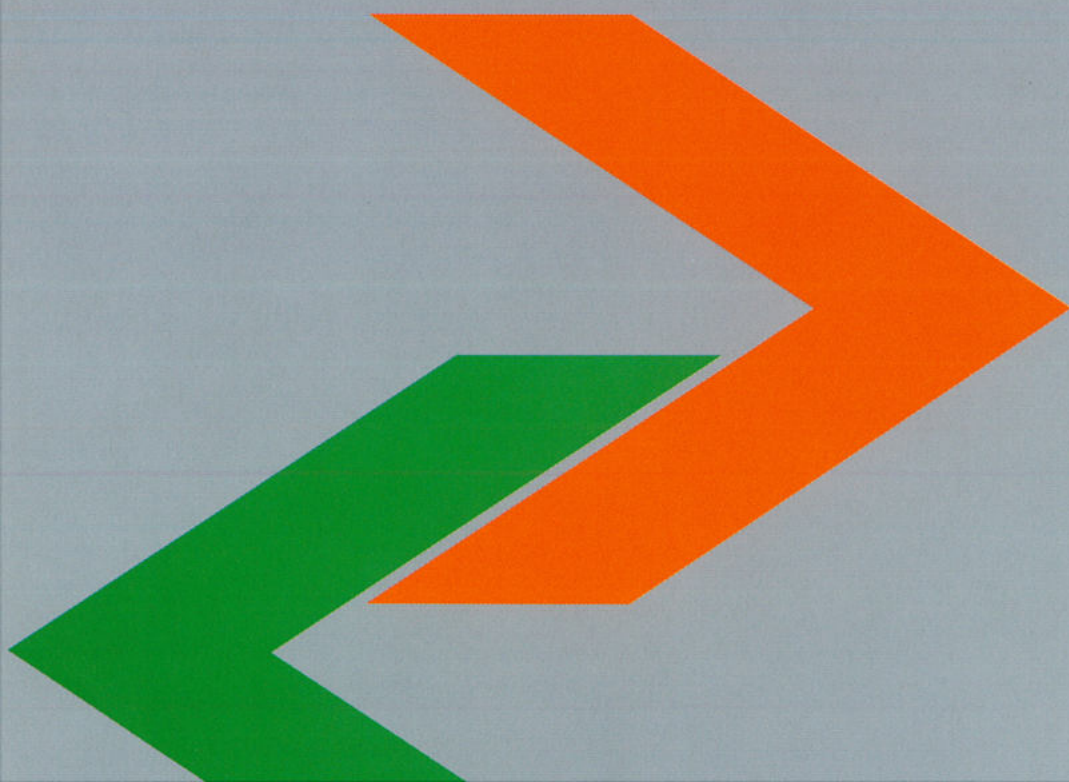




AEBR

**The Association of European
Border Regions**

**25 Years
of Working Together**

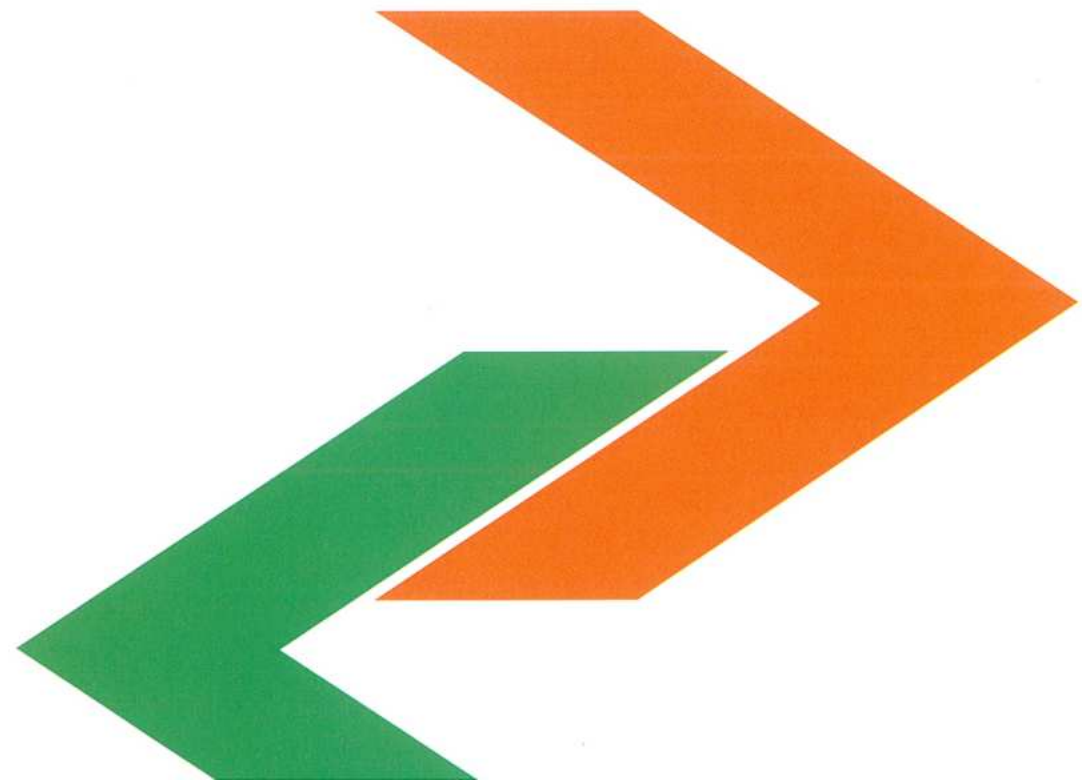




AEBR

**The Association of European
Border Regions**

**25 Years
of Working Together**



Contents

- Foreword by the President of the AEBR
- 6 Carry on!**
- The AEBR as part of the Movement for European Integration
- 7 Jubilee Welcome Speeches**
- JACQUES SANTER
LENI FISCHER
JORDI PUJOL
ELISABETH GATEAU
CLAUDE HAEGI
- The History of the AEBR from 1965 to 1996
- 10 Euro-Exercices for the 21st Century**
- The AEBR Membership Profile I
- 12 The Biggest are not always the Strongest**
- The AEBR Membership Profile II
- 14 Cooperation and Diversity**
- The Founding Principles of the AEBR
- 16 The Charter as the Expression of Common Intentions**
- The AEBR as an Umbrella Organisation
- 20 A Statute for Common Goals**
- The Achievements of the AEBR I
- 22 The Network for and with the Border Regions**
- The Achievements of the AEBR II
- 24 LACE: Coaching on Behalf of the EU**
- The Achievements of the AEBR III
- 26 Two Good Practice Examples**
- AEBR 1995 Resolution on the EU Report «Europa 2000+»
- 28 «This constant Interference from below»**

➤ Presidential address

KARL AHRENS
PRESIDENT OF AEBR

25 years of the Association of European Border Regions, a reason to celebrate? Certainly – but not a reason to take a rest.

Our work over the last 25 years has not only been worthwhile for the people in the European border regions but has also helped to support European integration. But even today most of the European border regions still experience an economic and cultural backwardness, their infrastructure is less developed than in the centres of the states, levels of unemployment are higher and, correspondingly, the future looks bleaker for young people. But our association – at first with a focus on the strip of the river Rhine but today working throughout Europe – has above all affected the consciousness of people living in border areas and their local and regional representatives. It has released them from thinking in the «semi-circles» to which they were confined for centuries, thanks to the power politics of states. Particularly in this area we cannot rest and must – especially with assistance through the LACE Observatory of the European Commission – strengthen our technical support.

Most European states have by now become aware that problems in their border regions cannot be solved against or without their neighbours but only in cooperation with them. This change of thinking has also been brought about with the help of the AEBR, but nevertheless, there are a number of states on our continent with a centralised tradition and who regard any contact with the local and regional representatives across the border as foreign policy, lying solely within the competencies of the national administration. A lot of patience and time is necessary to free the heads of those responsible from these traditional customs and the conviction that only the central administration knows

Since its foundation our association has played an important role as a technical advisor and a political engine not only with the Council of Europe but also with the European Commission. It has participated in the preparation of all the European Conference of Transfrontier Regions of the Council of Europe and has asserted considerable influence on their conclusions. The Madrid Convention on cross-border cooperation at the borders of European states would not have (or not yet) been developed without the cooperation of AEBR. In addition, the Interreg Programme of the European Union which provides financial support towards the development of border regions would not have happened without the AEBR's expert work nor its constant lobbying at all political levels. However, it should not be forgotten that also on European level there were a series of setbacks which had to be surmounted. Furthermore, the present level of European politics is not sufficient to support border regions with an equal level of development and to alleviate the disparities.

We will have achieved our goal only when people in the border regions have the same chances as people in the centres, when our young people do not have to emigrate anymore in order to use their full potential in life.

This means: Carry on!

➤ Welcome Speeches

JACQUES SANTER
PRESIDENT OF THE EUROPEAN COMMISSION

I OFFER MY WARMEST CONGRATULATIONS TO THE ASSOCIATION OF EUROPEAN BORDER REGIONS ON ITS 25TH ANNIVERSARY

During this quarter of a century, you have shown how fruitful regional cooperation beyond borders can be, making Europe a tangible life experience for its citizens.

As a Luxemburger I am aware of the significance of cross-border and interregional cooperation. The contribution to the rapprochement of the regions, and to finding common solutions to cross-border problems, cannot be valued too highly.

Through the Community Initiative Interreg, in which AEBR's members participate, the European Commission promotes a broad range of important actions.

Your long-standing achievements are focal points to which the European Commission's attention cannot fail to be drawn. I am therefore delighted that you have placed the theme of «cross-border cooperation for employment creation» at the centre of your jubilee event.

The fight against unemployment is my top priority. This conviction forms the basis of the «confidence pact for employment». Local employment initiatives especially can only make an effective impact if all those involved make the most of every opportunity. I would therefore like to encourage you to continue to use your tried and tested field experience of cooperation to draw special attention to this theme.

The regions are the building-blocks of the cathedral of Europe, to the construction of which we are all committed. For the future, my wish is that you further broaden and deepen your cooperation skills. The European Commission will not fail to support you actively in this task.

LENI FISCHER
PRESIDENT OF THE PARLIAMENTARY ASSEMBLY OF THE COUNCIL OF EUROPE, MEMBER OF THE GERMAN BUNDESTAG

THE AEBR IS A PRIVILEGED PARTNER OF THE COUNCIL OF EUROPE

It makes me very happy to congratulate you, on behalf of the Parliamentary Assembly, on the 25th birthday of the AEBR. This provides us with the opportunity to acknowledge not only the 25-year long contribution that this organisation has made to European integration, but also its intensive activity in this area. Furthermore, this event is the appropriate occasion to publicise the cooperation between the AEBR and the Council of Europe that has been going on now for almost a quarter of a century. It was in 1971, immediately after its foundation, that the AEBR and the Council of Europe began their fruitful dialogue and their efficient collaboration, an activity which has expanded regularly ever since.

These contacts have been borne on the mutual conviction that dialogue between neighbouring regions, separated solely by borders but confronted with the same problems, can only contribute to European cooperation and integration.

The AEBR is a privileged partner of the Council of Europe. The commitment of Dr Karl Ahrens in his successive posts has been instrumental in achieving this; first as Chairman of the Assembly Committee concerned, then as President of the Parliamentary Assembly and lastly as President of the AEBR.

The enthusiastic and visionary cooperation initiated by the AEBR with the Council of Europe has indicated the way for European integration. The vitality of cross-border and regional cooperation is a remarkable manifestation of the idea and the reality of a citizens' Europe.

... TODAY MOST OF THE
... IN BORDER REGIONS
... EXPERIENCE AN ECONOMIC
... CULTURAL BACKWARDNESS,
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... EUROPEAN STATES HAVE
... BECOME AWARE THAT
... PROBLEMS IN THEIR BORDER
... REGIONS CANNOT BE SOLVED
... AGAINST OR WITHOUT THEIR
... NEIGHBOURS BUT ONLY IN
... COOPERATION WITH THEM.»



...ms
... of AEBR



Jacques Santer
President of the European
Commission



Leni Fischer
President of the Parliamentary
Assembly of the Council of Europe,
Member of the German Bundestag

Welcome Speeches

as it does almost every state on the continent. These efforts and commitment have led to the creation of two legal instruments that the Council of Europe and the AEBR can be proud of: the European Outline Convention on Transfrontier Co-operation between Territorial Communities or Authorities and its additional protocol. However, these conventions by no means signify the end of our work, instead they are valuable instruments which we can use to continue the task we have had since 1949, that of turning our continent into a region of peace, cooperation and solidarity, where territorial ambition and intolerant nationalism are banished.

The Council of Europe and – I am sure – the AEBR too, are ready to take up this challenge. They begin a new quarter century of joint efforts for a Europe the way we would wish it to be.

JORDI PUJOL
PRESIDENT OF THE GENERALITAT DE CATALUNYA

Cross-border cooperation contributes to the strengthening of the European Union. In parallel with the process of building Europe which is being undertaken by the States and the Community institutions, the regions and local institutions are intensifying contacts with their neighbours and overcoming the separation lines that borders used to constitute in the past.

AEBR has played an important role in this rapprochement of regions and local institutions. Its work fostering the promotion and support of cooperation has borne fruit. Moreover, it has contributed greatly to the development of community initiatives in the field of cross-border coopera-

tion, and to express our conviction that it will continue to be at least as useful to the European border regions as it has been up to now.

ELISABETH GATEAU
SECRETARY GENERAL OF THE CEMR

Since its inception 25 years ago, the Association of European Border Regions has made a unique contribution to the goal of territorial co-operation in Europe.

Border regions have a crucial role to play in bringing Europeans closer together, as well as in European economic and urban development, throughout the Union and beyond.

The efficient activities of the AEBR have helped these border regions to overcome, one by one, the obstacles which prevented them from becoming the force for development, the models of co-operative innovation, which they are now, fostering dignity and equality at all levels, and forging alliances between towns and regions.

In this 25th anniversary year, the CEMR wishes to honour those whose indefatigable efforts are contributing to the creation of a Europe at the service of its citizens.



of the Assembly of
Regions
of the Generalitat de



Gateau
General of the CEMR



Claude Haegi
President of the Association of
Local and Regional Authorities of
the Council of Europe
Member of the Government of
Geneva

CLAUDE HAEGI
**PRESIDENT OF THE ASSOCIATION OF LOCAL
AND REGIONAL AUTHORITIES OF THE COUNCIL
OF EUROPE**
MEMBER OF THE GOVERNMENT OF GENEVA

**THERE IS A CRITICAL NEED FOR THE AEBR
THROUGHOUT THIS CONTINENT.**

The AEBR (Association of European Border Regions) exists because its activities are crucial to the successful transformation of this continent into a Europe of Regions. It is essential that an inter-regional body provide a forum where cross-border regions can get together to exchange experiences and, more importantly, define their future.

For a quarter of a century, the AEBR has contributed to the easing of the problems that persist along national boundaries, thereby laying a foundation for good neighbourly relations between States, regions, communes, and – finally – between the individual inhabitants of these areas. The activities of the AEBR complement the cross-border objectives of the Council of Europe, in particular those of the Association of Local and Regional Authorities in Europe which has, for many years, co-operated with the AEBR in this field. I hope that this co-operation will be developed further, beyond the conferences of European border regions in which both organisations are regularly involved.

I myself have personal daily experiences of cross-border co-operation, due to the fact that Geneva has 102.5 km of borders with France, against only 4.5 km with Switzerland. Which means that Geneva is a piece of jigsaw puzzle wedged almost entirely inside French territory. This has led, since the beginning of the 19th century, to the signing of over 100 international agreements, designed to make life easier for citizens on both sides of the Franco-Swiss border.

munies part of the taxes paid by those of their citizens who earn their living in Switzerland. Over a 20 year period, in excess of 900 million Swiss Francs have been returned to the neighbouring French region, and used to build schools, roads, homes.

Co-operation between France and Geneva has been growing steadily. For the last two years, a Franco-Geneva plan to rationalise their joint territory has resulted in ten cross-border projects being either studied or implemented, among them the cross-border light railway which will become the central element of the public transport network servicing an area with a population of over 650,000.

Geneva joined the AEBR because of the keen interest it has in the field of cross-border co-operation. It hopes to make a modest contribution to the goals of the organisation, and to rub shoulders with other regions experiencing similar problems. Together we are convinced that we shall find ways of building a prosperous Europe of Regions characterised by peaceful relations and solidarity.

My thanks to the AEBR, to all the members of its team, and to its secretary general, Jens Gabbe, who, for the last 25 years, have committed their energies to furthering this noble cause.

> Euro-Excercises for the 21st Century

MEMBER STATES

AEBR

Belgium
France
Germany
Italy
Netherlands
Spain
United Kingdom

GENERAL SECRETARIES

AEBR

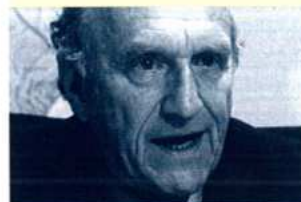
Alfred Mozer 1971-1979
Hartmut Hausmann 1979-1986
Jens Gabbe since 1987

PRESIDENTS OF THE AEBR

Alfred Mozer 1971-1976
Horst Gerlach 1976-1979
Wolfgang Schäuble 1979-1983
Karl Ahrens 1983-1996



Viktor von Malchus



Hans J. Briner



Joseph Rey



Jens Gabbe

FROM IDEA TO FOUNDATION

It was at the «International Regional Planning Conference» in Basel in 1965 that the first ideas for founding a European association, or union for border regions, were developed. Following intensive preparatory work, 10 border regions, meeting at the moated castle of Anholt (EUREGIO), founded the Standing Conference of European Border Regions on 17/18 June 1971. Alfred Mozer became President of the Committee and Georg Wiek the Secretary. The Conference gave itself the title the «Association of European Border Regions».

EXPERT POLICY ADVICE

In the years following its establishment, the AEBR, in addition to its links with the border regions themselves, also developed closer contacts with the Council of Europe, the Commission of the European Communities (EC) and the Council of European Municipalities and Regions (CEMR). The Association supported the European Council in its efforts to improve cross-border cooperation by providing expert analysis and organisational assistance, particularly at the European Conference of Transfrontier Regions, a regular event since 1972. In 1976 Horst Gerlach, a Member of the German Bundestag (MdB), became President of the Association. One year later the first statutes were drawn up, and in 1979 the Association became an official observer at the Council of Europe.

FORWARD-LOOKING LEGAL AND ECONOMIC PRINCIPLES

In 1979, Dr Wolfgang Schäuble, MdB, became President of the AEBR and Hartmut Hausmann its managing director. In the same year, the «European Outline Convention for Transfrontier Cooperation between Territorial Committees or Authorities», drawn up with collaboration from the AEBR, was adopted by the Advisory Committee of the Council of Europe and in 1981 it was adopted by the Council of



Alfred Mozer 1971-1976



Horst Gerlach 1976-1979



Wolfgang Schäuble 1979-1983



Karl Ahrens 1979-1996

ses the problems currently experienced by the European border regions. In addition to other projects, the AEBR called for the drawing up of a European Spatial Planning Charter, and in 1981 it released a «European Charter for Border and Cross-Border Regions» (19.11.1981). In 1981 the AEBR became a founding member of the Contact Office for the European Coastal and Former Industrial Regions (BLORE). In 1982 the AEBR was given the opportunity to collaborate in the Advisory Committee on Municipal and Regional Institutions in the EU Member States. In the same year, membership of the AEBR rose to 24.

PREPARATION FOR THE SINGLE EUROPEAN MARKET, FREE OF INTERNAL BORDERS

Dr. Karl Ahrens, President of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe and member of the German Bundestag, was elected President of the AEBR. At the end of 1983, the AEBR assisted in the preparation and setting up of the first regional cross-border development programmes. With the support of the AEBR, the European Commission was able step by step to develop solutions to the problems of the border regions, now becoming increasingly important thanks to their position on the internal and external borders of the EU. The AEBR works on EU funding regulations concerned with coordinating regional development in border areas, and with addressing issues affecting the inhabitants of the border regions. In 1985 the AEBR was one of the founding members of the Assembly of European Regions (later the Committee of the Regions). The Association demanded a cross-border European policy for spatial planning and transport and the systematic development of regional cross-border development programmes on all borders.

In 1987 the Secretariat of the the AEBR was set up in the offices of the EUREGIO. Jens Gabbe became honorary General Secretary and was responsible for drawing

mental problems, tourism, cultural cooperation, and the technological development of the border regions.

CONSOLIDATION OF EU REGIONAL POLICY IN THE WEST - OPENING UP TOWARDS THE EAST

Problems in the border regions have been and remain obstacles to the achievement of the internal market and European integration. The recognition of this by the European Community (later the European Union, EU) was the basis for the Interreg I Community Initiative (1989-1994) and Interreg II (1995-1999); both programmes to which the AEBR has made a substantial contribution through its specialised and regional expertise. Thanks to financial support from 1990 to 1995 for the AEBR project, «Observatory for Cross-Border Cooperation» (LACE), the AEBR was given an even greater opportunity to deliver technical and expert help for the improvement of cross-border cooperation.

The democratisation of Central and Eastern Europe since 1989 and the enlargement of the EU, have lent increased significance to cross-border cooperation, especially on the northern, southern and eastern borders of the EU. New border regions have sprung up and the AEBR has made a decisive contribution to their development (e.g. LACE-Phare project). In 1995 the AEBR promulgated the amended version of the «Charter for European Border Regions».

On 18th September 1996, the AEBR received a particular demonstration of confidence on the part of the European Commission: The LACE project «Technical Assistance and Promotion of Cross-Border Cooperation related to the Community Initiative Interreg II (LACE-TAP)» was approved for the period 1996-2001.

The celebration event «25 Years of the AEBR - More Jobs through Cross-Border Cooperation» will take place in Rheine

Europäische Grenzregionen
Régions frontalières européennes
European Border Regions

Regional Geography Leipzig
 Cartography: R. Bräuer
 : J. Gabbe, V.v. Malchus,
 A. Droth, K. Gröber

0 300 400 km
 000 000



The AEBR Membership Profile I

The Biggest are not always the Strongest

INTERNATIONAL ORGANISATIONS IN WHICH SEVERAL MAJOR REGIONS FORM A CROSS-BORDER ASSOCIATION (MEMBERS OF THE AEBR)

- | | | | |
|---|---|--|---|
| 1 Arbeitsgemeinschaft Alpen-Adria (D/A/I/H/SLO/HR) | 2 Arbeitsgemeinschaft Alpenländer (D/CH/A/I) | 3 Carpathian Euroregion (H/PL/SR/UKR) | 4 Nordisk Ministerråd (DK/IS/N/S/SF) |
|---|---|--|---|

BORDER REGIONS AND CROSS-BORDER REGIONS (MEMBERS OF THE AEBR)

- | | | | |
|--|---|--|---|
| 5 Autonome Provinz Bozen-Südtirol (I) | 18 Regione Autonoma Friuli-Venezia Giulia (I) | 31 Euregio Maas-Rhein (B/NL/D) | 44 Département du Haut-Rhin (F) |
| 6 Canton de Genève (CH) | 19 Regione Autonoma Trentino-Alto Adige (I) | 32 Euregio Rhein-Maas-Nord (NL/D) | 45 Freiburger Regio-Gesellschaft e.V. (D) |
| 7 Diputación General de Aragón (E) | 20 Regione Siciliana (I) | 33 Euregio Rhein-Waal (NL/D) | 46 Landkreis Nordfriesland (D) |
| 8 Generalitat de Catalunya (E) | 21 Republika Slovenija (SLO) | 34 Euregio Scheldemond (B/NL) | 47 Landkreis Schleswig-Flensburg (D) |
| 9 Gobierno de Navarra (E) | 22 Sønderjyllands Amtskommune (DK) | 35 Euroregion Bug (UKR/PL) | 48 Österbottens Förbund (SF) |
| 10 Gobierno Vasco (E) | 23 Xunta de Galicia (E) | 36 Euroregion Erzgebirge (D/CZ) | 49 Planungsgemeinschaft Rheinpfalz/Koordinierungsstelle Südpfalz (D) |
| 11 Junta de Andalucía (E) | 24 Association of Rhodopy Municipalities (BG/GR) | 37 Euroregion Elbe-Labe (D/CZ) | 50 Planungsgemeinschaft Westpfalz (D) |
| 12 Junta de Castilla y León (E) | 25 BENELUX-Mittengebiet (B/NL) | 38 Euroregion Neisse (D/PL/CZ) | 51 Regio Basiliensis (CH) |
| 13 Junta de Extremadura (E) | 26 Eifel-Ardennen-Region (B/D/LUX) | 39 Euroregion Pomerania (D/PL) | 52 Regionalverband Hochrhein-Bodensee (D) |
| 14 Kommunförbundet Värmland (S) | 27 Ems-Dollart-Region (D/NL) | 40 Inn-Salzach-Euregio (A/D) | 53 Regionalverband Mittlerer Oberrhein (D) |
| 15 Provincia Autonoma di Trento (I) | 28 EUREGIO (D/NL) | 41 Öresundskomiteen (DK/S) | 54 Regionalverband Südlicher Oberrhein (D) |
| 16 Région Alsace (F) | 29 Euregio Bayerwald/Böhmerwald (D/A/CZ) | 42 Euroregion Spree-Neisse-Bober (D/PL) | 55 Stadt Flensburg (D) |
| 17 Région Languedoc-Roussillon (F) | 30 Euregio Egrensis (D/CZ) | 43 Aalands Landskapsstyrelse (SF) | 56 EuRegio Salzburg-Berchtesgadener Land-Traunstein (A/D) |

Cooperation and Diversity

FOUNDATION IN 1971,
HAS GROWN CONTI-
AND NOW HAS 56 MEM-
REPRESENTING SOME 90
REGIONS ALL OVER
BROAD-BASED ASSOCIA-
OF (BORDER) REGIONS
SEVERAL STATES ARE
S, AS WELL AS BORDER
CROSS-BORDER REGIONS
G ALONG STATE BORDERS.
S ALSO INCLUDE MANY
AL ASSOCIATIONS, MADE
REGIONAL AND LOCAL
ITIES.

I
Organisations formed
from the association of
several larger regions



1 Arbeitsgemeinschaft Alpen-Adria (D/A/I/H/SLO/HR)



2 Arbeitsgemeinschaft Alpenländer (D/CH/A/I)



7 Diputación General de Aragón (E)



8 Generalitat de Catalunya (E)



9 Gobierno de Navarra (E)



10 Gobierno Vasco (E)



17 Région Languedoc-Roussillon (F)



18 Regione Autonoma Friuli-Venezia Giulia (I)



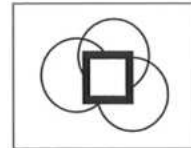
19 Regione Autonoma Trentino-Alto Adige (I)



20 Regione Siciliana (I)



25 BENELUX-Middegebied (B/NL)



26 Eifel-Ardennen-Region (B/D/LUX)



27 Ems-Dollart-Region (D/NL)



28 EUREGIO (D/NL)



35 Euroregion Bug (UKR/PL)



36 Euroregion Erzgebirge (D/CZ)



37 Euroregion Elbe-Labe (D/CZ)



38 Euroregion Neisse (D/PL/CZ)

III
National border
regions falling under
category II a



43 Aalands Landskapsstyrelse (SF)



44 Département du Haut-Rhin (F)



3 Carpathian Euroregion (H/PL/SK/UKR)



4 Nordisk Ministerråd (DK/IS/N/S/SF)



11 Junta de Andalucía (E)



12 Junta de Castilla y León (E)



13 Junta de Extremadura (E)



14 Kommunförbundet Värmland (S)



15 Provincia Autonoma di Trento (I)



16 Région Alsace (F)



21 Republika Slovenija (SLO)



22 Sønderjyllands Amtskommune (DK)



23 Xunta de Galicia (E)



29 Euregio Bayerwald/Böhmerwald (D/A/CZ)



30 Euregio Egrensis (D/D/CZ)



31 Euregio Maas-Rhein (B/NL/D)



32 Euregio Rhein-Maas-Nord (NL/D)



33 Euregio Rhein-Waal (NL/D)



34 Euregio Scheldemond (B/NL)



39 Euroregion Pomerania (D/PL)



40 Inn-Salzach-Euregio (A/D)



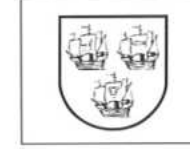
41 Öresundskomiteen (DK/S)



42 Euroregion Spree-Neisse-Bober (D/PL)



45 Freiburger Regio-Gesellschaft e.V. (D)



46 Landkreis Nordfriesland (D)



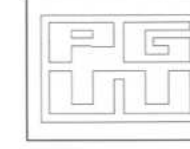
47 Landkreis Schleswig-Flensburg (D)



48 Österbottens Förbund (SF)



49 Planungsgemeinschaft Rheinpfalz/Koordinierungsstelle Südpfalz (D)



50 Planungsgemeinschaft Westpfalz (D)

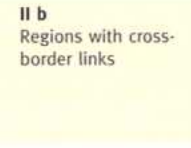
II a
Regions as defined by
the EU and the Council
of Europe: the first level
below the national level
(larger regions)



5 Autonomna Provinz Bozen-Südtirol (I)



6 Canton de Genève (CH)



II b
Regions with cross-
border links

IV
Advisory members

> The Charter as the Expression of Common Intentions

Y OF THE «EUROPEAN
OF BORDER AND CROSS-
REGIONS» SIGNED ON
EMBER 1981 IN THE
(GERMANY/NETHER-
AND AMENDED ON 1ST
ER 1995 IN SZCZECIN
ION POMERANIA
(GERMANY).

PREAMBLE

Borders are the «scars of history», that above bring all many disadvantages to border regions. Cross-border cooperation within Europe is vital since it helps to even out disadvantages and to improve the living conditions of the population concerned. Getting to know the neighbour region and developing mutual understanding and trust are preconditions for any cross-border cooperation.

HISTORICAL-POLITICAL BACKGROUND

Concepts of public law, human rights, fundamental rights and of free markets had already begun to develop in the eighteenth century. During the nineteenth and twentieth centuries much of the traditional geopolitical landscape that had evolved into regions during the course of history was cut through by the borders of the recently formed national states. Yet in spite of these borders many ethnic groups still belong together in cultural and historical terms.

POLITICAL ASPECTS

The violent confrontations in Europe during the first half of this century had the effect of weakening the flow of business, traffic, culture and settlement from the centres of states to their political borders. This caused – with a few exceptions – the border regions to develop into structurally weak, under-developed areas. Often the populations of these areas lost their identity. This state of affairs and the related legal, economic and social problems, are typical distinguishing features of border regions, to be found running from the south, through Central and Eastern Europe, all the way up into Scandinavia.

A TOUCHSTONE FOR MEASURING EUROPEAN INTEGRATION

After the second world war, the European states, regions and municipalities set about minimising these problems that had developed as the result of historical events, but which lacked any cultural found-



«BORDERS ARE THE «SCARS OF HISTORY»
THAT ABOVE BRING ALL MANY
DISADVANTAGES TO BORDER REGIONS.»
(PICTURE: CUSTOMS-BARRIER
BASEL-HUNINGUE CH-F)

Eastern Europe, at the borders within Eastern Europe itself, and in the Mediterranean area. These border regions too can put an end to their isolation by improving their integration and taking on a bridging role in their area. This process is significant for Europe since it is the touchstone for measuring European integration.

THE NEW QUALITY OF THE BORDERS

In order to reach this goal, the barriers, the divisive factors and the national administrative borders have first to be overcome. This is vital since, as part of European integration and the developing process of cooperation, the people of the border regions have the right to demand equal living conditions in this new Europe.

A CROSS-BORDER NETWORK IS NECESSARY

Border and cross-border regions often suffer from a shortage of high quality jobs and training organisations. Businesses in border regions frequently lack sufficient

of the border. These are the reasons why cross-border networks are so necessary. There is an urgent need to facilitate economic and infrastructural cooperation. It is only by removing barriers, for example in the social sector; within training and language education; in everyday border-related problems, and by lifting the obstacles to cultural understanding, that the necessary trust can be built up. Cross-border cooperation in all of Europe remains therefore a pressing task for the future.

PARTNERSHIP AND SUBSIDIARITY

As part of this task, the appropriate structures and bodies at regional level must be taken into consideration, supported and developed further. The comprehensive and consistent introduction of ideas on regionalisation into European state constitutions is of direct benefit to cross-border cooperation. Improved coordination and intensive cooperation between European, national, regional and local decision-makers is essential for the success

REMOVAL OF ECONOMIC RESTRICTIONS

Within the immediate regional context, cross-border cooperation helps to diminish economic imbalances and other barriers between neighbouring border regions when carried out in partnership with national governments and the European institutions.

The growing concentration of work, services and capital in the industrial centres of Europe can only be countered by adopting European and national level policies for regional planning and regional development.

MEASURES

The following measures are those most suitable for intensifying regional development and regional planning policies:

- cross-border regional analyses;
- regular cross-border coordination of all schemes affecting regional development;
- development and updating of a «catalogue of cross-border problems»;
- creating development visions and plans for the cross-border regions (taking into account national regional development and other specialised plans);
- cross-border local planning;
- cross-border participation in the design and coordination of measures and institutions affecting regional planning and regional development policy;
- gradual coordination of regional policy funding instruments in cross-border regions;
- participation of citizens, municipalities and regions on both sides of the border in all plans and measures affecting regional development.

STRENGTHENING THE POSITION OF THE BORDER REGIONS IN THE EUROPEAN COMPETITION FOR ECONOMIC LOCATIONS

The Charter as the Expression of Common Intentions

operational programmes should be developed and updated by the regions, serving as the basis for their joint development.

IMPROVEMENT IN THE TRANSPORT INFRASTRUCTURE

Transport links, roads, railways, airports, shipping routes, ports and energy supply have an increasing international significance. They are therefore amongst the most important measures and instruments of regional planning and regional development policy in cross-border regions.

IMPROVEMENT OF TELEMATICS AND COMMUNICATIONS

The development of telematics and communications offers prospective opportunities for the future development of border and cross-border regions, particularly those on the external borders of the EU and in those in Central and Eastern Europe.

IMPROVEMENT OF THE ECONOMIC SITUATION

A coordinated economic and employment policy must make a direct improvement on cross-border regional and economic development. The obvious economic differences across Southern, Western, Central and Eastern Europe have, in many European border areas, led to numerous problems in common. These problems could be avoided by encouraging industrial and service organisations to locate in the area, or by restructuring existing industries.

IMPROVEMENT OF SUPPLY AND WASTE DISPOSAL FACILITIES

It is possible to provide more efficient solutions for problems concerning supply and waste facilities, provided the habit of «thinking in semi-circles» can be overcome. Institutions within the health care sector, educational establishments, and services (police and emergency services, regional sporting facilities) could in many

IMPROVEMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AND NATURE CONSERVATION

Air, water and environmental development does not stop at borders. It is therefore important to have a regional cross-border development model. Countryside planning, air and water pollution, waste reduction – both recycling and waste disposal – and noise abatement are all issues which need to be tackled from within a cross-border context. In this process, considerable regional differences and priorities have certainly to be taken into account.

THE PROBLEMS OF CROSS-BORDER COMMUTERS

There are a considerable number of European employees living on one side of the border and working on the other. The number of commuters crossing borders – including those crossing for shopping or for touristic purposes – is increasing constantly. The following measures are appropriate:

- production of guides outlining the rights and obligations of commuters;
- use of European social guidelines and norms;
- continued development of friendship treaties and association agreements, both on EU external borders and in Central and Eastern Europe;
- simplified administration of border traffic;
- improvement of cross-border consumer protection.

CULTURAL COOPERATION

Reducing mistrust and developing mutual trust are important elements of any cross-border cooperation. Cross-border cultural development is important because it is a prerequisite for any further confidence-building measures. The responsible authorities within educational and cultural institutions, in the media, in church associations, etc. must put aside their prejudices and be active partners in the task of living



«THE NATIONAL STATES WILL LOSE SOME OF THEIR IMPORTANCE IN THE FUTURE, FOR EXAMPLE DUE TO THE INCREASING GLOBALISATION OF THE INTERNATIONAL ECONOMY. REGIONS WHERE PEOPLE ARE LIVING AND THOSE TO WHICH THEY BELONG, SO-CALLED ECONOMIC AND CULTURAL REGIONS, WILL ACQUIRE AN INCREASING IMPORTANCE.»
(PICTURE: THE INAUGURATION OF THE UPPER RHINE FLAG, SEPTEMBER 1994)

ed in public law which permit the involvement of the local and regional level. This participation ensures democratic control of cross-border development. In terms of legal instruments, a series of international conventions, agreements and accords are already available.

OUTLOOK FOR THE 21ST CENTURY

The European Charter of Border and Cross-Border Regions has been drawn up based on recognition of the historical background and awareness of our responsibility for the future of a Europe which is more closely knit and in which the border and cross-border regions have a determining role to play. These regions are the touchstone for:

- a peaceful human coexistence with respect for diversity and the rights of minorities;
- respect for the principles of partnership and subsidiarity;
- active participation of citizens, politicians, authorities and social groups in cross-border cooperation;
- reconciliation, tolerance, and equality, despite different partners;
- the interweaving of social, cultural and economic cooperation until cross-border integration is achieved, while still preserving national sovereignty;
- a Europe of the regions.

levels is as indispensable as solidarity between the border and cross-border regions. This Charter addresses all those partners who wish to participate in the design of this future process and thereby in the future of the border and cross-border regions themselves as the driving force of this development.

> A Statute for Common Goals

BR IS A REGISTERED ASSO-
BASED IN GRONAU (EU-
IN THE FEDERAL REPUBLIC
MANY. THE AIMS AND
ONS OF THE ASSOCIATION
EEN REWRITTEN IN A NEW
TUTION, INAUGURATED ON
TH NOVEMBER 1994 IN
(REGIONE AUTONOMA
VENEZIA GIULIA), ITALY.
W CONSTITUTION LAYS
E FORM AND NATURE OF
SS-BORDER COOPERA-
DERTAKEN BY THE
AN BORDER AND CROSS-
REGIONS WITHIN
BR.

THE AEBR WORKS FOR EUROPEAN BORDER AND CROSS-BORDER REGIONS WITH THE FOLLOWING OBJECTIVES:

- to make clear the peculiar problems, opportunities, responsibilities and activities of these regions;
- to further their joint interests vis-à-vis national and international parliaments, official bodies, authorities and institutions;
- to initiate, support and coordinate the cooperation of these regions throughout Europe;
- to exchange experience and information, expressing and coordinating the common interests that arise from the diversity of cross-border problems and opportunities, and to provide answers to these.

IT IS THE ROLE OF THE AEBR TO:

- implement programmes and projects; apply, receive and administer funding;
- organise events addressing cross-border problems;
- collaborate in the solution of cross-border problems and to support specific activities;
- prepare and implement joint actions;
- expand the «Centre for European Border and Cross-Border Regions», working closely with the European Union and the Council of Europe;
- inform policy and the general public across Europe of cross-border issues.

WHO CAN JOIN THE AEBR?

THE FOLLOWING CAN JOIN THE ASSOCIATION AS FULL MEMBERS WITH VOTING RIGHTS:

- European border and cross-border regions within Member States of the European Union or the Council of Europe;
- broad-based associations of border regions within several states can apply for full membership, as long as the association members do not also seek



it is not yet clear whether they are entitled to become full members;

- honorary members who have given special service to the AEBR.

THE FOLLOWING CAN JOIN AS ADVISORY MEMBERS WITHOUT VOTING RIGHTS:

- natural persons, associations of individuals, institutions and institutes active in the field of cross-border cooperation.

RIGHTS AND OBLIGATIONS OF MEMBERS:

- Members collaborate in forming the official objectives of the AEBR. They are kept informed of all current cross-border topics and developments at European level.
- Members have the right to make use of AEBR services, facilities and programmes.
- Members have a duty to support the work of the AEBR and so promote regional cross-border cooperation at na-

«THERE WERE MANY ORGANISATIONS AND ASSOCIATIONS OPERATING IN ISOLATION. EVERYONE HAD THEIR OWN IDEAS ABOUT HOW CERTAIN MEASURES COULD BE DEVELOPED IN A CROSS-BORDER FASHION. WE THOUGHT THAT WE COULD CREATE SUBSTANTIAL SYNERGY EFFECTS BY BRINGING ALL IDEAS AND EXPERIENCES TOGETHER AND SHARING THEM IN ORDER TO SAVE TIME AND MONEY. NOT EVERYONE NEEDS TO RE-INVENT THE WHEEL.»

(PICTURE: 3RD CONFERENCE OF THE EUROPEAN BORDER REGIONS, ORGANISED BY THE COUNCIL

with the regulations of the constitution and the rules regarding membership contributions.

The income of the AEBR comprises membership fees and subsidies (e.g. from national governments or the European Commission).

THE INSTITUTIONAL BODIES OF THE AEBR:

- the General Assembly of Members;
- the Presidium;
- the General Secretary.

The General Assembly of Members is the highest body. It elects the President and the Presidium, decides on the inclusion or exclusion of members and sets the membership fees.

The Presidium is elected for two years. It is made up of the President, the first Vice-President and at least three further Vice-Presidents, the Treasurer and at least 20 Members to represent the border and

The President is the highest level representative of the AEBR. He represents the Association and is authorised to make decisions – in agreement with the General Secretary, who has executive power and is also authorised to represent the AEBR.

The AEBR can form committees comprising representatives of European and political bodies, and also associations and social groupings with an advisory voice. A special «advisory committee for cross-border cooperation», consisting of experts from all over Europe, has the task of advising the AEBR on all issues concerning cross-border cooperation and of presenting proposals for their resolution.

The working languages of the AEBR are principally German, English, Spanish, and Italian, with the use of any other member languages where necessary.

> The Network for and with the Border Regions

ANHOLT IS HISTORIC
FOR THE AEBR. THIS
PLACE WHERE BORDER
FROM ALL OVER EUROPE
THE FIRST TIME IN
TO DISCUSS THE POSSI-
SETTING UP A JOINT
SATION»



In 1971, nine partners took part in founding the AEBR at Anholt castle in the EUREGIO. Two cross-border regions had already been in existence for some time: the CIMAB on the Upper Rhine (the Colmar-Freiburg axis), the Dutch-German EUREGIO (Westmünsterland, The County of Bentheim, Twente, Oost Gelderland). The Regio Rhein-Waal, the Euregio Noord (later Euregio Ems Dollart) and the Regio Bodanica (later EUREGIO Bodensee) were in the process of being established. The Nord-Pas de Calais Region, the German Land of Schleswig-Holstein, the Saarland, the Planungsgemeinschaft Mittelbaden (later Regionalverband Mittlerer Oberrhein) and – as the origin of the trinational «Regio» on the Upper Rhine – the REGIO BASILIENSIS (North-West Switzerland) participated as national border regions.

These ten border regions therefore, formed the first network of European border regions, concentrated along the strip of the river Rhine lying within the then six Member States of the European Community. The motives for joining together were «the exchange of experience and the joint representation of common interests».

Right from the start the AEBR was conscious of the fact that a network for and with the border regions can only be effective if it is able gradually to integrate all the European border areas, regardless of whether or not these are members of the European Community.

The AEBR's most important partner throughout the 1970s and 1980s was without a doubt the Council of Europe. This institution took charge of the case of the border regions in its Parliamentary Assembly and in particular in the «Committee for Spatial Planning and Municipal Affairs». One tangible result of this were the «Conferences of the European Border Regions» and the drawing up of a «Framework Agreement for the Improvement of Cross-Border Co-

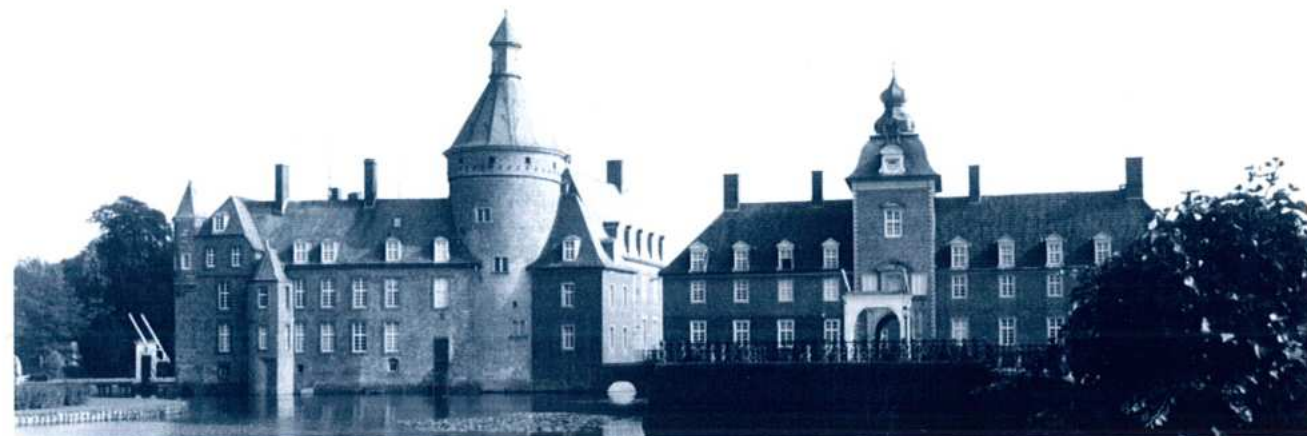
a consequence of its gradually expanding geographical framework that it began to develop into a political community. It was after this growth that numerous border regions in the south and north of Europe were able to take part in the AEBR network.

In the mid-1970s the European Parliament became increasingly active, particularly via its Committee for Regional Policy, and it called for the so-called Euro-Associations for border regions.

Since its foundation, the AEBR had called and lobbied the European institutions – at first without success – for a «Clearing House for Cross-Border Cooperation», able to tackle the particular problems of border regions; a kind of precursor of the subsequent «Observatory of Cross-Border Cooperation», founded at last in 1990 by the AEBR with support from the European Commission.

Since until 1990 support was clearly lacking, the AEBR became active on its own account. Annual events addressed specific themes of concern to the border regions, such as transport infrastructure, cultural cooperation, technology and innovation, tourism, leisure and agriculture. These events provided an opportunity to recruit new members from Spain, Italy, Scandinavia and Ireland/Northern Ireland, as well as cooperation partners in Greece and Portugal.

It soon became clear that, despite varied geography, varying starting points in terms of national administrative structures and competencies, and varying economic and social problems, border regions all over Europe faced the same fundamental concerns and problems. This made it all the more necessary for border regions to exchange their experiences, to share their problems and their efforts to provide solutions. From this, new ideas



cooperation work. In many cases, it was only by solving or working on these problems that the conditions for lasting economic and infrastructural cooperation could be created.

Thus, during the course of the 1970s and 1980s the network became increasingly close-knit and a comprehensive wealth of experience and knowledge was laid down at the AEBR. This wealth of experience provided useful contributions for the design Article 10 of the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF), aimed at pilot projects for cross-border cooperation, and when working on the design of the Interreg Programme. The AEBR was developing increasingly into a service point for its members and an advisory partner for other border regions and European institutions, particularly for the establishment of border related programmes and projects.

However, it was not only the network for and with the border regions and the contacts with the European institutions that were significant. The contacts and collaboration with the «Assembly of European Regions», itself co-founded by the AEBR, and with the «Council of European Municipalities and Regions» were also becoming more important.

pe, and on the other to the enlargement of the EU with the entry of Sweden, Finland and Austria. This change brought with it new forms of cooperation between the EU and the states of Central and Eastern Europe. The border regions affected were as much in need of the help, advice, and support of the AEBR as of becoming part of the tried and tested network of border regions.

At the beginning of the 1990s, the AEBR was therefore a much-consulted partner and «godparent» in the setting up of the eight border regions between Poland and Germany and the Czech Republic and Germany. Today this is also the case for the cross-border structures and organisations being established on the Bulgarian-Albanian border with Greece; the Slovenian border with Italy and Austria; the Hungarian, Slovak and Czech borders with Austria; the borders of the Baltic States; the borders of Poland with Scandinavia, Russia and Belarus; Poland's borders with the Ukraine, and the borders of Finland and Norway with Russia.

Just ten border regions were involved in the network at its founding in 1971, and by the middle of the 1980s, only around 8-10 new border regions had been added to this number, but since the end of the

function and its network. Today the AEBR has 56 members, representing nearly 90 border regions all over Europe, and membership continues to grow, particularly in Southern, but also in Central and Eastern Europe.

It is the declared political intention of the AEBR to establish branch offices in these countries, as is already the case in France (Region Alsace in Strasbourg), Italy (Region Trentino-Südtirol in Trento), Denmark (Sønderjyllands Amt in Apenrade), and Spain (Autonomous Region of Catalonia in Barcelona). The first steps have already been taken in Poland (Euroregion POME-RANIA, Szczecin).

The AEBR network for and with the border regions has proved itself capable not only of carrying its members but also of expanding to accommodate new ones.

> LACE: Coaching on behalf of the EU



The LACE Logo:
Contacts that extend
beyond borders.

The exchange of experience between the border regions, the provision of help and advice, building up a network, all these form part of the core duties of the AEBR. From its foundation in 1971 up to the present, this work has been managed by an honorary Secretariat. The volume of funding has increased in eight years from a little less than 20,000 DM to 250,000 DM, yet this is only enough to cover the most essential services provided by the administration, an annual conference, and the cost of smaller projects.

For some time it had been clear that there was a real need for a «Centre or Observatory for Cross-Border Cooperation». Its aim was to provide comprehensive and effective assistance and advice and to carry out the implementation of European-wide projects. In 1990 this Observatory was established under the acronym LACE (Linkage Assistance and Cooperation for the European Border Regions), with its base at the AEBR office in Gronau (EU-REGIO). Between 1990 and 1993, the EU provided 2.4 MECU of the total cost of 4.1 MECU. The AEBR provided the remaining 1.7 MECU.

LACE BENEFITS INTERREG

The EU has long recognised the importance of LACE in the successful implementation of the Interreg Initiative. The majority of EU border regions lying on internal and external borders lacked the conditions necessary for cross-border concepts and structures. As a consequence, the main focus of the LACE project between 1990 and 1994 lay on following and supporting the Interreg Initiative, as well as providing reports for the EU, written from the perspective of the border regions. 1994/5 was the time for preparing the Interreg IIA Initiative.

LACE enabled an impressive number of activities to take place (about 80 workshops, seminars, smaller meetings, etc.,



«INSTEAD OF POSITIONING
ARMIES AT THE BORDERS WE
TRIED TO DISCUSS JOINT DE-
VELOPMENT CONCEPTS FOR THE
BORDER REGION WITH THE PART-
NERS. THESE DISCUSSIONS LED
TO THE PHILOSOPHY OF ACCEP-
TANCE OF THE OTHER SIDE.»
(PICTURE: FESTIVITIES AT THE
FORMER GERMAN-FRENCH
CUSTOMS UNIT NORTH OF BASEL
NOW «INFOBEST», A TRI-NATIONAL
INFORMATION AND ADVICE
CENTRE ESTABLISHED IN 1993 FOR
THE POPULATION OF THE REGIO)

THE INTEGRATION OF CENTRAL AND EASTERN EUROPE

The evaluation of the LACE project indicated a need for more lasting foundations to the programme. In consideration of the Interreg II Programme and the Phare CBC (Cross-Border Cooperation) Programme, the long term aim of LACE should be to work for all border regions on EU external and internal borders, and for the border regions in the countries of Central and Eastern Europe.

At the beginning of 1996, the Directorate-General I of the European Commission signed a contract with the AEBR for a LACE/Phare Cross-Border Cooperation Programme. The project was initially limited to one year; its main focus was the active integration of border regions situated in those Central and Eastern European countries participating in the Phare Programme into the cross-border cooperation underway on the external borders of the EU.

Workshops were rapidly organised in Bulgaria, Albania, Slovenia, Hungary, Slovakia and the Czech Republic, and further workshops were programmed for the maritime borders between Albania and Italy, and those of the Baltic States with Scandinavia.

internal and external borders of the EU. The project will run from 1996 to 2001 and has annual funding of 2.7 MECU. The European Commission will provide 1.8 MECU of this amount, while the AEBR and the border regions will contribute the remaining 0.9 MECU.

LACE-TAP comprises a network of individuals with a think-tank of experts, a team of technical advisors, and experts in the border regions. Closer links within the network will be developed by means of workshops, seminars, annual conferences, exchanges of experts, study visits, and regular publications.

The AEBR will be responsible for management of the Programme through its General Secretariat in Gronau (EUREGIO). The Programme also envisages the establishment of several branch offices, with a contact office in Brussels. The large grants from the European Commission and the considerable co-financing from the AEBR reflect the fact that LACE-TAP, working within the framework of the Observatory for Cross-Border Cooperation, will serve the border regions and the AEBR as much as it benefits the EU.

➤ Two Good Practice Examples

Generally speaking, cross-border development concepts only work with the involvement of the EU and the national governments concerned. They must take into account existing European and national policy in order to ensure that the necessary funding is made available.

Cross-border regions – even those called Euroregions – are not new administrative levels. They need cross-border structures in order to carry out their tasks.

Initially, associations were formed on each side of the border, often based on their respective national laws. These associations then entered into a joint cross-border contract based on private law. It was only much later that it became possible to set up single cross-border structures, recognised in public law and based on inter-state agreements.

THE DUTCH-GERMAN BORDER REGIONS

The first agreement allowing «Zweckverbände» (organisations set up between local/regional authorities and based on public law), was the treaty between the Land of North Rhine Westphalia, the Land of Lower Saxony, the Federal Republic of Germany and the Kingdom of the Netherlands. It concerned the five Dutch-German border regions Regio Ems Dollart, EUREGIO, Euregio Rhein-Waal, euregio rhein-maas-nord, and Euregio Maas-Rhein. The treaty refers back to the 1981 Madrid Outline Convention of the Council of Europe concerning Transfrontier Cooperation between Territorial Committees or Authorities.

In 1984 the State Chancellery of the Land of North Rhine Westphalia took the first steps towards drawing up this agreement. This move was prompted by the need for better control and improved democratic and legal procedures for the parties concerned as, up to that time, Euregios had worked under private law. However, seven years were to pass before the agreement

- an agreement based on public law (by which one authority agrees to carry out tasks on behalf of another);
- an administrative association based on public law (Zweckverband).

The members of administrative associations (Zweckverbände) can be bound by the terms of the agreement to implement any decisions taken by the association (Zweckverband). The Zweckverbände cannot however confer any sovereign obligations on their members.

The Euregio Rhein-Waal achieved its objective relatively speedily. On 1st November 1993, the statute of the Euregio Rhein-Waal was approved as the basis for the first Zweckverband.

The experiences gained by the Euregio Rhein-Waal, especially in implementing its agreement, were the subject for intensive exchanges of experience between the Dutch-German border regions.

In practice it turned out that «the devil hides in the minor details» (in staffing issues, for example), but gradually obstacles were cleared out of the way. Work is currently underway for a continuation to the Dutch-German treaty.

Ever since the preparation of the Madrid Outline Convention, the AEBR has been active in following the development of administrative associations based on public law. The experience was and is disseminated to all the European border regions. Today, a multitude of bi- and tri-lateral inter-state agreements have been formed on the basis of this experience.

DEVELOPMENT CONCEPTS AS LEVERAGE INSTRUMENTS

The experience of the AEBR in drawing up cross-border development concepts goes back even further. It was in the 1980s that methodological considerations and a list



«OVER THE NEXT TEN YEARS THE BORDER AREAS WILL CONTRIBUTE TO THE PROGRESS OF EUROPEAN REGIONALISATION, THAT IS, BRINGING EUROPE NEARER TO ITS CITIZENS. IN THIS RESPECT, THE AEBR HAS AN IMPORTANT ROLE TO PLAY.»

(PICTURE: THE SECRETARIAT OF THE AEBR AT THE BUSINESS HEADQUARTERS OF THE GERMAN-DUTCH EUREGIO IN GRONAU)

THE SPANISH-PORTUGUESE BORDER

Whilst a total of five Operational Programmes were drawn up for the Dutch-German border region within the framework of Interreg I, Spain and Portugal presented one single Programme for their common border, covering all the area between the Mediterranean coast and Northwest Spain. The Spanish-Portuguese border area is one of the poorest regions in the EU, hence mainly infrastructure projects have received funding. Sharp criticism was often heard, claiming that the regions had scarcely been involved in drawing up the programmes; that their implementation was almost exclusively the responsibility of national level authorities, and that the needs of the region had not been taken sufficiently into account.

In 1993 the AEBR/LACE project had the opportunity to help the regional authorities in the three Spanish and Portuguese border regions, Centro (Portugal), Castilla y León and Extremadura (Spain), in the development of a joint cooperation and development concept. A joint Spanish-Portuguese working group drew up a strategy and a working plan. Experts from AEBR/LACE then led the investigations and conducted several advisory seminars. In their final report they presented a strategy and fields of action which

on the institutional aspects of the cooperation.

The Regions concerned set up a permanent cross-border working group and drew up an operational programme based on the recommendations of the experts in a tailored to the needs of the cross-border area.

Both the Dutch-German and the Portuguese-Spanish examples demonstrate that the European network of border regions does work. The AEBR provides practical help, and financial support from the EU, provided via the LACE project, fundamentally speeds up the process.

» «This constant Interference from below»

SOLUTION
E 2000+ – REGIONAL
ING IN EUROPE AND ITS
ON EUROPEAN
REGIONS», DRAWN UP
2.1995 IN SZCZECIN,
GION POMERANIA.

The participants of the AEBR congress, amongst them European and national politicians, representatives of the border regions, representatives of economic and social life and experts on questions regarding borders from all parts of Europe thank the town president and the city of Szczecin, the Euroregion POMERANIA and the Republic of Poland for their warm welcome and hospitality and make the following statements:

Cross-border cooperation is the «cornerstone» and «driving force» for a European regional development policy.

FOR THIS REASON WE DEMAND:

LEGAL MEASURES

- In future the European Conference of Ministers responsible for Regional Planning (CEMAT) should deal increasingly with the legal and conceptual questions of European regional development and cross-border cooperation in Central and Eastern Europe.
- During the amendment of the Maastricht Treaty (particularly of Article 3 and 130a and b), the EU should take on an outline competence for regional development policy. The promotion of institutionalised cross-border cooperation at regional and local level should be incorporated as an independent objective.
- Preconditions must be developed for cross-border cooperation at a level based on public law through the alignment of national law and bilateral or trilateral agreements in accordance with the decisions and recommendations of the European Regional Planning Charter and the European Outline Convention on Transfrontier Cooperation between Territorial Communities or Authorities.
- During the development of a European Regional Planning Strategy, the European border and cross-border re-

tion of all those responsible at regional and local level is as essential as the cross-border, conjointly regulated participation of the citizens.

II PROMOTION OF SPECIFIC MEASURES

- Constant cross-border observation of the region as well as the analysis and investigation of border problems is essential. Working on this basis, cross-border models for regional development must be developed for the entire border region and for individual border and cross-border regions which display cross-border trends and perspectives; for instance, for a settlement structure, transport, the economy or the environment.
- Where these models for cross-border regional development are developed and aligned, they should serve as a basis for:
 - «Regional cross-border development concepts» and «operational programmes»;
 - the further development of local and regional development planning at national level which is, in fact, discussed and agreed at cross-border level;
 - European regional development concepts;
 - high-level expert planning and promotional policies.
- At all European borders bilateral or multi-lateral regional development commissions must, with the participation of border and cross-border regions, be established with the objective of intensifying and embedding cross-border regional development as close to the public interest as possible.
- Trans-national European transport links must not simply use border regions as transit areas but must connect them to the neighbouring countries or improve the peripheral situation of these regions at external borders. Only region-specific linkage and the use of large scale infrastructures elimi-

«IN THE FUTURE THERE IS A NEED FOR GREATER FINANCIAL SUPPORT TO CENTRAL AND EASTERN EUROPE. THIS IS A MATTER OF ENSURING SECURITY AND PEACE. IT IS NECESSARY TO REDUCE THE LARGE DISPARITIES WHICH EXIST BETWEEN THE BORDER REGIONS AND ASSIST THE NEIGHBOURING COUNTRIES IN THEIR GRADUAL APPROACH TO THE EUROPEAN UNION. IT IS NECESSARY TO CREATE THE PRECONDITIONS FOR THIS PROCESS DURING THE NEXT FEW YEARS. THIS IS AN IMPORTANT TASK FOR CROSS-BORDER COOPERATION AND THE AEBR. AT THE SAME TIME HOWEVER, THE NEEDS AND CONCERNS OF BORDER REGIONS WITHIN THE EU SHOULD NOT BE NEGLECTED.»

- The introduction of high-speed trains, together with the desired shift of passenger and goods transport from the roads to rail, would lead to such a dense succession of trains that large-scale transit traffic would almost eliminate regional and local traffic, making the linkage of border regions to the train stations of the Trans-European networks impossible. A region-specific solution must be found here.
- In view of frequent national planning difficulties, motorways and main trunk roads should, in future, also be planned and built from jointly agreed border crossing points. Particularly careful planning and routing is therefore necessary which must be discussed and agreed at cross-border level.
- In recent years, Interreg and Phare CBC have contributed considerably to the increase and intensification of cross-border cooperation in all parts of Europe. The continuation and increase of these programmes (in the EU, in Central and Eastern Europe and in the neighbouring, external EU regions of the Mediterranean area) is as necessary as the promotion of linkage between European border regions through the exchange of know-how and technical aid. The activities of the Observatory for Cross-Border Cooperation of the AEBR must therefore be continued with the financial support of the EU within and beyond the European Union.

III SOLUTION OF IMPORTANT TECHNICAL PROBLEMS

- The laying down of «transnational fields of activity» for the promotion of the cohesion of the EU area, demanded by ministers for regional development in 1994 (Leipzig Decisions, D6), makes the active participation of border and cross-border regions imperative. The partnership needed (on European, national, regional and local

thods, planning criteria and planning standards) is urgently needed as well as the harmonisation of cartography (drawing up of cross-border planning maps) and an improvement of regional and cross-border statistics.

- Cross-border handbooks on planning terms (for instance, a German-Polish handbook, documents produced by ARGE ALP and ARGE Alpen-Adria) must be developed for all European border regions explaining, in several languages, the fundamental governmental and constitutional regulations, planning systems and central planning terms in the neighbouring countries and supporting them through maps and surveys.
- «Periodical reports», planned in accordance with Article 130b of the Maastricht Treaty, must be completed with «regional development-related reports».

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