THE INTERREG MODEL

Practical Experience in Cross Border Co-Operation

Friedrich Ebert Stiftung
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Foreword

The publication on the «Interreg Model - Practical Experience in Cross Border Co-operation Programmes» is the result of a workshop in Timisoara/Romania, end of July 2001, organized by the Zagreb and Timisoara office of Friedrich Ebert Stiftung in the frame of its regional project «Local Self-Government and Decentralisation in South-East Europe». In the context of the Stability Pact for South-East Europe and in co-operation with national institutions the Friedrich Ebert Stiftung has initiated a regional project to analyse the situation and the reforms of self-government and decentralization in the countries of the region, covering Albania, Bosnia and Hercegovina, Bulgaria, Macedonia, Croatia, Serbia, Montenego, Slovenia, Romania, and Hungary. Based on the analysis and the discussion of experts on the different experiences in implementing reform steps, and the preparation and distribution of publications resulting from different workshops, the project aims at the stimulation of public discussion with policy makers, researchers and experts at national and local level.

The first regional workshop with experts on local self-government and decentralization was organized in Zagreb in April 2001. Friedrich Ebert Stiftung Zagreb has published the results of this workshop, including ten country studies*. The second workshop on "Financing Local Self-Government" followed in June, as the majority of the participants in the first workshop had concluded a strong need to analyse more detailed questions of the financial structures at local level**. As a further important issue cross border co-operation was identified.

The Friedrich Ebert Stiftung Zagreb took up this proposal and organized a workshop with international experts focusing on case studies from Bulgaria, Hungary, Germany and Romania giving an overview of the experience on cross border activities in these countries. Furthermore, information was given on the support of cross border co-operation in the programmes of the European Union. The main issues of the discussion during the workshop are shown in the workshop summary of this publication.

Zagreb, November 2001

Rüdiger Pintar
Head of the Regional Office Zagreb
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* *Local Self Government and Decentralization in South-East Europe. Proceedings of the Workshop held in Zagreb, 6th April 2001*, Friedrich Ebert Stiftung, Zagreb 2001.

** *Financing Local Self-Government. Case Studies from Germany, Slovenia and Croatia*, Friedrich Ebert Stiftung, Zagreb 2001.

Veselka Ivanova

Mechanisms of Planning and Monitoring Structures for Co-ordination at Regional and National Level in Bulgaria

In Agenda 2000, the European Commission outlined a reinforced pre-accession strategy for the candidate countries including a re-orientation of the PHARE programme from the demand-driven to the accession-driven. Based on this document and after consultation with the Bulgarian authorities, an Accession Partnership was adopted to help the preparations for membership by determining priority areas. The Accession Partnership materialized with the launching of the implementation of measure BULGARIAN COUNTRY programme 1998.

Objective 7 (Regional Policy and Cohesion) of the above measure identifies the pressing need to start the process of setting up structures required for regional and structural policies. The project "Special Preparatory programme for Structural Funds" (SPP) was designed to facilitate this process and is currently under implementation. Major outputs of SPP include a National Economic Development Plan (NEDP) for the whole territory of Bulgaria, Regional Development Plans (RDPs) and Operational programmes (OPs).

The establishment of an effective Central Co-ordination Unit (CCU) to undertake all the essential programmeming, planning and co-ordination activities was a precondition for the implementation of SPP. Responding to this precondition, the Bulgarian Government set up such an inter-ministerial body with a mission to improve the sector co-ordination and administrative co-operation.

According to the Structural Funds' (SF) specifications and requirements, a regional development plan (RDP) is a document that defines development objectives, priorities, instruments and initiatives for a region on the basis of the National Plan of a Country. A RDP evolves from the analysis and evaluation of the current situation to a strategy for development, to the policies relevant to this strategy and ultimately to the measures with which the policies can be implemented.

An operational programme (OP) is a document that describes in steps the way an RDP can be realistically implemented. When in the final state, an OP includes

the translation of measures into concrete projects, as well as a schedule for the realization of these projects.

As one of the Central and Eastern European candidate countries for EU membership, Bulgaria has initiated and is committed to the process of preparing its administration (assisted by the SPP programme) to programmeing and implementing EU Structural Fund plans and programmes upon accession.

As the main co-ordinator of all pre-accession activities, the Ministry of Regional Development and Public Works (MRDPW) was engaged in drafting the legislation that would define the framework for the utilization of funds available through the PHARE programme during the pre-accession period (2000 - 2006) and of the Structural Funds (SF) available afterwards. According to the legislation, this utilization was implemented with:

- The division of the Country into Regions in accordance with the SF requirements. With Regulation No. 145/ 27.07.2000 the Country was divided into six planning regions (NUTS II level) - North West; North East; North Central; South West; South East and South Central Planning Regions;
- The establishment of Regional Administrative Structures in the Regions;
- The preparation of regional development plans (RDPs) aiming at the economic and social development of the Regions, in accordance with the strategies and priorities defined in the National Economic Development Plan (NEDP);
- The preparation of operational programmes (OPs) for the Regions, through which the policy objectives and the priorities laid out in the RDPs may be achieved;
- The implementation of projects, based on the OPs.

According to the same legislation, the main vehicles for the achievement of the above goals are the "Economic and Social Cohesion Commissions" (ESCCs) in each Region. The ESCCs main tasks are:

- To approve the RDPs of the respective Regions;
- To submit the RDPs to the MRDPW for discussion, co-ordination with the European Commission and ultimate approval;
- To approve preliminary OPs and submit them to the MRDPW for finalization and approval by the European Commission;
- To initiate interactions and co-ordination between the District Development Councils, the Central Administration and the Council of Regional Development within the Council of Ministers;
- To appoint expert committees to provide inputs to the RDPs and the OPs, tackling specialized problems such as the development of rural districts, unemployment, small and medium enterprises (SMEs), tourism, ecology and infrastructure.

The ESCCs include representatives of in-line Ministries, Institutions and Agencies, the District Governors, representatives of the District Councils, the Municipalities, as well as representatives of the trade unions and employment organizations. (See Appendix 1).

On the basis of the enclosed pyramid in The North West Planning Region (NWPR) we have 5 Thematic Working Groups: SMEs; Industry, Privatization, Foreign Investments, Energy, Human Recourses, Social Policy, Health and Education, Infrastructure, Communications, Tourism, Sport, Public Works, Agriculture, Development of Rural Areas and Ecology. These Groups are open and they are composed of specialists working for NGOs, businesses, local authorities, schools etc. They deal with different issues according to their specialization.

The main task of Thematic Working Groups is to work out a sector - its specific needs and priorities. After they made their conclusions about the situation in different areas of the economic and social life in the Region these results are gathered in the so-called Working Group. This team of experts is appointed by the MRDPW and is responsible for co-ordination / supporting the process and for drafting the RDP. During the pre-accession period all substructures and ESCC are advised by long term and short term EU experts within the framework of the SPP. The Working Group combines all the conclusions from the Thematic Working Groups and after that the so-called SWOT analysis is done.

Conclusions are made on the base of the SWOT analysis and the Region's vision for a future development is set. The strategic goals and objectives are identified as well as the concrete measures for their achievement. All the proposals The Working Group have made are forwarded to the Drafting Team. Representatives of central authorities on local level sit together in the Drafting Team. After voting, the Drafting Team forwards these proposals to the ESCC.

On a national basis there are the criteria for the identification of the so-called target areas where the financial support must be direct. The ESCC appoints these areas at the regional level. Also, ESCC adopts the criteria for the election of projects financed or co-financed by the EU programmes in the period from 2003 to 2006. Another function of ESCC is to decide the percentage of the allocation of EU financial support between the priority areas, although the funds coming from Brussels are centralized and the Bulgarian Government defines the amount for each of the planning regions. It is envisaged that for the period 2003 - 2006 the procedure for spending EU money is to be as follows:

If there is a project, it is must be handed to the Working Group. After checking out if it complies with the criteria determined by ESCC, the project will be passed on to the Drafting Team and then to the ESCC. It is also envisaged that ESCC

plays the role of the Monitoring Committee that will supervise the implementation of the projects.

In line with the required process of programmeming the PHARE support, Bulgaria has already produced a comprehensive National Economic Development Plan (NEDP). This document complies with the SF requirements and regulations and provides the basis for the allocation of financial support from PHARE, the national government and other sources. In line with the PHARE requirements, Bulgaria has identified two out of six Planning regions (i.e. the North-West and the South-Central regions) as the pilot regions for EU financial support in 2000. Four projects for the two pilot regions are under way within the PHARE 2000. The PHARE programme for Bulgaria in 2001 and 2002 will be based on the same principle. (See APPENDIX 2).

Enclosed is a scheme for the implementation of a project under PHARE 2000: Economic and Social Cohesion Component. The project is to provide support for SMEs quality certification. All other projects will be implemented in the same way till 2003.

After a decade of underestimating regional problems, the Bulgarian Government has in the last two years laid the foundations for a focused regional policy. Unfortunately, in the last few years the North-West Planning Region has turned into a problem region and is now placed at the centre of the national policy as such.

The North-West Planning Region (NWPR) is situated in the western part of Northern Bulgaria between the northern state border with Romania: the river Danube, the western state border with Serbia, Stara Planina (The Balkans) to the south and North Central Planning Region to the east. Of the six planning regions, this region is the smallest in size and population. The region comprises the territory of three administrative districts - Vidin, Vratza and Montana that in turn include 32 municipalities. Eighteen of them are defined as cross-boundary co-operation regions.

The location of the region determines its importance as a transport centre. Railroads, highways and water corridors of international significance pass through the region. The shortest way from the West to the East passes through the region. The Trans - European corridors are of significant importance - Corridor No. 4 Craiova (Romania) - Vidin- Sofia - Kulata - Thessaloniki (Greece) and Corridor No. 7 along the Danube River. Many ports are situated on the bank of the Danube River. There are RO-RO and RO-LA Terminals, two ferryboat connections with Romania and a free-trade zone. There are also nine cross border checking points - seven with Romania and two with Serbia.

The NWPR is a typical peripheral border region and as such it possesses all the negative characteristics of a periphery: a lack of adequate transport structure,

high level of unemployment, low-level incomes, idle industry, negative population growth, ineffective usage of the material and technical base. Despite all these regional weaknesses, the favorable geographical location and the future construction of the second Danube Bridge between Bulgaria and Romania at Vidin - Kalafat are opportunities for developing the region as a modern transport centre of national and international significance.

After the democratic changes in Bulgaria and Romania at the beginning of the 90s the two countries have been promoting the cross border co-operation among the border regions. Since these two countries are candidate countries for the accession to the EU, different EU programmes are available for supporting the cross border co-operation.

Big portions of the border municipalities in Bulgaria have traditionally good contacts with their partners from the other side of the border. Regional authorities are represented by District Governors, who also keep good and regularly contacts with Romanian Perfects. There are signed protocols for the co-operation between the Chambers of Commerce from the two sides of the border.

The Joint Bulgarian-Romanian Committee for cross border co-operation was established under the PHARE - CBC programme. The two countries have the Joint programme Document for the cross border co-operation for the period 1999 - 2003 in the fields of:

- Energy and transport links;
- Preservation of the environment;
- Improving the cross border infrastructure, communications, supply of local water, gas and electricity;
- Facilitation of a free circulation of people, capital and services across the borders.

The Project "New Bridge" was carried out under the PHARE-CREDO 1997 Programme. The partners from the Bulgarian side were the Municipality of Oriahovo and The Chamber of Commerce in Vratza, and the Romanian partner was The Chamber of Commerce in Oltenia. The project objectives were establishing contacts between the two regions and promoting the cross border co-operation. One of the project tasks was to study the possibilities for the construction of a bridge between Oriahovo and Beket. A research on the status of SMEs on the two banks of the river was carried out. Possibilities for joint tourist sector development were also investigated.

There was a questionnaire among the population from the bordering areas about their expectations regarding the possible construction of the bridge. The bridge models were designed and the technical investigation was carried out. The

project budget was 35,000 Euros (out of which 30,000 Euro - PHARE - CBC support).

The idea for establishing the Euroregion between Bulgaria and Romania is several years old. The idea has evolved and the latest plan was to form not one but three Euroregions. There were many problems, which stood in the way of founding the Euroregions: the different levels of governance in the two countries, a lack of structures on the Romanian side which would match those of the Bulgarian side, the alternation of elections in the two countries.

In November 2000 an Association for Cross Border Co-operation in the North-Western Bulgaria 'Vidin' was constituted. Members of the Association are different cross border municipalities from the NWPR. In February 2001, a trilateral meeting was held between the mayors of Vidin (Bulgaria), Kalafat (Romania) and Zaječar (Serbia). The mayors signed an agreement protocol for the foundation of the Euroregion. The Common Working Group was appointed for the preparation of the necessary documents. The partners in the Euroregion will be the Bulgarian Association 'Vidin', the Romanian District Dolj and the Serbian District Zaječar.

Future activities within the framework of the Euroregion will concentrate on how to overcome the negative trends in the development of the three bordering areas. The intention is to speed up the development of the region in all spheres of social and economic life.

The three parties have declared that they will develop cross border co-operation in the following areas:

- Establishment of joint ventures;
- Compliance with the European legislation in the arc of nature preservation;
- Joint activities in the field of natural disasters;
- Cross border co-operation in the field of health services;
- Cross border co-operation in the field of culture;
- Cross border co-operation in the field of sports;
- Cross border co-operation in the fields of vocational training and qualifications, education, tourism, agriculture, SMEs.

The structures for planning and monitoring the activities in the region are to be the Common Assembly, the Management Council (Presidium), the Head Secretariat in Vidin with two branches in Kalafat and Zaječar and the Joint Working Groups. The founders intend to register the Euroregion according to the Bulgarian laws as a non-governmental organization. The documents for setting up the Euroregion are to be signed by mid-September 2001.

The cross border co-operation between Bulgaria and Serbia is characterized as a complicated process. Due to the political situation, there are phases of

promoting the co-operation and there are the deadlocks. Nevertheless, the future relations will probably intensify.

In 1996 an Ecological Bilateral Forum for Stara Planina (The Balkans) was organized. The participants were the representatives of central, regional and municipal authorities from the two sides of the border. The border zone of Stara Planina was declared free and this nature-preserving zone was named the 'Bilateral Balkans Peace Park'.

The founders called upon the two Governments to create the conditions necessary for a sustainable development of the border zone, to promote ecologically clear production in the zone, to create conditions for the free circulation of people and goods, to keep and to preserve the local values and traditions.

The two sides will manage the Park together. For the co-ordination of the activities there is a Joint Co-operation Commission. The Commission holds regular sessions in Bulgaria or in Serbia when necessary. Each of the contracting parties will finance the activities on its territory and the two parties together will act together on the international scene.

The cross border co-operation process in Bulgaria has just started. It is to be a more intensive process in the future. There is an increased interest by central, regional and municipal authorities for the development of cross border co-operation. The limited financial resources of the municipalities and those of the country as a whole may delay this process. In spite of this increased interest, there is not one common long-term strategy for the development of cross border co-operation. A big part of the existing cross border activities has an accidental character. Nevertheless, there are joint programme documents for the co-operation under the PHARE - CBC programme, although they do not cover all possible aspects of cross border co-operation.

There are examples of a successful cross border co-operation as the established Euroregion "NESTOS - MESTA" between Greece and Bulgaria. (See Appendix 3).

The system of the administrative bodies is based on the dual mirror structure: one for each party in the region. There are also some joint administrative and operating structures. Each partner is obliged to observe the relevance to its country's laws. The two parties decided to register the Euroregion as a non-governmental organization.

In 1992 the preliminary agreement for promoting cross border co-operation was signed. In 1997 The Greek Border Association on River Nestos and the Bulgarian Border Association on the River Mesta signed the agreement protocol for cross border co-operation.

As for the structures and their powers, two main prerogatives are executed:

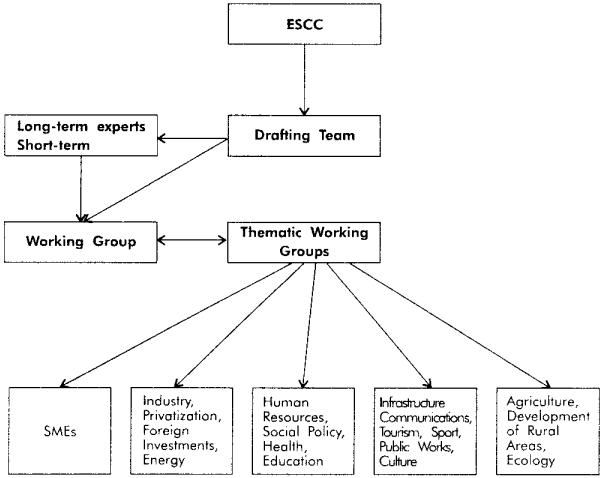
- Joint planning of activities and common representation at the international level;
- Implementation of additional activities with the same goals and expected results.

The first is obtained through the Joint Administrative Council and the second through six Joint Working Groups.

Each party has the following administrative structures:

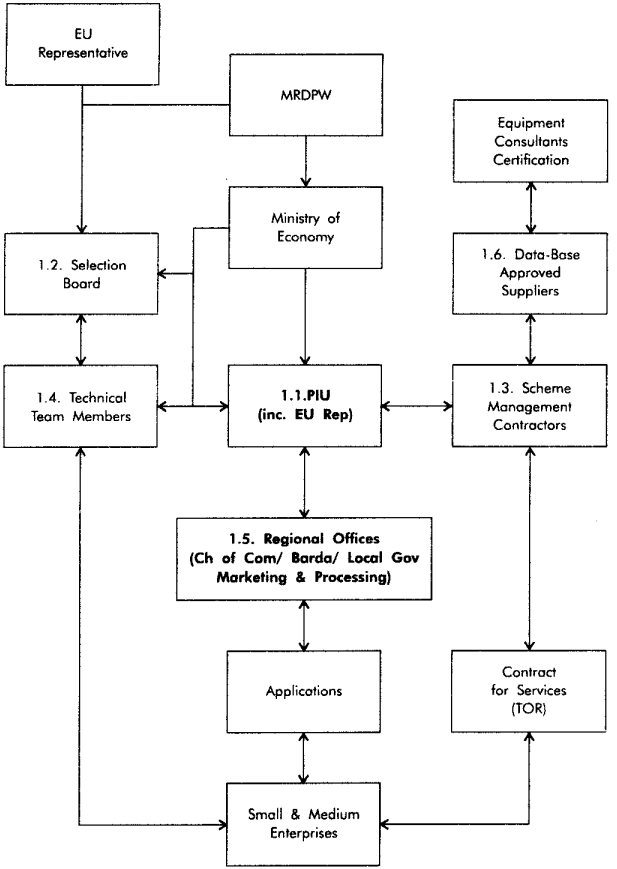
- Management Council for Monitoring and Evaluation (MCME): This is a team of high ranking officials from central, regional and local administrative structures. From the Greek side there is one representative of the Body for Implementing the INTERREG programme. From the Bulgarian side there is one representative of the Management Department of PHARE - CBC programme. The MCME holds sessions once a year and/or when necessary,
- Joint Assembly (JA): One for each party. The JA is composed of the representatives of trade unions and all institutions, municipalities, associations that accept the goals of the organization and want to be its member. The JA is the supreme body of the organization with political powers for making decisions and determining the strategy for future development of the organization,
- Administrative Council or Joint Administrative Council (AC): The executive organ of the organization. AC is responsible for the implementation of the decisions and organizational policy. AC is composed of one president, two vice-presidents,an executive secretary and a treasurer. The AC holds sessions regularly and makes decisions on all issues of common interest,
- Executive Secretary and his team of experts deal with routine work,
- Working Groups or Joint Working Groups: There are six working groups dealing with different issues of common interest.

Annex 1:



- Establish a programme Steering Committee and Project Selection Committee based in the Ministry of Economy;
- Set up and properly resource a PIU in the Ministry of Economy to implement the project. This will include the appointment of a number of personnel whose role will be to check whether the equipment has been purchased and retained by the company for the specified time period after receiving grant aid;
- Provide external advice and support for these new project structures;
- Select a short list of companies through a tendering process to supply consultancy advice to companies which have been successful in obtaining grant aid to help them acquire the ISO 9000 status;
- Develop a list of specialist Bulgarian technical advisors with practical experience in a number of companies in the manufacturing sector that will be

Annex 2:



used to provide technical and financial appraisals of individual applications. These appraisals will be used by the Project Selection Committee to make decisions on awarding funding to applicants;

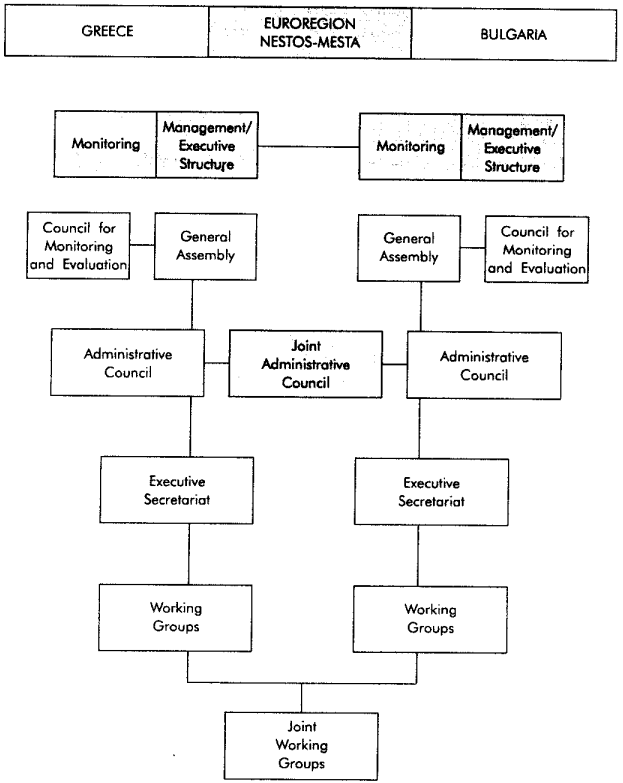
- Prepare guidelines, application forms etc. for distribution to interested companies;
- Conduct a publicity campaign to ensure that a sufficient number of quality applications are received for appraisal;
- Set up a computer system to help the PIU control and monitor the implementation of the projects.

The project will have an institutional building component. The MRDPW will contract external assistance on behalf of the Ministry of Economy, in the form of one long-term expert from a EU Member State. It was proposed to utilize Meur 0.20 institution building support to provide technical assistance with the management on the scheme.

Institution building assistance will be required to:

- Advise and work with PIU (Writing guidelines, preparing publicity material, developing administration systems);
- Provide technical advisory inputs to the programme Steering Committee (evaluation of selection systems, monitoring and controling mechanisms, etc.);
- Provide technical advice on selection procedures and the selection of consultancy companies (to advise successful applicants on ISO 9000 acquisition) and technical consultants (to produce appraisal reports on individual applications);
- Train the personnel about the PIU;
- Develop and maintain a general database of European general and technical requirements to the industrial companies.

Annex 3: Scheme of Euroregion Nestos- Mesta



György Csalótzky

A Successful Trans-Frontier Interregional Co-operation in the East Central European Region Arba

Presentation of Project Experiences: Austria - Hungary

Hungary has a common border with seven countries: Austria, Slovenia, Croatia, Yugoslavia, Romania, Ukraine and Slovakia. Through the ratification and by adopting a law which is in line with the European Outline Convention on Trans-frontier Cooperation between Territorial Communities or Authorities, Hungarian Parliament expressed its resolution to promote trans-frontier interregional co-operation, shortly: TIC, as far as possible and to contribute in this way to the economic and social progress of frontier regions and to the spirit of fellowship which unites the nations of Europe.

According to the Hungarian Constitution and the Act on Local Government - which are based on the European Charter on Local Government - it is stated that local and regional governments may freely co-operate with similar organizations abroad i.e. they may join international organizations of regional and local governments. The importance of international contacts of Hungarian regions has been increasing in the course of Hungary's preparations for its membership in the EU, the structure of which is characterised as "a Europe of Regions".

The first level of self-government in Hungary is the 3135 settlements. In Hungary, there are three types of regions:

- **The counties** (19 units) are territorial self-governments, with a scope of duties and jurisdiction, undertaken voluntarily or prescribed as obligatory. They are conducted by the directly elected General Assembly. The capital Budapest and 22 other cities of county rank are functioning simultaneously as regional and as local authorities;
- The 7 so-called **statistical planning regions** that are institutionalised co-operation of two or three counties;
- The so-called **small regions** (150 units) that are associations of 10-20 middle or small settlement local authorities.

The "strongest" of these unit types are now the counties that have developed bilateral or multilateral contacts abroad. All the Hungarian counties are

members of the European Assembly of Regions; some of the regions are participating in the work of the Association of European Border Regions. The representatives of the Hungarian counties, as members of the Hungarian delegation, are participating in the work of the Congress of Local and Regional Authorities of Europe. (This unit of the Council of Europe had been busy at its last session in May 2001, for example with the international co-operation at regional level, with the conclusions of the "Forum of Cities and Regions of South-East Europe (Skopje, November 2000)" and with the trans-boundary water resources.

Among the diverse forms of interregional co-operation, the Hungarian self-government units are participants of various Euroregions, for example of:

- The Kosice-Miskolc-Euroregion,
- The Slaná-Rimava-Euroregion,
- The Neogradiensis Euroregion,
- The Váh-Danube-Ipel Euroregion,
- The Carpathes Euroregion,
- The Danube-Kris-Mures-Tisa-Euroregion,
- The Danube-Drava-Sava Euroregion,
- The West-Pannonia Euroregion.

The original idea of the West-Pannonia Euroregion is a close relationship with the countries sharing similar geographical features. Hungary in the West borders the Federal Republic of Austria; the common border is approximately 120 kilometres long.

The Hungary-Austrian border region can be divided into two parts. The Northern part of this region - namely North-Burgenland, the Southern part of Vienna's Surrounding Area, Vienna, the Southern parts of Niederösterreich and the Western parts of the Hungarian counties Györ-Moson-Sopron and Vas - is situated at the meeting point of the border of Slovakia, Austria and Hungary. This location is favourable regarding the settlement and economic framework and so the region represents a dynamic development.

Counter to this, the Southern part of this border region is not only further away from the West European economic centres, but also its trans-frontier successes are not as good and its economic framework is weaker than that of the Northern part. The so-called Iron Curtain that existed between 1945 and 1989 conserved the underdeveloped status of this area.

The above mentioned geographical, economic and political situation manifested the common interest for trans-frontier co-operation on both sides of the Hungarian-Austrian border and even preceded the European political changes. Proofs for that are the membership of five Hungarian counties in the Alps-

Adriatic-Working-Group - consisting of the states of Croatia and Slovenia, 4 Austrian counties (Bundesländer), 4 Italian regions, the German Bavaria (Bundesland) and the Swiss canton Ticino - and also some partnership between Austrian and Hungarian cities and towns. This process had been speeded up and reinforced after the change of the Hungarian political and economic system: in 1992, the Austrian-Hungarian trans-frontier Council was founded, which functioned until 1998.

After the European political changes, three phases can be distinguished in the development of the Hungarian-Austrian trans-frontier co-operation: After the recognition of common interests and the rationale for trans-frontier co-operation in general, it was necessary to determine and rank those fields in which co-operation is most important and possible to realise. Within the Hungarian-Austrian trans-frontier co-operation, these fields are the following:

- Economic relations,
- Building of infrastructural facilities in transport and communication,
- Environmental protection,
- Emergency protection and border administration,
- Development of tourism,
- Science, culture, education, health, sports and civil relations.

The next step was to identify the project ideas and priorities in these fields and to form them into projects. In the area of economic relations, these are for example:

- Development of joint programmes dependent on the co-operation participants' economic potential,
- Development of the technical level and of qualified workforce,
- Development and exploitation of common information systems,
- Fostering and supporting the co-operation between chambers of economy;
- Fostering and supporting the creation of joint venture companies,
- Fostering and supporting the co-operation in the field of agricultural production and trade,
- Endorsing economic agreements between companies,
- Development of joint economic and financial activities on third markets.

Last but not least, there was the "conditio sine qua non" for the realisation of the co-operation projects: finding the appropriate financial sources for the planned activities. In the case of Austrian-Hungarian trans-frontier co-operation, two different types of European financial support were available (apart from the financial resources of the regions participating in the TIC):

On the Austrian side, trans-frontier projects had been supported by the "INTERREG II" community initiative and the financial funds supporting it; on

the Hungarian side, trans-frontier projects had been supported by the PHARE cross border co-operation project. The budget of this project for 1995-1997 was 42 Million Euros and has consisted of 66 big projects and a great number of so-called "small projects".
The preponderance of the Hungarian-Austrian TIC project is marked by the fact that 77 percent of Hungarian PHARE CBC resources had been spent for this region.
The Hungarian and Austrian partner-regions realised various projects, for example:

- Gönyü-Györ port on the Danube,
- An airport in the village of Pér,
- The International Trade Centre in Györ,
- An industrial area in Sopron,
- Bicycle routes besides the Danube and the lake Fertö,
- The common industrial area of Szentgotthárd/Hungary and Heiligenkreutz/Austria,
- Innonet incubator house.

The proposal for a PHARE CBC project made it necessary to conclude a "Memorandum of Understading", to establish a "Joint Cooperation Committee" and to prepare a "Joint Programming Document".
In the year 1998, the leaders of the Austrian Land Burgenland, the Hungarian county Györ-Moson-Sopron and the Hungarian county Vas signed the protocol about the West/Nyugat Pannoniaia Euroregion. The Hungarian county of Zala - which is not situated at the Austrian border but is in many ways connected to this trans-frontier co-operation - joined this Euroregion in 1999.
The protocol on the West-Pannonia Region established a complete structure of co-ordination of the TIC. At the top of this framework is the Regional Council consisting of regional leaders, mayors, members of national parliaments, representatives of national and ethnic minorities, economic chambers and other NGOs. The presidency of the council changes every year (the principle of the rotation of countries).
Working groups for different co-operation areas (for example, for national and ethnical minorities, for economic chambers, for NGOs, for border administration and emergency protection) are established by the Regional Council. They study and develop projects and programmes, formulate proposals and reports and forward them to the Regional Council.
The Austrian-Hungarian Joint Committee is responsible for preparing, implementing, monitoring and accounting of European Community projects supporting trans-frontier co-operation such as the INTERREG II projects on

the Austrian side and the PHARE CBC projects on the Hungarian side. The Hungarian members of this Committee are the Vice-State Secretary of the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development (as Co-president), the representatives of the Ministry of Economy, the Office of the Minister for PHARE Co-ordination and the representatives of the counties Györ-Moson-Sopron, Vas and Zala; the Austrian contributors are one Chief Officer of the Chancellor Office (as co-president) and the representatives of the länder Vienna and Burgenland
The communication between the participants of the Austrian-Hungarian TIC is taking place at various levels: the foreign policy background of this co-operation are good inter-governmental relations between Austria and Hungary; the forms of communication are similar to the European diplomatic practices (meetings of Prime Ministers and Ministers of Foreign Affairs, the continuous activity of the embassies in Budapest and Vienna etc.).
The strategic questions of the TIC are discussed at the sessions of the Austrian-Hungarian Joint Committee and the Regional Council and in their working groups and secretariats. For the co-operation in "small affairs", there are major direct contacts between office departments, chambers, NGOs, experts etc. Written and electronic press (regional TV and radio, newspapers, quarterlies etc.) disseminate the information and PR activities are directed at the population.
It is not easy to make an appraisal of the successes and the challenges of the Hungarian-Austrian TIC because this is a very complex issue. Among the successes, the following can be highlighted:
The co-operation becomes more and more intensive and it includes more and more areas; a good example is the expansion of the bilateral Hungarian and Austrian trans-frontier co-operation include to Slovenia and Slovakia in the form of a trilateral co-operation, while another trilateral co-operation is being prepared between Hungary, Croatia and Slovenia.
The co-operation enables the implementation of several already mentioned and other useful projects. With the help of the Austrian-Hungarian co-operation, we were given the chance to get more familiar with the situation and experiences of the developed West-European countries and the European Union. The population of the participating regions could understand better each other's successes and problems and as a result we could make a small step in the re-enforcement of the European thinking.
Of course there are some challenges we have to address: the experiences of the past three to four years have taught the participating regions that they need to be patient and that they should not expect quick results: success can be achieved

only by commitment. We have to learn to think in projects, which means that first of all we have to make decisions about what we would like to achieve; for these goals, carefully planned projects have to be worked out and following that we have to continuously search for financial and other sources and sponsors. We have had to face the bureaucratic glitches of the European Community, which often caused delay in the implementation of the projects.

Mariana Cernicova

The Euroregion Danube-Kris-Mures-Tisa (DKMT): Wishes and Achievements

The present study, The Euroregion Danube-Kris-Mures-Tisa (DKMT): wishes and achievements, is an attempt to present the recent history of implementing the Western model in the area comprising regions from Hungary, Yugoslavia and Romania. The integrative force of the regional co-operation has transformed the Western Europe in a continuum with well-articulated links. In following the pattern, the former communist countries hope to achieve the same type of effects for their own status in the new Europe, undivided by ideological borders.
Although the desire of the states seemed strong, the political endorsement for regional cross border policies lacked in the early '90s. The co-operation in the DKMT area was hindered mainly by the lack of clarity in the Romanian Legislation. With the changes in the international arena, in the second half of the '90s, the asymmetry of the regions belonging to the above-mentioned countries has deepened and, although important steps have been taken on the declarative level, the fruits of this co-operation are far from being ripe.
The study is based on a set of interviews that point at the perceptions and activities of Romanian regional political and administrative elites regarding the cross border co-operation in the framework of DKMT. The authors believe that the main problem of DKMT regional co-operation lies in the fact that it was based on the wrong premises. While in Western countries the regional co-operation aims at solving concrete problems, DKMT was formed with the hope to raise funds that would stimulate local development.

Euroregional Co-operation as a Framework for Rebuilding Border Regions

In post-totalitarian countries, the modernization processes are inextricably tied to the democratization of countries, both in adopting new responses to the current internal economic, social and political problems and in their ties to the outer world. The new democracies of the Central and Eastern Europe also try to identify which of the models from the consolidated democracies can best fit their

needs and can be used as a source of inspiration for ensuring a swift and sustainable development.

The experimentation of cross border co-operations at the level of regions carried out by regional and local authorities and not by central governments is one of the most daring projects such countries have launched. Euroregions potentially aim at strengthening the competitive value and attractiveness of formerly neglected areas. The border was perceived, during the Cold War, as a barrier, a wall between states, ensuring their security. A typical behaviour for states in the former socialist block was to avoid investments in the vicinity of the border, to keep valuable assets away from such areas, to keep their infrastructure at a minimum level of development, thus creating quasi-empty areas in front of a potential danger at the frontiers.

While searching for new sources of the development of these areas in the last decade of the 20th century, Central and Eastern countries have resorted to successful experiments from the Western part of the continent, trying to see if the framework of Euroregions can stimulate not only the economic, social and rural life in the border areas but also the paths to better relations with their neighbours, in times when globalization is a phenomenon impossible to ignore.

The aim of the current project is to seek for the values, achievements and potentials of such a Euroregion: Danube-Kris-Mures-Tisa (further in the text: DKMR) created in 1997 by the will of the regional authorities in the contact area between Romania, Hungary and Yugoslavia, which spreads over 77.000 sq km and has 6 million inhabitants.

Successfully implemented in Western Europe as early as 1950s, Euroregions were met with suspicion by most Eastern and Central European countries in the '90s, as the underlying philosophy of such frames of co-operation contradicted the traditional attitudes regarding the concepts such as **national sovereignty, national interest, national secret** and so on. Regionalism as such was a totally new concept to operate with and, in the transformation of political thought and practice, allowing for regional initiatives to take active part in the socio-political arena proved to be a hard task.

An early proposal made by the Hungarian partners to the Romanian regional authorities in 1990-1992 to create Eureregions in the border areas, in order to compound the strong elements for enhancing the chances of a rapid development and to surpass the underdeveloped, weak infrastructure, was met with enthusiasm by most representatives at the local and regional level, but was discouraged by the central government in Bucharest, unwilling to give away the prerogatives of decision-making in what seemed to be a typical matter of foreign policy. It was only in 1996 that regional policies and decentralization began to be timidly implemented in Romania, which allowed for creating Euroregions. DKMT is, hence, a new occurrence and only when attempting to launch it, it became obvious that there are still many obstacles to turn it into an agent of development and change in the area.

Dissimilarities in the individual political and economic practices in the three countries from which counties or regions entered this co-operation, the absence of an institutional framework for DKMR, and most important - the disadvantageous status of Vojvodina in the international arena (due to the lasting embargo on Yugoslavia which hinders the participation of any part of the federation in any out-of-the-border activities) still make it difficult to foresee whether the Euroregion as a frame is the proper answer to the dilemmas that the regions in Hungary, Romania and Yugoslavia face at the end of the millennium.

Two years after the DKMT co-operation protocols were signed and some steps made to create a coherent mechanism of consultation and co-operation, the material achievements of the Euroregion still remain to be seen.

Under the auspices of the "Diaspora" Studies Center, a group of researchers from Timisoara (Romania) and Szeged (Hungary) lead by Mr. Bodo Barna conducted a public opinion poll on a sample of 1,000 respondents from the border regions in Romania and Hungary. The results pointed at significant differences in the support these countries'central bodies are perceived to offer to the local and regional initiatives. While in Hungary 40% of the respondents believed that the government encourages and leaves space for regional initiatives (including the tightening of Euroregional direct links), in Romania the same parameter is three times less: only 14% of the respondents think that the central bodies support the regional initiatives to be carried out.

Further investigations should try:

- To identify the current state of Euroregional co-operation within DKMT region;
- To point at the potential to be developed for devising actions within these structures aimed at developing social, economic, and cultural ties within the Euroregion;
- To search for new ideas in order to deepen the Euroregional co-operation;
- To stimulate the academic debate concerning the use and future of Euroregions as a means of building a new European identity;
- To contribute to promoting Euroregional links in the public sphere.

The main elements of the current state are based on:

1. **Analysis** of: a) The historical background and the traditional links between the regions within the DKMT area;
   b) The basic documents concerning legal frames, political, economic and social strategies in the three countries involved in the DKMR co-operation;
   c) The existing infrastructure.
2. **Content analysis** of the public discourse concerning DKMT (in all three countries, by evaluating also the media coverage of such a discourse);
3. **Polling** of political administrative, economical and cultural elite with regard to DKMT on two levels in each country:
   a) Local and regional (presidents of regional assemblies or county councils, mayors, leaders of parties represented in the regional administrative bodies, chambers of commerce, agencies for promoting regional developments etc.);
   b) Central - governmental and parliamentary bodies, relevant for the issue (e.g. parliamentary committees, national agencies for regional development, ministries or departments regulating cross border co-operations etc.);
4. **Synthesis** of the results aimed at presenting:
   a) Current trends in the various dimensions of DKMT;
   b) Possible strategies to be applied in order to further deepen DKMT co-operation.

Florian Dohmen

Practical Experience in Cross Border Co-operation in the West-German-Region

After the completion of the single internal market programme of the European Union (EU), national borderlines between the member states have still not entirely lost their dividing character. The aim of drawing Europe's peoples into an ever-closer union is the one that has practical and everyday relevance in Europe's border regions. In the wake of the European Union's next expansion, the number of the internal frontiers will even increase. In a Europe that is growing together, it is only through intensive cross border co-operation that existing barriers can be overcome, with border regions now taking on a new role as a connecting link where once they served as a perimeter. Against this background, the EU has been supporting internal and exterior cross border co-operation since 1990 through its largest Community Initiative - INTERREG.

For Flanders, the Walloon Region, the French Community and the German-speaking Community of Belgium, the Kingdom of the Netherlands, and the bordering German federal states of Lower Saxony, North Rhine-Westphalia, and Rhineland-Palatinate, which together share a 1,183 km border line, a high value has been placed upon the co-operative efforts in the border regions. Like with the pioneer work of the first local initiatives, which already in the 1950s set out to promote closer co-operation beyond the cross border roads, there are now so-called "EUREGIONS" along the borders between Belgium, Germany and the Netherlands. This is the name given to describe permanent cross border associations of local and regional bodies. The co-operative involvement of the EUREGIONS in implementing the INTERREG programme under the authority of the national governments concerned today serves as a model for the whole Europe. The projects of co-operation are financed by European and national sources (from the region itself, from the project sponsors or other third party donors).

It was back in 1958 that the first cross border co-operational association in Europe was founded - the EUREGION (Gronau) - which then gave its name to the EUREGIONS that were to follow in later years.

Also, the other 6 EUREGIONS in the Belgian-German-Dutch border regions are among the first in Europe. Through the co-operational involvement of the

EUREGIONS in the development and implementation of the Community Initiative Programmes (CIP) INTERREG, the participating governments guarantee that the expert knowledge available "on the doorstep" is put to a good use. With the subsequently signed contracts, the governmental partners enabled the EUREGIONS to found their co-operative efforts on a legally safe and transparent basis:

- For the Belgian-Dutch frontier, the Benelux Agreement of September 12, 1986 (signatories: Belgium, the Netherlands, and Luxembourg)
- For the Dutch-German frontier, the Anholter Agreement 8 of May 23, 1991 (signatories: Federal Republic of Germany, the Netherlands, the German federal Länder of Lower Saxony and North Rhine-Westphalia)
- For the Belgian-German frontier, the Main Agreement of March 8, 1996 (signatories: the German federal Länder of Lower Saxony and North Rhine-Westphalia and Rhineland Palatinate, and the Walloon Region and German-speaking Community of Belgium)

On the basis of the Anholter Agreement[1] in 1993 the Euregio Rhine-Waal became the first in Europe to be awarded public legal status as a cross border joint-authority, followed in 1998 by the Ems Dollart Region.

The priorities of cross border co-operation listed below have been chosen by the partners in accordance with the priorities recommended by the European Commission for INTERREG III A. The results of the analysis of the specific development problems and hidden potential of the border regions between Belgium, Germany, and the Netherlands are also included. These chosen topics have already proven their value in the previous INTERREG II A (1994-99) phase as the most appropriate principles of the co-operation to follow. Therefore, they are being retained for INTERREG III A and further developed taking into account the experience gained and the actual and current requirements:

1. Spatial Structure
   - Cross-border regional planning
   - Improvements to the infrastructure of transport, traffic control, information and communication networks
2. Trade & Commerce, Technology and Innovation (including tourism)
   For example:
   - Co-operation between small and medium-sized companies
   - Technology transfer
3. Environment, Nature and Landscape (including agriculture)
   For example:
   - Rural development
   - Protecting the environment

[1] Also known as the Isselburger Agreement.

4. Qualifications and the Labour Market
   For example:
   - The development of an integrated labour market
   - Co-operation in vocational training programmes
5. Socio-Cultural Integration
   For example:
   - Developing the communication between the inhabitants of the regions/the local authorities
   - Co-operation between social-welfare / health authorities

In the future, cross border co-operation will be a process of development of the West German region. The border regions, together with the local authorities, will probably chose new topics of co-operation. To provide the regions with freedom of that kind, the national authorities will have to give them some of their legal responsibilities.

Violeta Bau

Workshop Summary

The most recent expert workshop on practical experience in the European cross border co-operation programmes in July 2001 in Bucharest, Romania, organized by Friedrich Ebert Stiftung offered us (a diverse group of intellectuals - university professors and practitioners from SE Europe, all interested in helping to strengthen democracy in the region through stability and reconstruction) a great opportunity for learning from each other's perspective on the issue of cross border co-operation.

The meeting was no doubt a very productive one due to the exchange of expertise and ideas among all the members on the above mentioned issue. Still, it is crucial to mention that the meeting was an excellent occasion for the participants to get to know each other and to compare their opinions with their colleagues, especially in such a desirable environment of comparative studies on the issues so characteristic for the region.

That is why the organizers tried to facilitate the re-union of the project's initial participants, to provide all the necessary logistic and support for the group in order to create the conditions conducive to a useful exchange of expertise with the view of a common research and evaluation methodology for a variety of issues. Although the organizers were open to new participants joining in the course of the project, they were naturally interested in ensuring the necessary continuity and the stimulus for an ongoing co-operation among all, once the project has ended.

The meeting in Timsoara dealt with the topic of cross border co-operation and was organized by both the Friedrich Ebert Stiftung representative in Romania and the FES experts in Zagreb, Croatia. To select Romania for the meeting location was not only an incentive to the Romanian authorities to adopt a more benevolent attitude to the cross border co-operation with its neighbors but a strategic decision as well, due to Timsoara's (Romania) importance for that respective Euroregion.

The workshop's structure included panelists (experts presenting case studies) as stipulated in the agenda and the commentaries from other participants. The idea of inviting both western specialists and experts/implementers from the region proved its advantages as soon as the participants began to address questions to both categories.

While the panelists were presenting case studies of cross border co-operation in their countries, several conclusions were raised especially regarding the principles and the obstacles when dealing with the topic.

Cross border co-operation is no longer a declaration only, but a true desire for economic growth, political harmonization or environmental improvement, to mention but a few. All those involved or preoccupied with the topic say the cross border co-operation starts with addressing the local needs, local impact, local politicians' support but it also counts on national political support.

There is a variety of cross border co-operation projects and a multitude of topics that the projects address. It is also true the projects differ depending on different conditions - one of the most important coming from environmental/non-environmental: industrial equation.

Regardless of the topic, the timing (also from the political perspective, if we look to the recurrent political changes in the countries of the region), the support, the actors etc., one thing became more and more clear to all participants: natural borders no longer have an impact on the desire of people to meet and co-operate. Although logistical obstacles still remain important (more details follow), people at different levels have become aware of the fact that the national borders do not prevent from forging partnerships for the benefit of their communities.

In a region where very few comparative analyses have been conducted, specialists (intellectuals and practitioners alike) feel the need for getting together and working on different issues that concern them and the people they live with in their communities.

As for the principles (some called them conditions) to be fulfilled in order to have a fruitful cross border co-operation, the participants mentioned the most important ones:

- The issue should "affect" people locally. People should be aware of it and ideally supportive of it
- The local support counts as much as the national one. The local priorities should be harmonized with the national politicians' agenda
- The same applies to harmonizing the national agenda with the regional and international ones
- There should be certain continuity from one political government to another. Due to the rapid and frequent changes in governments in this part of the world, specialists have noticed the importance of keeping them involved regardless of the political power shifts at all levels
- Although political involvement seems to be of greatest importance (if not the most important), such a project should involve other key players in all countries, such as NGOs, trade unions and the media

- Basic requirements should be met: besides the political support and the cross border co-operation, all the partnerships that involve many members depend on the existence of a secretariat as well as of contact persons in all countries/parts involved in the co-operation. It also requires minimum expenses for communication.

As for the obstacles, the participants said, it is difficult to run a cross border co-operation project when:

- The participants mostly speak different languages. Most of the times they choose English - the situation in which the translation diminishes the time for discussions,
- There are so many differences between the countries in terms of:
    - National policies
    - Political perspective on regional development
    - Authorities' competencies/responsibilities
    - Sometimes institutions in their entirety
    - Regulations/laws
    - Infrastructure
    - Visa requirements to travel to neighboring countries
    - Lack of experts stability
    - Lack of a long term vision among countries' politicians so that the approaches most of the time differ from one Government to another
    - Lack of initiative to co-operate due to an insufficient or superficial understanding of the gains
    - Lack of or inadequate information
    - Lack of co-ordination among potential partners, frequently because of the lack of basic logistic resources
    - Lack of co-ordination among donors. A particular discussion focused on the European bureaucracy overload that makes the funds late for projects' implementation.

The discussion about potential areas of co-operation followed. All the participants agreed there are many of them. European Union requires a joint effort to solve the problems related to that. All the participants who were present at the Timsoara meeting agreed this is only a small reflection of the variety of areas the partnerships should refer to. Some ideas were raised, very much influenced by the participants' background and areas of interests, and those were related to infrastructure (bridges, roads, highways), economy and education.

With all they gained by participating in the meetings and with everything they became aware they might gain by remaining in contact with each other and by exchanging information, the guests and the organizers were optimistically looking forward to a development of a professional network in the region. A simple listing of the problems this part of the region unfortunately has nowadays made all the participants have realized it is high time they put their heads together and helped democracy in South East Europe strengthen.

For more information on the Timsoara meeting and its results as well as the future plans of the core group of members, please do not hesitate to contact me.

APPENDIX

Local Self-Government and Decentralization: Cross Border Co-operation Programmes

Support of Cross Border Co-operation in SEE: Programmes of the EU (except ISPA/SAPARD/PHARE)

For all initiatives co-financing must be provided.

CARDS

Council regulation from Dec. 2000, no detailed programme until now

Description:
CARDS is supposed to unify the already existing assistance programmes in the Balkan region OBNOVA and PHARE. Amongst other fields the Commission expresses explicitly its willingness to support CBC: among the countries or with candidates or with member states: the so-called regional programme, which will be approved by Oct. Calls for proposals and tenders will be published a month later on the Europeaid website. No TWINNING anymore: Particular stress will be put on infrastructure, anti-smuggling etc. seminars/conferences/exchange between municipalities might be a part of a project but not a project itself (accompanying measure).

Countries concerned:
Albania, BiH, Croatia, FRY, Macedonia

Eligible institutions/organizations:
federal, regional and local bodies (public and semi-public), social partners, the state, international org., NGOs, foundations etc.

Application:
See web site Europaid or Official Journal
http://europa.eu.int/comm/europeaid/tender/index_en.htm

Contact:
Carmen Falkenberg, European Commission
Tel.: 0032-2-296 42 41
Carmen.falkenberg@cec.eu.int

European Agency for Reconstruction (implementing agency only for European activities in Kosovo, Serbia, Montenegro)

info@ear.eu.int
http://www.ear.int

EUROPEAN INITIATIVE FOR DEMOCRACY AND HUMAN RIGHTS

Description:
The European Initiative for Democracy and Human Rights (EIDHR) shall assist the global effort to build and reinforce pluralist democratic society, governed by the rule of law, and respecting human rights. It is a Horizontal Budget line in charge with projects all over the world. Macro projects (min. 300,000 Euro) and Micro projects are financed. The projects supported under the micro projects scheme are intended to contribute in particular to locally generated activities within the eligible countries.

Countries concerned (Micro projects):
Albania, Belarus, BiH, Bulgaria, Croatia, Czech Republic, Estonia, Georgia, Kazakhstan, Latvia, Lithuania, Macedonia, Romania, Russian Federation, Slovak Republic, Slovenia, Ukraine, FR Yugoslavia (the list will be reviewed)

Eligible Organizations/Institutions:
NGOs, private and public sector, local authorities

Costs:
Macro projects minimum 300,000 Euro, for details see table in the Practical Guide to External Aid p. 9

Application:
Local calls for proposal (delegation of the Commission)

Contact:
Micheline Kocak
Tel.: 0032-2-296 03 85
Micheline.kocak-dehandtschutter@cec.eu.int

Delegations of the Commission

Practical Guide to external aid of the EC:
http://europa.eu.int/comm/europeaid/tender/gestion/pg/pg_en.pdf

YOUTH (GD Education and Culture)

Description:
Promoting co-operation/exchange between young people. Sub programmes: Youth for Europe, European Voluntary Service, Youth initiatives and Joint actions.
The Commission enhances regional co-operation, particularly with third countries.

Countries concerned:
Candidate countries can equally participate in all programmes of YOUTH. Participation of third countries is limited to YOUTH for EUROPE, European Voluntary service and the supporting measure of these. Regulation:

Minimum two member states or one member state and one EFTA-state (Iceland, Liechtenstein, Norway) and at least two thirds of the countries (amongst others: Albania, BiH, Croatia, FRY, Macedonia). Must take place in a third country or involve more than 20 % of the participants from third countries. SEE is one priority region.

Eligible Partners:
local authorities, youth organizations, youth groups, individual persons involved in youth programmes

Costs:
Regulation regarding the amount of different types of expenses (exp.: for a seminar 100 Euro/day/participants)

Application:
to the National Agencies, in exceptional cases directly to the Commission GD Culture and Education

Contact :
National Agencies/Eurodesks
youth@cec.eu.int
http://europa.eu.int/comm/education/youth/youthprogramme.html

TOWN TWINNING (GD Education and Culture), independent from PHARE TWINNING !

Description:
Bringing people on the local level together, reinforcing European awareness, particularly promoting the participation of citizens not being representative of local government.

Countries concerned:
Open for candidate countries, minimum one municipality of a member state.

Eligible Partners:
A local government or a federation of local governments, associations, must submit the proposal.

Costs:
Minimum 1000 euro, Maximum 50,000 Euro

Application:
European Commission GD Culture and Education

Contact:
jumelage@cec.eu.int
towntwinning@cec.eu.int

Research and Technology Development and Demonstration on Confirming the international role of the community research (1998-2001) (GD Research)

Support for Centers of Excellence

Description:
As a contribution to restructuring the science and technology sector of the countries concerned, the objective will be to support approximately 20 excellent

research centres in these countries to better put their capabilities at the service of the economic and social needs of their region, in conformity with the interest of the Union as a whole. Enabling them to improve their links with other European centres, e.g. through networking and twinning arrangements, will do this in the first place.

Countries concerned:
Candidate countries

Eligible Partners:
Research institutes, universities, and laboratories

Application :
European Commission GD Research

Contact:
National Contact Points
European Commission
inco@cec.eu.int
http://www.cordis.lu/inco2/src/res-a-1.htm#a1

REINTEGRATION OF THE BALKAN REGION (INCO-Copernicus-Balkan: ICFP501A2PRO2)

Description:
Supporting research on

1. environment management in industrial areas (protection areas, treatment of waste, sustainable development, reduction of air pollution) and on
2. health issues like post-traumata/post-conflict problems (improving treatment, rehabilitation) and on
3. food protection (transport, danger of new technologies of food safety, hygiene standards, labeling).

Countries concerned:
Albania, BiH, Croatia, FRY, Macedonia

Eligible Partners:
Research institutes, universities

Application:
European Commission GD Research

Contact:
National Contact Points
European Commission
inco@cec.eu.int
http://www.cordis.lu/inco2/src/e-oj-en.htm

FALCONE (GD Justice and Internal Affairs)

Description:
Exchange/vocational training/co-operation of persons working in the fields of fight against organized crime.

Countries concerned:
All countries can participate, but the proposal has to be submitted by an organization of a member state.

Eligible Partners:
Administrations, institutions of vocational training or research (public as well as private), working in the field of justice (police, court, administration).

Application:
European Commission GD Justice and Home Affairs

Contact:
JAI-Falcone@cec.eu.int

ODYSSEUS (GD Justice and Internal affairs) (will be replaced in 2002 by a new programme)

Description:
Exchange/training/co-operation of persons involved in asylum issues, immigration and crossing of external borders.

Countries concerned:
All countries can participate, but the proposal has to be submitted by an organization of a member state.

Eligible Partners:
Administrations, NGOs, foundations, associations, research institutions dealing with asylum matters.

Application:
European Commission GD Justice and Home Affairs

Contact:
JAI-odysseus@cec.eu.int

LIFE III (2000-2004)

Description:
The programme co-finances environmental actions that contribute to the implementation, updating and development of Community policy and of environmental legislation in particular as regards the integration of the environment into other policies, and to sustainable development in the Community.

Contact:
EUROPEAN COMMISSION,
DG ENV.D.1, BU-9 02/1,
rue de Loi/Wetstraat 200,
B-1049 BRUSSELS
Fax (+32-2) 296 95.56
http://www.europa.eu.int/comm/life/home.htm
envinfo@cec.eu.int

LIFE is divided in LIFE-Environment, LIFE-Nature and LIFE-Third countries.

LIFE-Environment

Description:
LIFE-Environment finances innovative pilot and demonstration actions aimed at:
(1) the integration of environmental considerations into land use development and planning, including urban and coastal areas
(2) the promotion of the sustainable management of groundwater and surface water

(3) the minimization of environmental impact of economic activities
(4) the prevention, recycling and sound management of waste streams
(5) the reduction of the environmental impact of products

Countries concerned:
Member states, candidate countries that participate in the LIFE-Environment programme (for the call LIFE-Environment 2002, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Romania and Slovenia).

Application:
The responsible national authority of the member or candidate state responsible for collecting calls for proposals on a yearly basis.

Eligible partners:
legal entities established in the Member States of the European Union - e.g. individuals, industrial and commercial firms, local authorities, etc. The participation of Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs) is in particular encouraged.

LIFE-Nature

Description:
LIFE-Nature requires the maintenance or the restoration of the natural habitats and the population of species of wild fauna and flora at a favorable level (nature conversation actions). It is aimed at the on-site management and conservation of the most valuable fauna and flora species and habitats in the Union. In the candidate countries associated to LIFE, LIFE-Nature shall have similar objectives, applied to the sites of international importance.

Countries concerned:
Member states, candidate countries that participate in the LIFE-Environment programme (for the call LIFE-Environment 2002, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Romania and Slovenia).

Eligible partners:
All natural and legal persons established in the European Union or in the candidate countries associated to LIFE.

Application:
Calls for proposals on a yearly basis. The proposals are collected by the responsible national authority of a member or a candidate state concerned.

Costs:
Over 500,000 Euro.

LIFE-Third Countries

Description:
The programme supports technical assistance initiatives by establishing new administrative bodies and structures or by reinforcing the existing ones, strengthens co-operation, facilitates the experience sharing and favors the transfer of expertise and knowledge with a view to assisting the country (or the region) concerned to develop environmental legislation and planning to manage better its environment and promote strategies for sustainable development.

CBC and regional projects involving two or more countries are encouraged. NO FINANCING can be provided for: research, commercial projects, conferences, seminars, environmental studies and actions of structural nature (infrastructure, equipment etc.).

Costs:
more than 600,000 Euro less than 100.000 Euro

Countries concerned:
Third countries bordering the Mediterranean and the Baltic Sea, such as: Albania, Bosnia-Herzegovina, Croatia

Eligible partners:
National administrations, all kinds of companies, organizations, and technical assistance programme bodies (governmental and non-governmental) that are resident in the countries concerned, regional networks that are established in the region or have an international status.

Application:
Delegation of the European Commission, or the to the European Commission in Brussels via the missions to EC of the countries concerned, organizations with international status apply directly to the Commission in Brussels.

Contact:
Delegation of the Commission in the Third countries
life-tcy@cec.eu.int
http://europa.eu.int/comm/life/3countr/index.htm

LOCAL DEMOCRACY AGENCY (launched by the Council of Europe)

Description:
Created in 1993 by the standing conference of Local and Regional Authorities of Europe for Ex-Yugoslavia to support the preservation of the multicultural character of the cities. The initiative aims to improve the communication/ co-operation between citizens of communities by setting up an office in the host town, LDA.Delegates nominated by the partners, partners decide upon the programme run in the LDA.

Already existing LDAs in the Balkan countries: Subotica (FRY), Osijek/Vukovar (Croatia), Tuzla (BiH), Sisak (Croatia), Istria (Croatia), Zavidovici (BiH), Ohrid (Macedonia), Prijedor (BiH).

Application:
Council of Europe: Congress of Local and Regional Authorities (decides upon the use of the label LDA), financing by CoE, Co-financing by the partners.

Eligible Institutions/Organisations:
Local governments, municipalities, with possible aid from an international NGO minimum three towns/municipalities from different European states (definition CoE).

Contact:
Congress of Local and Regional Authorities of Europe (Council of Europe)
F-67075 Strasbourg Cedex
Tèl.: +33/(0)3 88 41 3194
Fax: +33/(0)3 88 41 3747 / 2751
E-mail: webcplre@coe.int
http://www.coe.fr/cplre/indexe.htm

LDAs
Mrs Sylvie AFFHOLDER
CLRAE Secretariat
F - 67075 Strasbourg cedex
tel: + 33 3 88 41 35 51
fax: + 33 3 88 41 37 47
E-Mail: sylvie.affholder@coe.int
http://www.coe.fr/cplre/adl/indexe.htm

ROYAUMONT PROCESS
(launched by the European Council, active until 2000, now absorbed by Stability pact)

The Royaumont Process for Stability and Good Neighborliness in South Eastern Europe was launched in December 1995 at the initiative of France, with support from the European Union, on the fringe of the Conference of Paris on Peace in Bosnia-Herzegovina.

Its original aim was to facilitate the implementation of the Paris/Dayton Peace Agreements by placing them in a broader perspective with a view to promoting stability and good-neighborliness, notably by encouraging dialogue, contacts and co-operation at all levels of civil society in the broader region of Southeastern Europe.

The countries participating in the Process are those "in and around the former SFR Yugoslavia", as well as the member states of the European Union, Russia and the United States of America.

The Royaumont initiative concentrates on the measures that need to be taken in the direction of promoting civic structures and of establishing effective channels of communication across national boundaries, at the bilateral and multilateral level in the region of South Eastern Europe.

The initiative focuses (amongst other) on:
- Local government,
- Civil society networking,
- Inter-ethnical dialogue,
- Co-operation of social and economic organizations,
- Media.

Applicants:
Non-governmental, non-profit organizations, based in the countries in question, must submit the application, private sector, states in contractual relation with the NGO, partners in two or three different countries, application directly to Royaumont Process/Council
European Investment Bank (EIB).

Description:
EIB operations in the Western Balkans will increase substantially in the near future in close co-operation with the EU Commission and the other multilateral financing institutions. With a view to underscoring its commitment to post-war reconstruction in the Balkan area, the EIB participated in the establishment of the Stability Pact for South-Eastern Europe at the Ministerial Meeting in Cologne in June 1999. In addition to the reconstruction programme, the EIB is financing projects in the Balkans under its normal lending activity in the region. Different types of loans are given, esp. individual loans of over 25 Million EURO.

GLOBAL LOANS

Countries concerned:
Candidates, FRY, Macedonia, Albania, BiH, Croatia

Eligible Partners:
Local authorities, firms with fewer than 500 employees

Costs:
Maximum 12.5 Million Euro

Application:
intermediary bank existing in each country (see list in web site)

Contact:
Intermediary bank

info@eib.org

For further information
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EUROPEAN BANK FOR RECONSTRUCTION AND DEVELOPMENT (EBRD)

Description:
It exists to foster the transition towards open market-oriented economies and to promote private and entrepreneurial initiative in the countries of central and eastern Europe and the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) committed to and applying the principles of multiparty democracy, pluralism and market economics.

The EBRD provides project-specific direct financing for private sector activities, restructuring and privatization, or financing of infrastructure that supports these activities. Joint ventures have been major beneficiaries of Bank lending, particularly those with foreign sponsors. The Bank offers a wide range of financial instruments and takes a flexible approach in the structuring of its financial products.

Countries concerned:
Candidates, Macedonia, FRY, Albania, BiH, Croatia

Eligible Partners:
Local and foreign Companies, entrepreneurs, particularly SMEs

Costs:
Minimum 5 Million Euro, can be reduced if necessary

Application:
EBRD, London

EUROPEAN NETWORK OF TRAINING ORGANIZATIONS (ENTO)

Network for organizations in charge with training for local and municipality authorities.
This network itself might not help as a partner but it can be helpful to find trainers for vocational training (possibly CBC) of representatives of municipalities (no financial support).
Financed by membership fees, sponsoring, CoE.
Participating members in Albania, Macedonia, Croatia, BiH, FRY, Romania (Soros).

Contact:
http://www.etf.eu.int

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