



**CENTRAL EUROPEAN SERVICE
FOR CROSS-BORDER INITIATIVES**

ACTIVITY REPORT 2022

Short introduction of CESCO

The Central European Service for Cross-Border Initiatives (CESCI) was established in 2009 with the aim of helping the spread and strengthening of cross-border cooperation, like the French Mission Opérationnelle Transfrontalière (MOT), along the borders of Hungary and across Central and South-Eastern Europe.

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

- conducting research in border studies and in specific border regions;
- designing territorial integrated strategies and participation in cross-border programming;
- preparing policy materials both on national and EU levels about the developmental initiatives in the border regions, and participating in the relevant consultations and policy debates;
- supporting the development of projects in the border regions;
- supporting the development of institutions in the border regions;
- contributing to the improvement of local stakeholders' preparedness by knowledge sharing activities.



Objectives of CESCO

CESCO's main objectives are:

- providing professional support for cross-border cooperation along the Hungarian borders and in other countries of Central and South-Eastern Europe;
- improving the exchange of experience between Euroregions, EGTCs and local and regional authorities involved in cross-border cooperation;
- the dissemination of good practices in Western Europe;
- developing strategic cooperation with the relevant decision-preparing and decision-making institutions of the Union and with networks in Northern and Western Europe designed for similar purposes;
- strengthening the cohesion, peace and mutual trust among the nations of Central and South Eastern Europe by nurturing mutually beneficial partnerships.

CESCO's public benefit objectives under Act CLVI of 1997:

- promoting Euro-Atlantic integration,
- activities related to national and ethnic minorities in Hungary and Hungarians beyond the borders.

Our office-holders in 2022

The President of the Association and our honorary President:

The **chair** of CESCO was held by Dr. Tamás Tóth until the Association's General Assembly held on 25 May 2022. At the same General Assembly, the members elected the former vice-president of the Association, **Dr. Zsuzsanna Fejes**, head of the Strategic Development Office of the National University of Public Service as president.



Our honorary president is **Professor Szilveszter, Vizi E.**, former president of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences.

After the General Assembly of 25 May 2022, the Vice-Presidents of the Association:

dr. Tamás Tóth
professor, Kodolányi János University;



Zoltán Szögi
CEO,
Edutus University.



After the General Assembly on 25 May 2022, the Board of the Association expanded to further five members:



dr. Hynek Böhm,
associate professor,
University of Opole (PL)
and assistant professor,
Liberec University of
Technology (CZ);



dr. Jože Gričar
professor emeritus of
Economics, University
of Maribor, Slovenia;



dr. Dana-Bianca Mitriță
head of the Institute for
Human Geography and Regional
Science of the Romanian
Academy of Sciences;



dr. János Rechnitzer
professor emeritus,
Széchenyi István University in Győr;



István Szabó
Vice President,
Szabolcs-Szatmár-Bereg
County Council.

Members of the Supervisory Board:



Kálmán Nagy (President)
former Vice-President of Zala
County Council,



dr. Attila Tilki
Member of the Parliament,
member of the Hungarian
delegation to the
Council of Europe,



István Oláh
operational director of
D-Tag Analytics PLC.

Member institutions of CESCO in 2022

○ 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-Duna-Vág 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

HUNGARIAN COUNCIL OF THE FERTŐ LANDSCAPE WORLD HERITAGE ASSOCIATION
Fertőszéplak

GYŐR

TATABÁNYA

FEHÉRGYARMAT
MÁTÉSZALKA

NYÍRADONY

PÜSPÖKLADÁNY

PÁLFI ISTVÁN REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT FOUNDATION
Berettyóújfalu

MÓRAHALOM



Our association has 42 members, the majority of them are Hungarian local or regional municipalities located along the border. In addition, professional organisations, EGTCs and individuals participate in the activities of CESCO. A member review was conducted at the Annual General Assembly of the Association due to legislative changes, membership fee arrears and regular absences from the General Assembly. In this context, the General Assembly decided to exclude two organisations and five individuals, and accepted the withdrawal of four individuals. At the same General Assembly, the membership of two individuals was approved.

Mosaics from the life of the association

We continuously strive to maintain and improve the range of our services to our members which mainly are local and regional municipalities and EGTCs.

During 2022, we published our online newsletter four times (March, June, October, December), which was supplemented by two newsletters dedicated to our members (May, November) and two newsletters dedicated to EGTCs (April, November). From 2022 onwards, we added a short video report to our newsletters. We continuously updated our renewed website last year, developed our newsletter features, improved our LinkedIn profile and Facebook page.

We published our usual activity report and held our regular General Assembly on 25 May, this time with in-person participation, coupled with our major event on cross-border monitoring. A member review was also carried out in connection with the General Assembly (members who have not participated in the work of the association for years and who have not paid membership fees have been excluded following a notice). The members adopted the previous year's report, the necessary re-election of office-holders were carried out, the 2022 work plan and budget were adopted, and changes to the operational management of the association's working organisation entered into force.

CESCI continued to provide professional support to its two regional partner organisations, CESC Carpathia based in Košice and CESC Balkans based in Novi Sad. With the latter, CESC also carried out joint project activities during the year.

Since its foundation, CESC has been continuously developing its international relations in order to gain comprehensive knowledge of cross-border cooperation and to establish alliances in the field of policy-making. To support this, we joined several international organisations being relevant from a policy point of view (ISOCARP, Regional Studies Association, EUREGHA, TG-WeB) in 2021 and participated actively in their general assemblies and other professional events during 2022.

The study tour for our members in 2022 took place from 6 to 9 September. We took our members to the Italian-Slovenian border region with the aim of gaining a better understanding of cross-border cultural, mobility and health initiatives in the region, as well as innovative and prestigious instruments for their implementation, such as the Integrated Territorial Investment (ITI), the European Grouping of Territorial Cooperation (EGTC) or the European Capital of Culture (ECC). The four-day trip was attended by ten members of the association (representatives of county and city councils, EGTCs and territorial development associations) and two employees also joined them from CESC's organisation.

While exploring the possibilities of the new budget cycle, we have continued our constant resource mapping activity, the results of which are made available to our members from time to time.

In addition to the development of services related to membership, we also put considerable effort into strengthening the association's work organisation in 2022. In order to better meet the growing GIS analysis needs related to our programming and urban or regional economic development planning tasks, our IT and GIS capacities were further developed and upgraded in 2022. We replaced the smaller, unusable elements of our hardware assets with more modern devices, we also subscribed to the GIS and graphics software required for our work, and we expanded and maintained our regional databases.

During the year, two young CESC staff members left our work organisation in search of new professional challenges. Starting in October, we welcomed a new full-time colleague specialised in GIS to our team. In addition, we continued our internship program, in which 9 young people (5 translation students, 1 geographer student, 2 foreign students, 1 high school student) spent their internships of varying lengths and types with us in 2022.

At the organisational level, we continued to put into practice the reforms regarding operational management already launched in 2021, to ensure a more efficient and sustainable operation. We organised focused and regular opportunities to improve language skills and professional expertise. The internal cohesion of the work organisation has also been strengthened by team building sessions.

The team of CESC in 2022

Melinda BENCZI
international relations coordinator

László DARÁNYI
junior planner-analyst, economist

Kitti DUBNICZKI
chief planner, landscape architect

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

Csaba SIKI
junior GIS expert, cartographer

Annamária VAS
office manager, economist, human resources manager

2.2 Admission of new members

2. Tagsági ügyek

2.1 Tagok kizárása és kilépése
2.2 Új tagok felvétele



CESC Study Tour 2022



CESC General Assembly 2022

CESC employees at Bodrog

Social responsibility

Although our association performs primarily public benefit tasks in the areas laid down in the Statutes, we also tried to strengthen our social responsibility in other directions in 2022.

Waste collection on the floodplain of Bodrog

Today, waste produced in ever greater quantities and with an increasingly dangerous content is becoming a more and more serious global problem. The garbage load in the Upper Tisza region is a major issue. Most of the waste comes from beyond our borders, such as Ukraine, Slovakia and Romania, where it is common practice in some regions to place garbage around the house in floodplains due to deficiencies in waste management. At the same time, Hungarian polluters also add significantly to the waste stream. The waste accumulated during winter months is picked up by the river swollen with spring meltwater and rain, and then deposited in floodplain forests on the shores of sand islands in the lower sections.

Our staff also tries to pay attention to the reduction of environmental impact and the conscious waste management in the course of its everyday activities. Within the framework of the PET Cup initiative, smaller and larger teams have been regularly flowing to water for years to remove as much waste as possible from rivers belonging to the river basin of Tisza. In the last days of August 2022, our team also took part in a waste collection tour on Bodrog, during which we collected nearly 50 bags of garbage. The contents of the bags were partly landfilled and partly recycled with the help of waste management companies.

Preparation of a publication for the elderly

Our board member Jože Gričar, professor emeritus, is very active in Slovenian and international initiatives on the elderly. On his proposal, we prepared a publication presenting services for the elderly in Hungary, based on a Slovenian model.

V4+ donation

The results of the project "With cross-border cooperation for the Europeanisation of Ukrainian borders", supported by the International Visegrad Fund and started in November 2020, were planned to be presented by project partners, including CESCO as the lead beneficiary, at an international conference to be co-organised with the Košice Platform. This could not take place due to the war. Instead, in agreement with the International Visegrad Fund and the project partners, we delivered nearly 7 tons of durable food and 80 boxes of medical supplies to Transcarpathia.



Photos of the delivery of the donation



Events of the Association

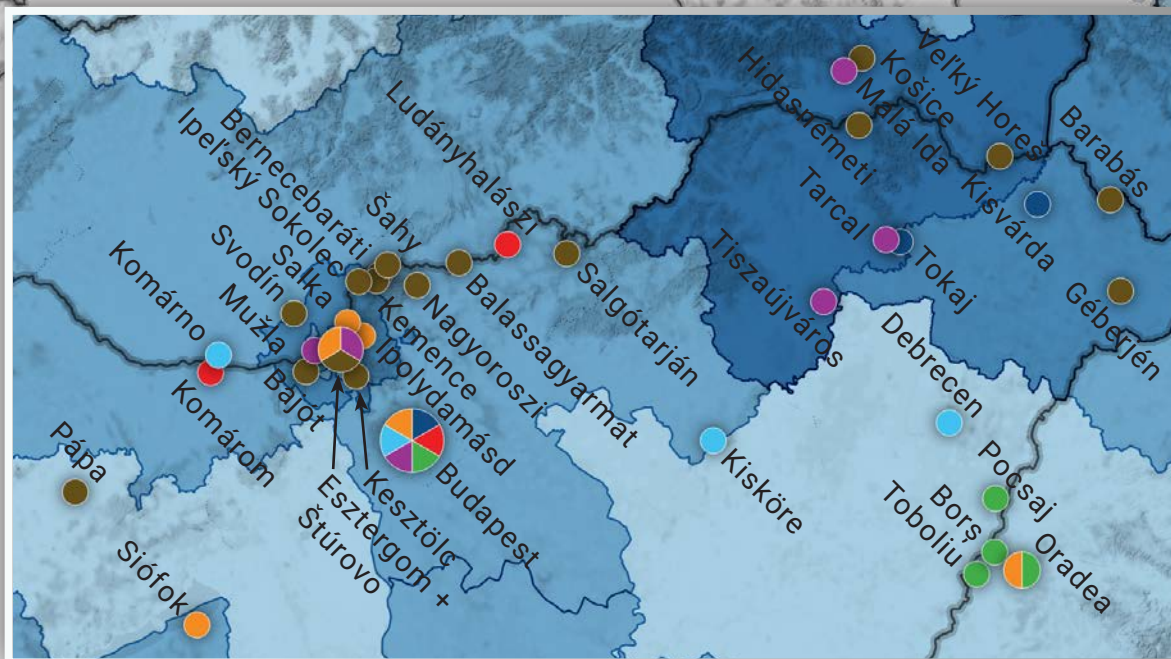
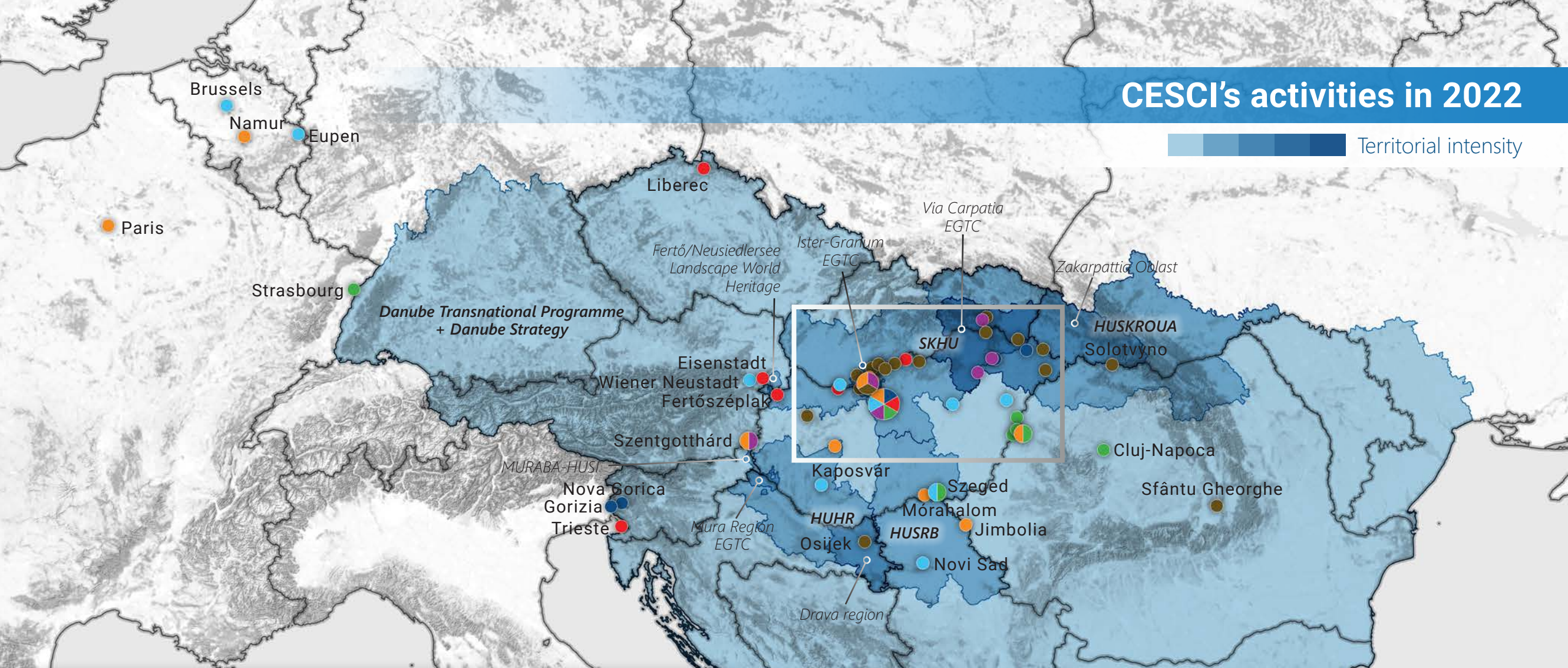
Date and time	Location	Name of the event
22 March 2022	(Online)	CESCO Carpathia General Assembly
4 April 2022	Kisvárdá (HU)	Aid to Ukraine (V4 proposal framework)
18 May 2022	(Online)	CESCO Supervisory Committee meeting
23 May 2022	(Online)	CESCO Board Meeting
25 May 2022	Budapest (HU)	CESCO General Assembly
6-9 September 2022	Gorizia (IT), Nova Gorica (SI)	CESCO study tour for our members
14 December 2022	(Online)	CESCO Supervisory Committee meeting



CESCO Study Tour 2022

CESCI's activities in 2022

Territorial intensity

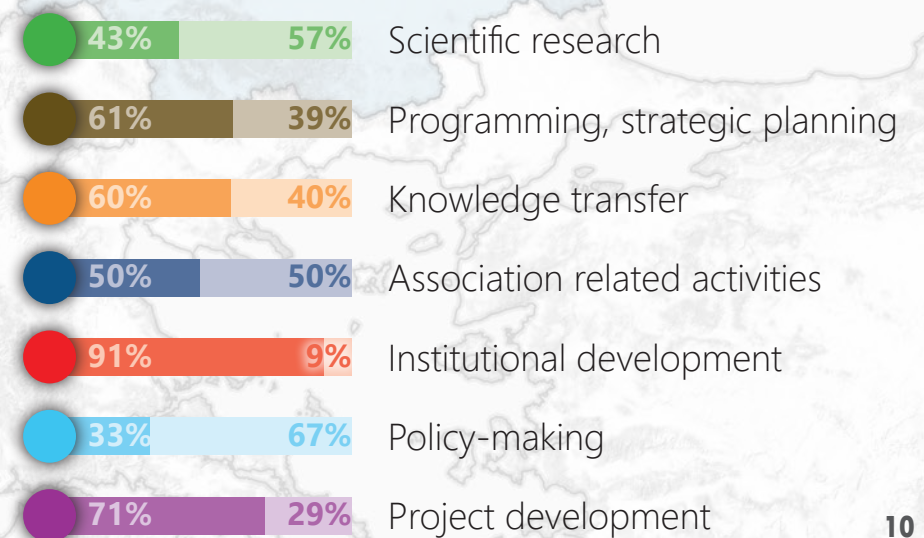


On-site



Online

Spatial distribution of activities



Border research, scientific activities

Since the beginning, our association has been actively participating in cross-border research and strives to strengthen the scientific basis of its professional activities. On the one hand, we are present at scientific conferences and workshops, and we ourselves organise such events as well. On the other hand, we try to be present in international scientific discourse with our own publications. We are also happy to be involved in the work of research groups in the field of border studies.

Towards the establishment of a research institute

Our association has been consciously striving for the establishment of a border research institute of Central European interest for years. To achieve these goals the Research Group of Cross-Border Cooperation led by our president, Ms Zsuzsanna Fejes, was established at the end of 2021 with the collaboration of the University of Public Service (UPS) and CESCİ, and held its inaugural meeting on 24 March 2022. The research group, which involves three CESCİ staff members, worked actively during the year, was regularly convened, launched targeted research, initiated publication activities and started international networking activities. A panel on border studies was organised in cooperation with the Centre for Economic and Regional Studies at the touring meeting of the Hungarian Regional Science Association (in Hungarian: MRRT) in October 2022. In the framework of the Ludovika Fellowship programme, Professor Dr. Jarosław Jańczak of the Adam Mickiewicz University in Poznań gave lectures at UPS in November 2022. In connection with this, the research group organised an open lecture for the professor on 21 November, where he analysed the issues of borderless Europe and cross-border governance in the post-pandemic world. In the evening he gave a special presentation to our colleagues on the same subject at CESCİ's office. In November and December, our research team members gave practical lectures at the Faculty of Public Governance and International Studies of the University of Public Service for Hungarian and foreign students.

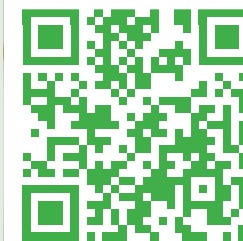
An important step forward in strengthening international relations was that the Research Group of Cross-Border Cooperation became a full member of TEIN (Transfrontier Euro-Institut Network) on 14 December 2022. TEIN was founded in 2005 by universities, research institutes and organisations supporting cross-border cooperation at a practical level, whose main objective is to provide a scientific background for cross-border developments across the EU.



Dr. Zsuzsanna Fejes and Anne Thevenet when the research group joined TEIN

The news about the launch of the research group and the visit of Dr. Jarosław Jańczak can be viewed on the internet:

<https://youtu.be/BI-9i35MDWs>



Dr. Jarosław Jańczak in the CESCİ office



Founding members of the research group

In order to develop the research institute, CESCİ, in partnership with the University of Public Service, the Karelian Institute (University of Eastern Finland), the University Institute of Lisbon (Portugal) and the European Academy of Bolzano (Italy), submitted a proposal for the Horizon Twinning call at the end of January 2022. In the framework of the project "PERIPATEIN 3.0" we would have used the experience of the developed Western European institutions for the development of the institute in Budapest. The application submitted for the third time reached the required score but was rejected due to shortages of funding.

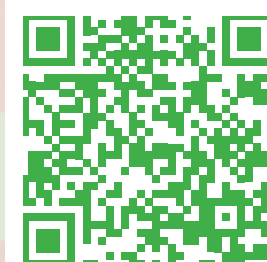
Also under the Horizon programme, the research group joined a Norwegian-led consortium aimed at preparing citizens living along the border for crisis situations. The workshop, together with the Romanian Academy of Sciences, would have analysed the Hungarian-Romanian border region and made proposals on the subject of the project. The application received a very high score but did not receive funding due to insufficient funds.



Lecture for the UPS students



MRTT's 20th annual conference



The research group regularly announces its activities on its independent website developed by CESCİ in 2022:

<https://research.cesci-net.eu/en/home-page/>

Participation in scientific projects

Frontem (Borders in motion: Which models for the EU?)

As an external expert, CESCO also participates in the “Frontem” project, which was launched in 2019 and is expected to end in 2023. Supported by the Jean Monnet sub-programme of the Erasmus+ programme, the project, led by the Institute of Political Science at the University of Strasbourg, aims to compare different border management systems and changing perceptions of borders.



As part of the project, on 19 May 2022 two focus group workshops were organised by the Institute of European Studies of the Babeş-Bolyai University and CESCO in Cluj-Napoca with the participation of Hungarian and Romanian border experts and project representatives. In the morning session, the changes in the border regime were discussed, and in the afternoon, the perceptions of citizens at the border were analysed by international participants.

As part of the project, a toolkit has also been compiled that explores the main issues of border management and border detection on the border sections examined by the project partners, relying on the focus groups

organised in the earlier phase of the project. Our colleague, Melinda Benczi, contributed to the publication of the results of the research project with a study titled “Outlining the main perception strands on the Hungarian-Romanian border”. We also contributed to the preparation of the media platform presenting the Hungarian-Romanian border region by organising a border visit and on-site reports.

Borders, Human-to-Military Security Database

Another research project was launched in 2021 with the support of the Jean Monnet sub-programme of the Erasmus+ programme, led by the University of Victoria in Canada (UVIC), to assess the impacts of the migration crisis on humanitarian and military border security. European experts include several universities, AEBR, MOT and our association. In addition to several partnership workshops during the year, the second workshop of the project took place between 30 November and 1 December 2022 in Strasbourg. At the meeting, researchers and experts from the field discussed the creation of a database called JMN Dyad. In the current phase of the research, the data collected so far is being analysed, which will be supplemented later with additional data sets.

OPUS-19 (Examination of cross-border cooperation in V4 countries)

Following the invitation of Hynek Böhm, board member of our organisation and lead researcher, we participated in a research project funded through the University of Opole on cross-border cooperation of V4 countries. Our task consisted of three parts: on the one hand, based on specific criteria, we had to evaluate the content of the Hungarian national curricula affecting Hungary's neighbouring countries, on the other hand we had to look at the educational practices of specific cross-border schools in their neighbourhood, and thirdly we had to carry out a targeted press analysis on the subject.

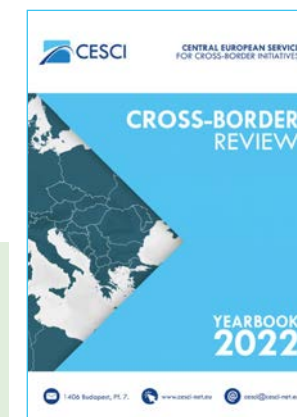
Scientific publications

Cross-Border Review 2022

The CESCO yearbook was also published in 2022, the studies of which reflect on the rapidly changing geopolitical environment in Europe and the world in general, analysing the role of education on the one hand, and person-to-person relations on the other hand, in terms of peace-building and the creation of common spaces. The volume was published online in English edited by James W. Scott, Professor of Regional and Border Sciences, University of Eastern Finland.

The yearbook can be downloaded from the Association's website:

<https://budapest.cesci-net.eu/en/cross-border-review-2022/>



Publications of CESCO team members (2022)

The CESCO staff also aims to increase its policy knowledge transfer activities through scientific publications. During 2022, the members of the work organisation continued to participate in a number of scientific publications in this field, both through colleagues involved in the Research Group of Cross-Border Cooperation, and through the Western Balkans Network on Territorial Governance (with the participation of Viktória Janosi, Olivér Kriszka and Máttyás Jaschitz).

The relevant publications listed by the team in 2022:

- Benczi, M. (2022): Twin Cities across Five Continents. Interactions and Tensions on Urban Borders. [Book review: Twin Cities across Five Continents. Interactions and Tensions on Urban Borders by Mikhailova, E. Garrard, J. Routledge, New York. *Tér és Társadalom*, 36(2), pp. 150-153. DOI. <https://doi.org/10.17649/TET.36.2.3433>
- Gyelník, T. (2022): Slovakia elects a king. [Book review: Slovakia elects a king by Kollai, I. Akadémiai Publishing House, Budapest.] In: Scott, W.J. (ed.): *Cross-Border Review. Yearbook 2022*. CESCO, Budapest, pp. 145-152.
- Hardi, T. – Kupi, M. – Ocskay, Gy. – Szemerédi, E. (2021): Study of cross-border cultural tourism indicating territorial integration on the Slovak-Hungarian border section. In Jóna, I. – Nárai, M. (ed.): *IT'S NYUTO 35. Selected announcements*. KRTK RKI Western Hungarian Scientific Department, Győr, pp. 263-293.
- Ocskay, Gy. (2022): Across borders. Commuting and mobility. *Mérnök Újság*. 29(10), pp. 14-16.
- Ocskay, Gy. – Guillermo-Ramírez, M. – Medeiros, E. – Peyrony, J. (2022): Post-COVID symptoms in EU cross-border cooperation. *Észak-magyarországi Stratégiai Füzetek*. 19(4), pp. 20-33.

Participation in scientific projects

Cross-border workshop on border studies at Andrassy University

The Andrassy University of Budapest organised its cross-border workshop for the second time in 2022. At the event on 21-22 October, the topic was the situation of border regions and the role of cross-border organisations in times of crisis. In addition to Andrassy University of Budapest and the participating German, Dutch, Czech and Italian universities and research centres, CESCO was also represented in the workshop, whose presentations were summarised in a conclusion by the organisers. The initiators aim to create a tradition by repeatedly organising the workshop.

Scientific events

Date and time	Location	Name of the event
4 January 2022	(Online)	Frontem partner meeting
26 January 2022	(Online)	Jean Monnet Network (UVIC) – monthly partner meeting
23 February 2022	(Online)	Jean Monnet Network (UVIC) – monthly partner meeting
1 March 2022	(Online)	OPUS – partner meeting
14 March 2022	(Online)	Frontem Seminar (Irish-Northern Irish Border)
24 March 2022	Budapest (HU)	Inaugural meeting of the UPS-CESCO Research Group (HEK)
24 March 2022	(Online)	OPUS – partner meeting
28 March 2022	(Online)	Frontem – partner meeting
30 March 2022	(Online)	Jean Monnet Network (UVIC) – monthly partner meeting
4 April 2022	(Online)	Opus – ATLAS Software Usage Training
22 April 2022	Budapest (HU)	Language and Border - Presentation by Louis-Jean Calvet at the French Institute,
25 April 2022	Budapest (HU)	Lecture given at Corvinus University (Contemporary challenges of the EU)
27 April 2022	(Online)	Jean Monnet Network (UVIC) – monthly partner meeting
19 May 2022	Cluj-Napoca (RO)	Frontem Focus Group Workshop
25 May 2022	(Online)	Jean Monnet Network (UVIC) – monthly partner meeting
27 June 2022	Budapest (HU)	Meeting of the UPS-CESCO Research Workshop
29 June 2022	(Online)	Jean Monnet Network (UVIC) – monthly partner meeting
28 September 2022	(Online)	Jean Monnet Network (UVIC) – monthly partner meeting



Jean Monnet Network (UVIC) – 2nd Scientific Workshop



Date and time	Location	Name of the event
28 September 2022	Szeged (HU)	AEBR's Cross-Border School scientific event (participation in the roundtable discussion)
5 October 2022	Budapest (HU)	Inauguration lecture by James W. Scott at the Hungarian Academy of Sciences
6-7 October 2022	Budapest (HU)	Presentations at the 20 th Jubilee Meeting of the Hungarian Regional Science Association (MRTT)
17 October 2022	Budapest (HU)	Class given at the University of Public Service
18-19 October 2022	Pocsaj (HU), Borş, Oradea, Toboliu (RO)	Frontem – preparing on-site reports for the project film
21-22 October 2022	Budapest (HU)	Cross-Border Cooperation in Crisis: Does institutionalised CBC Contribute to Resilience and Innovation? – scientific workshop at Andrassy University
26 October 2022	(Online)	Jean Monnet Network (UVIC) – monthly partner meeting
3 November 2022	(Online)	Presentation at the international scientific conference on the occasion of the Hungarian Science Festival
21 November 2022	Budapest (HU)	UPS Science Day, lecture by Jaroslaw Jańczak at UPS
21 November 2022	Budapest (HU)	Presentation by Jaroslaw Jańczak at CESCO
23 November 2022	(Online)	Lecture at the 8 th Central European Regional Science Conference (Resilience of cities and regions in an uncertain time)
30 November to 1 December 2022	Strasbourg (FR)	Jean Monnet Network (UVIC) – 2 nd Scientific Workshop
30 November 2022	Budapest (HU)	Class given at the University of Public Service
5 December 2022	Budapest (HU)	Class given at the University of Public Service

Cross-border planning

Since its foundation, CESCO performs comprehensive planning activities and uses the results thereof during the preparation and assessment of European Union programmes – so was the case in 2022, and we worked with a diversified planning portfolio.

Tasks related to programming

Evaluation of cross-border programmes 2014-2020

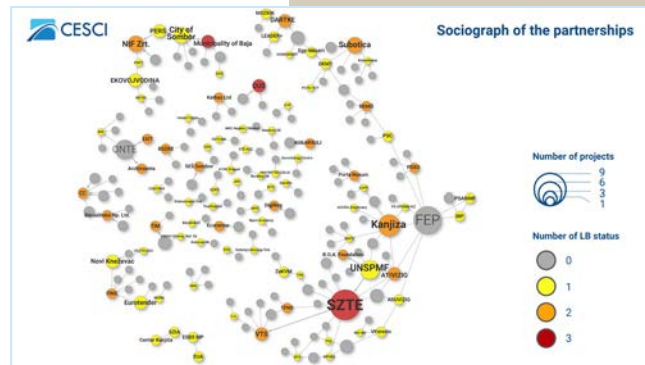
The second phase evaluation of four of the 2014-2020 cross-border cooperation programmes (Slovakia-Hungary INTERREG Cross-border Cooperation Programme, Hungary-Serbia INTERREG IPA Cross-border Cooperation Programme, Hungary-Croatia INTERREG Cross-border Cooperation Programme, Hungary-Slovakia-Romania-Ukraine ENI Programme) was prominent among the planning activities of CESCO in 2022 at the request of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade as the Managing Authority. The first phase (mid-term) evaluation of the programmes was also carried out by our team between 2018 and 2020.

In relation to the evaluation of the **Hungarian-Serbian Programme**, the first version of the evaluation document was submitted at the end of 2022. The completed document was reviewed by the Programme Bodies, and after a mutual consultation the document was returned to our organisation for a review at the end of the year. The Managing Authority requested to make the necessary modifications as per the comments by the first weeks of 2023.

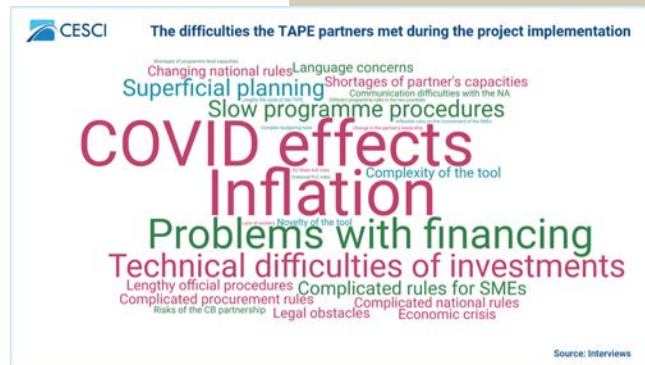
The collection, sorting and processing of data related to the evaluation of the **Hungarian-Slovak programme** committed significant resources in the second half of the year. For example, a number of project locations were visited. The progress of the evaluation process, which will be extended to the first quarter of 2023, was also reported at the monitoring committee meeting of the programme.

In connection with the evaluation of the **Hungarian-Croatian Programme**, we prepared the Inception Report of the evaluation, which was approved by the Monitoring Committee. The launch of the evaluation process was moved to 2023, considering the progress of the Programme's projects.

The Managing Authority of the **Hungarian-Slovak-Romanian-Ukrainian Programme** rescheduled the Programme's launch to 2023.



Figures from the evaluations



Preparation of the Hungarian-Slovenian economic and development programme

On the part of the two governments, the need to develop a special programme on the Slovenian-Hungarian border, to be implemented from national funds, primarily to support the ethnic minorities living in each other's territory and their local economic development goals remained on the agenda during 2022 as well. The Hungarian and Slovenian prime ministers signed an economic and development agreement in Lendava on 21 February 2022.



As a follow-up of the previous year's work, CESCO continued (with varying intensity) to provide its professional consultancy during 2022. At the same time, the programming process has slowed down at a government level, as a result of which the relevant rules of procedure and programme documents have not yet been finalised. In the autumn of 2022, we organised a successful bilateral professional event under the umbrella of the 5th Szentgotthárd/Monošter Forum, which focused on the challenges of the development of the border region. In the course of programme development we have provided continuous professional support to the MURABA EGTC.

Preparation of the 2021-2027 cross-border programmes

The preparation of the territorial analyses of three cross-border cooperation programmes – also at the request of the Managing Authority – (Interreg Cross-border Cooperation Programme Slovakia-Hungary, Hungary-Serbia INTERREG IPA Cross-border Cooperation Programme, Hungary-Slovakia-Romania-Ukraine NEXT Programme) played an outstanding role among the planning activities of CESCO in 2020. In 2022, the programmes were finalised, as a result of which all three programmes were adopted by the European Commission in the last quarter of the year. During the finalisation, CESCO only had to introduce minor changes to the first chapters titled "Common Programme Strategy".



Notification of accepted programmes (Source: The programs' websites)

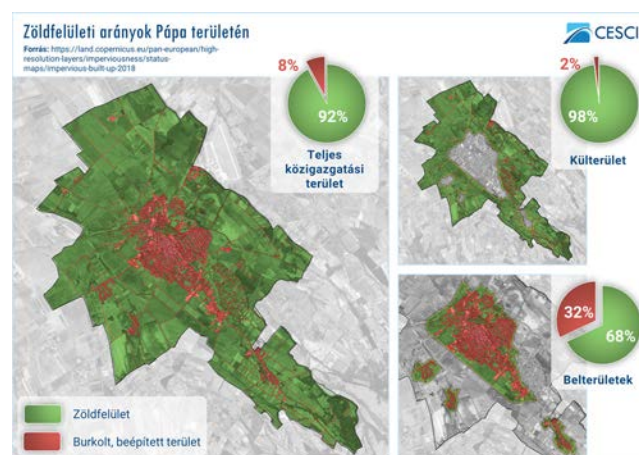
New Interreg Programme between Hungary, Slovakia, Romania and Ukraine



Planning at local level

On behalf of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade (MFA), we have been involved in the preparation of the development of cross-border cities since 2017. In the first half of 2022, we had to respond to some of the relevant enquiries related to the follow-up of the previously developed materials, through providing information and professional opinion. Furthermore, we advised on the integrated urban development strategy of **Sfântu Gheorghe** in Romania by 2030, and provided them with supporting proposals at the request of the city management. At the end of the year, a new task came to our table to create the urban development concept of **Šahy** in Slovakia, of which activity, we could only carry out the first coordination meeting until the end of 2022.

In the autumn of 2020, we received a request from the MFA to examine potential energies and existing development ideas of the city of **Pápa** in accordance with the methodology applied to cross-border cities, and then to propose a revision of its development concept. After the end of the review rounds, we managed to finalise the concept in the first quarter of 2021. After that, we successfully participated in the call for tender for the preparation of the city's sustainable development strategy (FVS), therefore, during the year, we were able to develop Pápa's development document for the coming years as well.



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 areas of the macro-region.

During the year 2021, on behalf of the MFA, we carried out a social, cultural and economic assessment of the situation of **Drava Region** in Croatia, on the basis of which, a strategy-building workshop was held on behalf of the *Economica Hungarica* Foundation in 2022. As a result, we updated the assessment of the situation and finalised the economic development strategy for the period 2022-2026 in the field of the Foundation's operations.

We joined the **Tisza EGTC's Revital I project** in the last quarter of 2021, in which we contribute to the preparation of the plan aiming to revitalise the collapsed mine in Solotvyno (Ukraine) and its region. In the course of 2022, we prepared an analysis of the territorial, social and economic situation of the region, which was also consulted with regional experts. The project is expected to close in 2023, until then we will be at the disposal of the project partners on issues related to the field of our association.

Events related to planning

Date and time	Location	Name of the event
24 January 2022	(Online)	Evaluation of the Hungarian-Serbian INTERREG IPA CBC Programme (2014-2020): first meeting
22 February 2022	(Online)	Revital I – Project Meeting
25 March 2022	(Online)	Revital I – Project Meeting
1 April 2022	(Online)	Revital I – Project Meeting
25 April 2022	(Online)	Evaluation of the Slovak-Hungarian INTERREG CBC Programme (2014-2020): first meeting
5 May 2022	(Online)	Revital I – Project Meeting
14-15 November 2022	Barabás, Hidasnémeti (HU), Košice, Veľký Horeš (SK)	SKHU (2014-2020) evaluation: project site visits
18 November 2022	Bajót, Esztergom, Keszthely (HU), Ipeľský Sokolec, Svodín (SK)	SKHU (2014-2020) evaluation: project site visits
23 November 2022	(Online)	Revital I – Project Meeting
28 November 2022	Balassagyarmat, Bernecebaráti, Kémence, Nagyoroszi, Salgótarján (HU), Šahy (SK)	SKHU (2014-2020) evaluation: project site visits
29 November 2022	Géberjén (HU)	SKHU (2014-2020) evaluation: project site visit
12 December 2022	(Online)	Evaluation of the Hungarian-Croatian INTERREG CBC Programme (2014-2020): first meeting
13 December 2022	Osijek (HR)	Strategy-building workshop (economic development strategy of Drava Region)
19 December 2022	(Online)	HUSRB (2014-2020) evaluation: consultation of the evaluation document with the Programme Bodies
20 December 2022	(Online)	SKHU (2014-2020) evaluation: 13 rd meeting of the Monitoring Committee

Cross-border project development

In order to realise the scientifically based cross-border integrated strategies, we support the preparation and development of cross-border projects from the very beginning. To this end, we not only help the development of projects, but we also regularly compile resource maps based on the requests of our partners, and from 2022 onwards we are also regularly sharing information to our members about the current application opportunities through our CESCÍ Figyelő ('Monitor').

Supporting the implementation of the territorial action plans for employment (TAPE) at the Hungarian-Slovak border

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

Preparation of tourism action plans in the Hungarian-Slovak border region

In the second half of the year, we were commissioned to develop a cross-border tourism action plan, which aims to boost tourism in the Gömör/Gemer area of the **Via Carpatia EGTC**, taking into account the funding opportunities of the new EU budgetary period. The work started with partnership building forums in 2022 and will continue in 2023 with the necessary negotiations and field work.

We were also involved in the preparation of the **Ister-Granum EGTC's** tourism action plan in the second half of the year: we collected the project ideas of the local actors and moderated the related workshop.



The partnership building forum of Via Carpatia EGTC (Source: Via Carpatia EGTC)

#spajameregiony
#rozvojregionov



Events related to project development

Date and time	Location	Name of the event
25 January 2022	Esztergom (HU)	Meeting of the Local Support Group for the WAVE Interreg Europe project
9 February 2022	(Online)	Online Seminar for Applicants of the ENI call
28 February 2022	(Online)	Preparatory webinar of the European Cooperation Day 2022 campaign
16 June 2022	(Online)	Financing Seminar of the Danube Regional Programme
16-17 June 2022	Tiszaújváros (HU)	Closing event of the Beautiful Cserhát TAPE
22 June 2022	(Online)	Webinar on easier access to healthcare: What can Interreg do?
22 June 2022	Budapest (HU)	LIFE Info Day 2022
25 August 2022	Mužla (SK)	Closing event of the TAPE project Wine-Lab
13 October 2022	Štúrovo (SK)	Project collection workshop
15 November 2022	Malá Ida (SK)	Via Carpatia EGTC Partnership Forum
29 November 2022	Tarcal (HU)	Via Carpatia EGTC Partnership Forum
9 December 2022	Szentgotthárd (HU)	Closing event of the MOTIVAGE project



The project collection workshop of the Ister-Granum EGTC (Source: Ister-Granum EGTC)

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, CESCO is actively involved in shaping cross-border institutional cooperation, which primarily means a professional assistance for the foundation and operation of EGTCs.

Institutional development

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

CESCO was commissioned back in 2015 by the Brussels based ECR network to provide professional support for the establishment of a network EGTC. In recent years, the process has progressed rather slowly, with several factors hampering the process of establishment which gained momentum in 2022. At the beginning of the year, in a Task Force meeting, stakeholders finalised the founding documents based on feedback from the approval authorities. Most of the year, national approvals took place and the association was registered in the Netherlands, but, for the time being, without having any members. The inaugural meeting of the EGTC may take place in 2023, after many years of preparatory work.

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

In the framework of the Common Heritage (ATHU0136) project, CESCO prepared the feasibility study for the Hungarian Council of the Fertő Landscape World Heritage Association in the summer of 2022, which began in the autumn of 2021 and was developed with participatory planning practices to establish a joint, cross-border management organisation of the World Heritage Site. The document proposed a gradual institutionalisation process. The next phase was commissioned in the autumn of 2022. In the framework of this, the founding document of the Consultative Council on the World Heritage of the Cross-border Lake Fertő tó/Neusiedler See was prepared, which was discussed by the Hungarian and Austrian World Heritage Associations at a meeting of the Working Group in Fertőszéplak, on 14 November. Following the approval by the general assemblies of the two organisations, the Council held its inaugural meeting in Eisenstadt on 5 December 2022.

At the end of the project, CESCO compiled the document entitled "Roadmap to the establishment of a joint organisation", in which, after explaining the history, it formulated proposals in order to achieve a future joint world heritage management organisation.

Events related to institutional development

Date and time	Location	Name of the event
18 January 2022	(Online)	Meeting of the ECR Network Working Group
2 March 2022	Fertőszéplak (HU)	Third meeting of the Local Support Group to prepare the joint management organisation of the World Heritage Site Fertő/Neusiedler See
20 April 2022	Ludányhalászi (HU)	General Assembly of the Ipoly Valley EGTC
16 May 2022	Budapest (HU)	EGTC workshop
20 July 2022	Trieste (IT)	Professional consultation on the establishment of an Italian-Hungarian EGTC
21 October 2022	Komárom (HU)	RDV's 10 th anniversary conference
10-11 November 2022	Ludányhalászi (HU)	EGTC workshop
14 November 2022	Fertőszéplak (HU)	Preparatory meeting of the Fertő/Neusiedler See Consultative Council
24-25 November 2022	Liberec (CZ)	Annual event of the EGTC Platform of the Committee of the Regions
5 December 2022	Eisenstadt (Austria)	Inaugural meeting of the Fertő/Neusiedler See Consultative Council



EGTC program

Our professional work involved the services relating to the EGTC program also in 2022, as we have been doing it since the establishment of CESC in 2009. This 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.

EGTC Consultation

Legal and **professional support to EGTCs is one of** our permanent tasks. In 2022, requests of this kind were raised by several Hungarian EGTCs. We have provided legal support to the Ipoly Valley, Ister-Granum and RDV EGTCs in connection with updating and amending their founding documents and supervisory committee rules. Similarly to previous years, we created **thematic maps** for several associations in 2022 as well.

In 2022, at the request of the MFA, we examined the **possibility of establishing two EGTCs**. On the one hand, we analysed the possibility and conditions of establishing an EGTC related to the Hungarian sea port in Trieste, supporting interregional networking and economic and cultural cooperation, outlining several scenarios. The founders would be Hungary and the province of Friuli-Venezia-Giulia in Italy.

The settlements of the historic Bodrogeköz/Medzibodrožie also decided to establish a closer cooperation in the form of an EGTC. In this context, we have been involved in consultations aimed at establishing the grouping. The process of establishing an EGTC has not yet begun.



Máttyás Jaschitz at the RDV EGTC's 10th birthday celebration (Source: RDV EGTC)

In several cases, we participated in the **professional events of the EGTCs** (conferences, project development workshops), typically as lecturers. On October 21 2022, RDV EGTC organised the 5th Danube Conference in Komárom's renewed 'Star' Fortress. The Conference also served as the 10th anniversary celebration of the association. The event was very successful, with a large audience of highly skilled professionals being present. Among others, Dr. Judit Czunyiné Bertalan, Member of Parliament and Government Commissioner for the Complex Development of the North-West Hungary Economic Development Zone, and Péter Kiss-Parciu, Deputy State Secretary for Regional and Cross-border Economic Development of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade gave welcome speeches to the participants. CESC was also represented at the high-quality professional event by Máttyás Jaschitz, director, with his presentation on the endogenous resources of the RDV EGTC's region, and its development opportunities.

The **EGTC Platform**, set up by the Committee of the Regions in 2011, held its annual meeting on 24-25 November 2022 in Liberec, Czechia. The meeting was organised by the Liberec Region and the tri-national Euroregion Neisse-Nisa-Nysa. The EGTC Award was handed over to the GO EGTC for their integrated territorial investment (ITI) in the field of health care; and the Honourable Mention certificate to the Pons Danubii EGTC for their regional bike sharing system called 'Kombibike'. Within the professional programme of the event, a roundtable discussion was held with the moderation of Gyula Ocskay, Secretary General of CESC, on the main challenges and future prospects of cross-border cooperation within the EU.

EGTC workshops

We contributed to the successful realisation of the EGTC workshops with our active participation and financial support in 2022.

The first EGTC workshop of the year took place on 16 May 2022 in the conference room of the MFA's building in Nagy Imre Square, where the main topics were the sources of the beginning EU programming cycle and the territorial development role of EGTCs. Péter Kiss-Parciu, Deputy State Secretary launched the event, and CESC experts spoke about the professional support of EGTCs. Following this, potential application opportunities for EGTCs were presented in two blocks, and finally an operational discussion of the actualities concerning EGTCs was opened with the representatives of the MFA.

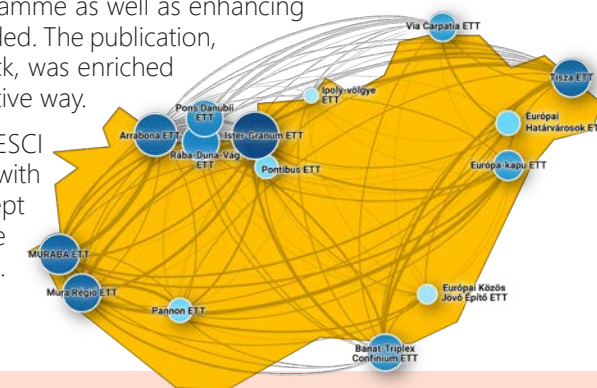
The second workshop of the year was organised by the Ipoly Valley EGTC in Ludányhalászi, on 10-11 November 2022. The workshop, apart from providing a venue for professional programmes, was also a celebration of the fifth birthday of the EGTC. The topics of the professional program were given partly by CESC and partly by two other EGTCs. The MURABA EGTC presented the lessons learned about the preparation of the Hungarian-Slovenian common fund, while the Arrabona EGTC reported to the other EGTCs on the sustainable spatial and urban development programme of Insula Magna – Szigetköz – Csallóköz/Žitný ostrov. CESC (in addition to organising and moderating the whole workshop) made proposals to participants primarily to increase the international visibility of their groupings. All these were followed by a quick, up-to-date overview of cross-border cooperation programmes given by the Department of Cross-Border Cooperation Programmes and, finally, the Department of Regional and Cross-Border Development held a roundtable discussion on information and news concerning the EGTCs.

Information services on the life of EGTCs

Our association has been providing **information services** on the life of European Groupings of Territorial Cooperation (EGTCs) since its foundation. This support activity was mainly carried out in 2022 with two previously implemented instruments and a third, new instrument.

On the one hand, we continued the tradition, started in 2021, which separated the EGTC topic from our general newsletters and we regularly reported on the current activities of the Hungarian EGTCs, as well as on the developments and policy processes in Hungary and Europe affecting their operating conditions. Over the course of the year, we have compiled and sent out two **EGTC newsletters**. In the second newsletter, a special online publication entitled **Snapshot of EGTCs with Hungarian participation**, presenting the results of the Hungarian EGTC programme as well as enhancing the visibility of the Hungarian EGTCs was also embedded. The publication, for which we received positive international feedback, was enriched with dynamic online data visualisations in an innovative way.

The **EGTC Monitor** developed and operated by CESC provides the latest information about the EGTCs with Hungarian participation, the content of which is kept up-to-date with continuous development work, and the constant expansion and improvement of the database.



An overview of the status and performance of EGTCs with Hungarian participation is available on the EGTC monitor operated by CESC:

<https://egtcmonitor.cesci-net.eu/en/literature/egtc-snapshot-2022/>

Participation in cross-border policy-making

Since its foundation, CЕСCI has been committed to shaping the Hungarian and EU policy background for cross-border cooperation. In this area, our activities are very diverse and range from local to EU level.

Participation in EU-level policy-making

In 2022, CЕСCI continued to participate actively in the EU discourse on the removal of legal barriers in the border regions, institutionalised cross-border cooperation, funding rules and models for cross-border development. We regularly attended the relevant EU professional events (according to the changed circumstances, often only online) in most cases as speakers.

We have compiled professional contributions to the upcoming legislation, policy documents and new tools. EGTC policy at EU level plays a key role in our activities.

European Cross-Border Citizens' Alliance

Through the Strasbourg Declaration, **AEBR, MOT and CЕСCI**, initiating the European Cross-Border Citizens' Alliance, committed in autumn 2021 to work together in a coordinated way to bring cross-border cooperation back to the centre of the European project.

The representatives of the three organisations talked on 25 January 2022 in an online meeting with Elisa Ferreira, Commissioner for Regional Policy, on the challenges of border regions. On 5 and 6 April, in Eupen, they held a meeting at the invitation of Karl Heinz Lambertz, President of the Parliament of the German-speaking Community of Belgium, President of the AEBR. The participants reviewed the biggest challenges of cross-border cooperation and decided to draw up a roadmap summarising the responses to these challenges at EU level. The roadmap was completed in spring. The three associations are working together in areas such as removing legal barriers, continuing Euro-Atlantic and Schengen integration, sharing public services across borders and addressing climate change challenges. There are regular consultations between the Parties to coordinate their actions in relation to each challenge.



The Eupen meeting

As usual, we participated in major events of MOT and AEBR. In the first half of 2022, the second Borders Forum held in Paris from 21 to 22 June can be highlighted. At the event, the three organisations adopted a joint political declaration entitled "To put cross-border cooperation back into the heart of the European project". The declaration points at national measures that have a negative impact on the concept of a borderless Europe in response to the last three crises: the migration crisis in 2015, the COVID-19 pandemic in 2020 and 2021 and the Russian invasion of Ukraine in 2022. In the declaration, the three associations urge national governments and the European institutions to join forces to defend the unique European achievements of free movement across borders.

In the second half of the year we participated in the annual series of AEBR events held in Szeged and Novi Sad between 28 September and 2 October. The event focused on the European Year of Youth, cross-border public services, smart solutions for mobility in border regions and the role of multiculturalism. CЕСCI was represented at the Cross-Border School in Szeged by Melinda Benczi, international relations coordinator, who participated in a panel discussion moderated by Martín Guillermo-Ramírez (AEBR Secretary General) alongside Anne Thevenet (Trans-Frontier Euro-Institut Network) and Dirk Peters (DG REGIO, European Commission). The next day the organisation held its General Assembly in Novi Sad, in the Great Hall of The Assembly of the Autonomous Province of Vojvodina. CЕСCI was represented by Mátyás Jaschitz, director, who, after the General Assembly, also gave a presentation on the impact of COVID-19 on the border regimes around Hungary, within the frames of the panel dedicated to cross-border public services.



The VI. AEBR Cross-Border School panel discussion (Source: DKMT)

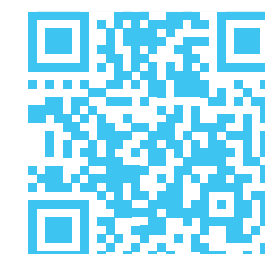
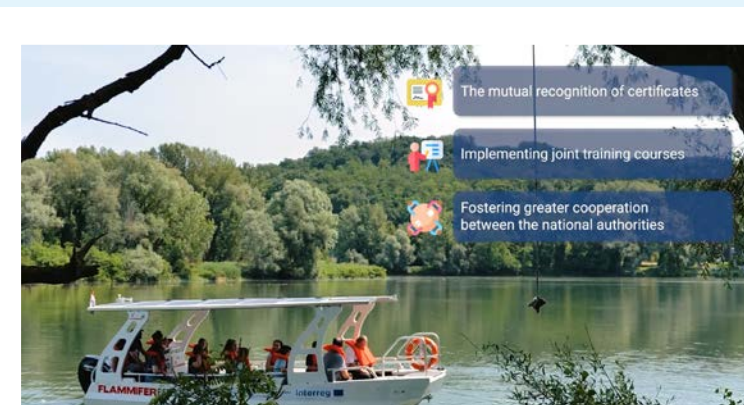
Participation in the b-solutions initiative

In 2022, b-solutions, a European project launched by DG REGIO and managed by AEBR, to remove legal and administrative obstacles in border regions continued. Based on AEBR's request, we promoted the new b-solutions call published in 2022.

At the end of the year we received two more requests from AEBR: on the one hand, they asked for our help in organising a promotional event in Budapest, and on the other hand, they indicated their intention to involve us in connection with new b-solutions cases. In both cases, the contracting process was completed in 2022 and will be implemented in 2023.

During the summer we received a request from our member, the Mura EGTC, to help make a short film about their b-solutions case. Our team was actively involved in compiling the short film script and editing the video which was first presented at the joint online workshop of DG REGIO and AEBR during the European Week of Regions and Cities. The video of the Mura Region EGTC's b-solutions case can be viewed on the Internet:

<https://youtu.be/1IYHUio4hgz>



Preparation of the new ESPON programme

ESPOON launched an extensive, multi-stage consultation process in 2021 on the four future thematic action plans (TAPs) of the **ESPOON 2030** programme. The online consultation process, which runs until 31 January 2022, aimed at involving a broad professional audience in the definition of topics for the next programming period. CESCO commented on the Luxembourg-led thematic action plan on the governance of new geographical areas.

In parallel, with a deadline of 28 February 2022, focus group discussions were held between ESPON and specific scientific and policy experts to refine the results of the consultation and channel further valuable comments, contributions and opinions, with a view to preparing the launch of the new programme. In addition to CESCO, AEBR and MOT were invited to a thematic focus group workshop on cross-border issues to gather the needs.



COVID and Ukraine – Participation in the European Parliament report

The European Parliament's Regional Policy Committee commissioned the Luxembourg-based consultancy company Spatial Foresight to draw up a comprehensive report on the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on the cohesion of the European Union. However, the war in Ukraine broken out in the meanwhile also formed part of the analysis. In connection with the development of the report, the entrusted company also set up an international regional reference group. The group held six meetings, involving two experts from CESCO who commented on the findings of the report, provided background information for the impact analysis and made proposals for future policy interventions.

Participation in the EUREGHA network

Since 2016, CESCO has been actively involved in various cross-border health services sharing activities, a milestone of which we joined EUREGHA (European Regional and Local Health Authorities) as a member in 2021. In 2022, we actively participated in the work of the EUREGHA Cross-Border Health Working Group and participated in its inaugural online meeting in February 2022, where members of the network were given the opportunity to present their past and planned activities and to exchange ideas on joint initiatives planned in 2022. During the year, we participated in several events organised by EUREGHA, typically online, and in person at the General Assembly of the network.



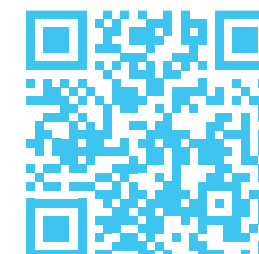
EUREGHA General Assembly
(Source: EUREGHA)

Conference on cross-border territorial monitoring

Over the past few years, it has become more evident in the course of planning work involving different territorial levels in border regions, that monitoring and collecting data on cross-border processes is an unresolved challenge. In connection with this, we attempted to develop cooperation at international level between Central European organisations involved in the collection, analysis and monitoring of data, for which we organised a major international scientific conference with our partners, the MOT and the French Institute, in Budapest on 24-25 May 2022. Our event was attended by the most prestigious experts from all over Europe. The conference has helped identify the instruments already available on the subject and determine what actions need to be taken collectively to enhance territorial monitoring within the EU. In addition, CESCO's international professional relations have been significantly strengthened.



The news coverage of the conference can be viewed on the Internet:
<https://youtu.be/3e1BqFtRJ6w>



Participation in Central European policy-making

Our policy contribution related to the Danube Strategy

The specialised diplomacy tasks related to the Danube Basin are coordinated by the Department for Water Diplomacy and the Danube Region Strategy at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade. CESCO (as a promoter of cross-border regional cooperation) has been involved in the work related to the Danube Strategy from the very beginning, mainly within priority area 10 and as a member of the national inter-ministerial working group coordinated by the MFA.

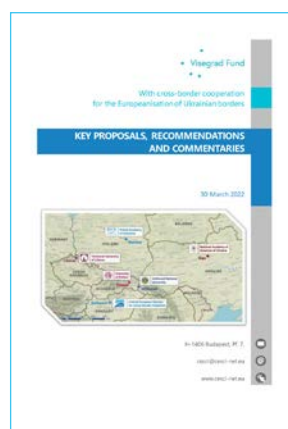
In 2022, we actively supported the Hungarian position in the processes related to priority area 10 of the Danube Strategy (the topic of institutional capacity development and cooperation). We are regular participants in the PA10 Danube Local Actors Platform, which aims to strengthen the strategy's civil society and territorial relations. In 2022, we regularly produced background materials and participated in professional and policy events on the subject. At the webinar on cross-border services of the Steering Group of the Priority Area on 27 September, we gave a presentation on the possibilities of cooperation between ambulance services in Central Europe. We participated online in the Danube Participation Day on 9 October, and the events of the EUSDR Annual Forum on 19-20 October. In response to the call for the selection of flagship projects, we submitted a proposal for a monitoring system targeting the Danube region's territorial processes. Unfortunately, our proposal was not successful.

During the year the **TEVI** project was closed, in which our association participated as a project partner. The project, implemented with the support of the ESPON programme and managed by the consultancy company Spatial Foresight in Luxembourg, aimed to outline a territorial vision for the Danube and Adriatic-Ionian macro-regional strategies until 2050. In the framework of the project we contributed to the workshops and the completed documents as an expert.

With cross-border cooperation for the Europeanisation of Ukrainian borders

Our international project "With cross-border cooperation for the Europeanisation of Ukrainian borders", supported by the International Visegrad Fund, was completed in 2022. The main objective of the project was to contribute to the development of Ukrainian borders and cross-border cooperation in accordance with European standards by boosting cross-border cooperation. One of the activities supporting the process in 2022 was to gather key proposals and recommendations for Ukraine's new draft law on cross-border cooperation. As a result, all of the professional documents that were planned to be prepared within the framework of the project have been completed. At the same time, the implementation of the project elements (training, international conference) requiring attendance was impossible, first by the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic and then by the outbreak of the Ukrainian-Russian war. After successful consultations with the International Visegrad Fund, in agreement with the project partners, we delivered aid shipment to Ukraine from the funds planned for the costs related to the cancelled events. After the aid shipment was delivered, the project was successfully completed administratively.

During the three-year implementation period of the project, in addition to professional activities, our association managed the project, operated the project website and edited the joint analyses and documents.



For the integration of the Central European region – proposal for the Central Europe Programme

CESCO submitted an application together with a number of universities, research centres and local and regional partners at the end of February for a call for proposals under the Central Europe transnational programme. The main objective of the **CB PAGO** project proposal was to strengthen integration and reduce cross-border barriers in the Central European region by increasing the capacity of public authorities and their cross-border organisations, in order to develop integrated cross-border strategies and implement participatory governance. The typical transnational cooperation included 8 countries, expert organisations, universities, research institutes and research centres, as well as authorities in the relevant case study areas. The proposal has not been selected for funding.

Participation in national level policy-making

As in recent years, in 2022 we regularly compiled technical contributions to the upcoming legislation, policy documents and new tools. We also provided assistance for the Hungarian regulatory and management tasks related to the EU's cross-border policy discourse, as well as for the representation of the interests of our members and partners, in order to strengthen international professional relations (professional background materials, analyses, drawing maps, opinion on documents, participation in professional events, continuous consultation, primarily with the relevant department of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade, etc.). In this context, we participated in the revision process on the renewal of the Schengen Code, as well as in the revision/preparation process of the cross-border and domestic operational programmes of the 2021-2027 cycle.

In addition to the above, we consciously sought to apply the cross-border aspects in the national territorial policies in 2022. In a manner agreed with the MFA we tried to have a say in domestic planning through all possible forums, bearing in mind the EGTC network along with economic and cooperation development interests in the border regions and beyond.

In line with the above planning and development activities, the MFA has delegated our director to the Hungarian TOP Monitoring Committee, where we continuously commented on the processes of the operational programme, trying to reflect the policy interests of the border regions.

In the last quarter of the year, in connection with the renewal of the National Development and Territorial Development Concept (in Hungarian: OFTK), in order to review and discuss territorial challenges, territorial development goals and policy orientations, expert-level regional development workshops were held. At the invitation of the Regional Development Planning and Support Department of the Ministry of Regional Development, CESCO participated in these workshops. Our organisation was represented by Mátyás Jaschitz, director, who promoted the recognition of cross-border aspects of regional development. Furthermore, he stressed the importance of conscious management of these cross-border considerations, and drew attention to the regional development potential of the Hungarian EGTC network.



Events related to policy-making

Similar to the past few years, CESCO staff participated in a number of policy events and webinars in 2022 and contributed to shaping a number of relevant policy processes. For example, we participated in the Commission's Beyond Borders: Breakfast Debate online events and events related to the waste removal along the Tisza. As every year, we followed the most exciting programmes of the European Week of Regions and Cities (EURegionsWeek) in 2022 too.

Date and time	Location	Name of the event
20 January 2022	(Online)	ESPO TEVI 2050 workshop – alternative territorial scenarios
25 January 2022	(Online)	Online meeting of AEBR, CESCO and MOT with Commissioner for Regional Policy Elisa Ferreira
27 January 2022	(Online)	Closing event of the ESPON Thematic Action Plan (TAP) Luxembourg
3 February 2022	(Online)	Focus group workshop on the new ESPON Thematic Action Plans (TAP) (AEBR, MOT, CESCO)
3 February 2022	(Online)	Beyond Borders: Breakfast Debate – Commission's online workshop on youth participation in cross-border cooperation
15 February 2022	(Online)	ESPO TEVI 2050-4 Steering Group meeting
16 February 2022	(Online)	ESPO Conference (Challenges and Opportunities for Shrinking Areas)
25 February 2022	(Online)	ESPO TEVI 2050 workshop – policy proposals
3 March 2022	(Online)	Workshop of the EUREGHA Cross-Border Health Working Group
7-11 March 2022	(Online)	EU macro-regional strategies week
17 March 2022	Komárno (SK)	Presentation on Selye Digital Day
17-18 March 2022	(Online)	8 th Cohesion Forum
24 March 2022	(Online)	Mid-term conference of the HEAL NOW project
29 March 2022	(Online)	ESPO Conference (From ESPON 2020 to ESPON 2030 – Building on 20 years of innovative support for territorial policy-making)
5-6 April 2022	Eupen (BE)	Joint AEBR, CESCO and MOT strategy-building workshop
7 April 2022	(Online)	Danube Local Actors Platform – 12 th meeting
5 May 2022	(Online)	Capacity building for integrated supply – closing conference of the SCIROCCO Exchange project
9 May 2022	(Online)	Building friendship and mutual understanding in cross-border regions for cooperation – Online workshop on updating the AEBR Youth Charter
12 May 2022	(Online)	ESPO TEVI 2050 workshop – summary of feedback from the two macro-regions
13 May 2022	(Online)	Workshop on the second phase of the ESPON thematic action plan in Luxembourg
24-25 May 2022	Budapest (HU)	Conference on Cross-border Territorial Monitoring

Date and time	Location	Name of the event
26-27 May 2022	(Online)	5 th Annual Workshop of the Western Balkans Network for Territorial Governance (Pathways towards Cohesion)
30 May 2022	(Online)	Meeting of the Regional and Urban Development Operational Programme and the Monitoring Committee of the Regional and Urban Development Operational Programme Plus (TOP – TOP Plus MB)
1 June 2022	(Online)	Global Network of Associations & Networks: Retirees Developing Silver Economy
8-9 June 2022	Brussels (BE)	General Assembly of the EUREGHA network
20 June 2022	(Online)	EP COVID Impact Study – Regional Reference Group Workshop
22 June 2022	Kisköre (HU)	VII. National Tisza Roundtable in the framework of the Interreg DTP Tid(y)Up project (lecture and participation in the roundtable discussion)
30 June 2022	(Online)	Beyond Borders Breakfast Debate – Commission's online workshop on cross-border cooperation between SMEs
19 July 2022	(Online)	EP COVID Impact Study – Regional Reference Group Workshop
22 September 2022	Budapest (HU)	National Development and Territorial Development Concept (OFTK) meeting at the Ministry of Regional Development
27 September 2022	(Online)	Presentation at the workshop on cross-border services in Priority Area 10 of the Danube Strategy
28 September 2022	(Online)	EP COVID Impact Study – Regional Reference Group Workshop
29-30 September 2022	Novi Sad (RS)	AEBR General Assembly and Annual Conference
6-7 October 2022	(Online)	Gerontological Days 2022
11-12 October 2022	Brussels (BE)	AEBR, CESCO and MOT negotiations with representatives of the EU institutions
11-14 October 2022	(Online)	European Week of Regions and Cities
18 October 2022	(Online)	Danube Participation Day – Resilience through Diversity. Involving Civil Society in the Danube Strategy for a resilient future
19-20 October 2022	(Online)	11 th Annual Forum of the Danube Strategy
20 October 2022	Debrecen (HU)	OFTK workshop discussion
25 October 2022	Kaposvár (HU)	OFTK workshop discussion
27 October 2022	Szeged (HU)	OFTK workshop discussion
8 November 2022	(Online)	Final conference and transnational roundtable of INTERREG DTP's Tid(y)Up project
10 November 2022	(Online)	Webinar of Priority Area 10 of the Danube Strategy on the digitalisation of cities and municipalities
22 November 2022	Budapest (HU)	OFTK workshop discussion
28 November 2022	Wiener Neustadt (AT)	Final Conference of the HEAL NOW project
29 November 2022	(Online)	Meeting of the Regional and Urban Development Operational Programme and the Monitoring Committee of the Regional and Urban Development Operational Programme Plus (TOP – TOP Plus MB)
7 December 2022	(Online)	Kick-off workshop for B-Solutions 2.0

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

Online Course (MOOC) on European Territorial Cooperation

In 2021, the European Commission launched a call for an online course on European Territorial Cooperation, which we won together with the University of Strasbourg, the University of Artois, the University of Thessaloniki, MOT, Euro-Institut and TEIN. The educational material covers topics such as the foundations, development history and theoretical framework of territorial cooperation and related European policies and decision-making processes. Our Association developed the “thematic approach” part of the curriculum, which summarises the EU framework for cross-border health, territorial development, transport, nature conservation and cultural cooperation, illustrated with examples and interviews. In addition to participating in the development of the curriculum, our organisation also provided the running of the student forum of the online platform.



The news about the training can be viewed on the Internet:

<https://youtu.be/YioXc94SrCM>

The 8-week long English language course was first available in spring 2022, then between October and November. In addition to watching the tutorial videos, participants had the opportunity to deepen their knowledge of the topics by reviewing the literature and then completing quizzes to test their acquired knowledge. The online course was free of charge and those successfully completing it received a certificate of participation.

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 this end, a one-year cross-border development specialist training developed with the support of the MFA and with the professional cooperation of CESCO was launched at EDUTUS University, which continued in 2022. The staff of our association regularly provided assistance for the students in the preparation of their theses with information, interviews and literature sharing.

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



István Pálfi Memorial Conference 2022



Szentgotthárd Forum

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

The digital information platform, created in 2018 with the support of the Danube Strategic Project Fund (Sharing Expertise on Cross-Border Cooperation within the Danube Region), was regularly updated and promoted at various events during 2022.

Oradea Process

Our activities to strengthen relations with neighbouring states include the Oradea Process, which aims to strengthen Hungarian-Romanian rapprochement and cross-border cooperation. Together with the Initiatives France Central and Eastern Europe (IFECO) and the French Institutes in Bucharest and Budapest, we organised the ninth seminar of the initiative on 9 June 2022, focusing on integrated cross-border planning. The event was attended by nearly 35 French, Romanian and Hungarian border actors, where 4 French, 2 Hungarian and 2 Romanian experts presented various cooperation tools and projects to the public.

Szentgotthárd Forum

In cooperation with the Embassy of the Republic of Slovenia in Budapest and the Embassy of Hungary in Ljubljana, CESCO organised the fifth Monošter (Szentgotthárd) Forum on 4 October 2022 with the financial support of the Ministries of Foreign Affairs of both countries. The initiative, which was launched in 2015 and was confirmed by the Szentgotthárd Declaration, aims to support cooperation between Hungary and Slovenia, as well as to promote joint development. The main topic of the 2022 Forum was the development challenges and opportunities of the Hungarian-Slovenian border region, in particular the territorial development and cooperation resources available during the 2021–2027 programming period, as well as bilateral initiatives to address the specific challenges of the mixed border region. In addition to the ambassadors of the two countries, Aleksander Jevšek, Minister for Development and EU Cohesion Policy from Slovenia, and Vesna Humar, State Secretary of the Government Office for Slovenians Abroad, attended the event. From Hungary, Csaba Latorcai, Parliamentary State Secretary and Deputy Minister of the Ministry of Territorial Development participated at the event. The prestigious participants supportively spoke about the joint border development programme developed with the professional support of CESCO.

Events related to knowledge sharing

Date and time	Location	Name of the event
7 February 2022	(Online)	Partner meeting on the MOOC
4-5 March 2022	(Online)	FRONT'IDENT "Conference on Better Knowledge for Better Cooperation" (participation in the roundtable discussion)
18 March 2022	(Online)	Conference of the Finnish Parliament on Hungary (presentation on cross-border cooperation)
5 May 2022	(Online)	Presentation on the evaluation of CBC programmes at Halmstad University (Sweden)
10 May 2022	(Online)	Conference on cross-border tourism in Europe
17 May 2022	(Online)	Partner meeting on the MOOC
30 May 2022	(Online)	Partner meeting on the MOOC with the Commission
9 June 2022	Oradea (RO)	Seminar in Oradea
10 June 2022	Esztergom, Ipolydamásd (HU), Salka (SK)	Study visit of French experts in the Ister-Granum EGTC
16 June 2022	Budapest (HU)	Pálfi Scholarship Meeting
21-22 June 2022	Paris (FR)	Second Forum of Borders
24 June 2022	(Online)	Presentation at the plenary session of the ProMIS summer university entitled "European Cross-Border Health Cooperation"
1 July 2022	Mórahalom (HU)	Presentation at the International Conference on the Challenges of Euroscepticism
16-18 September 2022	Namur (BE)	Presentation at the Passion for Europe Group annual conference (European democracy in a time of confusion)
21 September 2022	Siófok (HU)	Presentation at the conference entitled Transport Development in Hungary
27 September 2022	Jimbolia (RO)	Presentation at the Romania-Hungary Programming Conference
29 September 2022	Esztergom (HU)	Presentation at the Pálfi István Memorial Conference
4 October 2022	Szentgotthárd (HU)	5 th Szentgotthárd/ Monošter Forum
16 December 2022	Budapest (HU)	Lecture at the Corvinus University of Budapest



CESCI

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The report was published with the support of
the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade.