Towards a national working group on cross-border issues

Working group on innovative solutions to cross-border obstacles
Vienna – 05.07.2016
There are many problems. They are analyzed, understood …

- Comprehensive studies to identify the remaining obstacles:
  - at local level: e.g. analysis of the cross-border obstacles of the France-Belgium border.
  - at national level: e.g. report issued by the parliamentary mission on cross-border policy, driven by E.Blanc, F.Keller and T.Sanchez-Schmidt (2010).

- Political organization at national level:
  - *Bilateral political commissions*:
    - With a specific purpose: e.g. Commission for the “Tunnel du Mont-Blanc”.
    - For general affairs: e.g. Intergovernmental Commission France-Luxembourg.

  - *French Ambassador for intergovernmental commissions, cross-border policies and cooperation placed under the responsibilities of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.*
« … but not addressed. They are not tackled. 

(Report on cross border policy / Blanc, Keller, Sanchez-Schmidt / 2010) »

- No systematic approach: each obstacle is addressed individually, depending on willingness and awareness of the participants.

- No national register of existing practices, which could provide local, regional and national authorities with operational examples.

- No platform at national level where participants could regularly exchange on, discuss and criticize the existing tools and mechanisms.

- No established links between obstacles and financing tools (ESI Funds) that could contribute to remove them

-> a fair amount of propositions have been made so far but none materialized yet.
A stimulating context to work on cross-border issues

- **At European level**
  - CBC review: contributions still have to be deeply analyzed. The first results are however emphasizing the importance of the remaining obstacles in the cross-border area.
  - Proposal from the Luxembourg Presidency: consideration on a new legal tool = European Cross-Border Convention

- **At national level**
  - 2016: Expectation from the association representative of the regions that:
    - *initiatives and specificities of the cross-border areas will be better taken into consideration in the regulation*
    - *the debate will be open on a right to experiment innovative solutions, incl. new legal provisions*
A systematic approach to tackle cross border impediments

1. Completing and validating the first analysis made
2. Identifying the French competent authorities
3. Identifying potential ESI funds contribution to solve the problem
4. Identifying good practices that could be reused
5. Analyzing the adequacy of existing tools and the feasibility of the ECBC
Proposition: a comprehensive matrix consistent with existing initiatives

1. Border concerned.
2. Localization.
3. Specificities of the territory: Urban / rural / mountainous / littoral…
4. Policy field: healthcare / education / employment…
5. Nature of the obstacle: legal / cultural / administrative…
7. Level of resolution: local / regional / national / international.
9. Structured framework of cooperation: structured governance / intergovernmental agreement.
10. Experience that could inspire authorities.
11. Existing tool or mechanism that could apply in the situation.
12. For legal, regulatory, or technical obstacle: added value and feasibility of the ECBC (European cross-border convention)?
13. ETC Programs on the geographical zone?
14. Project(s) already financed on this thematic?
15. Thematic covered by the ETC programs of the zone?
Objectives and comitology of the French working group

Objectives
- Getting an overview of the current situation at the level of the French borders.
- Contributing to the European working group, especially to the discussions around the ECBC.
- Highlighting the added value of ETC programs by removing problems at the borders.

The selected steering committee
- Ministries: Interior, Foreign Affairs, Employment, Health and Social Services, Outermost regions…
- Mission opérationnelle transfrontalière for its expertise.

The wider steering committee
- Representatives of the local and regional authorities.
- Existing structure of cooperation: associations, EGTC…
- If relevant, colleagues from the bordering city / region / state?

-> 1st meeting: by the end of September
Questions

- Is there any structured debate on cross-border issues in your region or country? Based on a systematic analysis?
- Is there any legal provisions empowering the authorities to experiment innovative solutions to solve problems?
- Is there any evaluation of the contribution of the ESI Funds or ETC programs to remove obstacles in the border regions?
Thank you for your attention

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