

**ACTIVITY
REPORT
2021**



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Short introduction of CESCO



Inspired by the French initiative of Mission Opérationnelle Transfrontalière (MOT), Central European Service for Cross-Border Initiatives was established in 2009 with the mission to promote and strengthen cross-border cooperation along the Hungarian borders, as well as in Central and South-East Europe

CESCO is a private law public benefit organisation that advocates cross-border cooperation through the following activities:

- it conducts research in border studies and in specific border regions;
- it designs territorial integrated strategies and takes part in cross-border programming;
- it prepares policy materials both on national and EU level about the developmental initiatives in the border regions, as well as it takes part in the relevant consultations and policy debates;
- it supports the development of projects in the border regions;
- it supports the development of institutions in the border regions;
- it helps to improve the local stakeholders' preparedness by knowledge sharing activities.

CESCO's objectives

CESCO's main objectives:

- to provide professional support for cross-border initiatives along the Hungarian borders, as well as for other countries in Central and Southeast Europe;
- to improve the knowledge sharing practices between euroregions, EGTCs and the local and
- regional authorities taking part in cross-border cooperation;
- to disseminate the best practices from Western Europe;
- to create strategic cooperation with the relevant decision-preparing and decision-making authorities of the EU, as well as with the Northern and Western networks designed for similar purposes;
- to strengthen the cohesion, peace and mutual cooperation among the nations of Central and Southeastern Europe by nurturing mutually beneficial partnerships.

The public benefit objectives of CESCO are the following on the basis of the Act CLVI of 1997:

- promoting Euro-Atlantic integration;
- activities related towards national and ethnic minorities in Hungary and Hungarians living beyond the borders.

Our office-holders in 2021

Our **honorary President** is dr. Szilveszter E. Vizi, former President of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences.

The **President** of the Association is dr. Tamás Tóth, agricultural economist and professor of Kodolányi János University.

Vice-presidents:

- dr. Zsuzsanna Fejes, associate professor, head of the Strategic-Development Office, University of Public Service,
- Zoltán Szögi, CEO, Edutus University.

Members of the association's presidency:

- dr. Jože Gričar, professor emeritus of economics (University of Maribor, Slovenia)
- Peter Kubičko, municipal and IT consultant (Slovakia) (until May 7, 2021),
- Prof. Dr. János Rechnitzer, professor emeritus of the Széchenyi István University in Győr (since May 8, 2021),
- István Szabó, Vice-President, Szabolcs-Szatmár-Bereg County Assembly.

Members of the Supervisory Board:

- Kálmán Nagy (President), former Vice President of Zala County Assembly,
- István Oláh, CEO of D-Tag Analytics PLC,
- dr. Attila Tilki, Member of Parliament, member of the Hungarian delegation of the Council of Europe.


Members

Our association has 51 members, most of them are local or regional municipalities located in Hungarian border regions. Moreover, professional organisations, EGTCs and individuals participate in the activities of CESCO. In 2021, a new organization (Hungarian Council of the Fertő Landscape World Heritage Association) became a member of our Association.

Member institutions of CESCİ in 2021

○ Local municipality

● Association

 County council

- 1 Győr-Moson-Sopron county
- 2 Komárom-Esztergom county
- 3 Nógrád county
- 4 Szabolcs-Szatmár-Bereg county
- 5 Békés county
- 6 Bács-Kiskun county
- 7 Zala county
- 8 Vas county

 EGTCs / Euroregion

-  Rába-Danube-Váh EGTC
-  Arrabona EGTC
-  Pons Danubii EGTC
-  Ister-Granum EGTC
-  Slaná-Rimavá Euroregion
-  Slaná-Rimavá EGTC
-  Gate to Europe EGTC
-  Banat-Triplex Confinium EGTC
-  Pannon EGTC
-  Mura Region EGTC

ZDRUŽENIE PRE
DEMOKRATICKÚ A
OTVORENÚ SPOLOČNOSŤ

Čenkovce

HUNGARIAN COUNCIL OF
THE FERTŐ LANDSCAPE
WORLD HERITAGE
ASSOCIATION

Fertőszéplak

1

GYŐR

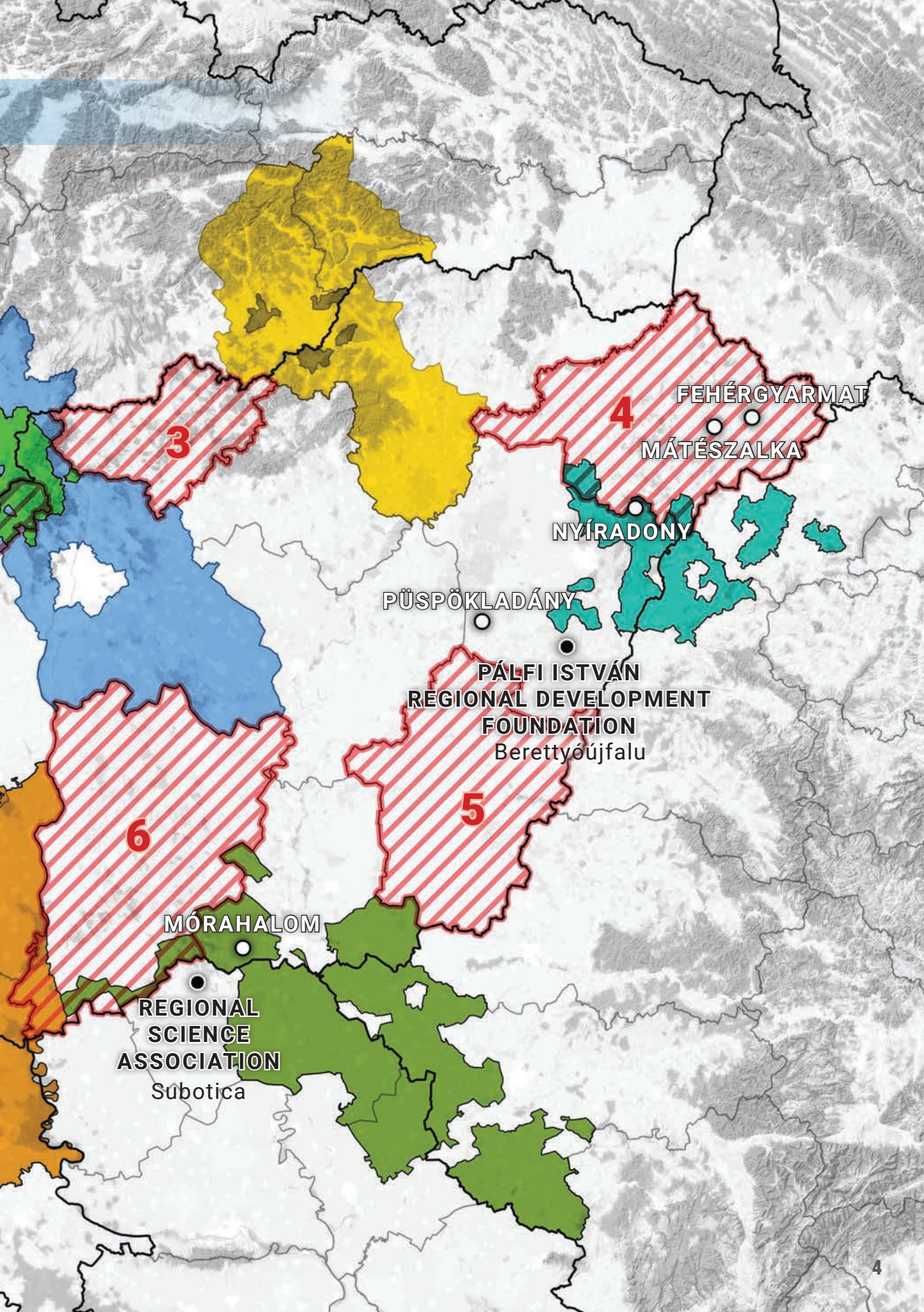
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TATABÁNYA

8

7





3

4

5

6

FEHÉRGYARMAT

MÁTÉSZALKA

NYÍRADONY

PÜSPÖKLADÁNY

PÁLFI ISTVÁN
REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT
FOUNDATION
Berettyóújfalu

MÓRAHALOM

REGIONAL
SCIENCE
ASSOCIATION
Súbotica

Mosaics from the life of the association

We constantly expand our range of services for local and regional municipalities and EGTCs, which are members of CESCO. With a renewed image in 2021, we published our **online newsletter** four times, which we supplemented with a separate newsletter dedicated to our members and another to the EGTCs, and we published our usual **activity report**. In parallel with learning about the possibilities of the new EU budget period, we also continued our **resource mapping** activities and we make available the results of this to our members from time to time.

Regardless of the unfavourable conditions generated by the pandemic, we managed to organise a **study trip for our members**, this time to the Salzburg (German-Austrian) border area. During the study tour, which was attended by 9 members of the Association and 3 members from our staff, the leaders of the affected local municipalities and the Euroregion, as well as the experts from the Salzburg research institute, who make research on border issues, presented their projects.



We held our regular annual General Assembly on May 31, and then we also had to hold an extraordinary General Assembly on November 29 - both meetings were organised in online format, due to the pandemic. At the **annual General Assembly**, our members approved the report from the previous year, the work

plan and the financial plan for 2021 and the necessary office-holder renewals took place. At the **extraordinary General Assembly**, on the one hand, the members approved the text of the signed Strasbourg Declaration laying down the frames for enhanced cooperation of AEBR, MOT and CESCO. On the other hand, we also amended the Statutes of CESCO. The main reason of the amendment was that the international role of the Association had been strengthened, hence the Secretary-General could no longer solve the multi-level task alone; consequently, it became necessary to share external and internal management activities. Subsequently, the position of the Director was established in addition to the position of Secretary General. The Director manages the day-to-day administrative operation of the work of the Association, while the Secretary General performs tasks that relate to strategic management.

In agreement with the **strategic international network** goals of the Association, the annual General Assembly also decided to join four international organisations and networks. Following the decision, the membership requests were admitted without exception during the year, we started to work together with the organisations and we are going to take part at their next meetings.

ISOCARP (International Society of City and Regional Planners) is a worldwide organisation of city and regional planners, dedicated to knowledge sharing and the advocacy of interest. The association is based in the Hague, the Netherlands. Since 2009, CESCO has accumulated extensive experience in cross-border regional planning that provides a common basis for cooperation with other members of ISOCARP.

The **RSA** (Regional Science Association) is one of the most significant global networks in regional and urban research, development and policy. It has recognised publications and organises professional events. CESCO is active in the domain of Border Studies which is a popular branch of regional science.

EUREGHA (European Regional and Local Health Authorities) is a network of regional and local public institutions and professional organisations with an interest to develop cross-border health. In essence, this is the only such initiative in Europe with a seat in Brussels. Since 2016, CESC has been actively involved in various activities that aim to promote cross-border share of healthcare services. Active involvement of CESC in this domain justifies its joining to the network.

The **TG-WeB** (Western Balkan Network on Territorial Governance) is an informal network of those institutions and individuals who are interested in territorial policies in the Western Balkan. CESC and CESC Balkans share the objectives of the initiative which focus on better territorial governance and EU integration. Subsequently, CESC expects a fruitful cooperation within the frame of the Network.

We also attended the annual General Assembly of our main allied partners, namely the Mission Opérationnelle Transfrontalière (**MOT**) and the AEBR. The Association of European Border Regions (**AEBR**) was founded 50 years ago in 1971. The "AEBR family" (including CESC) celebrated this anniversary in Arnhem, the Netherlands, from 20 to 22 October, 2021. The Mission Opérationnelle Transfrontalière (MOT) held its 25th General Assembly between 21 and 22 September 2021 in Morteau, France. Our Secretary General represented our Association at the meeting of the MOT. At the invitation of the MOT, we took part within the activities of the network on urban and territorial policy of the EU French Presidency as a member of the working group on cross-border and territorial cooperation.

The three professional associations entered into a closer alliance during the fall. The **Strasbourg Declaration** was signed on the 7th of October 2021 in the presence of Andreas Kiefer, Secretary General of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe, Zsuzsanna Fejes, Vice-President of CESC, Karl-Heinz Lambertz, President of the AEBR and Christian Dupessey, President of the MOT. According to the Declaration, the partners made a commitment to work together in a coordinated way in order to bring cross-border cooperation back to the heart of the European project.



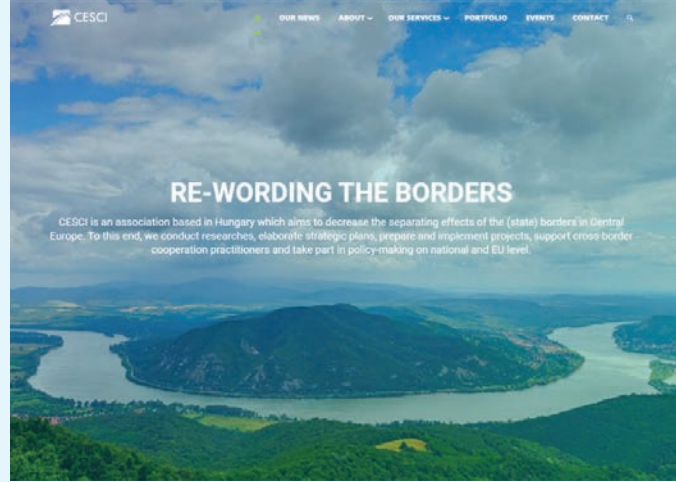


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During 2021, the **online presence** of CESCO was renewed. We completed the development of our renewed website. We modernised and expanded our newsletter platform with new features, as well as we created and developed our LinkedIn and Facebook profile.

In 2021, we devoted considerable energy to **strengthen the working organ of the Association**. In connection with our programming and urban or regional economic development planning tasks, there is a growing demand for geoinformatics (GIS) based analyses. Subsequently, we further developed and **modernised our IT and GIS capabilities** in 2021. We replaced the older (sometimes a decade old) parts of our hardware stock with more modern devices (including technical equipment to support online events that have become commonplace due to the epidemic situation), we subscribed to (high-priced) GIS and graphics softwares in order to visualise data even more professionally, and we extended our own databases. During the year, the number of full-time analysts was expanded and we also organised for them a course with the involvement of an external expert.

We have taken steps to make the Association and its work **more efficient**. We reformed our internal work organisation system, organised targeted knowledge expansion and knowledge sharing opportunities and we supported the English language learning of our colleagues. Moreover, we continued the internship program, thus five university students completed their internship in our Association (there were some students with whom we continued the cooperation for a definite period of time within the frame of our scholarship program). We developed our specialised library and launched the inventorying process of the thousands of books. Thanks to the alleviation of the epidemic situation, we were able to strengthen the internal cohesion of the Association through a team-building event.



Social responsibility

Even though the Association completes tasks with public benefit, in the fields determined in our Statutes, we have also strengthened our social responsibility in different directions in 2021.

In 2019, our Association established a partnership with two temporary homes for families. Within this framework, we supported the processes in the temporary homes by tutoring children, collecting donations, renovating and furnishing community spaces. Unfortunately, the coronavirus epidemic initially made it impossible and then made it very difficult to implement the personal tutoring. The attempts to relocate the tutoring into the online space failed, due to the difficulties of the host party. On the basis of experience deduction, an internal report on corporate social responsibility of the Association was prepared at the end of 2021. This was done with the aim to explore the possibilities for continuation in the field.

At the initiative of our Board member, Professor Jože Gričar, we prepared the Hungarian guide for elderly, which was prepared on the basis of the Slovenian publication, "Seniors Services Guide 55+". It contains extensive information on Hungarian social, health, elderly education and silver economy organisations and institutions. The Hungarian version is expected to be published online in 2022.

In addition to the above mentioned, CESCO continues to provide targeted support to the local economic development activities of the permanently lagging (border) region of Cserehát. We provided community organisation and project development support in 2021 (partly, through the employment of a local lawyer).



The team of CESC in 2021

Melinda BENCZI
strategic planner, project manager,
political scientist

László DARÁNYI
junior strategic planner, economist

Kitti DUBNICZKI
chief planner, landscape architect

Éva GANGL
chief GIS expert, geographer

Teodor GYELNÍK
senior research fellow, political scientist

Roland HESZ
chief analyst, geographer

Enikő HÜSE-NYERGES
project manager and strategic
planner, economist

Dr. Norbert JANKAI
senior legal adviser, lawyer

Viktória JÁNOSI
GIS expert, geographer

Mátyás JASCHITZ
director, geographer

Olivér KRISKA
junior GIS expert, geographer

Zsombor NAGY
junior strategic planner, economist

Gyula OCSKAY
secretary general, political
philosopher, economist

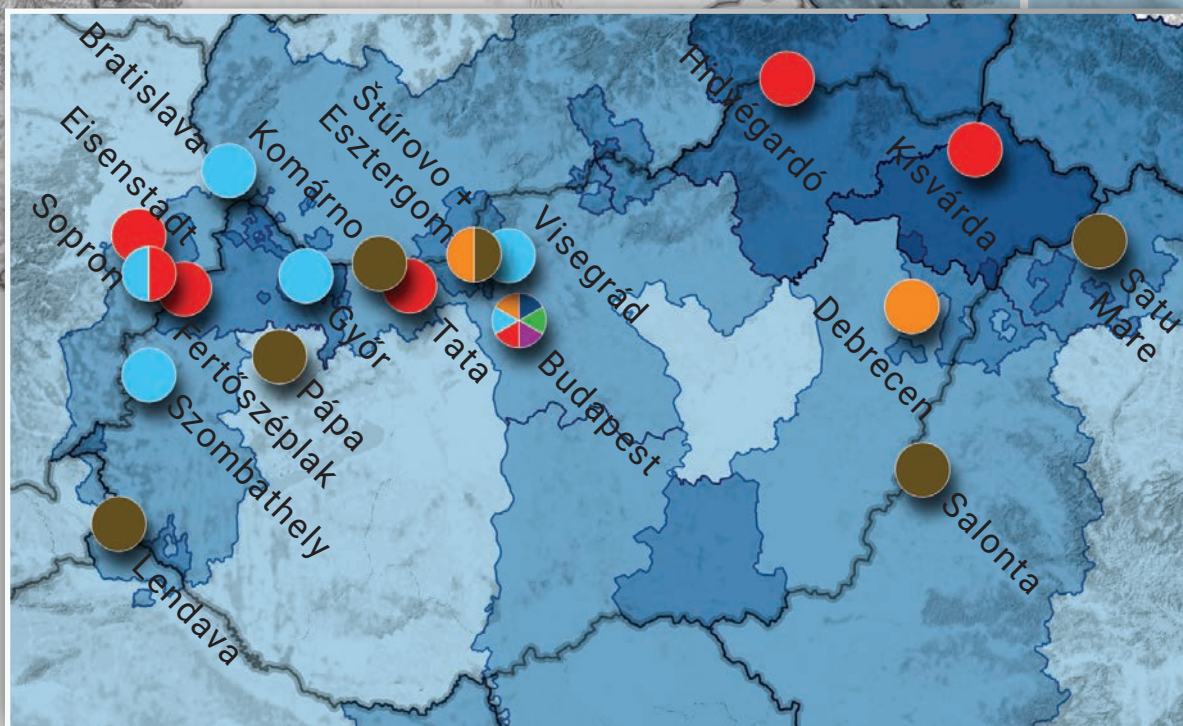
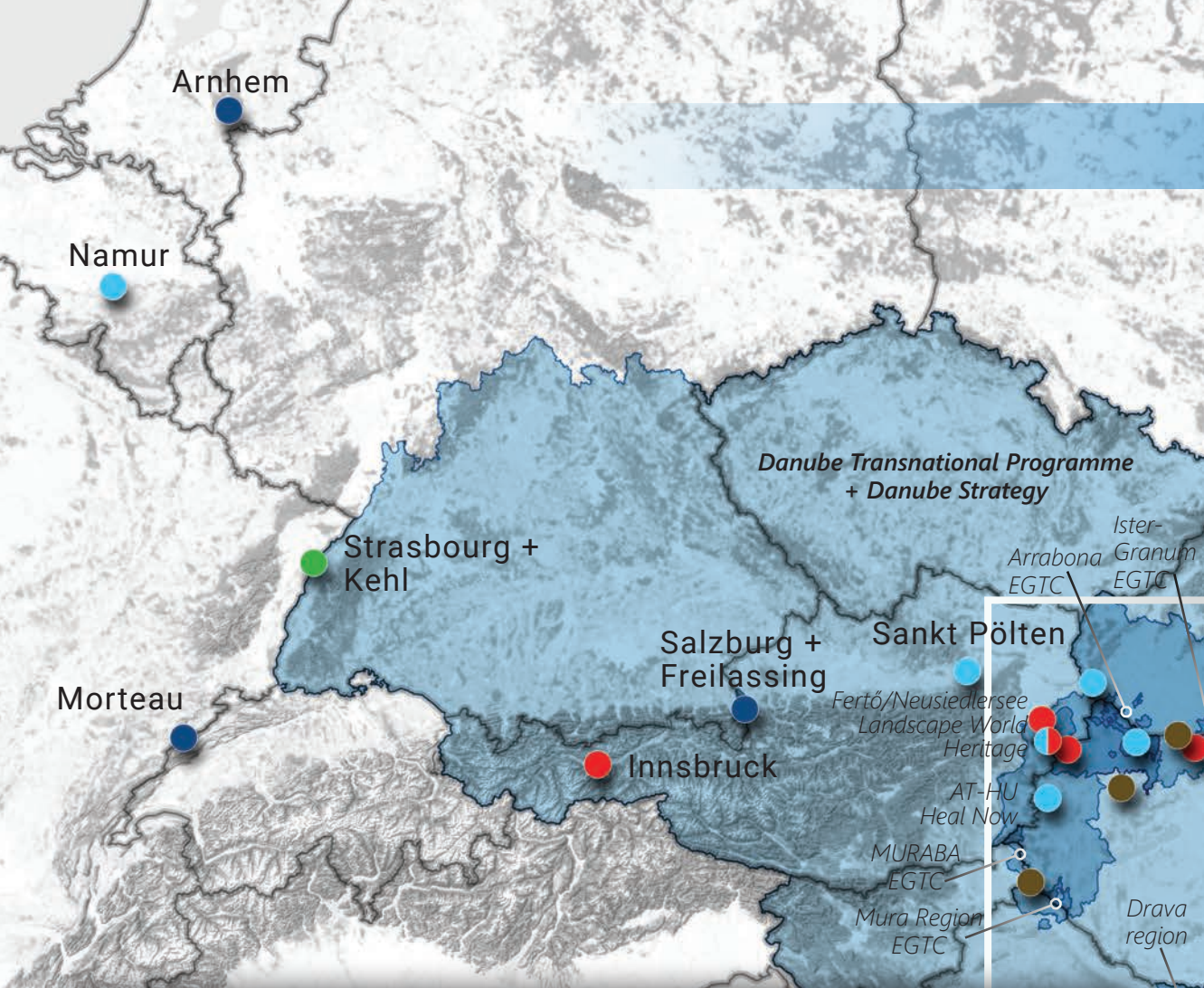
Éva ROMÁN
administrative assistant

Annamária VAS
office manager, economist, human
resources manager

János VERES
lawyer, coordinator of CESC's development
activities in Cserehát region

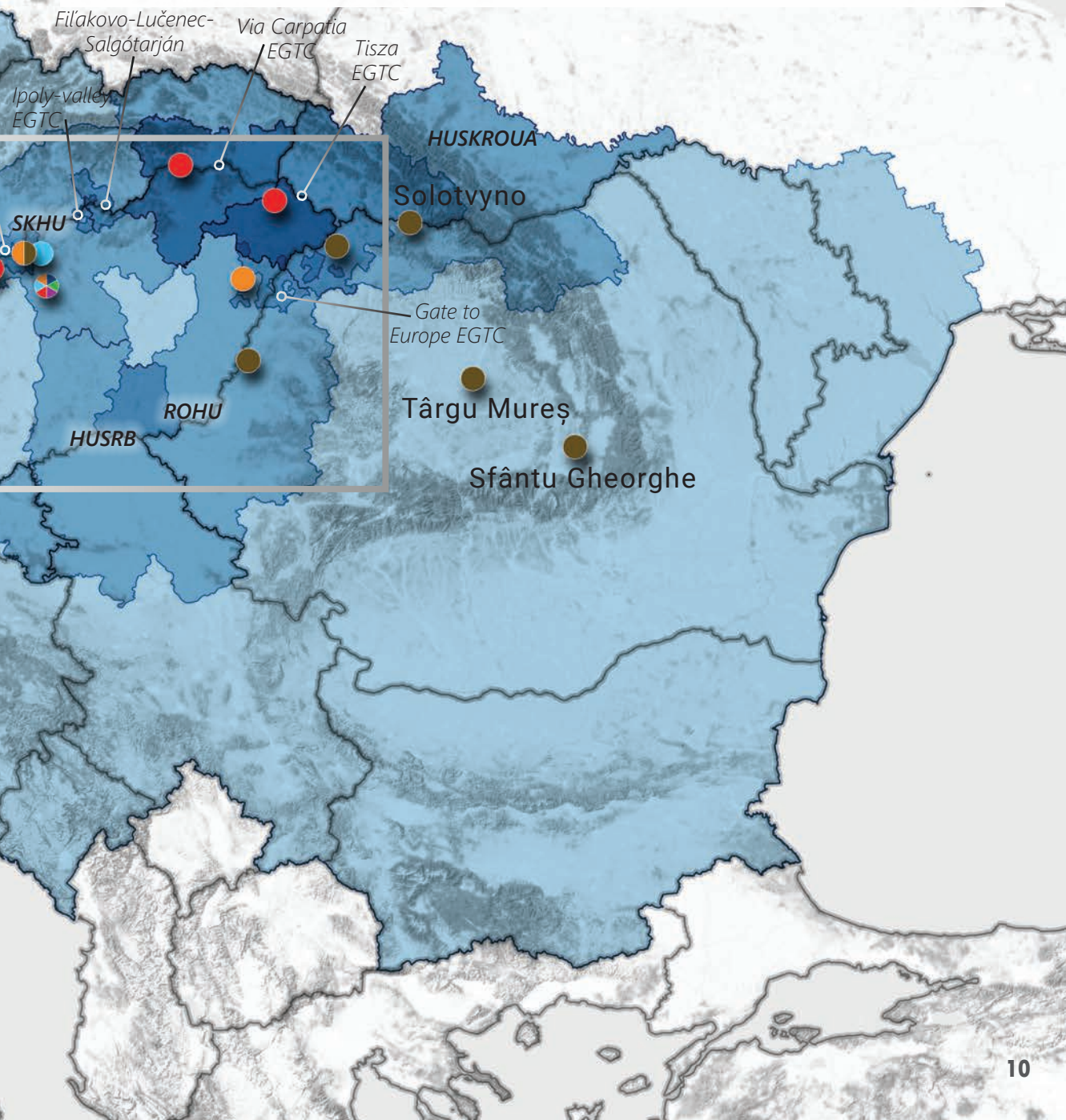
Association events

Date	Location	Event
6-8 April 2021	(Online)	Esri Developer Summit
18 June 2021	(Online)	AEBR: 50 th Anniversary event
23 August 2021	(Online)	Familiarisation with the new professional team of the French Institute in Budapest
21-22 September 2021	Morteau, France	MOT's 25 th General Assembly
23-24 September 2021	Salzburg and Oberndorf, Austria; Laufen and Freilassing, Germany	Study trip for the members
20-21 October 2021	Arnhem, the Netherlands	AEBR's General Assembly and Annual Conference "Mirror to the Future" – Cross-border perspectives on the European Green Deal



CESCI's activities in 2021

- Scientific research
- Programming, strategic planning
- Knowledge transfer
- Association related activities
- Institutional development
- Policy-making
- Project development
- Territorial intensity



Border research, scientific activities

Since the beginning, our Association has been actively participating in conducting research along the borders and has been aspiring to strengthen the scientific grounds of its professional activities. Consequently, we take part in scientific conferences, workshops and we ourselves organise such events as well. Furthermore, we enter the international scientific discussion with our own publications. We gladly join to the work of the emerging research teams in the field of border studies.

Towards a research institute

In order to provide a scientific basis for our activities, we have been striving to establish a research institute and to launch an internationally recognised scientific journal for years. Following these aims, we developed the concept, with the direction of Professor James W. Scott, in order to launch a border studies journal and we addressed one of the most prominent publishers. We started negotiations with the National University of Public Service on the establishment of the institute at the beginning of 2021. As a result of the negotiations, the management of the university adopted a decision at the end of the year to establish a Cross-Border Cooperation Research Group (HEK) which would be jointly established with CESCO. In order to develop the research group into an institute, we developed a tender for the call of the Horizon Europe programme together with our international partners.



Scientific publications

Cross-Border Review 2021

CESCO publishes one or two scientific papers on border issues every year. Our permanent publication, entitled 'Cross-Border Review', was completed with a renowned international team of authors in 2021. The volume was dedicated to the extremely complex experiences of living with a global pandemic without borders. The English-language publication was chief-edited by James W. Scott (Professor of Regional and Border Studies, University of Eastern Finland). The volume is available free of charge online and in printed version thanks to the support of the Hungarian Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade.



Publications of the CESCI team members (2021)

The CESCI staff also aims to increase its policy knowledge transfer activities through scientific publications. The relevant publications listed by the team in 2021:

- Benczi M. (2021): Achievement (un)locked: how did the covid-19 global pandemic change the narrative of cross-border cooperation? In: Nagy B. (eds.): *Challenges in the Carpathian Basin. Global Challenges – Local Answers. Interdependences or Slobalisation?* Sapiientia - Hungarian University of Transylvania, Faculty of Economics, Socio-Human Sciences and Engineering, Miercurea-Ciuc, pp. 1111–1139, available at: <http://csik.sapiientia.ro/data/Challenges%20in%20the%20carpathian%20basin%20e-book.pdf>
- Benczi, M. – Ocskay, Gy. (2021): The evolution of cross-border cooperation in Hungary. *Strategic Issues of Northern Hungary Economy-Region-Society*. Vol. 18. No. 3, pp. 54–67.
- Gyelnik, T. (2021): Border Ireland: From Partition to Brexit. [Book review: Border Ireland: From Partition to Brexit by McCall, C. Routledge, Taylor & Francis Group, London - New York.] In: Scott, W. J. (eds.): *Cross-Border Review. Yearbook 2021*. European Institute of Cross-Border Studies, CESCI, Budapest, pp. 119–124.
- Gyelnik, T. (2021): Borders, de-borderization and migration narratives in Hungary. *Przegląd Strategiczny*, Vol. 11. No. 14, pp. 127–143.
- Hardi, T. – Kupi, M. – Ocskay, Gy. – Szemerédi, E. (2021): Examining Cross-Border Cultural Tourism as an Indicator of Territorial Integration across the Slovak–Hungarian Border. *Sustainability*, Vol. 13. No. 13, (24 pages) DOI: <https://doi.org/10.3390/su13137225>
- Jaschitz, M. – Ocskay, Gy. (2021): Chapter XI: Cross-border relations. 1. History and current cross-border relations. In: Kocziszky, Gy. (eds.): *Northern Hungary*. HVG-ORAC, Budapest, pp. 668–685.
- Jaschitz, M. – Ocskay, Gy. (2021): Chapter XI: Cross-border relations. 2. Typology of the Northern-Hungarian region's border area. In: Kocziszky, Gy. (eds.): *Northern Hungary*. HVG-ORAC, Budapest, pp. 686–703.
- Ocskay, Gy. – Hardi, T. (2021): Integrated development of cross-border cultural economy at the Hungarian-Slovak border. *Földrajzi Közlemények*, Vol. 145. No. 2, pp. 154–169.
- Ocskay, Gy. – Jaschitz, M. – Scott, J. (2021): Borderland formation processes: Cross-border urban functional cooperation along the Slovak-Hungarian border. In: Medeiros, E. (eds.): *Border Cities and Territorial Development*. Routledge, Abingdon, Oxon – New York, pp. 171–189.
- Ocskay, Gy. (2021): Chapter XI: Cross-border relations. 3. History, present and perspectives of cross-border cooperation. In: Kocziszky, Gy. (eds.): *Northern Hungary*. HVG-ORAC, Budapest, pp. 704–728.
- Ocskay, Gy. (2021): Europeanisation of the Western Ukrainian Border: The Case of the Tisza EGTC. In: Lačný, M. (eds.): *The EU-Ukraine Association Agreement and Its Impacts on Cross-Border Cooperation*. Cambridge Scholars Publishing, Newcastle upon Tyne, pp. 24–44.
- Ocskay, Gy. (2021): Multi-level governance as a tool to reach the sustainable development goals. The case of River Tisza. *Annales Scientia Politica*, Vol. 10, No. 2, pp. 36–43.

Participation in scientific projects

Frontem (Frontiers in motion: which models for the EU?)

CESCI, as an external expert, is involved within the project called 'Frontem'. The aim of the network cooperation project, supported by the Jean Monnet sub-programme of the Erasmus+ programme, is to examine the changes of the opinions toward border regimes and perceptions of people living in the border area in 5 European border regions. The project is led by the University of Strasbourg, with the participation of the University of Southern Denmark, the Catholic University of Louvain, the Artois University, the Euro-Institut Kehl and the Babeş-Bolyai University in Cluj-Napoca. The partnership also includes the University of Victoria in Canada, which evaluates the European phenomena from an external perspective.

The first (online) seminar of the project, dedicated to the Hungarian-Romanian border, was organised by our association, together with our partners in Cluj-Napoca on May 27, 2021. The second seminar took place on 6-7 October 2021 in Strasbourg and Kehl (personal participation), which was preceded by a doctoral seminar on 5-6 October. In the latter, we led a panel, while we attended a roundtable discussion at the conference. We were "present" through online form at the seminar on 19 November dedicated to the German-Danish border region. The implementation of the project will continue in 2022.

Borders, Human-to-Military Security Database

A consortium research project led by the University of Victoria in Canada (UVIC), supported by the Jean Monnet sub-programme of the Erasmus+ programme, was launched in 2021 with the aim to analyse the effects of the migration crisis on humanitarian and military border security. We can find several universities, the AEBR, the MOT and our association among the European experts. Several partnership workshops were implemented during the year. As part of the project, CESCI is expected to build a database and to compile a scientific publication.

Scientific events

Seminar: Trianon, after 100 years

On 27th of October, together with the French Embassy and the French Institute in Budapest, as well as the Association of French Central and Eastern European Initiatives (IFECO), we organised a conference to commemorate the 100th anniversary of the Treaty of Trianon from the perspective of cross-border cooperation, with involvement of French, Hungarian, Romanian and Slovakian experts.



Further scientific events

Date	Location	Event
18 January 2021	(Online)	Castle Talks - The migration crisis: A challenge for border regions, seminar at the University of Strasbourg
4 February 2021	(Online)	Jean Monnet Network - FRONTEM: Partner meeting
8 March 2021	(Online)	Jean Monnet Network - FRONTEM: Partner meeting
31 March 2021	(Online)	Jean Monnet Network - Borders, Human-to-Military Security Database: Partner meeting
12 April 2021	(Online)	Elsevier workshop: How to write a scientific article?
15-17 April 2021	(Online)	ABS: Annual conference 2021
17 May 2021	(Online)	Jean Monnet Network - FRONTEM: Experiencing borders in time of Covid-19
26 May 2021	(Online)	Jean Monnet Network - Borders, Human-to-Military Security Database: Partner meeting
27 May 2021	(Online)	Jean Monnet Network - FRONTEM: Research Seminar Romanian-Hungarian Border
17 June 2021	(Online)	Cross-border Cooperation, Academic Institutions and Re-bordering in Contemporary Europe. Participation at a panel discussion of the Collegium Polonicum (Frankfurt Oder / Ślubice).
30 June 2021	(Online)	Jean Monnet Network - Borders, Human-to-Military Security Database: Partner meeting
27 September 2021	(Online)	Challenges and perspectives of cross-border cooperation in the context of the implementation of the EU-Ukraine Association Agreement. Presentation at the scientific conference (University of Prešov, Slovakia)
6-7 October 2021	Strasbourg, France and Kehl, Germany	Jean Monnet Network - FRONTEM: Research Seminar: The model of the Franco-German border
14-17 October 2021	Budapest	Cross-border Cooperation in Europe. Presentation at the conference organised by the Andrassy University Budapest and the Konrad Adenauer Stiftung
4 November 2021	Budapest	Hungarian Regional Scientific Association XIX. Wandering Assembly: New Forms of Territorial Inequalities and Transforming Territorial Policy – participation in a round-table discussion

Cross-border planning

Since its foundation, CESCO performs extended planning activities and uses the results thereof during the preparation of European Union programmes – this was also true in 2021 and we worked with a diversified planning portfolio.

Planning at local level

Since 2017, we have been regularly participating in the preparation of the development plans of the municipalities located along the Hungarian borders, hence developing urban development concepts mostly supported by Hungarian government subsidies. All projects follow roughly the same methodology: the current situation of the municipality and its surroundings is explored, local development ideas are identified and systematised through fieldwork; subsequently, a conceptual development document is prepared, which may be appropriate for substantiating support decisions.

With this methodology, we had to update the document of the Slovakian municipality of **Filákovo**, which was prepared in the previous year in 2021. The document was developed to an urban axis level with the involvement of Lučenec and Salgótarján. The work ended with the compilation of a project list, which was finalised in cooperation with the local authorities.

The state-of-play analysis of the development concept of **Sfântu Gheorghe** was prepared in the spring and it was closed with fieldwork in the early summer. As a result, the development document that was reviewed and approved by all parties was submitted at the end of the summer.

Some minor updating tasks also emerged during the year in connection with the afterlife of the urban development concepts prepared during the previous years. This typically meant a relatively quick task of providing data and updating related to specific interventions and projects. In 2021, requests were formulated in connection with the planned developments of **Komárno**, **Târgu Mureş**, **Satu Mare** and **Salonta**, while in the case of **Lendava**, the concept needed to be significantly reworked. In the last case, the list of projects was supplemented with the ideas of the new Mayor. The new ideas needed to be aligned with the previous intervention logic, while the individual projects also had to fit to the concept.

In the autumn of 2020, we received a request from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade to analyse the situational energies and existing development ideas, to the municipality of **Pápa** according to the methodology used for cross-border cities, and to propose a revision of its development concept. Following the collection of opinions, we finalised this concept in the first quarter of 2021. During the development of the concept, CESCO gained knowledge and experience that helped the association to successfully participate in the call for preparing the sustainable development strategy of the city. This means that we can also prepare the development document of Pápa for the coming years.

It was not necessary to prepare a complete concept in connection with another Hungarian city, namely **Esztergom**. However, requests were articulated in connection with some minor amendments of the previously prepared material (a set of arguments for obtaining the title of a city with county status). The requests were implemented.

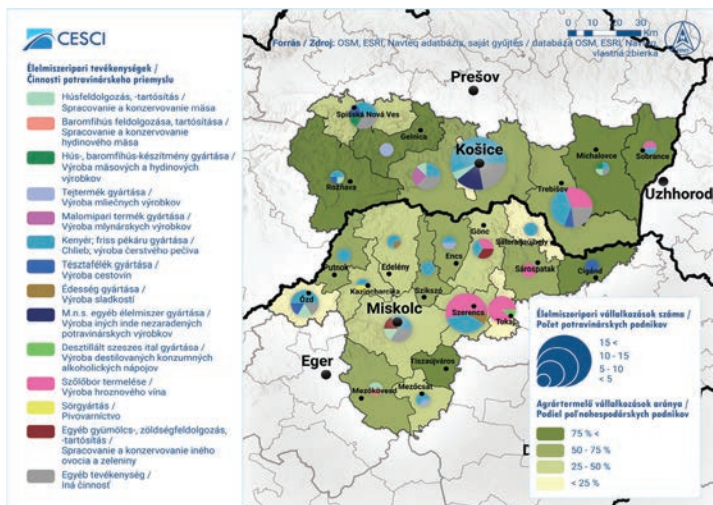


Planning at regional level

One of the most important, dynamic elements of the planning activity of CESC is the foundation, compilation and implementation of urban and regional (economic) development plans, concepts, project lists to be supported, and action plans in the Danube Basin. These plans and interventions directly serve better interconnection, competitiveness and strengthening of the border regions of the macro-region.

In 2021, at the request of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade, we carried out social, cultural and economic situational analysis of certain micro-regions in the **Drava region** of Croatia. Moreover, we completed the elaboration of strategic documents, whose preparation was launched in 2020, for the **Via Carpatia EGTC**. What is more, we made thematic maps at the request of the ministry several times.

We joined the **Revital I** project of the Tisza EGTC in the last quarter of 2021. Within the framework of the project, we participate in the compilation of a plan to help revitalise the collapsed salt mine and its area in Solotvyno (Ukraine).



Events related to planning

Date	Location	Event
5 January 2021	(Online)	DTP: Finalisation of Territorial Strategy
17 June 2021	(Online)	4 th Programming Committee meeting of the 2021-27 Interreg-IPA CBC Programme between Hungary and Serbia
28 October 2021	(Online)	4 th Programming Committee Meeting of the future Interreg Programme between Hungary and Slovakia
26 November 2021	(Online)	12 th Monitoring Committee Meeting for the Interreg V-A Slovakia-Hungary Cooperation Programme

Tasks related to programming

Evaluation of cross-border programmes 2014-2020

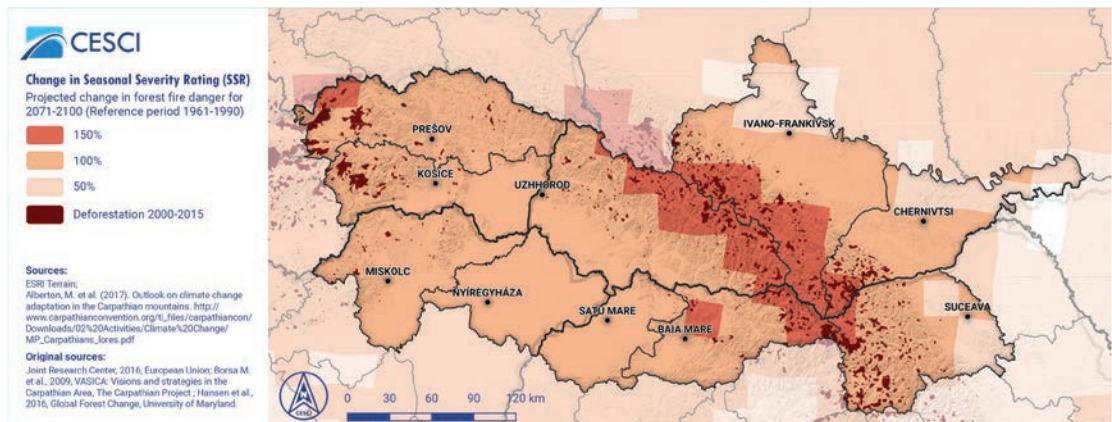
In the second half of the year, we were entrusted, at the initiative of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade, as the Managing Authority, with the implementation of the so-called Second Phase evaluations of the three programmes (Slovakia-Hungary INTERREG Cross-border Cooperation Programme, Interreg-IPA Cross-border Cooperation Programme Hungary-Serbia, Hungary-Slovakia-Romania-Ukraine ENI CBC Programme) that are/were implemented in the 2014-2020 budget period. As part of this activity, we prepared a methodology of programme evaluation according to the EU nomenclature (in terms of effectiveness, efficiency and impact). The inception reports for the Slovak-Hungarian and Hungarian-Serbian programmes were completed and adopted by the end of 2021; although, the majority of the tasks, related to all three programmes, are stretched to 2022.

Preparation of cross-border programmes for 2021-2027

Regarding the documents concerning the preparation and establishment of the Hungarian cross-border programmes to be realised in the budgetary period of 2021-2027, the preparation – also at the request of the Managing Authority – of three regional analyses (Slovakia-Hungary INTERREG Cross-border Cooperation Programme, Interreg-IPA Cross-border Cooperation Programme Hungary-Serbia, Hungary-Slovakia-Romania-Ukraine NEXT Programme) played an outstanding role among the planning activities of CESCİ in 2021. On the basis of the completed documents, the compilation of the programmes continued in 2021. CESCİ also played a role in the process, namely preparing the Chapter One, entitled as “Common Programme Strategy”, for all three programmes. These chapters were adopted by the Programming Committees in all three cases. Further chapters of the programmes were developed and finalised by the delegated experts and by the Joint Secretariats, hence CESCİ was not directly involved in the second phase of programming.

In the first half of the year, we were involved in the preparation of the Romania-Hungary INTERREG Cross-border Cooperation Programme. As a member of an Italian-led international consortium, our responsibilities included document analysis, data collection, data processing and preparing of maps.

The work was hampered by the fact that the legislative package of the Cohesion Policy for 2021-2027, which is highly important for the compilation and future launch of the next programmes, was adopted only on 1st of July 2021.

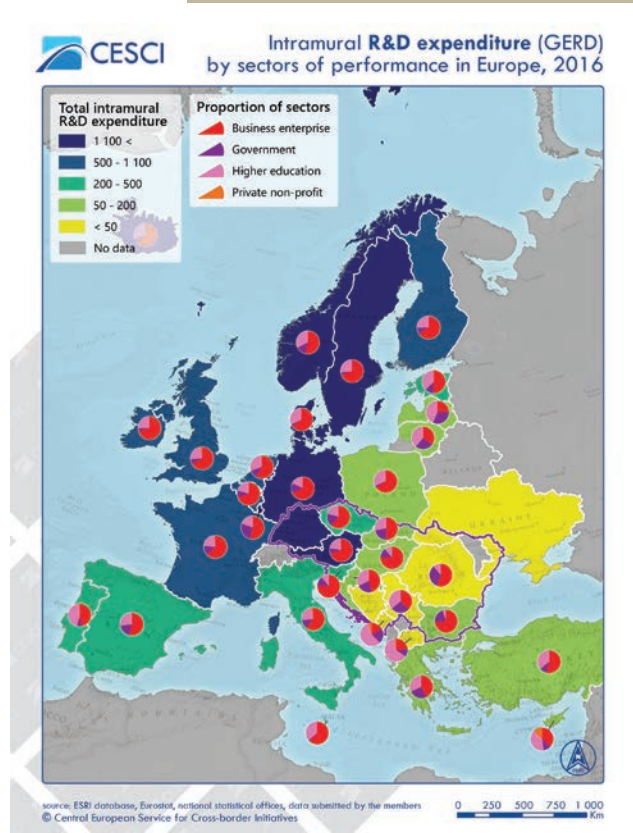


Preparation of the Danube Transnational Programme

Territorial diplomatic competence made it possible that the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade supported the preparatory work of the next transnational programme as part of CESC's annual services. This was done at the request of the managing authority of the INTERREG V-B Danube Transnational Programme, functioning in the Ministry of Finance. During 2020, we developed the first version of the Territorial Strategy of the next Danube Transnational Programme (DTP2) 2021-2027. The document provided evidence for further programming processes and defined the logic of the future programme, essentially providing a basis for the subsequent completion of the EU programme template. The finalisation of this work was stretched to 2021, which was made harder and was slowed down by adverse external conditions similar to CBC programmes: no finalised plans, regulations and financial frameworks and their alterations during the year, as well as the effects of the pandemic made the consultation even more complicated. The latter also caused significant additional tasks for DTP2 in such a way that a horizontal topic became part of the Territorial Strategy that examined the effects of Covid-19, and formulated suggestions for all priority areas and specific purposes in this context. In the case of DTP2, the planning had to be in line with the EUSDR action plan, which was updated in parallel, and there was a need to find a common ground of the opinion of 14 countries (including countries outside the EU). The strategy was adopted at the end of 2020. The finalisation of the received comments stretched to 2021; consequently, the final version of the Territorial Strategy was completed in January 2021. At that time, we also updated the Territorial Analysis, which is the basis of the Territorial Strategy, with the statistical data obtained from the Republic of Moldova. This means that the task was successfully completed in the early 2021.

Preparation of the Hungarian-Slovenian economic and development programme

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade articulated a demand to elaborate a cross-border programme for the Slovenian-Hungarian border to be implemented between the two countries. The programme would primarily support, through national resources, the nationalities living in each other's territories. The realisation of the tasks of CESC began during the autumn including monitoring of the situation, programming, instrument and institution development. We provided professional background support for the establishment of the territorial justification of the programme, for the preliminary collection of regional project ideas and for the preparation of technical aspects of to the future procedures. During the development of the programme, we provide(d) regular professional support to the MURABA EGTC. It is planned that the EGTC will perform the management tasks of the programme.



Cross-border policy-making

CESCI puts strong emphasis on the participation in Hungarian and EU level policy-making processes related to cross-border cooperation. In this field, our activity is very diversified, ranging from the local level to the EU one.

Participation in EU level policy-making

In 2021, CESCI actively participated in areas like elimination of cross-border legal obstacles, institutionalisation of cross-border cooperation, as well as, in the EU discourse on the financing rules and models of cross-border developments. We were regularly present (due to the pandemic often only through online presence) at the relevant EU professional events, in most of the cases as speakers.

We compiled professional comments on the legislation, policy documents and new tools. The EGTC policy at the EU level plays a key role in our activities.

European Cross-Border Citizens' Alliance

At the initiative of the MOT, the European Cross-Border Citizens' Alliance was set up in 2020 with the aim to counterbalance the impacts of the border closures introduced after the COVID pandemic and to protect the values of CBC. Founders of the Alliance are the MOT, the AEBR, CESCI and the Committee of the Regions. Hundreds have already joined the Alliance from all over Europe. The promotion tasks (including translation

in the languages of Central Europe) were implemented by our association in the region of Central and Eastern Europe. Later on, the Alliance organised a conference on the future of Europe. CESCI was also a speaker at the conference. The Committee of the Regions, in cooperation with the European Cross-Border Citizens' Alliance, held a public consultation (with the support of CESCI) on the long-term future of cross-border cooperation in the European Union. The report of the Committee of the Regions on the results of the consultation was completed in 2021. On the basis of the received feedback, the Committee of the Regions adopted a decision on the future of cross-border cooperation. Shortly after the decision was made, the Alliance organised an online conference on the subject. The aim of the conference, which was held on 5th of July, was to summarise the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on border regimes and to outline the future of cross-border cooperation.



Beyond Borders: Breakfast Debates

The Border Focal Point, set up within DG REGIO in 2018, advertised online events in five topics in 2021 (as part of the 'Beyond Borders: Breakfast Debates' series). During these events, the BFP attempts to highlight the importance of the reduction of obstacles to cross-border cooperation and the development of cross-border services along the EU's internal borders. Experts are involved in these events. Our staff actively participated in each online event.

Conference on cross-border cooperation and development

Within the framework of the Hungarian Presidency of the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe, a conference on cross-border cooperation was held in Budapest, at the Institute of Foreign Affairs and Trade on 9-10 September, 2021. In connection with the event, organised by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade, the Pálfi award was also handed. We provided significant professional background support for the preparation and moderation of the event.



B-Solutions

The European project titled as B-Solutions, which was launched by the DG Regio and managed by the AEBR, continued also in 2021. Its main object is to remove legal and administrative obstacles in border regions. At the request of the AEBR, we promoted the fourth B-Solutions call, published in January 2021. The collection of cases from 2020 to 2021 was published in December 2021. Legal obstacles identified by the Hungarian EGTCs (Arrabona, Gate to Europe, Ister-Granum, Mura Region, Via Carpatia) and analysed by CESCO were published, too. The success of the initiative is mirrored by the fact that B-Solutions was nominated for the European Ombudsman Award in 2021.

ESPON

During 2021, we also participated at several activities related to the ESPON programme.

As a project partner, we participate in the **TEVI project**, which ends in 2022. It is supported by the ESPON programme and managed by Spatial Foresight Company (Luxembourg). It aims to draw the territorial vision of the Danube and Adriatic-Ionian macro-regional strategies until 2050. We contribute to the activities of the expert pool, the workshops and the completed materials.

As addressed experts, we also contributed to several processes which were launched under the ESPON programme. Especially, we contributed through participation at **workshops**, through expert **interviews**, **filling of questionnaires** and through articulating **opinions** (Pan-European Network for CB Monitoring and Observation; Cross-border Public Services; Territorial Action Plan; Pilot Action: Luxembourg in Transition PILOT).

We participated in the reviewing process of the Territorial Action Plans of the new ESPON programme, as well as in the ESPON "Pan-European Network for CB Monitoring and Observation" initiative.

The ESPON week was held between 30th of November and 2nd of December in 2021. Due to the pandemic, it was entirely broadcasted in online format and it was only partially held in Bled, Slovenia. CESCO also represented its professional position at the event.

Other policy activities at European level

During the year, we did not only contributed to policy-making processes by compiling specific documents, but we also supported the work of experts. The support, for those who contacted us for help, was implemented mainly through interviews and background papers. Spatial Foresight was commissioned by the Directorate-General for Regional and Urban Policy of the European Commission to conduct a survey on barriers and solutions for cross-border public transport services in early 2021. Our Association also contributed to the promotion process of the questionnaire. We commented the 'Long-term vision for rural areas' of the European Commission and we helped carry out the study of the EU on the European Groupings of Territorial Cooperation through interviews and the compilation of a professional background material.

Participation in Central European policy-making

Our policy contribution related to the Danube Strategy

We continued to be active and permanent participants of the **Danube Region Strategy Interministerial Working Group** coordinated by the Department for Water Diplomacy and the Danube Region Strategy at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade, and through our professional background support, we actively helped strengthen the Hungarian standpoint in processes related to PA10 of the Danube Strategy (cross-border capacity development and cooperation). In 2021 we regularly prepared professional background materials and we participated in professional and policy events concerning the subject.

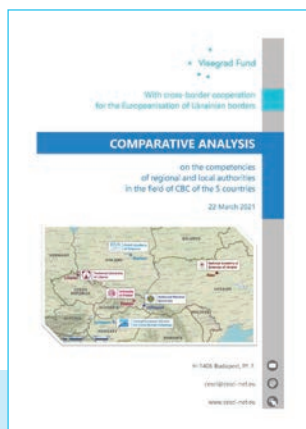
We constantly participate in the work of the **Danube Local Actors Platform** of PA 10, which primarily aims to strengthen the strategy's civil society and territorial connections. From 25 to 27 October we attended the 8th Danube Participation Day and the 10th EUSDR Annual Forum.

With cross-border cooperation for the Europeanisation of the Ukrainian borders

Our project called 'With cross-border cooperation for the Europeanisation of the Ukrainian borders', with the goal of contributing to the development of Ukrainian borders and cross-border cooperation in line with European standards by boosting cross-border cooperation supported by the International Visegrad Fund continued in 2021. The project is led by CESCO with the contribution of the Institute of Economic and Legal Research of the National Academy of Sciences of Ukraine, the Faculty of Law of the Uzhhorod National University, the Institute of Political Science of the University of Prešov, the Institute of Geography and Spatial Organisation of the Polish Academy of Sciences and the Technical University of Liberec.

In 2021, within the framework of the project a comparative analysis on the competencies of regional and local authorities in Visegrád countries and in Ukraine was prepared in English. The profile of Hungary was prepared by the staff of our association. An extract from the analysis was also prepared in Ukrainian. Also, one of the results of the project in 2021 is the development of a training material in Ukrainian to improve the capacity of local border actors in Ukraine. The staff of CESCO contributed to preparing many chapters of the training material. The training programme planned to be implemented on the basis of the document was postponed to 2022 taking into account the epidemiological situation. The project is scheduled to be completed in April 2022.

In addition to the professional activities, our association carries out the project management, operates the website of the project, and performs editorial tasks of joint analyses and documents.



Legal accessibility 5

The coronavirus outbreak at the beginning of 2020 prevented the Legal Accessibility initiative from carrying out some of its activities planned for the year (presenting a handbook about EGTCs in Brussels, supporting the cross-border cooperation of ambulance services). We were forced to amend the tender: we had to postpone the deadline for completion to 2021 and we also had to initiate changes in the content. According to the original scheduling the **complimentary copies of the handbook about EGTCs** were finished in 2020 and were sent out to those concerned in 2021. As a new activity, we analysed the impact of the coronavirus on the border regime in a separate study, which examined the change in the border regime in Hungary between March 2020 and August 2021.

The pandemic situation in the summer and early autumn of 2021 allowed us to organise four events along the Hungarian-Austrian and Hungarian-Slovak borders to strengthen cooperation between **ambulance services**. In addition to three workshops, the project also included a study trip to Lower Austria, to Sankt Pölten where the staff of Slovak and Hungarian ambulance services and the national health authorities were given the opportunity to learn in detail about the Austrian-Czech cross-border rescue system.

As a result of the workshop in Győr, the Western Transdanubian Regional Rescue Organisation of the National Ambulance Service of Hungary and the Operational Centre of the Emergency Medical Service of the Slovak Republic signed a statement (the Győr statement) on behalf of the workshop participants. In the statement, drafted in Hungarian and Slovak, the participants of the meeting took the initiative to contact the competent ministries of the two countries with a view to starting negotiations to enable the share of services and to prepare the necessary agreement. A county-level statement of support for the initiative was also prepared.



Legal accessibility 6

The sixth milestone of *Legal accessibility* financed by the Ministry of Justice of Hungary included activities in two main areas. First, we made a comprehensive analysis of the legal solutions for the institutionalisation of urban agglomerations, and we also organised a two-day event on legal accessibility between the Visegrad countries. The implementation period of the sixth Legal accessibility project ends in February 2022.

In relation to the first topic, experts from the French MOT compiled a study on **cross-border agglomerations and their governance models in France**, describing their modalities and legal framework, and the underlying territorial dynamics. This study is significant as – although the structure of border settlements in France differs from those in Hungary – the experience gained there since the 1990s can be extremely useful for the development of the nearly 40 large, medium and small towns in Hungary that found themselves at the border as a result of Trianon, which has a perceptible negative impact on the development of these settlements and their urban influencing zone.

Then, with the help of a renowned Hungarian expert the concept of the adaptability of the French model to Hungary was developed by the staff of CESCO.

In addition to the agglomeration analysis, within the framework of the supported project, CESCO undertook to organise a **forum and international conference** in the autumn of 2021, under the umbrella of the Hungarian V4 presidency, the main aim of which was to popularise both the systematic analysis and elimination of border obstacles between the Visegrad countries, and the relevant EU policy initiatives taken in this field. We prepared a report in English for the European Commission on the results of the event.



Participation in national level policy-making

We provide continuous assistance in the performance of domestic regulatory and governance tasks related to the EU cross-border policy discourse, as well as in the representation of the interests of cross-border actors and the strengthening of international professional relations (elaboration of professional background materials and analyses, drawing maps, reviewing documents, participating in professional events, etc.). Within this framework, we participated in the consultation process on the proposed EU Cohesion Policy regulations that would define the cross-border programmes for the next budgetary period of 2021-2027, we also commented separately on the **Hungarian operational programmes of 2021-2027**, the **Partnership Agreement**, the **Recovery and Resilience Facility**, and the **development strategy of Komárom-Esztergom county**.

In addition, in 2021 we made a conscious effort again to validate cross-border aspects in territorial policy. With the new EU budgetary period starting in 2021, we tried to have a say in the planning process through every possible forum.

In line with the above mentioned planning and development activities, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade appointed our director to be a member of the **Monitoring Committee of the Territorial and Settlement Development Operational Programme (TOP)** of Hungary where we continuously provide opinion on the processes of the operational programme, trying to represent the policy interests of the border regions.

We participate in the **HealNow** project as a stakeholder, the aim of which is to share and integrate healthcare services in the Hungarian-Austrian border region. Our participation was based on our activities in this field in previous years. The project managed by the National Directorate General for Hospitals of Hungary and the Health Across Agency of Lower Austria fits in well with our similar activities in the area of legal accessibility.

Events related to policy-making

The European Week of Regions and Cities (**EU Regions Week**), the biggest annual event dedicated to regional policy, which normally takes place in Brussels, this year was held online again, having regard to the epidemiological situation, in October. Our colleagues from CESCO participated in dozens of workshops (at three of them they gave presentations), and one workshop was co-moderated by one of our colleagues.

Alongside these major events and professional initiatives, CESCO also participated in a number of other conferences and webinars throughout the year, and contributed to policy-making in a number of key processes (for example: ECBM, opinion on the roadmap for the 8th Cohesion Report etc.).

Date	Location	Events
15 January 2021	(Online)	EP Working-Group on Cross-border Cooperation on the topic "Does the Covid-19 pandemic open new possibilities for cross-border cooperation?"
21 January 2021	(Online)	Interreg Europe: The Cycling Cities webinar series I. Strategic planning for cycling
28 January 2021	(Online)	Interreg Europe: The Cycling Cities webinar series II. Infrastructure Development

Date	Location	Events
3 February 2021	(Online)	AEBR Cross-Border Health Task Force meeting
4 February 2021	(Online)	Interreg Europe: The Cycling Cities webinar series III. Getting more people to cycle
4 February 2021	(Online)	Digital Welfare Programme (DJP) Salon - Digital Ecosystem in the Carpathian Basin: Using smart technologies in tourism
9 February 2021	(Online)	Beyond Borders: Breakfast Debate #1: Public service cooperation during the COVID-19 pandemic
12 February 2021	(Online)	INTERACT Cooperation for bigger territorial impact
18 February 2021	(Online)	Webinar for networking on cross-border cultural and natural heritage
23 February 2021	(Online)	Digital Welfare Programme (DJP) Salon - Digital Ecosystem in the Carpathian Basin: Goals and tasks
25 February 2021	(Online)	Digital Welfare Programme (DJP) Salon - Digital Ecosystem in the Carpathian Basin: Using smart technologies (As the speaker of the presentation: Promoting digitalisation in cross-border cooperation.)
2 March 2021	(Online)	Digital Welfare Programme (DJP) Salon - Digital Ecosystem in the Carpathian Basin: Goals and tasks (As the speaker of the presentation: Promoting digitalisation in cross-border cooperation.)
4 March 2021	(Online)	Regional disparities and territorial problems
10 March 2021	(Online)	Welcome to 'Culture and Creative Industries in Interreg' Network
24 March 2021	(Online)	Présentation du 12. Rapport sur la situation du marché de l'emploi de la Grande Région
25 March 2021	(Online)	Cross-border healthcare, what are the new opportunities?
26 March 2021	(Online)	Kick-off meeting of the ESPON Pilot Action "A vision for a zero-carbon cross-border functional region"
29 March 2021	(Online)	11 th Meeting of the EUSDR PA 10 Danube Local Actors Platform
30 March 2021	(Online)	Opening Conference of the SIBSU project
14 April 2021	(Online)	Groupe de travail "Gouvernances transfrontalières": Vers un Statut transfrontalier ("Cross-border governance" working party: On the road to a cross-border status.)
16 April 2021	(Online)	The 3 rd Smart Communities Academy "Smart opportunities for rural communities between 2021-2027" (presentation)
21 April 2021	(Online)	Euroregion Neisse-Nisa-Nysa, Rádlo Municipality: The future of cross-border cooperation and border regions in Europe
28 April 2021	(Online)	DINÂMIA'CET-Iscte: Territorial cohesion, trends and policies: the role of EU cohesion policy
29 April 2021	(Online)	Beyond Borders: Breakfast Debate #2: Cross-border commuters: A daily journey between obstacles and opportunities
7 May 2021	(Online)	Second meeting of the ESPON Pilot Action "Vision for a zero-carbon cross-border functional region"
10 May 2021	(Online)	ESPOI TEVI2050: 1 st internal meeting: project & mapshots
11 May 2021	(Online)	In-Between Initiative Launch Event

Date	Location	Events
12 May 2021	(Online)	Digital Welfare Programme (DJP) Salon - Digital Ecosystem in the Carpathian Basin: Goals and tasks (As the speaker of the presentation: Promoting digitalisation in cross-border cooperation.)
19 May 2021	(Online)	ESPO TEVI2050: 1 st meeting of the Steering Committee
20 May 2021	(Online)	NATIONAL ENERGY AND CLIMATE PLANS OF DANUBE REGION COUNTRIES: targets, policies and projections
20 May 2021	(Online)	Partenariat Français pour la Ville et les Territoires (PVFT): CBC Working Group - Workshop 1
20 May 2021	(Online)	Sharing Know-How in Paradiplomacy: The Visegrad Dimension: Paradiplomacy of Czech, Polish and Slovak regions in a comparative perspective
27 May 2021	(Online)	Online workshop: Living rivers: a driver for sustainable regional development
1 June 2021	(Online)	ESPO TEVI2050: 2 nd internal meeting
2 June 2021	(Online)	Event for Pálfi scholarship holders
8 June 2021	(Online)	ECBC Alliance meeting
10-11 June 2021	(Online)	MOT: Cross-border rail connections: fostering cohesion between regions and their citizens
16 June 2021	(Online)	AEHR Health focus group meeting
16 June 2021	(Online)	ECBC Alliance meeting
23 June 2021	Budapest	Meeting of the EUSDR inter-ministerial working group
24 June 2021	(Online)	Beyond Borders: Breakfast Debate #3: Border regions & the European Green Deal: managing the clean energy transition
2 July 2021	Sopron	Legal accessibility 5: First Austrian-Hungarian rescue services workshop
5 July 2021	(Online)	Conference on the Future of Cross-Border Cooperation. Presentation at the conference organised by the members of the European Cross-Border Citizens' Alliance
7 July 2021	(Online)	Partenariat Français pour la Ville et les Territoires (PVFT): CBC Working Group - Workshop 2
15 July 2021	(Online)	ESPO TEVI2050: 2 nd meeting of the Steering Committee
22 July 2021	(Online)	ESPO TEVI2050: EUSDR Team meeting
18 August 2021	Bratislava, Slovakia	Legal accessibility 5: Austrian-Slovak-Hungarian ambulance services' meeting
31 August 2021	Budapest	EUSDR PA 10 – Hungarian National Hearing 2021
7 September 2021	(Online)	ECBC Alliance meeting
9-10 September 2021	Budapest	Conference on Cross-Border Cooperation and Development (under the auspice of the Hungarian Presidency of the Council of Europe) – moderation of the event
10 September 2021	(Online)	Webinar EU4Health Work Programme 2022
14-15 September 2021	Visegrád	Legal accessibility 6: Legal accessibility among the Visegrad countries – Forum and international conference within the framework of the Hungarian V4 Presidency organised by CESC
21-22 September 2021	Budapest	Civitas Sapiens '21 Smart City Conference + V4 Summit

Date	Location	Events
24-26 September 2021	Namur, Belgium	Passion for Europe group's event (participation in a round-table discussion)
27 September 2021	(Online)	EUREGHA PACT meeting
27 September 2021	(Online)	EUSDR Thematic Event on Climate Change & Water Management
28 September 2021	(Online)	Beyond Borders: Breakfast Debate #4: EU Border Regions: Living labs of European integration
29 September 2021	Szombathely	Legal accessibility 5: Second Austrian-Hungarian rescue services workshop
30 September 2021	(Online)	Regional Reference Group – The impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic on EU cohesion and EU cohesion policy
1 October 2021	Budapest	Visegrad for Sustainability - Regional Cooperation Reimagined workshop and conference
5 October 2021	(Online)	Smart cities: innovative solutions from Bavaria for sustainable urban development
6 October 2021	(Online)	Cross Border Patient Mobility in Selected EU Regions
11-14 October 2021	(Online)	European Week of Regions and Cities
13 October 2021	Győr	Legal accessibility 5: Slovak-Hungarian ambulance services workshop
18 October 2021	(Online)	Regional Reference Group – The impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic on EU cohesion and EU cohesion policy
21-22 October 2021	(Online)	PERISCOPE WP3 webinar for EUREGHA members: "Gained experiences and knowledge gaps in facing pandemics: What to focus attention on?"
25-26 October 2021	(Online)	8 th Danube Participation Day
26-27 October 2021	(Online)	10 th EUSDR Annual Forum
27 October 2021	Sankt Pölten, Austria	Legal accessibility 5: Slovak-Hungarian study trip of ambulance services to Sankt Pölten
4 November 2021	(Online)	Shaping the future of health in Europe
18 November 2021	Budapest	Meeting of the EUSDR inter-ministerial working group
19 November 2021	(Online)	ITEM Annual Conference 2021: Empowering border regions - more than ever? "Lessons learned, opportunities and challenges of cross-border cooperation"
22 November 2021	(Online)	Meeting of the TOP Monitoring Committee
29 November – 2 December 2021	(Online)	ESPO Week 2021: ESPON 2030 TAP consultation Kick-off and ESPON Seminar on quality of life
1 December 2021	Budapest	Planet Budapest 2021
2 December 2021	(Online)	Beyond Borders: Breakfast Debate #5: Cross-border Public Transport Services
10 December 2021	(Online)	Launch event for B-Solutions' newest publications – a celebration
15 December 2021	(Online)	Recovery in border regions of the Eastern Partnership territories (Presentation at the event)

Cross-border project development

Since the beginning, we have been supporting the preparation and development of cross-border projects, so that scientifically valid, cross-border integrated strategies would be implemented. To this end, we not only help develop projects, but we also regularly prepare resource maps at the request of our partners.

Tasks related to project development

Supporting the implementation of Territorial Action Plans for Employment (TAPE) on the Hungarian-Slovak border

The Territorial Action Plan for Employment (TAPE) is an instrument, developed by CESC within the frame of the Slovakia-Hungary INTERREG V-A Programme. It is a novel solution for the implementation of integrated cross-border developments. The introduction of the new instrument involves many difficulties. It is a novelty for all actors, thus it is necessary to learn its use. Our association provides ongoing professional assistance to the Joint Secretariat and to the applicants for successful implementation. In 2021, this task represented the follow-up process of the individual TAPE projects and it also meant, if it was necessary, a professional intervention with moderate resource requirements.

Resource map for the Tisza EGTC

In September 2021, at the request of the Council of the Transcarpathian Region (Ukraine), we compiled a resource map in English on the available funds directly managed by the EU Commission.

In connection with the management of the pollution of the Tisza River, our association examined several other resources of funding and provided the necessary information to the interested parties.

Events related to project development

Date	Location	Event
12 January 2021	(Online)	EUSDR: Webinar on the EuroAccess Macro-Regions Tool
2 March 2021	(Online)	REACT-EU and the Recovery and Resilience Fund
14 September 2021	Budapest	Sixth EUSDR project financing conference
24 November 2021	(Online)	Interreg contribution to social innovation
24 November 2021	(Online)	Round Table: Digital health applications frameworks for the Nordics
24-25 November 2021	(Online)	Europe, let's cooperate! 2021: Interreg Europe Launching event
9 December 2021	(Online)	EISMEA: Interregional Innovation Investments (I3) Instrument Info Day

Cross -border institutional development

The sustainability of the results of the cross-border developments can be ensured if there is some kind of institutional guarantee. Therefore, beside the planning and project development work, CESCİ is actively involved in shaping cross-border institutional cooperation, which primarily means a professional assistance for the foundation and operation of EGTCs.

Institutional development

Analysis of the establishment of a joint management organisation of the World Heritage Site Fertő/Neusiedler See

In the summer of 2021, CESCİ was entrusted by the Hungarian Council of the Fertő Landscape World Heritage Association to prepare a feasibility study for the establishment of a joint cross-border management organisation for the World Heritage Site within the framework of the Common Heritage project. The project was implemented with participatory planning. Accordingly, the Local Support Group was established in September 2021. It had two meetings in 2021, one meeting in Eisenstadt, Austria and one in Fertőszéplak, Hungary. Besides, our colleagues analysed the Hungarian and Austrian legal environment. We examined almost 20 examples of cross-border European heritage management cooperation; subsequently, expert interviews were conducted with the representatives of the selected cooperation areas. The preparation of the joint management organisation resulted in a benchmark for potential cooperation models of the World Heritage Site in 2021. The work continues in the first quarter of 2022 with the compilation of an institution-building proposal. During the project, the association who entrusted us submitted a membership application to CESCİ. We consider this application as a recognition of our work towards the client.



Support for the establishment of the Euro-Contrôle Route (ECR) EGTC

CESCI was commissioned back in 2015 by the Brussels based ECR network to provide professional support for the establishment of a network EGTC. Over the last years, the process progressed quite slowly and the establishment process was hindered by several factors. The establishment of the network could have been implemented years ago, but the composition of the founding members is in a constant change. The British left the cooperation because of BREXIT and this change has generated uncertainty among many members; nevertheless, new organisations have signalled their intention to join. Accordingly, we provided advisory support to the members of the network in compliance with the national legislation of the new members. It is already evident that the registration will not be achieved even in 2022.

Events related to institutional development

Date	Location	Event
20 April 2021	Hidvégyardó	Consultation with regional actors about the establishment of a potential new EGTC.
24 June 2021	Tata	EGTC workshop
2 July 2021	Sopron	Preparation of the joint management organisation for the World Heritage Site Fertő/Neusiedler See - Kick-off meeting
10 August 2021	Budapest	Negotiation about the establishment of a thematic EGTC for water authorities
13 September 2021	Kisvárdá	Anniversary conference of the Tisza EGTC (presentation)
28 September 2021	Budapest	EGTC workshop
28 September 2021	Eisenstadt, Austria	Inaugural meeting of the Local Support Group designed to prepare the joint management organisation for the World Heritage Site Fertő/Neusiedler See
30 September - 1 October 2021	Innsbruck, Austria	Annual Event of the EGTC Platform of the Committee of the Regions
10 November 2021	Fertőszéplak	Second meeting of the Local Support Group designed to prepare the joint management organization for the World Heritage Site Fertő/Neusiedler See



EGTC program

Our professional work involved the services relating to the EGTC program also in 2021, as we have been doing it since the establishment of CESCO in 2009. This process includes regular professional consultation with the officials of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade, the completion of individual requests from the EGTCs (e.g. legal consultancy, plotting thematic maps, participation at conferences, etc.), professional assistance to implement the annual EGTC workshops, as well as the coordination (if necessary) of the foundation process of new groupings.

Consultancy for the EGTCs

The provision of legal and professional support towards the EGTCs is one of our permanent tasks. Smaller or larger requests from several Hungarian EGTCs were articulated in 2021.

We provided support for the **Ipoly-Valley** EGTC and the **Ister-Granum** EGTC. This means a legal support in amending the founding documents and regulations. These processes are currently going on.

We examined the possibilities of establishing new EGTCs in three cases, namely a thematic-based initiative **grouping water authorities** (planned in full form, Hungarian-Romanian-Slovenian-Croatian-Serbian), a new **regional grouping of Abaúj**, and a network-based idea that was inspired by a **Finnish initiative**. Subsequently, at personal and at online meetings we provided information on the relevant legislation and procedures. However, none of these initiatives were transformed into the EGTC form in 2021.

As in previous years, we prepared an updated membership map for several EGTCs. In the case of the **Arrabona** EGTC, the process was supplemented with special (basically demographic) data service. In several cases, we participated at the professional events of some EGTCs (conferences, project development workshops), typically we were present as speakers (due to the epidemic situation, mostly in online form).

EGTC workshops

The staff of our association participated at both EGTC workshops in 2021 and supported the implementation of the workshops with their active and professional preparatory work.

We contributed with presentation of two topics at the **first EGTC workshop** in Tata on 24 June, 2021. On the one hand, we introduced the EGTC monitor, which had been completed during the year. The monitor is an information platform of the Hungarian EGTCs. On the other hand, we gave a presentation about the outlining resources of the post-2021 period and about the direct funding opportunities of the European Union.

The **second EGTC workshop** was held in Budapest on 28 September, in 2021. The staff of CESCO made a short professional presentation on three topics: the actuality of cross-border programming, the legal tasks of the groupings and the expected financial resources for the 2021-2027 budgetary period.

The EGTC Monitor

Since the establishment, our association provides a permanent information service on the life of European Groupings of Territorial Cooperation (EGTC). We managed to expand and develop this supportive activity with two new tools in 2021.

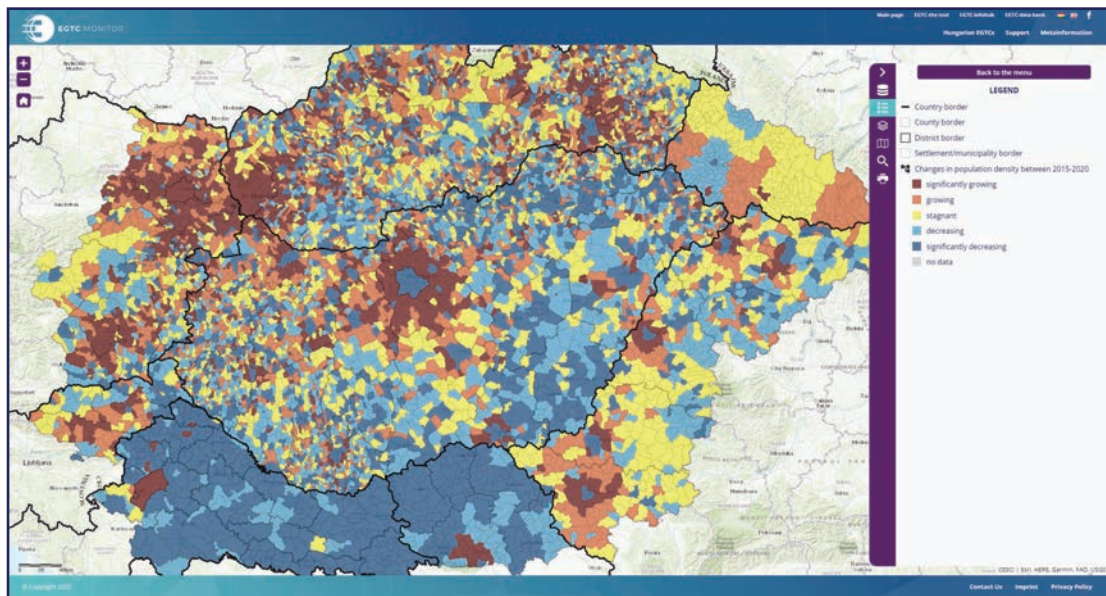
On the one hand, via a new **EGTC Newsletter** (disconnected from our official newsletter) we regularly report on the current activities of the domestic EGTCs, as well as about the domestic and European developments and policy processes that influence their operating conditions. The newsletter will be published quarterly.

On the other hand, the **EGTC monitor**, which is an information platform regarding the Hungarian based EGTCs and which has been developed since 2017, will substantially help fill the content. This means that all important information is available both in Hungarian and English about the Hungarian EGTCs, their operation and its legal and policy background. This platform significantly increases the visibility of the results of the domestic EGTC program and its international embeddedness. Its up-to-date content is maintained by continuous development, and we constantly expand and develop the completed monitor database.

We launched our dynamic database in the hope that those who are interested in the topic can find all the information about the Hungarian EGTCs.



EGTC MONITOR



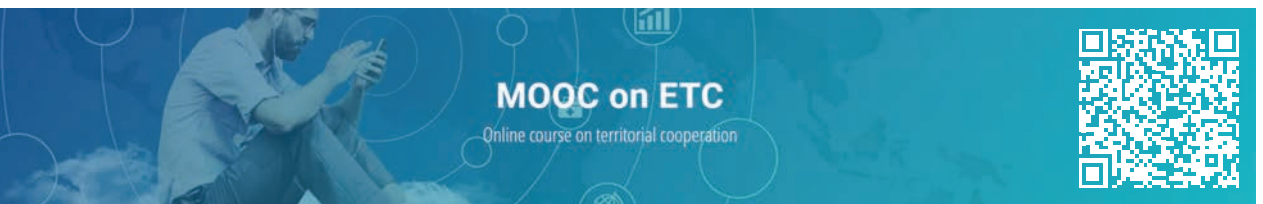
Cross-border knowledge sharing

We conduct comprehensive information and knowledge sharing activities (during which we also try to learn as much as we can), in order the local stakeholders to become more and more successful at developing cross-border cooperation.

Capacity development

Online course on European territorial cooperation

The European Commission published a call for tenders for the development of an online course on European territorial cooperation, which we won in 2021 as a member of a consortium led by the University of Strasbourg. Together with the consortium members – the University of Strasbourg, the University of Artois, the University of Thessaloniki, the MOT, the Euro-Institut, and the TEIN – we started developing the first online course on this topic in the second half of the year. The course deals with subjects such as the foundations of territorial cooperation, its origins, evolution and theoretical framework, as well as the European policies and decision-making processes in the field of territorial cooperation. CESCO was in charge of the preparation of the chapter titled “thematic approaches” which showcases relevant examples of healthcare cooperation, spatial planning, mobility, nature and culture. In 2021, the preparation of content of the course’s curriculum was completed and the related interviews and those requested by the project partners were also carried out. The 6-week long English-based course will be available in 2022; it will be free of charge and the successful applicants will be awarded with a certificate.



Training of cross-border development desk-officers at the EUDUTUS University

Ensuring adequately trained human resources is also an important pillar of strengthening the Hungarian EGTC network. To achieve this, a one-year, part-time, specialised training of cross-border development desk-officers was launched at the EDUTUS University with the support of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade. The training had been developed with the professional assistance of CESCO. The aim of this programme is to train professionals who will build on their previous basic qualifications to acquire specialised knowledge of cross-border development, which could also partly solve the shortage of EGTC professionals. In 2021, we continued to provide professional assistance for the training launched with the support of the Ministry, acting as a bridge between the EGTCs and the university, providing content for the seminars, providing data and information for the papers of some students, and also assessing the theses of some students. The training can be considered a success, with around 50 students enrolled.

In addition to these activities we can also mention our professional assistance related to the Scholarship Program of the Pálfi István Regional Development Foundation, in the framework of which we assisted in the tutoring of the scholarship holders, and also, we gave professional presentations at relevant events.

Leadership Academy for Cross-Border Cooperation

The project developed by the Institute of International Sociology of Gorizia and implemented by the Council of Europe, Centre of Expertise for Good Governance and CESCO Balkans, the Leadership Academy Programme for Cross-Border Cooperation included a two-day online workshop on cross-border strategic planning and CESCO provided technical support for its online realisation. The primary objective of the practical training course organised for practitioners in cross-border cooperation was to improve the leadership capacity of mayors and senior officials involved in cross-border cooperation.

Information, knowledge transfer

SECCo2 – Youth for cross-border partnership and cohesion of Danube and Adriatic-Ionian Strategies

In 2021, even after the project ended, we continued to update and promote the digital information platform established within the framework of our project (Sharing Expertise on Cross-Border Cooperation within the Danube Region) implemented with the support of the Danube Strategic Project Fund.

Events related to knowledge sharing

Date	Location	Events
16 April 2021	(Online)	Training programme of EDUTUS University for EGTCs (Online workshop)
7 July 2021	(Online)	MOOC on ETC: Partner meeting
24 September 2021	(Online)	MOOC on ETC: Partner meeting
4 October 2021	(Online)	MOOC on ETC: Partner meeting
7-8 October 2021	(Online)	Interreg Annual Event 2021
11 October 2021	Esztergom - Štúrovo, Slovakia	The 20 th anniversary of the inauguration of the Mária Valéria Bridge
18 October 2021	(Online)	MOOC on ETC: Steering committee meeting
11 November 2021	Debrecen	Tinlab-Urban21: Social innovation - the future of innovation?
19 November 2021	Budapest	Professional day for Pálfi scholarship holders
22 November 2021	(Online)	MOOC on ETC: Partner meeting
30 November – 1 December 2021	(Online)	Leadership Academy Programme for Cross-Border Cooperation: Online workshop for the border region of Serbia – Bulgaria

CESCI

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