



“Cross-border territories: Day-to-day Europe”



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Workshop 4

“Cross-border conurbations”

- ❖ **Presidents**
Sven-Erik BUCHT, Mayor of Haparanda (SE) and Raimo RONKAINEN, Mayor of Tornio (FI)
- ❖ **Debate animated by**
Marie VANNOUQUE-DIGNE, Director of International Affairs, Lille Metropolitan Urban Community (FR)
- ❖ **Presentation of the framing memorandum**
Frédéric DUVINAGE, General Coordinator, Trinational Eurodistrict Basel (FR-DE-CH)
- ❖ **Project 1: France-Vaud-Geneva conurbation (FR-CH)**
Christian DUPESSEY, Deputy mayor of Annemasse, France-Vaud-Geneva conurbation project (FR)
- ❖ **Project 2: Saarbrücken Moselle East Eurodistrict (FR-DE)**
Isabelle PRIANON, Director of the cooperation office, Zukunft SaarMoselle Avenir (FR)
- ❖ **Project 3: Tornio/ Haparanda (FI-SE)**
Ritva NOUSIAINEN, Project leader Tornio Haparanda (SE)
- ❖ **Project 4: Frankfurt (Oder)/ Slubice (DE-PL)**
Klaus BALDAUF, Representative for International Cooperation, City of Frankfurt (Oder) (DE)
- ❖ **Presentation of the recommendations**
Marie VANNOUQUE-DIGNE, Director of International Affairs, Lille Metropolitan Urban Community (FR)
- ❖ **Discussion with the floor**
- ❖ **Rapporteur**
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Introduction

A factor in territorial integration

Cross-border conurbations and, more generally, cross-border urban networks form genuine living areas, laboratories for a European citizenship in the making. Extending into two or even three countries, their cross-border situation exacerbates the complexity of the problems faced by "national" conurbations, but also increases their potential for innovation. In the context of a cross-border conurbation, the challenge of cooperation is to give concrete answers to the needs of the inhabitants. Through their various actions, cross-border conurbations show that they are in advance of Community law, which does not take them into account as such.

They must be taken into account to a greater extent, but they are laboratories for the convergence of national and Community policies and legislations. Cross-border conurbations, some of which are cross-border metropolitan areas combining critical mass and diversity, are emblematic of the European city of the 21st century.

Issues

There are cross-border conurbations on many European borders (refer to the *Etude sur les Bonnes pratiques de gouvernance dans les agglomérations transfrontalières en Europe* (study on good governance practices in cross-border conurbations in Europe) (MOT 2006); ESPON project 143 (www.espon.eu). Some of these conurbations are covered by political cooperation projects guiding cross-border development, in some cases for the last fifteen years or more. Cross-border cooperation, a long-haul process, has enabled the various actors involved to progress successively from the stage of ignorance to that of knowledge, consistency, joint production and finally to the organisation of cross-border governance. The responses that have been developed to the various problems inherent in certain of these specific territories have led to the initiation of changes in the law which will give cross-border conurbations the opportunity to go even further in their integrated territory projects.

❖ **A better response to the specific issues of cross-border conurbations**

- **Transport and mobility**

Most of the phenomenon of border worker flows is channelled through the corridors of cross-border conurbations. The vast majority of these border workers use their cars. The issue of the saturation of road infrastructures and that of the development and management of public transport are not specific to cross-border conurbations. However, they are made more significant by the international transit role of borders, and the frameworks set up by the public authorities to resolve these issues (urban transport plans (PDU) in France, for example) are not interoperable, which raises the problem of their coordination (refer to the “public transport” workshop).

- **Integrated management of services at the level of the cross-border conurbation**

The costs of “non-agglomeration”, that is, the separate management of services such as sanitation, waste, energy, public transport, broadband networks and health, can be substantial, since separation leads to duplication of facilities and higher capital and running costs. There is therefore a need to develop partnerships between border urban administrations in order to establish integrated management of cross-border urban services and optimise management costs.

- **Economic development and employment**

The topic of economic development appears to be recurrent in cross-border territory projects and particularly in conurbations. But integrated management of economic development (*refer to the economic development and employment/training workshops*) on a cross-border scale is hampered by various types of issue: regulation of access to work for border workers, competition between territories, incompatibility of tax systems and of technical standards, lack of equivalence of qualifications, etc. However, examples of successful integration (Øresund) show how a cross-border urban system can benefit from this situation.

- **Land and property management**

Housing is a recurring topic in the concerns of cross-border conurbations, because of the differences in land and housing costs on either side of borders. For example, border workers cross the border to find less expensive housing while continuing to work in their country of origin. Important issues concern interactions in terms of land and property

shortages or of cross-border access to housing, again necessitating cross-border coordination of measures on either side (local housing programmes, land policies).

- **Culture**

Cross-border conurbations provide strong encouragement for intercultural exchanges. Through the development of school exchanges, learning the language of the other country, the organisation of cross-border cultural events or the establishment of partnerships between different cultural institutions, the inhabitants of these conurbations no longer experience the border as a barrier or a divide, but rather as a place of enrichment through diversity. The need now is to encourage cultural cooperation, which forms the mortar for the successful working of a cross-border living space.

❖ **What governance for cross-border conurbations?**

- **Political**

Cross-border conurbations are faced with various day-to-day problems resulting from the inconsistency of the systems in place on each side of the border. To overcome these problems, more or less formal solutions have been considered. The MOT's experience suggests that only the setting-up of a permanent political governance structure covering an identified space can enable the definition of a territory project within which the various competent levels of public authority can be made to cooperate, the "upper" levels (regional, national) coming in support of the local level, which must remain preponderant. In order to do that, the new Community tool GECT seems to be the most adapting (see example of the Eurometropolis Lille Kortrijk Tournai). Member States consequently have to allow the groups to participate in such structures. This governance must respect parity between representatives of the different countries and be legible for the population

- **Technical**

A permanent, dedicated technical structure with its own budget, at the service of the political governance, is the instrument for dealing with the problems raised by the running of a cross-border conurbation by coordinating different cross-border projects within a territory project in fields recalled above (transport, public services, economic development and employment, housing, culture). It must be a permanent team of border technicians, mastering the languages and the cultures of the different countries involved, using tools adapted to the cross-border situation.

Planning the territorial development is decisive for the structuring of a territory and of its governance; it includes the elaboration of a common vision, the coordination of the spatial planning documents, and generally a certain number of policies, infrastructure (roads, public transport, etc.) and/or services. It is also true for cross-border conurbations. Definition and implementation of a project of cross-border territory requires improving the taking into account of the cross-border dimension in the realization of documents of regional and urban planning on both sides of the border; but the cross-border dimension of agglomerations is comparatively not much taken into account most of the territory projects and the documents of regional or urban planning, at different territorial scales (municipalities, intercommunalities and regions). It is therefore important to increase their taking into account by institutional authorities competent in territorial development and in urban planning.

To achieve that, it is necessary to improve knowledge of documents of spatial planning or urban planning and the policies of development at work in the neighbouring countries: most of the actors involved in cross-border cooperation in European conurbations face the ignorance of documents of planning and policies of development led on either side of

the border. It is for these actors to benefit from common trainings (law, urban planning and spatial planning) and to consult the border partners during the realization of "national" strategies).

Functions of observation, planning, urban planning studies, necessary for definition and monitoring of a territory project, can be implemented by tools like cross-border urban planning agencies (example of AGAPE, for North Lorraine).

- A dialogue with the inhabitants of cross-border conurbations

Democratic principles request that elected representatives partners of the political governance maintain a structured dialogue with the population of the cross-border conurbations, as well as with the economical and social actors. It is the condition of a membership of the population in a territory project that answers its needs; beyond, the development of a cross-border citizenship promotes European citizenship. This dialogue with the population will be lean on actions of communication such as organization of events around the project of cross-border conurbation, use of different media (television, radio, newspapers), or development of school exchanges. In most cases, the best vectors of communication are successful projects (bridges, communication hubs, etc.)

❖ What place for cross-border conurbations in local, national and European plans and strategies?

At regional level

The development of cities must be coordinated with that of the regions; it is also true for cross-border agglomerations: approaches of cross-border cooperation at the level of conurbations must be articulated with those led at the level of euroregions.

Considering specific difficulties in cross-border cooperation, but also of potential which cross-border conurbation represent for European integration, it is important to encourage the structuring of cross-border conurbations, given the specific difficulties of cross-border cooperation but also its potential, it is important to ensure that the reality of cross-border conurbations is taken into account to a greater extent in cooperation programmes funded within the framework of Objective 3: partnership with local authorities in the programming bodies (the urban dimension is taken into account explicitly in the regulations regarding Objectives 1 and 2, but not Objective 3), funding of monitoring and territorial engineering, promotion of the EGTC as an instrument, Community technical assistance, etc. Furthermore, the Objective 1 and Objective 2 programmes of border regions must be asked to take account of cross-border conurbations in their regional strategies and in project funding. Given the measures involved, it is these programmes which will fund the largest projects.

At national or federal level

For a long time cross-border conurbations have suffered from a lack of consideration in regional or national planning and development strategies. Recently several cross-border conurbations, including the Basle trinational conurbation and the France-Vaud-Geneva conurbation, have been certified under the DIACT's call for "metropolitan area cooperation" projects in France; the Geneva site also benefits from the Swiss conurbation programme. In the light of these examples, it appears important to encourage the

consideration of cooperation of cross-border conurbations in the different national or regional strategies, and their coordination.

A coordination between national authorities either side of the border improves the synergy of the sectoral policies concerned (for example the French-Belgian parliamentary working group). It favours the harmonisation of legislations.

At Community level

The specific feature of cross-border cooperation is that it is local cooperation. Nearness (or, to be more precise, accessibility, which combines the parameters of co-presence (density) and good public transport provision) plays a determining role: it is the very basis of the urban phenomenon, which is the major parameter of planning. All spatial planning policies now give priority attention to urban aspects, from small towns innervating the rural space to metropolitan areas driving the globalised economy.

Within the states of the European Union, several policies favouring metropolitan spaces have been implemented (Germany: Metropolregionen; France: coopération métropolitaine). Since several major European metropolitan areas have cross-border locations (Lille, Geneva, Copenhagen-Malmö, Vienna-Bratislava, etc.), they should be identified as a topic of European interest.

The various sectoral policies of the European Union (transport, environment, etc.) have substantial impact on cross-border urban territories. According to the EDSP (1999) and the territorial agenda (2007), it should be obligatory to encourage coherence among sectoral policies and take their spatial impact into account. It has already been done for example in the choice of the alignment of the Öresund crossing between Copenhagen and Malmö, favouring the birth of a cross-border conurbation. There is a need to increase coordination between the European Union and the different neighbouring states in favour.

This identification of the European stake of cross-border conurbations should be translated by taking in account at European community level:

- in the Community tools Urban Audit (as it is already case for Geneva); ESPON)
- in European strategies (process " territorial agenda ", strategic monitoring of cohesion)
- by European networking of these sites, and constituting a network of cross-border conurbations and more in general cross-border local authorities in Europe, supporting this network (EUROMOT) by a project Interreg IVC and developing an European network of cross-border metropolitan areas within the Urbact framework.

Proposal for recommendations

Local level

❖ **Recommendation 1: Encourage political governance of cross-border conurbations**

- Include different institutional levels according to their competences to the monitoring of the territorial project.
- Develop technical tools (observation, planning)
- Promote dialogue with the inhabitants

Regional/national level

❖ **Recommendation 2: Ensure that the cross-border urban dimension is taken into account at regional level**

- Promote linkage between the levels of cross-border conurbations and Euroregions
- Take cross-border conurbations into account in the implementation of the 2007-2013 cohesion programmes

❖ **Recommendation 3: Encourage states to take the reality of cross-border conurbations into account**

- Enable local authorities to participate in cross-border intermunicipal structures, if they wish (encourage the development of the EGTC).
- Develop and coordinate support policies for the cooperation of cross-border conurbations and metropolitan areas.
- Organise the coordination of national policies border by border, taking account of cross-border conurbations and cross-border metropolitan areas.

European level

❖ **Recommendation 4: Take into account the european issue of cross-border conurbations**

- Take cross-border conurbation monitoring and knowledge needs into account in Community tools
- Make cross-border conurbations places of convergence of national and Community policies
- Establish a network of cross-border conurbations in Europe.