initiated by the Committee of the Regions (CoR) on the amendment of the regulation on the EGTC and the draft CoR opinion on this issue. These discussions are taking place one year before submission of the European Commission report to the European Parliament and to the Council (in August 2011).

### Results of the public consultation

Michel Delebarre, president of the COTER Commission of the CoR, mayor of Dunkerque and president of the MOT, stated that 91 contributions had been received: 15 from existing EGTCs (out of 16 EGTCs formed), 13 from cross-border structures, 26 from territorial authorities and seven from associations, including those from the MOT and the AEBR. All of the contributions advocate moving towards a simplified and more transparent EGTC formation process. Some want to eliminate the inconsistencies between the national provisions applicable to EGTCs. The personnel issue was raised as requiring innovative solutions and a flexible interpretation of national legislations. Several contributors mentioned the usefulness of receiving technical assistance at national and Community levels. Participation by private-sector entities was also discussed, as well as that of third countries (a sensitive issue that would necessitate review).

### Draft opinion of the Committee of the Regions and discussions

Jesus Gamallo Aller, representative of the rapporteur on the draft CoR opinion, presented some of the recommendations put forward by the document, such as the proposal that the Commission make procedural measures available to the states so as to simplify their procedures when establishing EGTCs, the setting-up by the CoR of a group of legal experts to issue technical opinions, and the establishment of an EGTC monitoring unit, tasked with assessing the implementation of the regulation.

Mercedes Bresso, president of the CoR, put forward recommendations including reinforcement of the partnership with the European Union and the introduction of a one-stop shop at European level for the establishment of EGTCs, modelled on the European research infrastructure consortium (ERIC).

Marie-Thérèse Sanchez-Schmid, MEP, noted that a collaboration with the CoR would be pertinent with regard to the drafting of the report on the future of territorial cooperation, for which she is the rapporteur. She also declared that the European '2020' strategy could not work without territorial participation.

Further information: [www.opendays.europa.eu](http://www.opendays.europa.eu) - <http://portal.cor.europa.eu/egtc>

**NOTE: Another workshop on the EGTC** was held on 5 October on "Using the EGTC for interregional cooperation: inside and outside the European territorial cooperation objective (and the cohesion policy)". The MOT director-general, Dr Hans-Günther Clev, presented the expertise of the MOT on the question "The EGTC, a tool for managing programs, is it truly adapted to networks?". All the contributions can be downloaded from the Open Days website: [www.opendays.europa.eu](http://www.opendays.europa.eu).



### In brief

#### ■ Citizen participation

- "Participate! Let's build our future together": with this invitation the **Strasbourg-Ortenau Eurodistrict** launched an on-line public consultation on 9 October through a bilingual website ([www.mon-eurodistrict.eu](http://www.mon-eurodistrict.eu)). The inhabitants are invited to express their expectations and their queries, and submit their proposals and criticisms, the objective being for them to assume ownership of this cross-border governance project. The consultation lasts for four weeks and gives priority to a direct dialogue between the citizens and the leaders of the Eurodistrict.
- Another initiative to note: on 16 October in Strasbourg, the first trilingual citizen forum of the **Upper Rhine metropolitan region**.

Further information: [www.espaces-transfrontaliers.eu](http://www.espaces-transfrontaliers.eu).

#### ■ Towards a network of Euro-Institutes

Validated by the Leonardo da Vinci programme last summer, the "Transfrontier Euro-Institut Network" is holding its first working meeting on 20 October. With the Euro-Institute as lead partner, it will spend two years investigating the usefulness of establishing a network of training and research institutions working on cross-border cooperation at European level. The MOT is one of the associate partners of this project.

Further information: [www.euroinstitut.org](http://www.euroinstitut.org).

#### ■ Belgian presidency

Note that the events of the Belgian presidency (supplementing our article on page 1) included the 7<sup>th</sup> high-level meeting on local governance, on 30 September and 1 October, organised by the federated entities of Belgium, in collaboration with the Commission, the Committee of the Regions and the Council of Europe.

## Press review

- **Border regions looking for a separate status**, *Le Figaro*, 24-09-2010 - "Businesses prefer to invest in Luxembourg and Switzerland rather than in Lorraine and other French regions, considered less competitive."
- **England, a new Eldorado?**, *Nord Eclair*, 04-10-2010 - "Businesses in the south of England are finding it difficult to recruit in the UK. Consequently, managers are turning to France, in particular the Calais district, to try and persuade job-seekers to cross the Channel."
- **A cross-border telephone plan**, *E-Alsace*, 23-09-2010 - "On 23 September 2010 in Kehl, Michel Mercier, French Minister for the rural space and spatial planning, and Pierre-Etienne Bisch, Prefect of the Alsace region and Prefect of the Bas-Rhin department, visited the French-German association Euro-Info-Consommateurs (EIC), which is taking action together with Fabienne Keller, senator for Bas-Rhin, to push for the introduction of a 'cross-border plan'..."
- **Switzerland is preparing to recover the tax on the second pillar of border workers**, *La Tribune de Genève*, 22-09-2010 - "As France does not tax this capital transferred to its territory, the Swiss tax authorities want to plug the gap. The Swiss taxman may well rub his hands. In this story, it seems he wins the jackpot. Last Thursday the French parliament voted to amend the tax convention in effect between France and Switzerland since 1966."
- **Forum on cross-border initiatives: share our experience**, Press release from the Committee of the Regions, 06-09-2010 - "On 28 October 2010, the Midi-Pyrénées presidency of the CTP [Communauté de Travail des Pyrénées] is holding the plenary Council session of the CTP in Luchon and intends to make this event an ideal occasion to meet all the Pyrenean participants, including all the beneficiaries of the POCTEFA"...

### Upcoming events

- **AEBR annual conference**, 21-23 October 2010 in Dundalk (Ireland)
- **Seminar on cross-border cooperation on sport**, 26 October 2010 in Wimille (Pas-de-Calais), organised by the MOT, in liaison with the Pas-de-Calais department council
- **Seminar on "Governance, Territory, Innovation"**, 28-29 October 2010 in Ajaccio, organised by the Corsica territorial authority
- **National conference** "Cross-border cooperation on employment and professional training", 16-17 November 2010 in Saint-Louis (Haut-Rhin, France)

Further information: [www.espaces-transfrontaliers.eu](http://www.espaces-transfrontaliers.eu)