Tax ID: 18188071-2-42
Registering authority: Budapest Capital Regional Court
Registration number: 01/01/10819

CENTRAL EUROPEAN SERVICE FOR CROSS-BORDER INITIATIVES
1067 Budapest, Teréz körút 13.

Non-profit income statement for non-profit organisations maintaining double-entry bookkeeping

Reporting period: 01.01.2024-31.12.2024

Budapest, 12.05.2025

CESCI
Határon Átnyúló Kezdeményezések
Közép-európai Segítő Szolgálata
HUN 1067 Budapest, Teréz krt. 13.
adószám: 18188071-2-42
bankszámlaszám: 12010240-01374052-00100001

Stamp

The representative of the organisation

The published information has not been audited.

CENTRAL EUROPEAN SERVICE FOR CROSS-BORDER INITIATIVES
Tax ID: 18188071-2-42
Registration number: 01/01/10819

Non-profit income statement for non-profit organizations maintaining double-entry bookkeeping
Reporting period: 01.01.2024-31.12.2024

	1000 HUF	Previous year	Previous year modification	Reference year
A.	**Personnel Expenses**	**154 036**	**0**	**187 169**
A.1.	**Salary costs**	**122 675**	**0**	**151 846**
A. 1 .A.	Salary costs: in form of commission fees	2522	0	1 250
A. 1 .B.	Salary costs: in form of honorarium	480	0	480
A.2.	**Other personnel expenses**	**14 260**	**0**	**13 789**
A.3.	**Payroll taxes**	**17 101**	**0**	**21 534**
B.	**Support provided by the organisation**	**0**	**0**	**0**

The published information has not been audited.

CENTRAL EUROPEAN SERVICE FOR CROSS-BORDER INITIATIVES
Tax ID: 18188071-2-42
Registration number: 01/01/10819

Non-profit income statement for non-profit organizations maintaining double-entry bookkeeping
The balance sheet date: 2024.12.31.

	1000 HUF	Previous year	Previous year modification	Reference year
A.	**Total revenue from public benefit activities**	**184 496**	**0**	**299 690**
A.1.	**Subsidy for public benefit purposes**	**180 132**	**0**	**294 456**
A. 1 .A.	from the founder	0	0	0
A. 1 .B.	from the central budget	173 661	0	292 839
A.1.C.	from the local government	0	0	0
A.1.D.	other	6 471	0	1 617
A.2.	**Grants received through tenders**	**0**	**0**	**0**
A.3.	**Revenue from public benefit activities**	**0**	**0**	**0**
A.4.	**Revenue from membership fees**	**1 409**	**0**	**1 466**
A.5.	**Other type of revenue**	**2 955**	**0**	**3 768**
B.	**Revenue from business activities**	**19 967**	**0**	**15 441**
C.	**Total revenue (A+B)**	**204 463**	**0**	**315 131**
D.	**Expenditure of public benefit activities**	**176 756**	**0**	**246 522**
D.1.	Material expenses	34 845	0	66 259
D.2.	Personnel expenses	138 988	0	177 998
D.3.	Depreciation	1 137	0	1 123
D.4.	Other expenses	264	0	288
D.5.	Expenses of financial transactions	1 522	0	854
E.	**Expenditures of business activities**	**19 140**	**0**	**12 702**
E. 1.	Material expenses	3 773	0	3 414
E.2.	Personnel expenses	15 049	0	9 171
E.3.	Depreciation	123	0	58
E.4.	Other expenses	30	0	15
E.5.	Expenses of financial transactions	165	0	44
F.	**Total expenditure (D+E)**	**195 896**	**0**	**259 224**
G.	**Profit or loss before tax (B-E or C-F)**	**827**	**0**	**2 739**
H.	**Tax liability**	77	0	247
I.	**Profit or loss of the base year (G-H)**	**750**	**0**	**2 492**
J	**Public benefit result of the base year (A-D)**	**7 740**	**0**	**53 168**

The published information has not been audited.

Tax ID:	18188071-2-42
Registering authority:	Budapest Capital Regional Court
Registration number:	01/01/10819

CENTRAL EUROPEAN SERVICE FOR CROSS-BORDER INITIATIVES

1067 Budapest, Teréz körút 13.

Simplified annual report balance sheet for other organisations maintaining double-entry bookkeeping

The balance sheet date:	31.12.2024
Type of profit and loss account:	Simplified annual report

Budapest, 12.05.2025

CESCI
Határon Átnyúló Kezdeményezések
Közép-európai Segítő Szolgálata
HUN 1067 Budapest, Teréz krt. 13.
adószám: 18188071-2-42
bankszámlaszám: 12010240-01374052-00100001

The representative of the organisation

Stamp

The published information has not been audited.

CENTRAL EUROPEAN SERVICE FOR CROSS-BORDER INITIATIVES
Tax ID: 18188071-2-42
Registration number: 01/01/10819

Simplified annual report balance sheet for other organizations maintaining double-entry bookkeeping
The balance sheet date: 2024.12.31.

	1000 HUF	Previous year	Previous year modification	Reference year
01.	**A. Invested assets**	**4 041**		**5 832**
02.	I. Intangible assets	58		0
03.	II. Tangible assets	3 983		5 832
04.	III. Invested financial assets	0		0
05.	**B. Current assets**	**416 750**		**465 281**
06.	I. Inventories	0		0
07.	II. Receivables	8 083		7 225
08.	III. Securities	0		30 306
09.	IV. Cash	408 667		427 750
10.	**C. Prepaid expenses**	**18**		**411**
11.	**TOTAL ASSETS**	**420 809**		**471 524**
12.	**D. Owner's equity**	**70 946**	**0**	**126 606**
13.	I. Start-up capital I Subscribed capital	0		0
14.	II. Capital change/Results	62 456		70 946
15.	III. Restricted reserve	0		0
16.	IV. Revaluation reserve	0		0
17.	V. Current year result from core activities (non-profit activities)	7 740	0	53 168
18.	VI. Current year result from business activities	750	0	2 492
19.	**E. Provisions**	**0**		**0**
20.	**F. Liabilities**	**12 546**	**0**	**19 364**
21.	I. Subordinated debt	0		0
22.	II. Long-term liabilities	0		0
23.	III. Short-term liabilities	12 546	0	19 364
24.	**G. Accrued liabilities**	**337 317**	**0**	**325 554**
25.	**TOTAL LIABILITIES**	**420 809**		**471 524**

The published information has not been audited.

Tax number:	18188071-2-42
Registering body:	Budapest Capital Regional Court
Recording order:	PK 61.285/2003/
Registration number:	01-02-0010819

Central European Service for Cross-Border Initiatives

1067 Budapest, Teréz körút 13.

Public benefit annex
Year 2024

A Brief Introduction to CESCI

The Central European Service for Cross-border Initiatives (CESCI) was established in 2009 to enhance and promote cross-border cooperation along the Hungarian borders and throughout Central and South-Eastern Europe. The organisation's mission was followed by the example of the French Mission Opérationnelle Transfrontalière (MOT).

CESCI, as a private public benefit association, carries out the following activities related to cross-border cooperation:

- conducting research on borders and specific border regions;
- developing integrated territorial strategies and participate in cross-border programming;
- preparing policy background papers at EU and national level on cross-border development and participating in related consultations and policy debates;
- supporting the development of cross-border projects;
- facilitating the development of cross-border institutions;
- assisting local actors through knowledge transfer and capacity-building.

Objectives of CESCI

The main objectives of CESCI are:

- professional support for cross-border cooperation along the Hungarian borders and in other countries of Central and South-Eastern Europe;
- improving the exchange of expertise between Euroregions, EGTCs and local and regional authorities involved in cross-border cooperation;
- disseminating good examples from Western Europe;
- developing strategic cooperation with the relevant EU decision-making and decision-preparatory institutions and with the networks of Northern and Western European institutions established for the same purpose;
- strengthening internal cohesion, peace and facilitating closer relations in the region by building partnerships between the nations of Central and South-Eastern Europe.

The public benefit objectives of CESCI under Act CLVI of 1997:

- promoting Euro-Atlantic integration,
- engaging in activities concerning national and ethnic minorities in Hungary and Hungarians residing abroad.

Our officials in 2024:

Our Honorary President is Professor Dr. Szilveszter E. Vizi, former President of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences.

The CESCI is chaired by Dr Zsuzsanna Fejes, Associate Professor at the National University of Public Service.

Vice-Presidents of the Association in 2024:

- Prof. Dr. Tamás Tóth, Professor, Milton Friedman University;
- Zoltán Szögi, Consultant, Budapest City Government Office.

Presidency of the association in 2024:

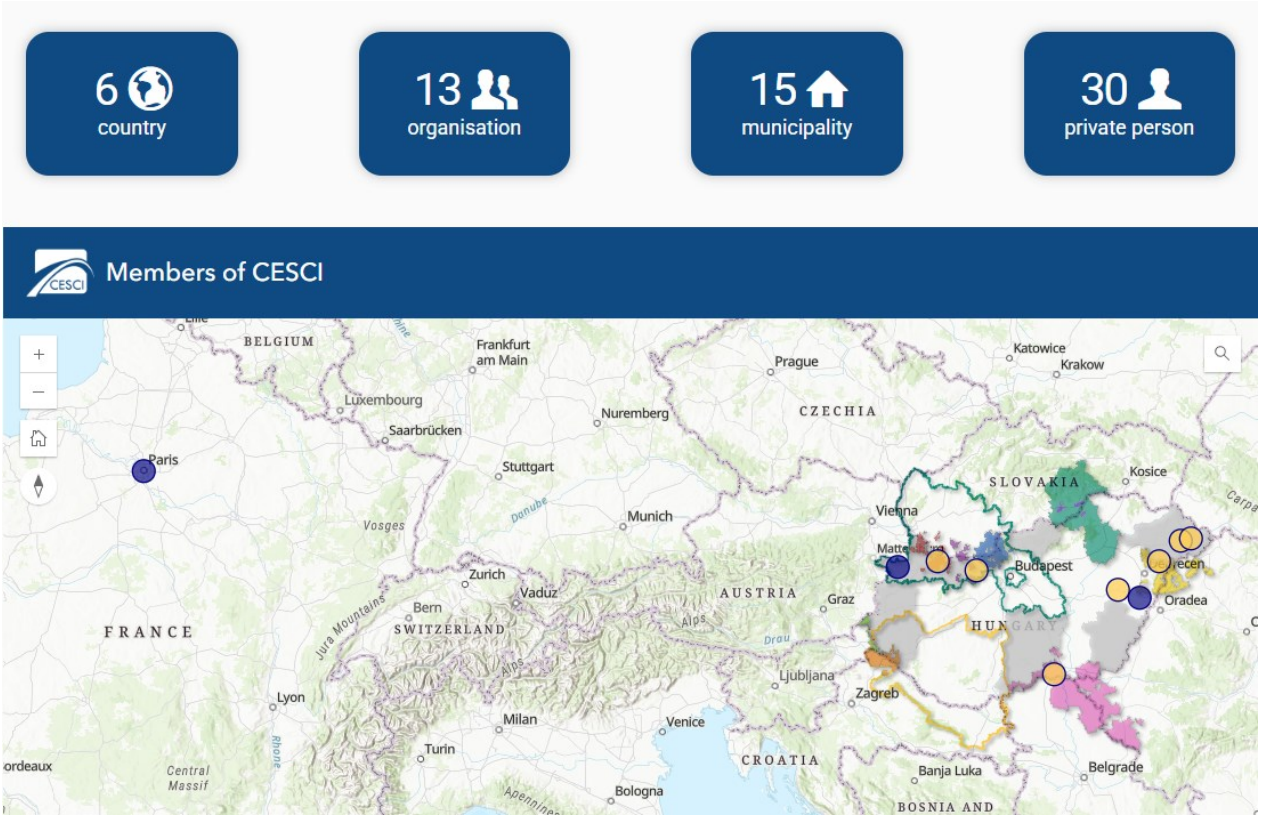
- Dr Hynek Böhm, Associate Professor at the University of Opole (Poland) and Assistant Professor at the Technical University of Liberec (Czech Republic),
- Dr Jože Gričar, retired professor of economics (University of Maribor, Slovenia),
- Ferenc Ivanics, Vice President of the Assembly of Győr-Moson-Sopron County,
- Dr. Dana-Bianca Mitrică, Head of the Institute of Human Geography and Regional Sciences of the Romanian Academy of Sciences,
- István Szabó, former vice-president of the Szabolcs-Szatmár-Bereg County Assembly.

Members of the Supervisory Board (SC) in 2024:

- Dr György Kocziszky (President), Rector of the Budapest Metropolitan University,
- Dr. Judit Árvai-Füleki, CEO, EDUTUS Nonprofit Public Benefit Ltd,
- Attila Tilki, Member of Parliament, Member of the Hungarian Delegation to the Council of Europe.

Members of CESCI

There were no changes in the membership of the association in 2024.



Services offered to our members:

- access to a quarterly newsletter containing practical, member-focused information;
- supporting our members in gaining professional experience by organising study trips and co-funding their travel;
- invitation to participate in all professional events hosted by our organisation;
- provision of individual assistance offered free of charge in many cases.

Activities of Our Association

Throughout 2024, CESCI continued to focus on maintaining and improving the services it provides to its members. We are constantly striving to maintain and improve our services for CESCI members, local and county authorities, EGTCs and individuals directly involved at a professional level.

Our in-person Annual General Assembly was held in Budapest on 9 May 2024. A substantial number of representatives from both individual and institutional members participated in the AGA, with all voting procedures conducted in accordance with the regulations, ensuring the validity of the votes. Members adopted the previous year's report and the 2024 work plan and financial plan. The mandate of István Szabó as a member of the board was extended and the General Assembly

endorsed the election of Dr. Judit Árvai-Füleki as a member of the SC. Other bodies of the association, such as the Supervisory Board and the Board, met several times during the year.

Last year we organised a study trip to the Karavanke (Karawanken) Geopark from 26-30 August 2024. Participants of the study trip could learn about the characteristics of the border area, the locations of several projects, the operation and development activities of the geopark. During the trip, our members had a chance to attend a number of presentations and a tourism programme. Throughout the year, we also provided additional member services, including the preparation of customised maps and access to technical services available for us with NGO discount, aimed at supporting and enhancing the professional activities of our members.

Since its foundation, CESCI has been continuously developing its international relations in order to gain comprehensive knowledge on cross-border cooperation and to build alliances in the field of policy making. In support of this, we have maintained our memberships (policy-relevant) in international organisations (e.g. Regional Studies Association, EUREGHA, TG-WeB, AEBR, TEIN) and actively participated in the general assembly meetings and other professional events of these organisations throughout the year. At the same time, at the beginning of the year, the withdrawal procedure from ISOCARP, which was initiated by a decision of the Association's General Assembly in 2023, was completed.

In 2024 we paid particular attention to our communication activities and CESCI's online presence. We have continuously updated and developed our website. CESCI's network of websites now includes five websites with the following thematic focus:

- CESCI's central website: https://budapest.cesci-net.eu/en/
- Research Group on Cross-Border Cooperation website: https://research.cesci-net.eu/en/home-page/
- the information platform of the Hungarian European Groupings of Territorial Cooperation: https://egtcmonitor.cesci-net.eu/en/
- the #ACCESS project website: https://hu-sk.eu/en/
- the SECCo2 project website: https://secco2.eu/

Besides keeping the websites up to date, we published our newsletters regularly. We published four official newsletters during the year, which were supplemented by four special issues on calls for proposals and events for our members. We also developed our social media presence, in particular our LinkedIn profile.

We have also placed strong emphasis on the economic sustainability of the organisation. On the one hand, we have worked diligently to meet the accounting obligations of our two international projects with significant budgets, in line with the association's public benefit status. On the other hand, to ensure the financial stability of the organisation, in line with the Association's investment policy and the Board's agreement, we have made safe, quick-access investments of the Association's unrestricted funds. The investments are accounted for and reflected in the association's annual financial statements in accordance with the applicable legal requirements.

In 2024, we continued to invest considerable energy in strengthening the working body of the association. We have sought to retain full-time professionals at CESCI in 2024, with changes at two positions during the year. We have also improved our organisational efficiency, both operationally and professionally. We continued to develop and modernise our IT and GIS capacities in 2024 to better address the growing demand for geospatial analyses related to our tasks. We replaced small parts of our hardware park, which had become unusable, with more modern equipment, and we also subscribed to GIS, graphics and administrative software needed for our work, and expanded and maintained our spatial databases. We organised targeted skills development sessions, paid particular attention to improving our staff's English language skills, supported our colleagues' ambitions to continue their studies and continued our traineeship programme. During the year, we provided practitioner placements for four students. We also strengthened the internal cohesion of the working body through team-building sessions and continued to improve our internal administrative systems and office working conditions.

Although our association is essentially a public benefit association in the areas set out in its statutes, we have tried to strengthen our social responsibility in other areas in 2024.

Last year, we published a list of medical equipment for hospitals in Transcarpathia on our website and promoted the list both online and through our partnership network. During their stay in Uzhhorod, our colleagues visited several hospitals and produced a short video highlighting the conditions of healthcare facilities in Transcarpathia. The video was also screened at the AEBR External Borders Working Group meeting, and a link to the video was later shared with the Working Group members.

In 2024, we also joined a Christmas fundraiser coordinated by our colleague on maternity leave. The initiative aimed to make the holidays more joyful for the families living in the Family Transition Home in Etes. As a result of the fundraising, we were able to deliver large packs of diapers of various sizes, baby care products, baby food and winter baby and children's clothes and shoes to the managers of the home. In addition, a large amount of board games, puzzles and personalised gift boxes for children of all ages (0-15 years) were sent out.

Over the years, CESCI has built up a valuable collection of more than 500 books. The library offers insights into a wide range of disciplines in different languages. In order to facilitate the accessibility of the textbooks, we have completed the catalogue of our publications in 2024. The books are now available for consultation and use by appointment at the CESCI office.

Events of the Association

Date	Location	Name of the event
30 January 2024	(Online)	Extraordinary Board meeting
19 February 2024	Budapest	Visiting the "Budapest that never existed" exhibition

Date	Location	Name of the event
14 March 2024	Budapest	CESCI Light: presentation of the archaeologist Balázs Major
15 April 2024	Košice, Slovakia	General Assembly of CESCI Carpathia
29 April 2024	(Online)	CESCI Supervisory Board Meeting
6 May 2024	Budapest	CESCI Light: welcoming event of the new team members
9 May 2024	Budapest	General Assembly of CESCI
29 May 2024	Novi Sad, Serbia	CESCI Balkans General Assembly
13-14 June 2024	Eplény	CESCI team building event
26-30 August 2024	Karawanken, Austria-Slovenia	Study trip for CESCI members - Karawanken Geopark
28 August 2024	(Online)	Online meeting of the Supervisory Board
2 October 2024	(Online)	CESCI Board meeting
15 October 2024	(Online)	Introduction to ArcGIS Story Mapy
23-26 October 2024	Trysil, Norway	AEBR Annual Conference and General Assembly
24 October 2024	Uzhhorod, Ukraine	Visiting Ukrainian hospitals to shoot a video message for help

Border Studies, Scientific Activities

From the very beginning, our association has been actively involved in research on cross-border issues and strives to strengthen the scientific basis of its professional activities. In this context, we are present at scientific conferences and workshops and organise such events ourselves. We also contribute to the international scientific discourse through our own publications. We also contribute to the work of emerging research groups in the field of border studies and support the scientific career of our team. On 19 January 2024, Melinda Istenes-Benczi successfully defended her doctoral thesis on the role of national minorities in cross-border cooperation at the University of Sopron.

The Ludovika UPS - CESCI Research Group

Our scientific activities are largely carried out through the Research Group on Cross-Border Cooperation, which was established in 2022 under the leadership of our President within the

framework of the National University of Public Service. This research workshop stands out among similar European research groups due to its inclusion of border surveillance and security policy, thanks to the involvement of the Faculty of Law Enforcement. Our association supports the work of the academic sector by sharing practical, hands-on experience.

The Research Group held its regular kick-off meeting on 22 February 2024, where Dr Zsuzsanna Fejes, President, reported on the activities of the previous year and presented the plans for 2024, highlighting the events related to the Hungarian EU Presidency. In order to strengthen the intensity of cooperation, our Secretary General signed a strategic agreement on 25 March with Dr. Balázs Bartóki-Gönczy, Deputy Dean of the Faculty of Political Science and International Studies of the University of Public Service, Hungary. The content of the agreement covers not only cooperation in publication, networking and event organisation, but also the launch and support of the research group's own periodical, and provides a long-term perspective for the Group.

The Research Group provides regular information on its activities through its website and occasional newsletters.

Events of the Research Group in 2024

The Group organised four events during the year.

We launched our online lecture series in 2023 to provide researchers within the group with the opportunity to present their work. Last year, László Vájlok gave a presentation on the Schengen system on 5 June, and Melinda Istenes-Benczi a week later on methodological options for measuring cross-border economic development outcomes. The presentations can be viewed on the group's website: https://research.cesci-net.eu/esemenyek.

On 16 October, we organised a joint conference with the Department of Governance and Public Policy of the University of Budapest, Rethinking Cross-Border Cooperation and Governance in the Era of Transformative Processes. The event was opened by Gergely Deli, Rector of the University, and featured presentations by Péter Kiss-Parciu, Deputy State Secretary (Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade), Ricardo Ferreira, expert at the European Commission's Directorate General for Regional Policy, and Daniel Klimovský, researcher at Comenius University in Bratislava. A special panel was dedicated to the practice of cross-border cooperation in Central Europe. The panel was moderated by Melinda Istenes-Benczi and featured presentations by Martin Lačný, University of Prešov (Slovakia), Enya Újvári-Tămaş, Babeş-Bolyai University (Romania), Julija Feťko, National University of Uzhhorod (Ukraine) and Gyula Ocskay, Secretary General (CESCI).

On 28 November, HEK organised a hybrid event together with the University of Granada on the occasion of the Day of Science, entitled *Cooperation and Conflict in an Age of Uncertainty*. The participants were welcomed by Réka Varga, Dean of the Faculty of Political Science and International Relations of the University of Public Service. The presentations, which addressed the various challenges to cooperation and how to address them, were delivered in the online space.

Zsuzsanna Fejes, Dániel Gazsó, Melinda Istenes-Benczi, Ádám Kalmár and Edit Soós gave presentations on behalf of Research Group.

In 2024, the staff of the Faculty of Law Enforcement participating in the Research Group organised two conferences, that we also attended, thus strengthening the cooperation between the disciplines: on 29 April we participated in the seminar entitled *Organisational Culture - glimpses from the life of the border police*, which presented the past 100 years of the Hungarian border police; and on 11 September we attended the event *Border Opening 35*, organised by our colleagues on the occasion of the anniversary of the opening of the Iron Curtain.

The Research Group in the International Scientific Community

CESCI and the Research Group are consciously seeking to actively participate in international networks involved in border-related research.

TEIN: the Transfrontier Euro-Institute Network

In 2023, the Research Group became a member of the Transfrontier Euro-Institute Network (TEIN), a network of more than 20 European institutions, and has been an active member since then. In May 2024, we participated in the TEIN strategy workshop in Eupen, Belgium. Initiated by the outgoing AEBR President Karl-Heinz Lambertz, the main objective of the meeting was to jointly develop a framework for European research and academic institutions dealing with borders to systematically contribute to EU and national policy making and to the work of local actors involved in cross-border cooperation. The Eupen workshop raised the need to organise a similar event on training. The Research Group has successfully submitted a proposal to the National Research, Development and Innovation Office to organise this event. The workshop will take place in Budapest in May 2025.

At the workshop, we also took the lead in coordinating the drafting of a policy paper on the future of European Territorial Cooperation, which was published in November after several months of work by the network members with the title '*Costs of non-Interreg*'. The document contains a comprehensive set of arguments to demonstrate that EU programmes supporting territorial cooperation are an indispensable element of EU Cohesion Policy and, more broadly, of European integration. To maximise visibility, we have also produced a flyer that makes the full text accessible via a QR code. The flyer was first distributed at the Art of Cooperation conference. The main findings of the document were also presented by our Secretary General at the 10th anniversary celebrations of the Institute for Transnational and Euregional Cross-border Cooperation and Mobility (ITEM) at Maastricht University in Ghent on 22 November.

The network held its Annual Meeting and Conference in Maastricht on 25-27 September, where Zsuzsanna Fejes and Gyula Ocskay represented the Research Group. The latter also participated in a round-table discussion on legal accessibility at the conference.

Participation in Jean Monnet Network Projects

Jean Monnet Actions supported by Erasmus+ promote the development of professional networks between research institutions and universities around a specific research theme. In recent years, CESCI has been involved in two such networking projects. The official closure of the *Frontiers in Motion* (Frontem) project, managed by the University of Strasbourg, took place in early 2024 (thanks to the reallocation of resources due to COVID, there will be another conference in Cluj-Napoca in 2025). In this project we participated as external experts, applying the methodology of the network's research programme to the Hungarian-Romanian border region. The final volume of the project was a collection of papers including two members of the Research Group, namely Melinda Istenes-Benczi and János Sallai.

In the context of the Jean Monnet Action on the *Human-to-Military Security Database* coordinated by the University of Victoria in Canada, we have been continuously involved in internal meetings and online presentations of the project. Teodor Gyelník, Melinda Istenes-Benczi and Gyula Ocskay co-authored a paper on the changes in the official EU narrative on migration, which was presented at the conference "*Borders, Politics and Policies: Using Data to Power Border Research* in Strasbourg, 2-4 June. It is expected to be published in 2025. On 18 September, the Research Group was represented by Gyula Ocskay at the closing round-table discussion of the project, organised and moderated by Professor Emmanuel Brunet-Jailly, the project's lead researcher, in the framework of the first Polish Congress on Border Studies. Zsuzsanna Fejes also gave a presentation on the legal framework for cross-border cooperation at the three-day congress in Wrocław and Opole.

Cooperation in the Central and Eastern European Region

In recent years, we have established fruitful professional relationships with a number of Central and Eastern European universities and research institutions, which is well represented by the CESCI Presidency, with researchers from the Romanian Academy of Sciences and the Technical University of Liberec in the Czech Republic. Through our projects and events, we have strengthened our links with Poland (WSB University, University of Wrocław), Slovakia (University of Prešov), Romania (Babeş-Bolyai University).

We maintain a strong cooperation with the National University of Uzhhorod, with whom we are implementing another joint project, despite the Russian aggression, with the support of the Visegrad Fund. We are regular speakers at each other's events and participate in European networks.

Publication Activities of the Research Group: Launch of the ABCD Journal

In 2024, we launched a joint journal of the Research Group and the University of Eastern Finland, the Journal of Advanced Studies on Borders, Cooperation and Development (ABCD Journal). The publication of the issue Nr zero was financially supported by the European Commission through the b-solutions initiative managed by the AEBR. The papers are written by internationally renowned authors, elaborating on the results of the legal barrier removal initiative.

The Editor-in-Chief of the 1,000-copy publication is James W. Scott, Editor-in-Chief of CESCI's Yearbook 2014-2023, with whom we have had several meetings throughout the year to discuss the launch of the journal. After the concept of the publication was not accepted by any major international publisher, we decided to try to launch it as a joint journal of the National University of Public Service, CESCI, and the University of Eastern Finland in 2025.

For the pilot issue, our team was actively involved in the editorial process, collaborating with authors, designers and printers, carrying out editorial tasks and producing two illustrative maps for the introductory study.

Research Initiatives beyond Research Group

Our team members are regular participants and speakers at professional and scientific events. For example, on 29 August, at the 35th International Geographical Congress in Dublin, our Board member Bianca Mitrică and Secretary General Gyula Ocskay organised and moderated two panels. On 5 July, experts from eight EU Member States discussed cross-border mobility issues at the University of Twente in the Netherlands. Our association was represented by the Secretary General in a round-table discussion. We participated at the conference of the Institute for Research Institute for Hungarian Minorities Abroad on 18 March, where the topic was the inclusion of Ukrainian refugee children in the Hungarian education system; and at the panel on cross-border obstacles of the Kecskemét conference organised by the International Regional Science Association.

During the year, we were asked to peer-edit studies by several editors, including the Journal of Borderlands Studies and the Regional Statistics.

We regularly undertake tutoring of Pálfi interns, and the preparation of theses for undergraduate and PhD students. In 2024, Márton Farkas, a student at ELTE, was assisted by our colleague Mátyás Jaschitz in the preparation of his thesis supported by the Pálfi scholarship program. The student completed his university internship with us and later worked as an intern at CESCI.

In December, we submitted a call for proposals to the European Commission to provide logistical and technical support for a Commission expert to present at the Association of Borderlands

Studies (ABS) World Conference in Seattle in April 2025, and to participate in the roundtable he proposed.

Our Publications

Benczi, M. (2024): Outlining the Main Perception Strands on the Hungarian-Romanian Border: Frontières en mouvement (Frontem): Which Models of Cross-Border Cooperation for the EU? Peter Lang, Bruxelles - Berlin - Chennai - Lausanne - New York - Oxford, pp. 529-551.

Fejes, Zs. - Ocskay, Gy. (2024): The Cross-Border Cooperation Tool-Box of EU Cohesion Policy, European Review, Vol. 26, No. 4, pp. 45-69. DOI: 10.32559/et.2023.4.4

Gyelnik, T. (2024) From Demarcation Line to State Border: Society at the Border and Its Conflicts in the 1920s. Book review: From Demarcation Line to State Border: Society at the Border and Its Conflicts in the 1920s by Bencsík, P. ELKH. Journal of Advanced Studies on Borders, Cooperation and Development, Vol. 0 (PILOT issue) pp. 132-139.

Gyelnik, T. (2024). Invisible Borders in a Bordered World: Power, Mobility, and Belonging by Diener, C. A., & Hagen, J. (eds.) Routledge, London - New York. Journal of Advanced Studies on Borders, Cooperation and Development, Vol. 0 (PILOT issue) pp. 125-131.

Hesz, R. (2024): Importance of cross-border service provision along the borders of Hungary. TerritoriAll, No. 13, pp. 38-39.

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Scientific events

Date	Location	Name of the event
11 January 2024	Budapest	Meeting with James W. Scott on the launch of the ABCD Journal
15 January 2024	(Online)	Jean Monnet Network (UVIC) – BIG Partner Presentation Series
22 January 2024	(Online)	Jean Monnet Network (UVIC) – BIG Partner Presentation Series
29 January 2024	(Online)	Jean Monnet Network (UVIC) – BIG Partner Presentation Series
30 January 2024	(Online)	Jean Monnet Network (UVIC) – BIG Monthly partner meeting
5 February 2024	(Online)	Jean Monnet Network (UVIC) – BIG Partner Presentation Series
12 February 2024	(Online)	Jean Monnet Network (UVIC) – BIG Partner Presentation Series
22 February 2024	Budapest	Annual regular meeting of the LUPS-CESCI Research Group on Cross-Border Cooperation
18 March 2024	Budapest	Ukrainian children in the Hungarian education system (participation in the event of the Research Institute for Hungarian Minorities Abroad)
25 March 2024	Budapest	Signing ceremony of the cooperation agreement between CESCI and the University of Public Service
9 April 2024	Kecskemét	Participation in the World Congress of the International Regional Science Association
29 April 2024	Budapest	Organisational culture – glimpses from the life of border guard agencies (participation in the conference of the Faculty of Law Enforcement of the University of Public Service)
3-4 May 2024	Eupen, Belgium	Strategic workshop of the TEIN network
8 May 2024	Siófok	Presentation at the conference titled "Transport Development in Hungary"
10 May 2024	(Online)	Editorial board meeting of the ABCD Journal
21 May 2024	(Online)	Jean Monnet Network partner meeting
28 May 2024	(Online)	Editorial board meeting of the ABCD Journal
2-4 June 2024	Strasbourg, France	Presentation at the 'Borders in Globalization LAB' international conference

Date	Location	Name of the event
5 June 2024	(Online)	LUPS-CESCI Research Group on Cross-Border Cooperation lecture: László Vájlok
12 June 2024	(Online)	LUPS-CESCI Research Group on Cross-Border Cooperation lecture: Melinda Istenes-Benczi
19 June 2024	Budapest	Meeting of the Pálfi interns
3 July 2024	(Online)	Presentation for the experts of the Translation Centre for the Bodies of the EU
5-6 July 2024	Enschede, The Netherlands	Presentation at the workshop or the Twente University
24 July 2024	Budapest	Meeting with James W. Scott on the establishment of the ABCD Journal
29 August 2024	Dublin, Ireland	35th International Geographical Congress
2 September 2024	(Online)	Editorial Meeting of the ABCD Journal
11 September 2024	Budapest	Participation in the conference organised at the University of Public Service at the 35th anniversary of the opening of the border
16-18 September 2024	Opole, Poland	First International Congress of Border Researchers
25-27 September 2024	Maastricht, The Netherlands	TEIN annual General Assembly
26 September 2024	(Online)	Joint conference of LUPS-CESCI RG and the University of Granada: organisers' meeting
16 October 2024	Budapest	Conference 'Rethinking Cross-Border Cooperation and Governance in the Era of Transformative Processes' at the University of Public Service (co-organised by the LUPS-CESCI Research Group)
8 November 2024	(Online)	Presentation at the conference 'Legal and informational aspects of ensuring security in cross-border cooperation' organised by the Uzhhorod National University
15 November 2024	Szeged	Lecture at the European Studies Network Conference
21-22 November 2024	Ghent, Belgium	10th anniversary conference of the ITEM
28 November 2024	Budapest	Conference 'Cooperation and Conflict in an Age of Uncertainty' organised by the LUPS-CESCI RG and the University of Granada

Planning

Assistance in the Implementation of the Hungarian-Slovenian Economic and Development Programme

The two governments have incorporated into the 2024 agenda the initiative for the Slovenian-Hungarian border, to be financed through national funds. This program aims primarily to support national minorities residing in each other's territories, with a focus on enhancing local community development, as well as promoting social sustainability and population retention goals.

The technical groundwork for CESCI, continuing the work done in previous years, reached its culmination in 2024, with the Joint Strategic Programme Document adopted by both sides by the end of the year and the decision on the first 4 projects to be funded. Throughout the programme development process, we have provided and continue to provide constant technical support to our member, the MURABA EGTC.

Evaluation of Cross-border Cooperation Programmes

In connection with the cross-border programmes involving Hungary during the 2014-2020 programming period, at the request of the Managing Authority within the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade (KKM), CESCI's evaluation activities in 2024 prominently featured the "second phase evaluation" of three cross-border cooperation programmes: the Slovakia-Hungary INTERREG Cross-border Cooperation Programme, the Hungary-Croatia INTERREG Cross-border Cooperation Programme, and the Hungary-Slovakia-Romania-Ukraine ENI Cross-border Cooperation Programme. In the year 2024, a summary of the evaluation carried out in 2023 was prepared for the evaluation of the Hungary-Slovakia programme in the so-called Final Implementation Report (FIR). The finalisation of the evaluation, and the preparation of the summary for the Final Implementation Report (FIR) for the Hungary-Croatia programme were completed in February 2024. The start of the evaluation of the Hungary-Slovakia-Romania-Ukraine programme had to be postponed several times due to the delay in the closure of the programme, and the related work was finally launched in the second half of 2024. During the year, questionnaires were sent to the beneficiaries, in-depth interviews were conducted with the programme bodies and the analysis and evaluation sections were drafted. However, some of the data required for the evaluation were not yet available at the end of the year, and the closure of the evaluation was postponed to 2025.

Regional Development Tasks in the Carpathian Basin

On behalf of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade (KKM), we have been involved in the preparation of the development of cities located along or beyond the borders since 2017. During 2024, we had to respond to some requests for information and professional opinions on the follow-up of previously developed materials. The development concept previously elaborated for the municipality of Šahy follows an administrative cross-border approach, which provides a basis for future urban development projects. The urban development concept was finalised and presented in February 2024, coupled with an executive summary and a Slovak version.

In addition, we have been continuously working on the updating and development of our spatial and statistical databases along the Hungarian borders and in areas beyond the borders. One of the most spectacular results of this work was the creation of a map of Hungary's road, water and rail border crossings in cooperation with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade and the verification of the database related to the map. We produced large-format prints of the map dataset for the Ministry and made the online version of the map available.

We have also made efforts to present our expertise and opinions on all domestic platforms where the cross-border impact of developments and interventions in the domestic field can be emphasised.

Professional Networks for Cross-border Planning

During the year, we continued to cooperate with several professional networks on cross-border planning and governance. In the Balkans, Director, Mátyás Jaschitz participated in the annual workshop of TG-WeB, the leading expert organisation on cross-border planning and governance issues, through an online platform. He also participated in three online meetings of the AESOP cross-border planning and governance thematic group: two internal meetings and a targeted workshop titled "Inclusive and Cohesive Urban Development in European Cities - European Reflections and Learnings for a Post-War Urban Planning".

Professional events related to planning

Date	Location	Name of the event
14 February 2024	Felsőszölnök	Meeting of the Programming Task Force of the Hungarian-Slovenian Economic and Development Programme
27 February 2024	Šahy, Slovakia	Closing event of the planning project of the town of Šahy
28 May 2024	(Online)	Hungarian-Slovenian Economic and Development Programme: consultation with the Slovenian party

Date	Location	Name of the event
7 June 2024	(Online)	TG-WeB annual meeting
25 September 2024	(Online)	Meeting with the representatives of the baum_cityregion initiative for data exchange and generation
18 October 2024	(Online)	Participation in the workshop 'Inclusive and Cohesive Urban Development in European Cities - European Reflections and Learnings for a Post-War Urban Planning' organised by the Thematic Group "Transboundary Planning and Governance" of AESOP
3 December 2024	(Online)	TG meeting of AESOP Transboundary planning and governance

Project Development

Tourist Territorial Action Plans

Back in 2014, CESCI developed a new tool for cross-border integrated development for the INTERREG V-A Slovakia-Hungary programme. The Territorial Action Plan for Employment (TAPE) was implemented in 9 regions with the support of the programme. The tool is considered a good example at international level and its further developed version provides a framework for the complex development of tourism destinations in the border region in the current programme period. In the context of last year's call for proposals, we devoted significant resources during the year to the elaboration of the tourism action plans of five EGTCss along the Hungarian-Slovakian border. We supported the planning work of the Arrabona EGTC, the Pons-Danubii EGTC, the Ister-Granum and Pontibus EGTCs and the Via Carpatia EGTC by organising project development workshops, partnership meetings, drafting statistical analyses, the preparation of diagrams and the elaboration of action plan concepts.

Preparing Investments in Innovation

In 2024, CESCI provided technical assistance to several cross-border actors on the development of innovation capacity building. In the first months of the year, we supported the setting up of a consortium with the Pontibus EGTC and the preparation of the application form for a call for proposals for capacity building launched by the European Innovation Council and the SME Agency. Despite the commitment of the consortium members, the application was not successful.

During the year, we held professional consultations with other regional actors operating along the Hungarian borders on the development of their innovation ideas.

Resource Mapping, Partner Search

In 2024, we continued to explore financial resources to support cross-border developments and improvements. We participated in several information days related to the different funding opportunities and regularly informed our members about the relevant funding opportunities. Last year, we updated the resource map prepared in 2023 in English and Ukrainian at the request of the Transcarpathian County Municipality.

In each case, when we received a request for proposals, we assessed which of our members would be most relevant to the request and put interested partners in touch.

Events related to project development

Date	Location	Name of the event
2 January 2024	(Online)	Project development meeting (I3: BIOCON)
3 January 2024	(Online)	Project development meeting (I3: BIOCON)
5 January 2024	(Online)	Project development meeting (I3: BIOCON)
8 January 2024	(Online)	Project development meeting (I3: BIOCON)
11 January 2024	(Online)	Project development meeting (I3: Caadex)
12 January 2024	(Online)	Project development meeting (I3: Caadex)
15 January 2024	Budapest	Project development meeting (TAP: Ister-Granum EGTC)
15 January 2024	(Online)	Project development meeting (I3: BIOCON)
16 January 2024	(Online)	Project development meeting (I3: BIOCON)
22 January 2024	(Online)	Project development meeting (I3: BIOCON)
23 January 2024	Budapest	Project development meeting (I3: BIOCON)
30 January 2024	Budapest	Project development meeting (I3: BIOCON)
2 February 2024	(Online)	Project development meeting (I3: BIOCON)
7 February 2024	(Online)	Project development meeting (I3: BIOCON)
12 February 2024	(Online)	Project development meeting (I3: BIOCON)
21 February 2024	Budapest	Project development meeting (TAP of the Ister-Granum and Pontibus EGTCs)
22 February 2024	Vanyarc	Project development meeting: (TAP of the Via Carpatia EGTC)

Date	Location	Name of the event
11 March 2024	Drégelypalánk - Ipeľské Predmostie, Slovakia	Inauguration of the bridge between Ipolydamásd and Ipeľské Predmostie
9 April 2024	(Online)	Project development meeting (TAP of Pontibus EGTC)
10 April 2024	Budapest	Project development meeting (TAP of the Ister-Granum EGTC)
15 April 2024	Edelény	Project development meeting (TAP of the Via Carpatia EGTC)
7 May 2024	Budapest	Project development meeting (TAP of the Pons Danubii EGTC)
10 May 2024	(Online)	Hemp IVF project development meeting
13 May 2024	(Online)	Innovative Health Initiative - online information workshop
17 May 2024	(Online)	Project development meeting (TAP of the Via Carpatia EGTC)
30 May 2024	Budapest	Public consultation of the draft call for proposals for tourism projects (Interreg VI-A Hungary-Slovakia Programme)
4 June 2024	(Online)	Project development meeting (TAP of the Via Carpatia EGTC)
20 June 2024	(Online)	Project development meeting (TAP of the Via Carpatia EGTC)
27 June 2024	Želiezovce, Slovakia	Project development workshop (TAP of the Pontibus EGTC)
27 June 2024	(Online)	Project development meeting (TAP of the Via Carpatia EGTC)
28 June 2024	(Online)	Project development meeting (TAP of the Via Carpatia EGTC)
1 July 2024	(Online)	Project development meeting (TAP of the Via Carpatia EGTC)
9 July 2024	(Online)	Project generation workshop on organic construction
17 July 2024	(Online)	Info Day of the Interreg VI-A Hungary-Slovakia Programme on the call for tourism projects
7 August 2024	(Online)	Project development meeting (TAP of the Arrabona EGTC)
13 August 2024	(Online)	Project development meeting (TAP of the Via Carpatia EGTC)
15 August 2024	Komárno, Slovakia	Project development meeting (TAP of the Pons Danubii EGTC)
16 August 2024	Budapest	Project development meeting with the Joint Secretariat (TAP of the Via Carpatia EGTC)
21 August 2024	Budapest	Project development meeting (TAP of the Pontibus and Ister-Granum EGTCs)

Date	Location	Name of the event
21 August 2024	(Online)	Project development meeting (TAP of the Via Carpatia EGTC)
5 September 2024	(Online)	Project development meeting (TAP of the Via Carpatia EGTC)
6 September 2024	(Online)	Project development meeting (TAP of the Via Carpatia EGTC)
13 September 2024	(Online)	Project development meeting (TAP of the Arrabona EGTC)
19 September 2024	(Online)	Project development meeting (TAP of the Arrabona EGTC)
23 September 2024	(Online)	Project development meeting (TAP of the Via Carpatia EGTC)
30 September 2024	Budapest	Project development meeting (TAP of the Pontibus and Ister-Granum EGTCs)
3 October 2024	(Online)	Project development meeting (TAP of the Via Carpatia EGTC)
14 October 2024	Esztergom	Project development workshop (TAP of the Ister-Granum and the Pontibus EGTCs)
15 October 2024	(Online)	Interreg Central info day
15 October 2024	(Online)	Project development meeting (TAP of the Pons Danubii EGTC)
22 October 2024	Esztergom	Workshop of the representatives of the tourist destination management organisations (TAP of the Ister-Granum and the Pontibus EGTCs)
30 October 2024	(Online)	Resilient Borders call's info session
30 October 2024	Verőce	Project development meeting (TAP of the Ister-Granum and Pontibus EGTCs)
30 October 2024	(Online)	Project development meeting (TAP of the Via Carpatia EGTC)
6-7 November 2024	Košice, Slovakia	Project development workshop (TAP of the Via Carpatia EGTC)
15 November 2024	(Online)	Project development meeting (TAP of the Via Carpatia EGTC)
25 November 2024	(Online)	Project development meeting (TAP of the Ister-Granum and the Pontibus EGTCs)
27 November 2024	(Online)	Project development meeting (TAP of the Via Carpatia EGTC)
27 November 2024	(Online)	Project development meeting (TAP of the Arrabona EGTC)
9-12 December 2024	(Online)	Horizon Europe Programme: info day
12 December 2024	(Online)	Project development meeting (TAP of the Via Carpatia EGTC)

Institutional Development

The EGTC Programme

Since its establishment in 2009, CESCI has been playing an important role in the establishment and professional activities of the EGTCs with Hungarian involvement, as well as shaping policies at national and EU level. This extensive work continued in 2024. The professional support for Hungarian EGTCs was carried out in close cooperation with the competent department of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade, with whom the necessary activities were coordinated in regular joint consultations in 2024.

Since its establishment, our association has been providing a continuous information service regarding the activities of the European Groupings of Territorial Cooperation (EGTCs). We have continued this support activity in 2024, mainly by using the tools we have already developed, and by helping the relevant department of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade to build a database to facilitate and systematise the collection of information on the EGTCs. The EGTC Monitor, launched in 2019 by CESCI, significantly increases the visibility and international embeddedness of the results of the domestic EGTC programme. Its content is kept up-to-date through continuous development work, and its database is constantly being expanded and improved. In the course of this work, we have accumulated a wealth of data, information and knowledge on the functioning of the EGTCs. During the year, we kept the interactive map of the Hungarian EGTCs up to date and published more than 20 news items on the EGTCs' activities.

Providing legal and professional advice on EGTCs has been a constant task for years. Also in 2024, our legal staff received several legal questions and requests, which required in-depth research work in several cases. In the year 2024, the competent department of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade of Hungary carried out a legal compliance audit of two EGTCs (European Border Cities EGTC, Ipoly Valley EGTC), which included an on-site visit, with the expert support of two legal advisors of CESCI, Dr. Katalin Fekete and Dr. Norbert Jankai. Our colleagues also provided personalised advisory level support to the EGTCs concerned with regard to the deficiencies identified during the on-site visits. Based on the main findings identified during the audits, a self-audit checklist for all EGTCs has been developed and is planned to be finalised and shared with the groupings in 2025. At the request of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade, we analysed the legal aspects of real estate acquisition by EGTCs. Additionally, upon request from the MURABA EGTC we examined the legal status of supervisory board members and addressed conflict of interest issues related to the status of the director of the EGTC. We provided information to the Committee of the Regions on the Hungarian EGTCs that have ceased to exist.

Last year, the process of setting up the planned BOTILA EGTC, which was launched in 2023, continued, and our colleague provided several rounds of opinions on the Slovak drafts of the EGTC's Convention and Statutes, as well as answers to legal questions. At the beginning of the

year, we received a request to set up a new EGTC for the management of the cross-border Novohrad-Nógrád Geopark. Due to legal difficulties encountered during the establishment process, it later became an integral part of our #ACCESS project. In the middle of the year, the establishment of a new EGTC was also launched. Five twin municipalities in the Romanian-Hungarian border region decided to establish a grouping. We supported the process by providing professional advice and by drawing up a roadmap for the establishment of the EGTC.

As in previous years, in 2024 we have prepared thematic maps for several EGTCs and shared our translation capacity when requested. In several cases, we participated as speakers in the professional events of each EGTC, notably in project development workshops.

EGTC Workshops

We actively contributed to successful delivery of the two **EGTC workshops** by providing professional coordination, active engagement and limited financial assistance. .

The first EGTC workshop of the year took place on 18-19 June 2024 in Kóspallag, hosted by the Pontibus EGTC, which has realised several innovative developments in the region over the past decade. In line with the profile of the host EGTC, CESCI invited experts in the field of social and sustainability innovation. During the two days, six thematic presentations were delivered , accompanied by operational discussions coordinated by the staff of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade, and two horizontal presentations prepared by CESCI. One presentation included a video message from Secretary General Gyula Ocskay on the future of EU Cohesion Policy, while the second presentation was delivered by Mónika Simon (project manager of CESCI), who gave an overview of various funding sources available beyond the Interreg programmes.

The second workshop of the year took place at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade (MFA), jointly organised by the Ministry and CESCI, during which the EGTCs and the team of the MFA discussed current challenges and opportunities, with the focus on cross-border cooperation and the elimination of legal obstacles. Among the legal experts of our association, Dr. Norbert Jankai co-presented on the legal supervision of the EGTCs, and Dr. Katalin Fekete highlighted the role of the EGTCs in the legal accessibility of border regions through the b-solutions initiative. Kitti Dubniczki, Director of CESCI, reported on the progress of the #ACCESS project.

We have published a detailed article on both events on our website, including the presentations and the photo report.

Events related to institutional development

Date	Location	Name of the event
20 March 2024	Budapest	Consultation with the representatives of the MFA

Date	Location	Name of the event
31 May 2024	(Online)	Consultation with the representatives of the MFA
18-19 June 2024	Kóspallag	EGTC workshop
3 July 2024	Nyíregyháza	Legality check of the European Border Cities EGTC
8 July 2024	Ludányhalászi	Legality check of the Ipoly Valley EGTC
18 September 2024	Budapest	Consultation with the representatives of the MFA
13 November 2024	Budapest	EGTC workshop
19 November 2024	Gyula	Consultation on the planned EGTC in the Romanian-Hungarian border region

Policy

Participation in the EU-level Professional Debate

Our association is involved in the professional discourse at EU level in a comprehensive way, we are regular speakers at EU professional events on border issues, and we comment on policy documents. We have further strengthened our network with key international partners (European Commission, Committee of the Regions, AEBR, MOT), actively participating in each other's events, launched a joint platform and have made the development and contributed to shaping of the post-2027 situation of European Territorial Cooperation Programme.

The European Cross-border Platform (ECBP)

In order to strengthen cross-border cooperation and support the specific needs of border regions, the European Committee of the Regions launched the European Cross-border Platform (ECBP) in early 2024, bringing together actors in cross-border cooperation from border cities and regions to EGTCs and Euroregions.

The platform works under the technical coordination of the chair and Steering Committee of the COTER Committee and, depending on the subject under discussion, it also cooperates with the relevant committees of the Committee of the Regions. In 2024, the Steering Committee was composed of two members of the Committee of the Regions and representatives of AEBR, MOT and CESCI.

The launch of the platform took place at the Art of Cooperation event in Budapest, jointly organised by AEBR and CESCI, in November 2024. The day after the launch event, which was also supported by the Committee of the Regions, interested participants travelled to the Ister-Granum EGTC area to learn about the EGTC's activities, projects and achievements.

Cooperation with Our Strategic Partners in Europe

At the meeting of the Intergroup on Cross-border Cooperation of the Committee of the Regions on 14 February 2024, we reported online and at the meeting in Brussels on 20 June 2024, we reported in person on the latest developments of our association. The Committee of the Regions (CoR) Bureau held its external meeting on 28 and 29 October in Balatonfüred, on the topic of European Territorial Cooperation and Sustainable Tourism, where our Secretary General was given the opportunity to speak on the future of Cohesion Policy.

The Transfrontier Operational Mission (MOT) hosted the 3rd Forum on Borders in Paris on 2 and 3 December 2024. The panels and presentations focused on an EU-level Cross-Border Deal. One of the workshops at the event focused on Enlargement and Eastern Borders. This workshop was organised and moderated by representatives of ESPON EGTC (Nicolas Rossignol, Deputy Director) and CESCI (Gyula Ocskay, Secretary General).

We have also deepened our professional relationship with the Association of European Border Regions (AEBR), promoting the b-solutions initiative in professional circles. Our organisation was personally represented at the AEBR annual conference and general assembly, which was hosted by Innlandet in Norway and Värmland in Sweden in 2024. Director, Kitti Dubniczki also participated in the meeting of the External Borders Task Force.

A year and a half ago, the European Commission asked the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) to develop a toolkit for cross-border governance. The draft proposal was presented at a conference and workshop in Brussels on 18-19 June. The first panel of the event was dedicated to cross-border spatial development, where Gyula Ocskay gave a presentation on the principles of CESCI's Cohesion-based Planning Methodology and concrete examples of its application. The final event of the project was organised in a hybrid format, attended by us online.

Legal Accessibility

Our association has been working for a decade to identify and remove legal and administrative obstacles to cross-border interactions. In 2024, we continued to be actively involved in several initiatives on the field, including the implementation of our strategic #ACCESS project in the Slovak-Hungarian border region launched in 2023, the preparation of an EU legislation on the BRIDGEforEU instrument, and the development of various sectoral processes.

BRIDGEforEU, ECBM

Our association has been actively involved in the negotiation process for an EU instrument aimed at eliminating obstacles that affect the daily lives of border residents since the proposal was drafted by the Luxembourg EU Presidency in 2015. Initially known as the European Cross-Border Mechanism (ECBM), the introduction of this instrument has faced significant setbacks with the suspension of the negotiations on the draft regulation in 2021.

The European Commission published its new proposal at the end of 2023, which amended the regulation, including renaming the instrument the Regulation on facilitating cross-border solutions (FCBS). However, the draft, even in its new form, has met with widespread opposition from member states and the idea of its possible withdrawal was raised during the Belgian EU Presidency. However, later this year, the Hungarian Presidency, with the help of the Permanent Representation in Brussels, proposed a solution whereby the framework would create a common EU fund, but would be voluntary. Under the regulation, national cross-border coordination points would be set up in border regions to coordinate responses to existing obstacles in a one-stop-shop system. The new name of the instrument is BRIDGEforEU, referring to its role in reducing the divisive effects of borders. On 23 October 2024, the European Council adopted the Hungarian proposal, and on 16 December 2024, the provisional agreement was reached between the Council, the Parliament and the Commission in the so-called trilogue process. The new Regulation is expected to be adopted and published in the first half of 2025.

In 2024, CESCI remained actively engaged in supporting the negotiation process of the draft regulation. Earlier this year, the MFA asked our organisation to contribute to the development of the official Hungarian negotiating position during the Belgian Presidency. In addition, we have prepared several ministerial preparatory materials, commented on the current Hungarian official positions, participated in several international events on the subject, and dedicated a special panel to the instrument at the Art of Cooperation Conference.

Responding to an invitation of the ITEM Institute in Maastricht, and following their methodology, we analysed the potential spatial impacts of the planned instrument, using the example of the cross-border metropolitan agglomeration of Bratislava. The study drew on insights gathered through interviews with residents who had moved to the Hungarian side of the border from Bratislava, which made it clear that the instrument, then known as ECBM, could help to remove a number of barriers. At the same time, we also proposed the re-launch of the previously successful Hungarian-Slovak Joint Committee, which could provide an appropriate forum for discussing the obstacles raised. The results of the study were presented at the TEIN network's annual conference in Maastricht in September.

#ACCESS

The #ACCESS project, a strategic operation realised in partnership with CESCI Carpathia targeting legal accessibility of the Hungarian-Slovak border region, has included a number of activities during 2024. We systematically collected nearly 300 obstacles encountered along the border. These problems have been classified and filtered thematically (on a sectoral basis) to identify the barriers that will be prioritised in the coming years.

The obstacles were collected through four channels:

- **We conducted a survey among residents living in the border area according to five life situations**: cross-border shopping, working, studying, moving and implementing projects. The sample of 1609 valid responses shows that residents of the Slovak-Hungarian border region face a number of difficulties in cross-border mobility and cooperation, many of which are of a legal nature.
- **Expert interviews were conducted** to get a more detailed picture of the difficulties encountered and to classify them. The interviews, conducted mainly online, revealed that different actors in the sector have different perspectives on the problems. The interviews also showed that although cross-border cooperation has improved in recent years, legal barriers still exist.
- **Workshops were organised** in the urban catchment areas most affected by cross-border mobility. In total, 9 such reference groups have been set up along the Hungarian-Slovak border, mainly with the participation of the leaders of the municipalities concerned, who have up-to-date information on both mobility trends and the everyday obstacles that hamper them. In addition to the 9 launching workshops, four of the second round of workshops took also place in 2024.
- **We made available a permanent barrier reporting platform on the project website**, through which we received more than 40 citizen reports of barriers in 2024, which were analysed by our legal experts, and detailed responses were sent to the individuals who reported the barrier with further actions were implemented, depending on the nature of the problem.

In parallel with the identification of obstacles, partners have actively addressed several significant barriers:

- **Emergency health services:** an expert meeting was held in Bratislava with relevant institutional representatives from Slovakia, Austria and Hungary, where the preparation of an agreement based on the existing model of rescue cooperation at the Austro-Czech border was launched.
- **Environmental and forestry challenges:** expert consultations and legal analyses have been carried out to overcome environmental and forestry barriers.
- **Public transport integration:** the project aims to help further develop the integrated public transport system in Eastern Slovakia, specifically focusing on cross-border connections, in connection with the opening of the new VOLVO plant in Valaliky in 2026.

- **Tourism cooperation:** one of the most important initiatives of the project is to help the creation of a new European Grouping of Territorial Cooperation (EGTC) for the integrated development of the Novohrad-Nógrád Geopark. Stakeholders met in September 2024 to develop the founding documents for the EGTC, with finalisation planned for 2025.
- **Cross-border residential mobility:** the project proposed a governance solution to systematically address the everyday problems of Slovak citizens moving to the Hungarian side of the border in Bratislava region.. The model is the BAUM, an existing organisation in the Austrias context.

As part of the #ACCESS project, we also share information about the project on social media. In 2024, ACCESS, the solution Facebook page has gained over 5,000 followers. The page provides updates on the Hungarian-Slovak border and the #ACCESS project, the reported obstacles and interesting information on the border area in the form of quizzes and infographics. In addition to our Facebook page, the project's website is also active, where visitors can report additional obstacles, find information about the project, our activities and the legal responses to the notifications received so far. Pieces of news on the project are also shared on this site.

The project was also presented at major events such as the Hungarian EU Presidency's Art of Cooperation event in Budapest where the project partners organised two panel discussions on tackling cross-border barriers, which attracted nearly 100 participants and further increased the visibility of the project. In addition, a video presenting the key lessons learned from the international conference was shared on the project's social media platforms, reaching more than 24,000 views.

B-Solutions

In 2024, the European project b-solutions, launched by DG REGIO and managed by the AEBR, continued to address legal and administrative obstacles in border regions. Based on the requests of AEBR, our association provided professional assistance in several cases in recent years to identify the legal background of the obstacles encountered and to moderate the professional discussions leading to the solution.

At the beginning of the year, we closed the investigation of the case reported by Pannon EGTC on Croatian-Hungarian cross-border employment. During the year, we were also invited to appear in a short video presenting the case.

In May, our experts started investigating a new case reported by the Mura Region EGTC, which involved a comparison of fishing rules for border rivers. The Mura and Drava are border rivers between Croatia and Hungary, and although Croatia's accession to Schengen in 2023 has facilitated inshore fishing and the use of lift nets and boats. These activities are still regulated differently in both countries, and experience shows that national regulations should be approximated and harmonised. The related legal advice exercise started in the second quarter and the report was completed by the end of the summer.

During the year, we also worked on promoting the b-solutions project. We have created a dedicated sub-page on the CESCI website, where we present, among other things, the cases our experts have studied so far, and we share current news about the project in collaboration with AEBR. The pilot issue of the Research Group's journal presented the lessons learned from the b-solutions initiative featuring 10 scientific articles. In addition, during the first half of the year, our experts also contacted previous b-solutions applicants with Hungarian participation to gather their follow-up experiences.

Cross-border Health Cooperation

Since 2016, CESCI has been actively involved in activities aimed at sharing health services across borders.

Cross-border Health Cooperation Working Group

At the initiative of our association, with the support of Dr. Péter Takács, Minister of State for Health and under the coordination of Dr. Bence Rétvári, Parliamentary State Secretary, the ministerial working group on cross-border health cooperation started its work on 24 April 2024. In addition to the competent departments of the Ministry of Interior (managing health in Hungary), the National Directorate General of Hospitals (OKFŐ), the National Health Insurance Fund Management (NEAK), the National Ambulance Service (OMSZ) and CESCI delegate members to the group authorised with a proposal-making role.

The working group held a further meeting during 2024 (in October) and, in addition to clarifying administrative issues related to its operation, focused on cross-border rescue. On the one hand, it monitored and assisted in the signing and ratification by the Hungarian Parliament of the Hungarian-Austrian Framework Treaty on Rescue, in the drafting of which our association has been actively involved since 2018. This is why we were invited to the Austrian Embassy reception organised to celebrate the successful conclusion of the negotiation process. The treaty was signed by the two governments in June 2024 and ratified by the Hungarian Parliament on 13 November. On the other hand, the working group has started the process of negotiating a similar framework agreement with the Slovak side. For the latter, CESCI has been assigned the responsibility of coordinating the tasks. In November 2024, our association, in cooperation with CESCI Carpathia, co-organised the first technical meeting with the two rescue services in Bratislava in the framework of the #ACCESS project. (We are working on the development of a framework for health cooperation in the Slovak-Hungarian border region, both in terms of cross-border rescue and patient care, in the framework of our #ACCESS project.)

International Cooperation on Cross-border Health

In order to provide a quality basis for cross-border health cooperation in Hungary, we have joined the EUREGHA association, which brings together European regions involved in such activities. We actively participated in two technical working groups focused on cross-border cooperation in public health and digital transformation. Every year, the management of the Italian-led organisation provides an opportunity for a "one-to-one" discussion of project ideas and initiatives in this field and sends out a bi-weekly newsletter with a variety of proposals. The online workshops regularly provide information on projects implemented by partners far ahead of Hungary in health integration.

In 2024, the Cross-border Cooperation Task Force held its workshops in March, May and November. At the first meeting, CESCI briefed on the health issues of the #ACCESS project, the threats to Interreg programmes and the Hungarian EU Presidency event related to the topic. In addition, we drew the attention of the members to the collection launched by CESCI to help hospitals in Transcarpathia. At the working group's November event, Dr Katalin Fekete presented the Austrian-Hungarian rescue agreement.

We participated in two workshops of the Digital Transformation Task Force 2024 (in April and October), where the introduction of a single European health data space and the presentation of projects focusing on health data were the topics discussed.

Dr Katalin Fekete, legal advisor, represented CESCI at the network's annual general meeting. Five new members joined the association at the event held in Venice, Italy on 22-23 May.

In the framework of our cooperation with the Committee of the Regions, we have had two rounds of comments on Pavel Branda's report on the future of cross-border emergency cooperation. We are honoured that the comments we raised were all incorporated in the version approved by the Committee of the Regions in plenary.

At the panel of the ESPON seminar organised by CESCI in the context of the EU Presidency, Siegfried Weinert spoke about the experiences of cross-border health cooperation in Lower Austria at our invitation.

BorderLabs CE

The BorderLabs CE project, funded by the Interreg Central Europe programme, implemented from June 2024 to November 2026, aims to improve the internal cohesion of the programme area (and Central Europe more broadly). To achieve this, it will develop and test new cooperation models and solutions in five pilot sites, along three professional aspects (1. cross-border strategic planning; 2. participatory cross-border governance; 3. addressing cross-border legal and administrative barriers).

The PILOT partners represent 5 border regions that are considered exemplary for various reasons.

- Twin cities Frankfurt/Oder and Słubice (DE/PL) have been developing their participatory planning methods for decades. These methods are used in the present project to analyse and share the conditions for building trust as a basis for cooperation with actors from two other twin cities.
- The Neisse-Nysa-Nisa Euroregion (DE/CZ/PL) was the first Euroregion of the former communist bloc, created in 1991. In the project, they aim to prepare the integrated development plan for the region.
- Upper Austria is a very developed area in terms of cross-border functional links, especially with Bavaria. Their aim is to identify legal and administrative obstacles to further integration and to solve them in the Bavarian and Czech contexts.
- The Ister-Granum EGTC (HU/SK) started to develop a cross-border network of local products in 2012, which now includes more than 300 local producers. In the framework of this project, the partnership is exploring the conditions for the development of cross-border supply chains.
- The EGTC GO (IT/SI), which hosts the European Capital of Culture in 2025, aims to develop the slow tourism system in the Gorizia and Nova Gorica area.

In order to support capacity building of cross-border cooperation organisations in Central Europe, the professional information and knowledge gathered in the framework of the project will be shared through a multimedia learning platform. Besides, the lessons learned will be summarised in a charter that can be seen as a kind of territorial agenda for Central Europe to overcome barriers and strengthen integration. CESCI will coordinate the project's professional and communication activities.

The official kick-off conference of the BorderLabs CE project took place on 13 November 2024 at the Bálna Event Center in Budapest, where experts, project partners, representatives of the Joint Secretariat of the Interreg Central Europe Programme, and further projects implemented in the same field participated to present the project objectives and discuss the challenges and possible solutions to the barriers in the border regions of Central Europe. The event was hosted by CESCI.

As a first milestone of the project, in 2024, the 5 pilots elaborated the inception reports , which included the activities planned under the pilots, the coordinated implementation of these activities and the methods for stakeholder involvement. The reports were peer reviewed by the project lead partner, the Saxony Regional Development Ministry and CESCI.

Participation in the ESPON Programme

For more than 20 years, the ESPON programme has helped shape EU policy processes through comprehensive analytical projects. For CESCI, it has always been an objective to be involved in the activities of the programme, and in recent years we have had increasing opportunities to do so.

We have been involved in the ESPON KARPAT project on behalf of Roland Hesz, senior analyst, both through the policy workshop organised by the partnership and in response to other targeted requests.

The ESPON EGTC and CESCI organised a panel on cross-border public services at the ESPON Presidency Seminar on 6 November 2024. The seminar focused on the priority theme of the Hungarian EU Presidency "Ensuring quality services for all people and all places". ESPON EGTC invited CESCI to co-organise one of the four expert panels on the first day of the seminar, which focused on the cross-border context of the topic. The key message of the panel, moderated by CESCI Secretary General Gyula Ocskay was that although market services can easily cross the national borders, equal access to quality public services continues to encounter significant barriers.

CESCI participates as a consortium partner in the pan-European ESPON project to support better governance of cross-border functional areas. The activities and main outputs of the CROSSGOV project, which will be implemented from July 2024 to January 2026 with a total budget of €725,130 is organised in a triple implementation scheme, which will serve both the analysis of functional areas and their governance. On the one hand, the partners review the literature on such areas and their governance. On the other hand, they create a database and atlas of existing functional areas. In this context, CESCI, in collaboration with the Technical University of Turin, is responsible for the collection of 5 indicators on cross-border institutions. The third activity will be coordinated by our association and will include 10 European case studies.

This is the first time that our association is part of a prestigious consortium carrying out territorial analysis work of European significance, which represents a new level of our policy activities.

Data Management and Data-driven Governance

Building on the work of the past years, in 2024 we also focused on data management and data-driven governance issues, and we personally participated and held presentations at several international events.

In 2018, Germany and the national and regional representatives responsible for territorial observation in its neighbouring countries signed a memorandum of understanding committing to work together to improve the availability of cross-border data. Currently, CESCI is the sole member of the European Cross-Border Monitoring Network (ECBM) from a country that does not share a border with Germany. Through the network, we learned about the SCORUS (Standing Committee on Regional and Urban Statistics) conference on "Regional and Local Statistics for Better Informed Policy Making", which was held on 5 and 6 June 2024 in Brussels. The conference was co-organised by DG REGIO and Eurostat in a hybrid format, with the audience and some of the speakers joining in online. Participants were representatives of national, European and international institutions (universities, national statistical offices, JRC, OECD, etc.). Our organisation was represented by Viktória Jánosi, GIS expert.

It was also through the wider work of this network that we were able to get involved in a project supported by DG REGIO. In the context of the project "Study on Cross-border data collection", at the invitation of the Austrian ÖIR, Mátyás Jaschitz, Director, is part of the narrow professional group that defines methodological recommendations for the collection and use of cross-border data at European level.

The European Commission has asked Eurostat to identify the indicators needed to assess cross-border functional urban areas. The first results of the project were presented in a workshop on 20-21 June 2024 in Brussels. Our Secretary General represented our organisation at the event. Gyula Ocskay presented the gaps and incompatibilities in the harmonisation of data at local level and some alternative methods for measuring cross-border flows and mobility. During the year, Viktória Jánosi, Senior GIS Analyst at CESCI, also joined the work of the working group set up by Eurostat on this topic. Furthermore, we shared our EGTC geodatabase with the JRC for their ongoing project called 'ACROSS'.

The EFGS (European Geographical and Statistical Forum) conference is an annual event dedicated to promoting the integration of spatial and statistical data. This year's conference took place in Brdo pri Kranju, Slovenia, between 10 and 12 December 2024. The event was hosted by the Slovenian Statistical Office and the Slovenian Observation and Mapping Authority. Our association was represented by Viktória Jánosi, who presented the complexity and difficulties of data collection and analysis for cross-border analyses and research, and the ways to overcome them.

In addition to the international level, we have also built up a professional relationship with the domestic experts. We held several high-level meetings with the representatives of the Central Statistical Office to strengthen efforts to measure cross-border flows, and we have requested and received targeted data.

In addition to the above, our geospatial experts also participated in the GDi Solutions Day professional programs this year, in order to keep up with the state-of-the-art solutions not only from the content (data collection) but also from the technical side (data management, online data visualisation).

Our Policy Contribution to the Danube Strategy

The Department for Water Diplomacy and Tied Aid Credits in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade coordinates the specialised diplomatic tasks related to the Danube Basin. CESCI (as a promoter of cross-border regional cooperation) has been involved in the Danube Strategy related activities from the very beginning, mainly within priority area 10 (institutional capacity and cooperation) and on an ad hoc basis as an invited member of the national interministerial working group coordinated by the MFA. We regularly participate in technical and policy events on the subject, like, among orther, the EU Strategy for the Danube Region - National Hearing on 13 March 2024, where Mátyás Jaschitz gave an insight into CESCI's activities to promote the liveability of

border regions and improve access to cross-border services. Our senior analyst, Roland Hesz participated in the Danube Participation Day at the Vienna University of Technology. In addition, we were involved in several online events and consultation processes related to Priority Area 10 of the Danube Strategy.

Participation in Domestic Policy-Making

In recent years, CESCI has developed an increasingly close cooperation with the Ministry of Public Administration and Regional Development (MPA), mainly to promote integrated development of border regions. On several occasions, we have prepared background papers highlighting the specific development needs of border towns with low population density and have also commented on policy proposals (e.g. on economic development zones and urban areas). Dávid Bán, an expert from the Ministry, became a regular participant in the cross-border city-region reference group workshops organised under the #ACCESS project, where he always emphasised the parallels between the project and the Ministry's approach.

At the request of the Secretary of State for Regional Development, we have compiled a collection of diagrams to help coordinate the development of the Szigetköz in Hungary and Žitný ostrov (Csallóköz) in Slovakia, and a quick report on the labour market processes and their territorial impacts of the Hungarian-Austrian border region, illustrated with diagrams. A particular challenge was that these background documents generally had to be prepared under very tight deadlines.

In line with the policy objectives of planning and development, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs delegated our Director to the Monitoring Committee of the Territorial Operational Programme+, where we continuously commented on the developments of the Operational Programme in the first half of the year, trying to reflect the policy interests of the border regions.

Events related to policy-making

Date	Location	Name of the event
8 January 2024	(Online)	Strategic meeting of the CoR, AEBR, MOT and CESCI
10 January 2024	(Online)	#ACCESS project: Partner meeting
25 January 2024	Győr	#ACCESS reference group workshop in Győr
2 February 2024	Esztergom	#ACCESS reference group workshop in Esztergom
5 February 2024	Putnok	#ACCESS reference group workshop in Putnok
6 February 2024	Balassagyarmat	#ACCESS reference group workshop in Balassagyarmat
12 February 2024	(Online)	Meeting with the management of the EUREGHA network on the joint activities for 2024

Date	Location	Name of the event
13 February 2024	Sátoraljaújhely	#ACCESS reference group workshop in Sátoraljaújhely
14 February 2024	(Online)	Meeting of the CBC Intergroup of the Committee of the Regions
21 February 2024	(Online)	#ACCESS project: Partner meeting
27 February 2024	(Online)	European Cross-Border Platform Steering Committee meeting
28 February 2024	Komárno, Slovakia	#ACCESS reference group workshop in Komárno
29 February 2024	Budapest	Presentation of the progress of the #ACCESS project at the 3rd MC meeting of the Interreg VI-A Hungary-Slovakia Programme
29 February 2024	Budapest	Meeting with the experts of the Hungarian Statistical Office on cross-border data harmonisation
1 March 2024	(Online)	EUREGHA Working Group on Cross-Border Healthcare: constitutive meeting
5 March 2024	Lučenec, Slovakia	#ACCESS reference group workshop in Lučenec
6 March 2024	Košice, Slovakia	#ACCESS reference group workshop in Košice
12 March 2024	Bratislava, Slovakia	#ACCESS reference group workshop in Bratislava
13 March 2024	(Online)	EUSDR - National Hearing
20 March 2024	(Online)	Interreg Central Europe: 2nd Call Project Implementation Webinar
25 March 2024	Budapest	Novohrad-Nógrád Geopark: relaunching the set-up process of the EGTC
26 March 2024	Brussels, Belgium	Participation in the ITEM's expert meeting on the ECBM tool
3 April 2024	(Online)	Cooperation for food supply and food security in the Carpathian Basin region (participation in the event of the Cibus Hungaricus Foundation)
April 9, 2024	(Online)	EUREGHA Working Group on Digital Transformation - Spring meeting
17 April 2024	Budapest	Meeting with the experts of the Hungarian Statistical Office on cross-border data harmonisation
24 April 2024	Budapest	Inaugural meeting of the Cross-Border Health Working Group at the Ministry of Interior
7 May 2024	(Online)	EUREGHA Working Group on Cross-border Healthcare - Spring meeting

Date	Location	Name of the event
14 May 2024	(Online)	Future of Interreg - conference of the Committee of Regions
21 May 2024	Budapest	Meeting with the representative of the Austrian Embassy on the development of cross-border cooperation
22-23 May 2024	Venezia, Italy	EUREGHA General Assembly
23 May 2024	(Online)	The Future of European Territorial Cooperation post-2027 (participation in the workshop of the Committee of the Regions)
23 May 2024	(Online)	TOP+ Programme, Monitoring Committee meeting
28 May 2024	(Online)	#ACCESS project: Partner meeting
3 June 2024	(Online)	Essential co-operation for resilient health systems - the role of Interreg (participation in the workshop of the Interact)
5-6 June 2024	(Online)	SCORUS conference
6-7 June 2024	Meißen, Germany	BorderLabs CE project: kick-off meeting
12 June 2024	(Online)	#ACCESS: project progress presentation for the JS and the MA
18-19 June 2024	Brussels, Belgium	Reinforcing cross-border governance for development (presentation in the event of the OECD)
20 June 2024	Brussels, Belgium	Meeting of the CBC Intergroup of the Committee of the Regions
20-21 June 2024	Brussels, Belgium	EUROSTAT roundtable on cross-border city statistics: presentation and participation in the discussion
24 June 2024	Bratislava, Slovakia	#ACCESS: project progress presentation for the Slovak NA of the Interreg Programme
25 June 2024	(Online)	#ACCESS project: Partner meeting
26 June 2024	(Online)	B-Solutions: fishing regulations on Hungarian-Croatian border rivers - workshop of professionals
18 July 2024	Budapest	Reception at the Austrian Embassy, related to the joint cross-border rescue treaty
13 August 2024	(Online)	#ACCESS project: Partner meeting
10 September 2024	(Online)	#ACCESS project: Partner meeting
11 September 2024	Ipolytarnóc	#ACCESS - reference group meeting in Ipolytarnóc
16 September 2024	(Online)	ESPON CROSSGOV - Consortium Meeting

Date	Location	Name of the event
23 September 2024	(Online)	BorderLabs CE partner meeting
24 September 2024	(Online)	ESPON KARPAT project workshop
24 September 2024	Budapest	Meeting with the experts of the Hungarian Statistical Office on cross-border data harmonisation
2-4 October 2024	Barcelona, Spain	Roundtable discussion at the 5th Zero Hunger Conference
3 October 2024	(Online)	Nordic Health 2030 perspectives - How can the Nordic approach prepare European Health Systems for an equitable digital future for all? (participation in the event)
9 October 2024	Budapest	Meeting of the Cross-Border Health Working Group
9 October 2024	Budapest	GDi Solutions Day
16 October 2024	Rajka	#ACCESS reference group workshop in Rajka
18 October 2024	(Online)	ESPON seminar in Budapest: organisers' meeting
29 October 2024	Balatonfüred	Committee of the Regions' Bureau meeting
29 October 2024	(Online)	EUREGHA WG on Digital Transformation - Autumn meeting
6 November 2024	(Online)	#ACCESS Forestry expert meeting
6-7 November 2024	Budapest	ESPON Seminar
11 November 2024	Budapest	EU Strategy for the Danube Region Project Financing Conference
12 November 2024	(Online)	ESPON CROSSGOV Steering Committee meeting
12 November 2024	Budapest	BorderLabs CE project partner meeting
13 November 2024	Budapest	BorderLabs CE project kick-off conference
14 November 2024	Budapest	#ACCESS panel at the Art of Cooperation Conference
14 November 2024	Budapest	Launching ceremony of the European Cross-Border Platform at the Art of Cooperation Conference
18 November 2024	Bratislava, Slovakia	#ACCESS: Expert meeting on the shared rescue services
19 November 2024	Hidasnémeti	#ACCESS reference group workshop in Hidasnémeti
20 November 2024	Kráľovský Chlmec, Slovakia	#ACCESS reference group workshop in Kráľovský Chlmec
22 November 2024	(Online)	EUREGHA Cross-Border Healthcare working group - Autumn meeting

Date	Location	Name of the event
25 November 2024	(Online)	Participation in the International Dialogue Event on Cross-Border Governance organised by the OECD
26 November 2024	(Online)	Participation in the ESPON KARPAT Policy Workshop
3 December 2024	Budapest	Participation in the conference on local products organised by the Corvinus University
3 December 2024	Budapest	EUDRS National Hearing
3 December 2024	(Online)	BorderLabs CE project: Communication webinar
4 December 2024	(Online)	#ACCESS project: Partner meeting
9 December 2024	(Online)	ESPON CROSSGOV partner meeting
10 December 2024	(Online)	BorderLabs CE project: Communication webinar
10-12 December 2024	Brdo pri Kranju, Slovenia	Presentation at the 2024 Conference of the European Forum for Geography and Statistics
17 December 2024	(Online)	BorderLabs CE project: Communication webinar

Knowledge Sharing

Art of Cooperation Conference

The Széchenyi Programme Office and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade, in partnership with the European Committee of the Regions, CESCI, the Association of European Border Regions (AEBR) and the Hungarian Development Promotion Office (MFOI), organised the second Art of Cooperation Conference as an official side event of the Hungarian EU Presidency. The event took place between 13-15 November 2024 in Budapest, providing a platform for practitioners to discuss the future of European Territorial Cooperation Programmes. The large-scale event was attended by around 400 participants from all over Europe.

CESCI coordinated the organisation of several events in the framework of the conference: the international panel discussions of the #ACCESS project, the official kick-off of the European Cross-Border Platform, and the study tour organised as the final programme of the conference. In addition, we contributed to the ceremonies of the István Pálfi Award and the EGTC Award, as well as to the Interreg 35 Declaration on the Future of Interreg. The kick-off conference of the BorderLabs CE project, funded by the Interreg Central Europe programme, was also held at the same venue and in conjunction with the conference, also organised by CESCI.

Participation in the Training of Experts in Cross-border Development

As in previous years, we actively participated in the professional activities related to the internship programme of the István Pálfi Regional Development Foundation, with the financial support of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade. In the year 2024, CESCI organised the Pálfi interns' trip to Brussels, with the support of the Edutus University and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade. During the programme, which took place from 12 to 15 June 2024, the interns visited the European Parliament and the Museum of European History, and met with representatives of the European Commission's Directorate-General for Regional and Urban Policy (DG REGIO), the Hungarian Permanent Representation and experts from the Committee of the Regions. At the final meeting of the Palfi interns 2024, Mátyás Jaschitz, Director of CESCI and professional mentor to one of the interns, gave a presentation on cross-border legal accessibility, using the example of the #ACCESS project.

Knowledge Transfer Activities of the Border Focal Point

We are a regular participant in the Border Focal Point online knowledge transfer events on borders and CBC, established in 2018 within DG REGIO. In 2024, we participated in six such workshops in the "Beyond Borders: Breakfast Debates" series. The topics of the workshops - cross-border risk and crisis management, health care, public education, public transport, water supply, data management - were in many ways in synergy with the current activities of CESCI. Several news items were shared on the online platform created by the focal point during the year.

Promoting Cross-border Cooperation in Ukraine: The First V4 Project Methodological Seminar on Good Practices in Cross-border Cooperation

The project "Cross-border cooperation in Ukraine and the V4 countries: the search for best practices" will be implemented between 2024 and 2026 with the support of the International Visegrad Fund in cooperation with research institutions from Slovakia, Poland, the Czech Republic, Hungary and Ukraine. The partnership, led by the National University of Uzhhorod, aims to identify, systematise and promote effective cross-border solutions that have already proven successful in the V4 countries and can serve as useful examples for Ukraine's border regions.

The first methodological seminar of the project took place in Uzhhorod on 25-26 October 2024 with the participation of Gyula Ocskay, Secretary General of CESCI and Melinda Istenes-Benczi, International Relations Coordinator of CESCI. The event was the first step of an initiative to enhance regional cohesion and support Ukraine's EU accession process.

Events related to knowledge sharing

Date	Location	Name of the event
15 January 2024	(Online)	Art of Cooperation conference: organisers' meeting
17 January 2024	Budapest	Art of Cooperation conference: organisers' meeting
15 February 2024	(Online)	Beyond Borders - Breakfast Debate #16: "How can cross-border risk & crisis management enhance EU resilience?"
27 February 2024	(Online)	Borders Forum 2024 - organisers' meeting
21 March 2024	(Online)	Beyond Borders - Breakfast Debate #17: "Facilitating access to healthcare in cross-border regions"
9 April 2024	Budapest	Art of cooperation conference: organisers' meeting
6 May 2024	Budapest	Art of Cooperation conference: organisers' meeting
7 May 2024	Budapest	Hungarians in Slovakia (participation in the event of the Research Institute for Hungarian Minorities Abroad)
16 May 2024	Budapest	National images: Hungarians about Romanians, Romanians about Hungarians from the 19th century to present (participation in the event of the Centre for Social Sciences of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences)
23 May 2024	(Online)	Beyond Borders - Breakfast Debate #18: "Insights into cross-border primary and secondary education"
29 May 2024	(Online)	Art of Cooperation conference: organisers' meeting
19 June 2024	Wien, Austria	11th Danube Participation Day
24 June 2024	(Online)	Borders Forum 2024: organisers' meeting
27 June 2024	(Online)	Beyond Borders - Breakfast Debate #19: "How to enhance cross-border public transport for a more integrated EU"
23 July 2024	(Online)	Art of Cooperation conference: organiser's meeting
3 September 2024	(Online)	Art of Cooperation: organisers' meeting
5 September 2024	(Online)	Art of Cooperation: organisers' meeting
13 September 2024	Šahy, Slovakia	Opening of the Days of Hont county
18 September 2024	(Online)	Art of Cooperation: organisers' meeting
25 September 2024	(Online)	Webinar about keep.eu
8 October 2024	(Online)	EUSDR PA10 | Caring Communities Online Workshop
8 October 2024	(Online)	Art of Cooperation: organisers' meeting

Date	Location	Name of the event
8 October 2024	(Online)	Borders Forum 2024: organisers' meeting
9 October 2024	(Online)	EUSDR PA10 Extended Steering Group Meeting - Digitalisation of Public Services
14 October 2024	(Online)	TEIN: exchange on training
24 October 2024	(Online)	Beyond Borders - Breakfast Debate #20: "Cross-border Water Supply networks"
24-25 October 2024	Uzhhorod, Ukraine	Promoting cross-border cooperation in Ukraine: The first methodological seminar of the V4 project on CBC good practices
25 October 2024	(Online)	Art of Cooperation: organisers' meeting
5 November 2024	(Online)	Art of Cooperation: organisers' meeting
11 November 2024	(Online)	Art of Cooperation: organisers' meeting
13 November 2024	Budapest	Ceremony of the Pálfi Award and the EGTC Award
15 November 2024	Esztergom, Štúrovo, Kravany nad Dunajom, Svodín, Želiezovce (Slovakia)	European Cross-Border Platform - Field trip
26 November 2024	(Online)	Borders Forum 2024: organisers' meeting
2-3 December 2024	Paris, France	3rd Borders Forum
12 December 2024	(Online)	Beyond Borders - Breakfast Debate #21: "ACROSS: A New Data Hub for EU Border Regions"

Basic data needed for defining a public benefit status

1) Contribution to fulfilling common social and individual needs

According to the data of the Public Benefit Annex for the year 2024 related to target groups, the association's services are equally available to persons other than the association's board members, employees or volunteers.

2) Proper resources at disposal in respect of the former two closed business years (2023, 2024)

The following alternative conditions apply:

- the annual average budget surpasses HUF 1 million (de facto in 2023-2024: 259.797K HUF)
- overall taxed outcome of the two years (baseline year) is not negative: 64.150K HUF)
- personal charges (expenses), without taking into consideration officials' allowances, are at least a quarter of all charges (expenses) (de facto in 2023-2024: 74.97%)

3) Account of appropriate social support after the two previously closed business years

The following alternative conditions apply:

- all expenses related to public utility activities make up at least half of all expenses on a two-year average (de facto in 2023-2024: 93%)

Account of allocations by objectives

Allocation to senior officers

In 2024, the association provided an allocation of 480,000 HUF for Dr. Zsuzsanna Fejes, as a presidential honorarium.

Account of assets used for public benefit activities

Value of equity	126 606K HUF
Aim of utilisation	public benefit activities

Resource supply and social support indicators

Resource supply indicators	Fulfilment of indicator	Value
Ectv.32.par.(4) a) (B1+B2)/2>1.000.000 Ft	**Yes**	**259 797K HUF**
Ectv.32.par.(4) b) K1+K2>=0	**Yes**	**64 150K HUF**
Ectv.32.par.(4) c) (I1+I2-A1-A2)/(H1+H2)>=0,25	**Yes**	**0.7497**

Resource supply indicators	Fulfilment of indicator	Value
Ectv.32.par.(5) a) (C1+C2)/(G1+G2)>=0,02	**No**	**0.00**
Ectv.32.par.(5) b) (J1+J2)/(H1+H2)>=0,5	**Yes**	**0.93**
Ectv.32.par.(5) c) (L1+L2)/2>=10 ps.	**No**	**0 ps**

Basic data needed for defining a public benefit status

	Previous year	Base year
B. Total annual income:	**204 463K HUF**	**315 131K HUF**
D. Public benefit income:	**184 496K HUF**	**299 690K HUF**
E. Normative grant:	**0K HUF**	**0K HUF**
F. Support from EU structural funds, and from Cohesion Fund	**0K HUF**	**0K HUF**
G. Adjusted turnover	**0K HUF**	**0K HUF**
H. Total expenditure	**195 896K HUF**	**259 224K HUF**
I. Personal charges	**154 036K HUF**	**187 169K HUF**
J. Public benefit expenditures	**176 756K HUF**	**246 522K HUF**
K. Profit/Loss after taxation	**8 490K HUF**	**55 660K HUF**
L. Number of volunteers assisting the association's operation (in accordance with regulation	**1 person**	**0**

	Previous year	Base year
LXXXVIII/2005 on public utility volunteer activity) (persons)		

Personnel Expenses

	1000 HUF	Previous year	Previous year modification	Reference year
A.	**Personnel Expenses**	**154 036**	**0**	**187 169**
A.1.	**Salary costs**	**122 675**	**0**	**151 846**
A. 1 .A.	Salary costs: in form of commission fees	2522	0	1 250
A. 1 .B.	Salary costs: in form of honorarium	480	0	480
A.2.	**Other personnel expenses**	**14 260**	**0**	**13 789**
A.3.	**Payroll taxes**	**17 101**	**0**	**21 534**
B.	**Support provided by the organisation**	**0**	**0**	**0**