

Memorandum for the Creation of a European Network for Cross-Border Monitoring

Territorial monitoring at the cross-border level is essential to enhance the potential of border areas. Whether it is to foster economic development, to improve employment opportunities or to increase access to services, efficient public policies and cooperation projects in border regions can only be developed if decision-makers are provided with detailed, harmonised, on-going information from both sides of the border.

Recent political initiatives underlined the necessity to make this issue a priority: In September 2017, the communication from the European Commission "boosting growth and cohesion in EU border regions" stressed the need to "[build] evidence of cross-border interaction to inform decision-making". At the French-German level, the Hambach declaration from April 2017 calls for strengthening cross-border spatial monitoring, and the common parliamentary resolution from February 2018 for the 55th anniversary of the Elysée Treaty also invites governments to reinforce cross-border cooperation. On the German-Polish boundary, the "Common Future Vision 2030", adopted in December 2016 by the Spatial Development Committee of the German-Polish Governmental Commission for Regional and Cross-Border Cooperation, also calls for further cooperation and highlights the need for more monitoring.

Existing monitoring activities are currently being constrained by the limits of cross-border statistics: lack of comparability, of availability, or of appropriate indicators are common issues encountered by data users and decision-makers at the cross-border scale. Such challenges are particularly present for the topics of job market and cross-border commuters, or access to public services.

There is a consensus that an improvement of the situation is not possible without further cooperation. The harmonisation of data and the definition of indicators can be reached with increased communication among data providers, and also between data providers and data users. It requires intensified transversal exchanges between European stakeholders at the regional and national level. Existing national and regional initiatives also need to complement each other.

To this purpose, we see the need to create a network to develop cross-border statistics and improve territorial monitoring in cross-border areas. The network will consist of national and regional representatives in charge of territorial observation and will be completed by thematic groups working with appropriate partners on sectoral policies.

The network membership is flexible, open to interested institutions and adaptable according to the needs and the situation.

We hereby declare our willingness to create this network and to take part in its development. Network members will exchange on their activities, work actively towards the definition and harmonisation of cross-border data and indicators, and meet on an annual basis.

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