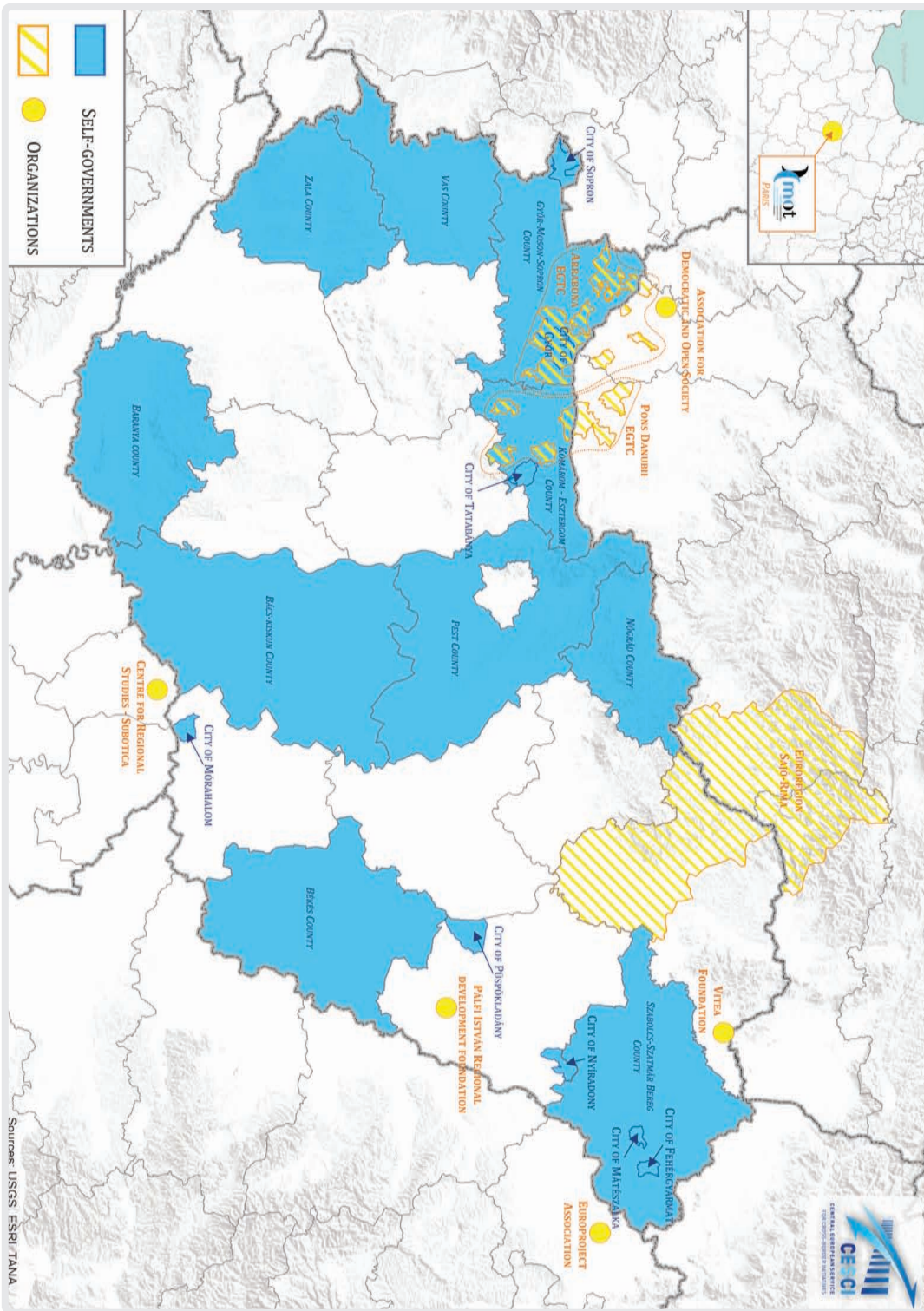




ACTIVITY REPORT

2012



ABOUT CESCO

The Central European Service for Cross-border Initiatives was established by natural persons in 2009 with the aim of providing professional support for cross-border cooperations along the Hungarian borders as well as in the Central and Southeast European area.

CESCO is based in Budapest, but its operation covers several countries.

The honorary president of the association is prof. Szilveszter Vizi E., former president of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences.

THE MEMBERS OF THE BOARD ARE:

Dr Tamás Tóth associate professor, vice-dean and senior lecturer of Szent István University president (from May of 2012),

Dr Rudolf Bauer mayor (Košice West, Slovakia)

Dr József Benedek professor of geography, vice-president of the Senate of Babes-Bolyai University (Cluj-Napoca, Romania),

Zsolt Borkai mayor (Győr)

dr András Levente Gál, manager of the G.A.L. and Partner Law Firm

Iosif Matula member of the European Parliament (Arad, Romania)

Judit H. Kovács director (Managing Authority of Regional Development Operative Programs in Hungary)

The former chairman of the association (Dr József Benedek) resigned in consideration of his new charge in January of 2012, the General Assembly has elected Dr Tamás Tóth vice-dean, as the new chairman. The mandate of two vice presidents were expired on 12th November 2012. CESCO made the decision on replacement at the General Assembly meeting on 29th November where Zsolt Borkai's mandate was prolonged, and the members elected dr András Levente Gál, former secretary of state as the other vice president of the association.

THE MAIN OBJECTIVES OF CESCI:

- providing professional support for cross-border cooperation along the Hungarian borders as well as in other states of Central and South-Eastern Europe
- incorporating the Euroregions, the EGTCs and the local and regional authorities participating in the cross-border cooperation into a network
- sharing good examples from Western Europe
- establishing strategic cooperation with the competent decision making and decision preparing institutes of the European Union as well as with European networks created with the same purpose
- strengthening the internal cohesion and mutual rapprochement within the region by establishing partnerships between the nations of Central and Southern Europe.

Leader of our Working Organisation is Gyula Ocskay, secretary general. In 2012 day-to-day operation was carried out by an average of 6 member staff.

In 2012 a new member joined the association which has 44 members at the moment.

We give a detailed report on the 2012 activities in the followings.



Representatives of the EGTCs at the workshop in Salgóbánya

CESCI AS THE ENGINE OF CROSS-BORDER DEVELOPMENT



The main area of activities of CESCI stands in professional support related to cross-border cooperation. Our association performs this multi-faceted work mainly along the Hungarian borders but similarly to the previous years we operated in other European regions in 2012 too.

EGTC PROGRAMME

SETTING UP OF EGTCs

Establishment of an European Grouping of Territorial Cooperation (EGTC) in the European Union has been possible since 2007, according to the 1082/2006/EC Regulation. Until the end of 2012, 33 EGTC have been registered all over the Union, 14 out of them have Hungarian members and 11 are based in Hungary. CESCI plays an active role in setting up and launching these innovative institutional solutions and in implementing successful professional work. The main part of these activities consists in preparing and reconciliation of the founding documents, as well as the coordination of the approval and registration process, in all concerned countries.



Visitors and EGTCs

Made by Edina Szilágyi at the introduction of the EGTCs in Brussels (Open Days)

In 2012 two EGTC founding process terminated successfully, both at the Hungarian-Romanian border: the decree of registration of the Nyiradony based Gate to Europe EGTC eighth members given by the Metropolitan Court of Budapest entered into force in May, that of the Pusztatölkés based European Common Future Building EGTC then in October.

The foundation of further three EGTCs (European Border Cities: Hungarian-Romanian-Ukrainian; Sajó-Rima: Hungarian-Slovakian, Fertő-Neusiedl: Hungarian-Austrian) are in progress.

EGTC WORKSHOP

We established the permanent workshop of the EGTCs with Hungarian participation for the sake of coordinating the professional work, planning the joint appearance, mutual transfer of knowledge and the effective representation of interest. The workshop held two meetings in the summer of 2012. In July in Salgóbánya we



Great interest towards the Hungarian stand

Made by Edina Szilágyi at the introduction of the EGTCs in Brussels (Open Days)

- drafted the operation framework of the workshop for the future
- discussed in details the expected cross-border programmes after 2014 and the role of EGTCs in programming
- talked about the county development conceptions under preparation
- the eligible applicant status in case of national programmes
- decided about the set-up of an internal web forum
- and about the joint appearance of the Hungarian EGTCs at Open Days in Bruxelles
- as well as a proposal was made on elaborating an EGTC study volume.

The main topic of the second meeting, held in August in Lovasberény, was integrated territorial planning. Besides the colleagues of the Ministry of Public Administration and Justice and the Office for National Economic Planning, Levente Magyar, deputy secretary of state of foreign affairs of Prime Minister's office also attended the meeting and negotiated on the EGTCs' problems. We planned the appearance of the EGTCs in Bruxelles and discussed the expected budget of 2013.

The Hungarian EGTCs introduced themselves jointly at the Open Days within the confines of the networking event, organised by MOT, CESCI and the Committee of the Regions on 9th October, in Bruxelles. About 100-150 participants participated in the successful introduction followed by offering local products.

On the website of CESCI we set up an own internal forum (also offering information on the actual calls) of the workshop which is going to have five meetings in 2013.

PROFESSIONAL SUPPORT TO THE EGTCs

Besides the activities mentioned above, CESCI offers services in several ways to the Hungarian EGTCs.

In course of 2012 we

- edited and published the introducing brochure of the Arrabona EGTC in three languages
- made a statistic overview with GIS background related to the territory of Pons Danubii EGTC
- prepared the legal amendment of the Statutes of the Ister- Granum EGTC, provided help to the elaboration of a project aiming at establishing a local-product cluster, and worked out a professional material and presentation on the EGTC for the research and seminar performed by EURAC (Bolzano, Italy).

In the summer of 2012 CESCI worked out an own methodology on the planning of integrated territorial investments (ITI), new instrument of the cohesion policy of 2014-2020. Following this new methodology, CESCI prepares this type of investments, involving experts, for EGTCs with Hungarian participation free of charge.

We accept all invitation, so we had several presentations given at the events organised by the Groupings. We have also resolved smaller administrative problems for the EGTCs several times.

Apart from our work „on the ground”, we have been also participating in the work of the interministerial task force and the EGTC forum involving local stakeholders as well operated by the Ministry of Public Administration and Justice. In addition to this we offer our professional opinion on relevant domestic and EU legislations.

STRATEGIC PLANNING

CESCI – mostly as a subcontractor – takes part in strategic planning work of border regions. In all these cases we try to apply the principles of our cohesion-based planning methodology worked out in 2012.

In 2012 we completed the cohesion analysis of the Rába-Duna Vág EGTC which replace the former state-of-play analysis. In the case of the Banat-Triplex Confinium EGTC we launched to elaborate even the strategic chapter.

Contracted with/ by the request of the Municipality of Nyíradony we worked out a study and an institution development strategy. The study examines the Hungarian and Romanian legal background in order to identify the functions of the planned EGTC, but it also treats the changes generated by the new law on Hungarian self-governments



Launching conference of the Frontier value project

PROJECTS

FRONTIER-VALUE

CESCI and Forum Institute (Šamorín, Slovakia) have submitted a successful application to the call of the Hungary-Slovakia Cross-border Cooperation Programme. The project, called Frontier – value aims at summarizing the results of the Hungarian-Slovakian cross-border cooperation programmes which have been implemented since 1999. Within the framework of the project started in May of

2012 a knowledge portal has been developed by the end of the year, and a magazine was also published in December. According to our prospects for the future the latter one will promote annually the best practices of cross-border cooperation. Next activity of the project is going to be the shooting of three documentary movies presenting 10 successful initiatives from the border area. The project is ending on 31st August.

COLLABORATION FOR THE DNIESTER AREA

The International Centre for Democratic Transition with the support of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Hungary implemented the project called Collaboration for the Dniester area which aimed at starting a regional cooperation in the Moldovan-Transnistrian-Ukrainian border area capable for receiving resources from the EU. CESCI was invited to coordinate professional facilitation of the project. The project started in March and it included two local training events and a study tour to Hungary. The initiative may support the work of Dniester euroregion founded in February.

THE NEW GENERATION OF CROSS-BORDER COOPERATIONS

The Budapest-based Interrégió Fórum Association gained subvention from the Visegrad Fund to implement a project which promotes best practice projects from the Hungarian-Slovakian border region. Within the framework of the project CESCI has worked out the summary study and has served as the professional mentor of the film. The film, which was shown in May in Štúrovo (Slovakia), is available on our website.

INTERNSHIP PROGRAMME OF CESCI

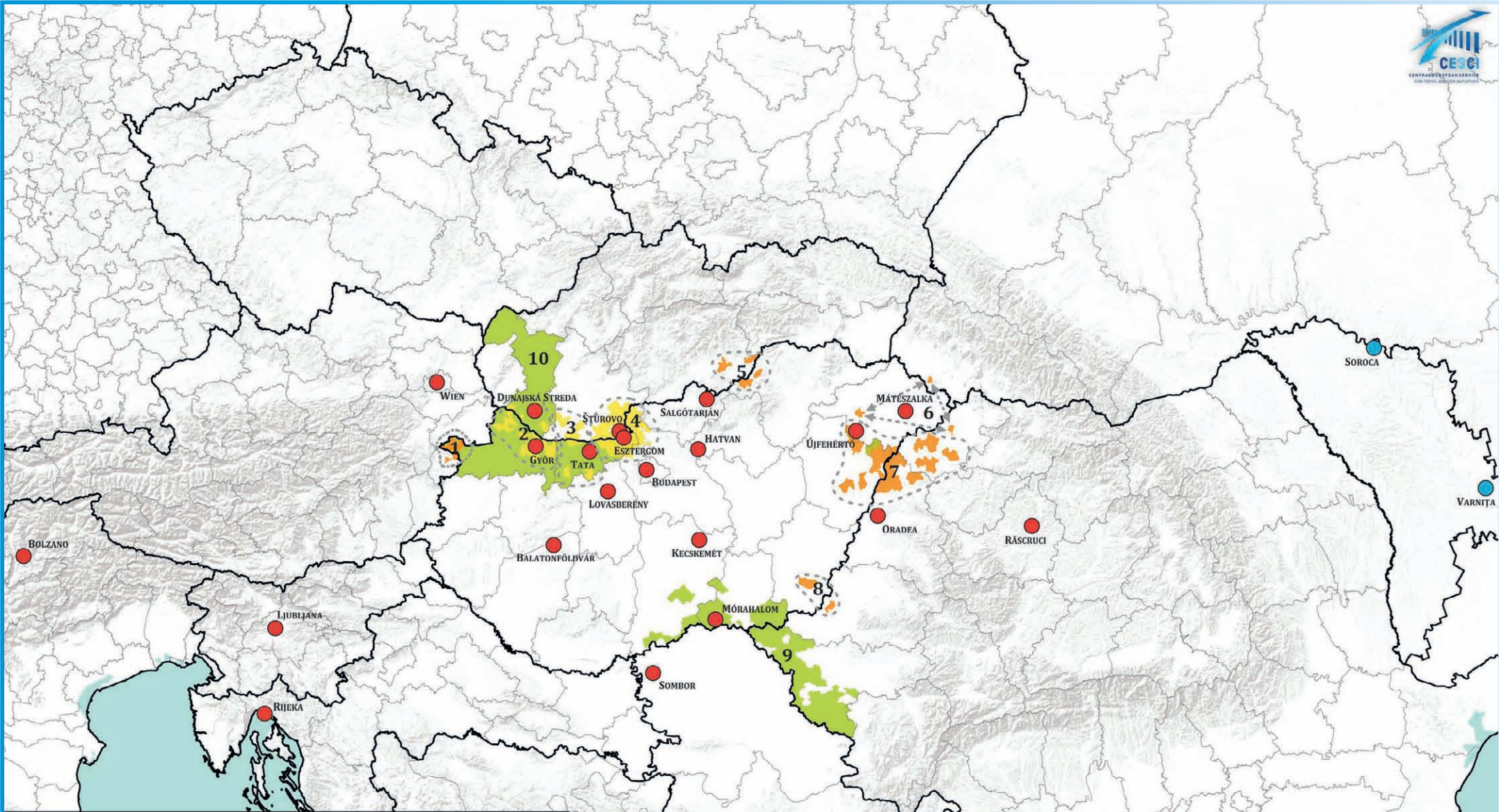
Our association has contracts with five higher educational institutions, within the framework of which we regularly receive trainees who pass their 2-3-week or half-year internships. During this time they have an overview on the methodologies of cross-border researches, they can get a practice of territorial analysing processes, but also help the day-to-day administration of the organization. Our experts support the elaboration of the students' theses and the talented and interested trainees have the opportunity to start their professional career as the employees of the association.

In 2012 we received more than 30 students within the framework of the programme. Three out of them are already part-time employees of the association.

CESCI AS THE EXPERT OF CROSS-BORDER ISSUES



Four pillars of CESCI's organizational strategy are sciences, planning/programming, development and mediation. We have the intent on that particular cross-border developments be implemented according to reasoned, long-term strategic plans (instead of ad-hoc deliberations) and to use the most recent techniques of spatial and economic sciences during strategic planning. For the sake of the latter one we not only follow the professional work of different think-tanks and networks but also work out own methodologies, based on which we promote certain topics and support the decision-makers' work. This part of our activity involves several subtasks, starting from the elaboration of analyses and studies related to border regions, through preparation of decision-making documents and development of methodologies until publishing brochures.



1. NEUSIEDL EGTC
2. ARRABONA EGTC
3. PONS DANUBII EGTC
4. ISTER-GRANUM EGTC
5. SLANÁ-RIMAVÁ EGTC
6. EUROPEAN BORDERTOWNS EGTC
7. GATE TO EUROPE EGTC
8. EUROPEAN COMMON FUTURE BUILDING EGTC
9. BANAT-TRIPLEX CONFINIUM EGTC
10. RÁBA-DANUBE-VÁH EGTC

- STRATEGIC PLANNING
- PROFESSIONAL SUPPORT
- EGTC SET UP
- PROFESSIONAL EVENTS AND CONFERENCES
- EDUCATION

PREPARATION OF STUDIES

Hozzászólást készítettünk és juttattunk el az illetékeseknek a magyar közigazgatási reform járási tervezetéhez, mely a Bibó István-féle közigazgatásireform-javaslat (1971) alapvelei szerint készült, és hangsúlyosan kezelte a határ menti járási székhelyek funkcionális szerepét.

A TÁMOP 1.3.1-es kiemelt projekthez kapcsolódóan június végéig alvállalkozóként négy tanulmányt készítettünk el, ezek közül kettőt (az ETT-tanulmányt és a forrásvizsgálatot) az ÁFSZ-ben egy műhely keretében be is mutattuk. A vonatkozó tanulmányok:

- Comprehensive study for the sake of broadening the labour force migration across Hungarian-Romanian border
- action plan related to the study before
- Feasibility study of a cross-border employment EGTC
- Feasibility study tackling the participation of National Labour Office in international tenders.

By the request of European Academy (EURAC) of Bolzano we prepared two studies on the Ister-Granum EGTC in cooperation with director Péter Nagy. One of them examines the questions of legitimacy of the grouping, the other presents the future sectoral projects.

In accordance with our contract with National University of Public Service we submitted two comprehensive studies by the end of June, which aims at support the academic and educational work. The first study analyses the legal frames of cross-border cooperation activities of local municipalities, while the second one offers scientific base to cross-border, integrated developments of local municipalities. By the end of August, two auxiliary documents based on the mentioned studies were worked out.

Coordination Center for Transport Development charged two consortia to analyse and prepare the necessary infrastructure investments in the Hungarian-Slovak and the Hungarian-Romanian border area. We have prepared cartographic and statistic databases for both consortia.

METHODOLOGY DEVELOPMENT

For the sake of the preparation of integrated territorial investments (ITIs), experts of CESCI worked out a new cross-border strategic planning methodology which is in harmony with the new regulations of the cohesion policy, and partially based on the results of the research projects implemented within the framework of ESPON programme. According to the core principle of the new methodology the planification is not performed by a sectoral approach but we analyse the border region from the point of view of territorial, economic and social cohesion, and we build the strategic plan on the integrated, synergic system of the interventions strengthening the cohesion. The state-of-play analysis is replaced by a cohesion analysis, the interventions are identified in an integrated system. This new methodology forms the base for preparation of integrated territorial investments (ITIs).

The ITI provides opportunity to get funding from several priority areas of several operational programmes to implement a territorially integrated development programme. Hereby the incidental and ad-hoc project partnerships realised by different actors can be avoided, the synergic effects of the coherent projects can be exploited. Since the end of 2012 CESCI has been working out several ITIs.

The prepared methodology was firstly presented in Paris in September, and we have been using it for the first time in the strategic plans of the RDV EGTC and BTC EGTC.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

THE NORTH HUNGARIAN DEVELOPMENT STRATEGIES, PÁLFI ISSUE

The special issue of the magazine edited by the University of Miskolc was published during the summer. It presents the rewarded studies of CESCI's Pálfi István call of the last two years and the those worked out by the experts of CESCI.



The snapshot

SNAPSHOT ON THE EGTCs WITH HUNGARIAN PARTICIPATION

Since 2007, the entry into force of the EGTC Regulation 33 Groupings have been registered all over the European Union. Eleven out of them have their seat in Hungary, three more EGTC's have Hungarian participants also. That is the reason why Hungarian experiences are in the focus of international attention. Being aware of this attention CESCI published a brochure in English introducing the Hungarian EGTCs from some important aspects (foundation, strategic objectives, institutional framework, decision-making, financial conditions.) The brochure was introduced at Open Days, in Bruxelles.

FRONTIER-VALUE MAGAZINE

The first volume of the Frontier-Value Magazine was published at the end of 2012 within the framework of the joint project of CESCI and Forum Institute (Šamorín, Szlovákia). The editors present 10 successful initiatives from the border region, which were personally visited during the preparation period. According to our plans the magazine will be published annually and similarly to the LEADER magazine, it will promote exemplary cross-border projects.

ON-LINE NEWSLETTER

Our bilingual e-newsletter restarted in October. It is published in every two months and the registered partners receive it automatically. Permanent columns: internal news (news on the operation of CESCI), EGTC (news from Hungary and the European Union related to EGTCs), EU news, bibliography (introduction of professional materials published on cross-border issues).



First volume of the Frontier value magazine



Presentation at the seminar in Bolzano

PROFESSIONAL EVENTS

The Ministry of Public Administration and Justice organised the first meeting of EGTC approval authorities in 26th-27th February, 2012 for the sake of better use of EGTC instrument and sharing experiences of the member states. The innovative initiative allows to transfer professional knowledge and building up personal relationships. Among others CESCI and MOT also presented their experiences in the field.

The European Academy of Bolzano held a conference on the application of EGTC Regulation on 20th-21st April. The experiences of the Ister-Granum EGTC were presented by Gyula Ocskay and director Péter Nagy.

The CECICN, European network uniting cross-border and interregional city associations organised its first conference on the subject of territorial cooperation enhancing the European integration on 25th-26th June 2012 in La Coruña. The section on multi-level governance, coordinated by the MOT, was

chaired by Rudolf Bauer (member of the Board of CESCI) and moderated by Gyula Ocskay (secretary general).

The Adetef (technical assistance organization of the French Ministry of Finance) and the DATAR (spatial development institution charged by the Prime Minister) organised their second seminar of the year for the representatives of the former communist states on 20th-21st September. Initiated by DATAR within the framework of European Territorial Cooperation the seminars are intended to offer technical help to the representatives of these states in the field of territorial planning and successful use of resources. In the seminar Gyula Ocskay (secretary general) and Mátyás Jaschitz (planning director) presented the Hungarian model and the methodology on integrated, cross-border planning worked out by CESCI.

On 24th-25th September, in Ljubljana the ALADIN (– Alpe Adria Danube Initiative Universities Initiative) organised a Danube macroregion conference on the development of cross-border eServices. The first speaker of the panel moderated by National University of Public Service was Gyula Ocskay who talked about the role of the EGTC Regulation in cross-border services.

We participated in the preparation and realisation of the Pálfi Memorial Day which was organised by the Ministry of Public Administration and Justice on 24th September. CESCI's tasks were the sending out of the invitation letter to some of the invited persons, the registration of the attendants and operating of the registration desk during the event.

„The cross-border cooperation: the tools for a new dynamic” international conference, organised by the French Ambassies of the two neighbouring countries, the CESCI, the municipality of Oradea and the INFH (French-Hungarian Initiative), was held on 27th September in Oradea (Romania). The Hungarian, French and Romanian participants talked about the institutionalised cross-border cooperation. According to the intent of the organizers, the conference meant the first step of the permanent dialogue between the Hungarian–Romanian stakeholders.

The seminar of EGTC platform was held on 9th October within the framework of Open Days in Bruxelles where the participants talked about the potentials of the groupings. Gyula Ocskay, secretary general was an official speaker. After the seminar a networking event was held where the Hungarian EGTCs and CESCI presented themselves. The event was partially financed by our association.

The Central European Transport Corridor initiative held a conference on 23th November in Rijeka, the Croatian port-town. One of the main subjects was the organizational transformation of the initiative. The speaker of CESCI has given a presentation on the establishment process of the Groupings and the role of a network EGTC.



Meeting of the Working Group 3 of Priority Area 10 of EUSDR

THE NETWORK AND PARTNERSHIP COOPERATIONS OF CESCI



HUNGARIAN STRATEGIC PARTNERS

MINISTRY OF PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION AND JUSTICE

Similarly to the previous year, the most important strategic partner of the association was the Ministry of Public Administration and Justice which involves CESCI in the work of the interministerial EGTC task force and the ex-ante evaluation of the draft legal provisions related to cross-border cooperation.

We are regularly invited to the events on this subject, and the colleagues of the Ministry also permanent participants of our EGTC workshops.

NATIONAL UNIVERSITY OF PUBLIC SERVICE

Our association signed an agreement on strategic partnership with the National University of Public Service in March. The agreement aims at transferring supplementary knowledge to the future public servants on cross-border cooperation of local municipalities. For this purpose, CESCI launches an internship programme for university students, realises joint research programmes and events together with professors of the institution and supports the education with professional and educational materials.

In 2012 within the framework of the contract two studies and educational materials were completed, we prepared for the launching of the internship programme, organised together a panel on the ALADIN conference in Ljubljana, and started the set-up of a research and development workshop which deals with development of cross-border e-administration and e-services.

THE OFFICE OF GOVERNMENT COMMISSIONER FOR EUSDR

CESCI is permanent member of the Hungarian Danube Strategy working group, which involves the representatives of the ministries and professional organizations interested in the realisation of the Strategy. Our association participates in the work lead by the government commissioner as project manager and advisor too.

NETWORKING AT CENTRAL EUROPEAN LEVEL

CESCI takes part in the activity of the 3rd working group (regional cooperation) of priority area 10 of Danube Strategy. According to the action plan adopted by the working group, our association's task is the coordination of the project which aims at revealing the cross-border cooperations of Danube basin and promoting the best practices. The preparation of the project, called Crossing the borders started in December 2012.

During the previous years we have been building up strategic partnerships going beyond the implementation of single projects with the Forum Institute in Slovakia, Civitas Foundation in Romania and Regional Scientific Association in Serbia.

NETWORKING AT EUROPEAN LEVEL

In 2012 the Budapest Platform took part only in the conference in La Coruña where the MOT organized a panel on multi-level governance. (see among the events)

The General Assembly of our association (foremost from the Central- European Region) decided to join CECICN (Conference of European Cross-border and Interregional City Networks) in November (the network unites the Mediterranean, Adriatic, Baltic, Atlantic and Iberian city associations). Our admission is supported by the leading body, decision will be made in 2013.

We succeeded in establishing a very useful partnership with the French-Hungarian Initiative (Initiatives France-Hongrie) that we jointly organised with the EGTC conference in Oradea. By means of the association our relationship with the French Institute of Budapest has also deepened.

CESCI also participates in the work of the EGTC Platform established by the Committee of the Regions which unites the registered EGTCs and the professional organizations dealing with the subject. In this capacity, we took part in the EGTC panel of the Open Days. The information exchange with the department operating the platform is permanent considering the large number of Hungarian EGTCs.

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**HUNGARIAN MINISTRY OF PUBLIC
ADMINISTRATION AND JUSTICE**