The Estonian national approach to solving cross-border obstacles

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06.02.2018
Intergovernmental commission for cross-border cooperation (IGC)

- Estonian-Latvian Governmental Commission
- Latvian-Estonian Governmental Commission
IGC timeline

2001 – organisation of special Task Force for the developing strategy of cross-border cooperation between EE and LV;

2003 – preparation of the legislation, rules of procedure, selection of members;

2004 – establishing of the national commissions, Joint Session and first working groups;

2010 – establishing further working groups;

2015 – closure of working groups, introduction of a more flexible work organization; creation of ad hoc expert groups, synchronization of members.

2017 – synchronization of procedures, creation of common work processes and documents.
IGC aim and scope of activities

With an aim to develop co-operation between regional and local authorities the IGC:

• discusses and analyses the common challenges of the border region and agrees on a common vision for the joint development of the border area and facilitates joint operations, which provide coherent and efficient response to detected weaknesses;

• promotes entrepreneurial lifestyle and socio-economic development in border regions (including joint development of mainland and maritime cross-border transport connection links and networks, creation of entrepreneurial friendly environment, etc.);

• contributes to the joint development and exchange of cross-border services and Valga-Valka twin-city in the areas of healthcare, education, rescue services etc.;

• resolves actual individual matters of border regions.
Some previously addressed issues

- Legislation for realization of the fire-fighting and rescue operations in border areas;
- Exchange of cross-border cooperation strategies;
- Small harbours network in Gulf of Riga;
- Re-opening of the border crossing checkpoints;
- Simplifying the procedure for issuing work and residence permits;
- Development of institutional rescue cooperation, joint trainings and rescue stations in cross-border regions;
- Renovation of the gravel roads in cross-border regions;
- Development of tourism corridors;
- Special agreement on mutual aid for providing ambulance service in border areas.
Some IGC assisted CBC projects

- Improvement of first responders’ efficiency and effectiveness regarding response time to an emergency in the border area to combat natural and manmade disasters;
- Renovation of Valga-Valka old railway station which can provide services on today’s standards for Estonians and Latvians;
- Renovation of 3 cross-border gravel roads in total length of 78 km;
- Estonian-Latvian and Latvian-Estonian dictionaries;
- Implementation of joint vocational education programmes;
- Coastal and maritime spatial planning in Gulf of Riga.
IGC working and expert groups

Permanent working groups:

- Valga-Valka (2004-2009)
- Social and Medical services (2010-2015)
- Cross-border Labour Movement and Taxation (2010-2015)

Ad hoc expert groups (2015-):

- Taxation issues in border regions
- Cross-border railway connection
- Health care & health care related public services in cross-border regions
CB challenge identification form

Form is based on 4 blocks:

- essence (*legal or other*)
- summary (*CB elements*)
- justification & solutions
- financial & institutional durability

Form is in 3 languages: EE, EN, LV

CB challenges are collected in respective national languages.
CB challenge identification process

Survey target groups – border regions, municipalities, relevant ministries and stakeholders.

Study lasts until 16 March in EE and 2 March in LV.

- exchange of results/positions between EE and LV,
- publication of results for participants,
- selection of topics to be included into IGC Agenda,
- compilation of Informative Report.
Joint Session (JS) of the IGC

Occurs usually once a year. In 2018 – September 7

The JS consists of the following:

- overview of the IGC work in respective year,
- introduction of actual IGC issues,
- conclusions and tasks for the next period.
Thank you!

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