

RECOMMENDATIONS

BEN Seminar “Cross-border cooperation and Regional Development”

Malmö, 15-16 March 2007

The basis for joint cross-border regional planning and development is confidence and common understanding on both sides of the border. At the same time, joint cross-border regional planning and development is a further step in the process from the dawn of CBC via the “soft level” of confidence, knowledge and awareness of the possibilities and challenges of CBC to the “hard results” improving the living standards and social-economic cohesion of the border territories. The BEN project aims at enabling the Euroregions and other cross-border regions to go this second step and has formulated the following recommendations:

1. It is important to visualize for the national governments the benefit of actions directed towards improving of cross-border mobility and accessibility and reducing border barriers because it enhances economic development of all parties involved;
2. Euroregions/CBC regions should initiate internal discussions among their members why it is important for an Euroregion/CBC region to work with issues of infrastructure and spatial development, and how this should be done, e.g. within the framework of a joint regional development strategy.
3. Euroregions/CBC regions should initiate lobbying activities for the development of joint infrastructure and planning strategies in border regions and be the common platform for respective joint activities;
4. Euroregions should emphasize the need for cross-border statistics and GIS (Geographic Information System) data. Cross border statistics and analysis on territorial structures and dynamics is inevitable for development and implementation of cross border policies
5. Euroregions should ensure the involvement of all triple-helix partners into the process of spatial development of border territories;
6. Within each Euroregion a common understanding of terminology, planning procedures, legislation should be developed;
7. National governments should include a CBC component into national regional development plans and involve Euroregions/CBC regions in the development of cross-border infrastructure and spatial planning;
8. Structural Funds and INTERREG programs could provide joint resources in order to finance cross-border infrastructure;

9. BEN partners could jointly identify legislative barriers for joint regional development and exchange practical solutions;
10. BEN National Roundtables could be transformed into “Euroregional Roundtables” in order to facilitate joint cross-border regional development planning involving all interested parties;
11. Issues of cross border infrastructure, spatial development and regional development strategies can benefit from comparative pan-Baltic evidence and experience, and therefore should remain as a priority on the future BEN agenda;
12. Discussions about the impact of the recent amendments of the legislation on border zones of the Russian Federation on CBC should be initiated.