



Project-sheet



Theme:
**“Cross-border conurbations:
Empowering internal governance”**

EURODISTRICT STRASBOURG – ORTENAU (FR/DE)

1. Mobilization of the people dedicated to cross-border cooperation

1.1. Present situation

At the political level, the composition of Eurodistrict Strasborug-Ortenau includes:

- Two spokesmen: a French one and a German one,
- a Eurodistrict Assembly of 14 members (mayors and Landrat on the German side, President of the Urban Community of Strasbourg and town councillors on the French side), at least two meetings a year,
- a Eurodistrict Follow-up Committee involving higher levels of administration and both states, at least one meeting a year.

At the technical level, the organisation is based on:

- Two secretariats:
 - on the French side: technicians of the Department of International Affairs of the Urban community of Strasbourg,
 - on the German side : technicians of the Department of International Affairs of the Landratsamt Ortenaukreis and of the City, whose Mayor or president is spokesman (City of Kehl for the year 2009),
 - the technicians of the two countries build the coordination group that meets twice a month.

The key problem: the technicians are working on other cross-border themes and do not have enough time to work for the Eurodistrict.

- Groups of experts for the specific fields of activity of the Eurodistrict: these groups meet irregularly and are sometimes difficult to mobilize as their members also have a lot of work to do within their respective administrations.

1.2. Improvements planned

The setting-up of a European Grouping of Territorial Cooperation (EGTC) for the Eurodistrict might lead to a stronger involvement of political and technical levels on a long-term basis.



European Union

European Regional Development Fund

At the political level:

- Stronger participation of the representatives in the Assembly of the EGTC (48 persons versus 14 actually)
- Common management of the budget of the EGTC
- Common election of the president and the vice-president of the EGTC
- Common designation of the members of the executive body
- Development of actions leading to a stronger policy of communication between CB politicians (policy of exchanges)

At the technical level:

Establishing the EGTC aims to change the working conditions by ensuring a better flow of communication through a common general secretariat. This means:

- Putting together the two separate secretariats under the same roof with one general secretary assisted by a technical staff
- Having technicians who are working exclusively for the EGTC
- Creating a job dedicated to the management of the Interreg funds for micro projects
- Setting-up the general secretariat at a symbolic place on the border of the two countries (the City of Kehl)

1.3. Solutions

It is planned to organize language and intercultural trainings for the employees and to set-up cross-border courses and studies dedicated to the administration of cross-border conurbations at the national levels.

2. Formalization of cross-border cooperation

2.1. Present situation

A convention between 7 partners from both sides of the border was signed in 2005. It has no legal status. Through this convention, the Eurodistrict Strasbourg-Ortenau pursues three aims: becoming a pilot-territory in Europe; contributing to the sustainable development of the region and playing a strong role within Europe; improving the daily life of the citizens living on its territory.

2.2. Improvements planned

The aim is to create a cross-border legal institution. The creation of a European Grouping of Territorial Cooperation (EGTC) was chosen as the form of governance for different reasons (see above). The EGTC is the best legal instrument available at the moment in the European Union: it is the best instrument to handle EU funds, its legal structure is flexible and open to other partners such as EU member states and other public bodies. The EGTC allows possibility for an enlargement of the geographical area. And finally, the EGTC gives a very good visibility of the structure for the citizens of the district and at national and international levels.

2.3. Recommendations

The main recommendation from Eurodistrict Strasbourg Ortenau addressed to the European level is to create other legal tools empowering local institutions.

For the regional and national levels, the organization of meetings between different cross-border conurbations for the exchange of good practices within a region or a country is recommended.

3. Budget

3.1 Present situation

Concerning the financing of the coordination of the cross-border cooperation, the technicians are paid by their own administrations. The cross-border projects are financed by the local bodies (50% / 50%) and by other sources of funding (Interreg).

3.2 Improvements planned

The aim is to secure a yearly financing of the European Grouping of Territorial Cooperation (EGTC): each member participates in the budget and each country's contribution amounts to 50 percent of the general budget. The budget should enable an easier handling of EU structural funds and in some cases a direct management (i.e. interreg funds for micro projects).

