

## **Annex**

### **to the agenda point 4.1 of the General Assembly of the Central European Service for Cross-Border Initiatives to be held on 25 May 2022**

#### *4.1 Agenda: Accepting the work plan for 2022*

The work plan for 2022 is presented in a grouping according to the type of each activity.

#### **1. Border Studies**

Since the establishment of CESCI, it has been working with scientific approach towards cross-border cooperation. As part of this activity, we organize events, publish our scientific journal *Cross-Border Review* on an annual basis and participate in international research networks.

On 24<sup>th</sup> of March this year, the inaugural meeting of the **joint border research group** of **CESCI** and the **University of Public Service** was held. The research group is led by our Vice-President, Zsuzsanna Fejes. CESCI has three staff members in the research group, namely Melinda Benczi, Teodor Gyelník and Gyula Ocskay. They will participate in the work of the research group that will be the main focus of our scientific activities in the future. In order to develop it into a research institute, we submitted an application for the Horizon Twinning call together with the Karelian Institute of the University of Eastern Finland, the Lisbon University Institute and the European Academy in Bolzano; however, if the application is not successful, we will also implement the institution building thanks to the supportive attitude of the leadership of the University of Public Service. We would like to further develop our yearbook *Cross-Border Review*, which is going to be published also in 2022, into an internationally recognized journal of the research group. The research group is scheduled to hold its first international conference in the fall of 2022.

Moreover, we continue to be involved in the implementation of **two Erasmus+ Jean Monnet** projects: the Frontem project, led by the University of Strasbourg, which is a comparative study of 5 European border regions in terms of border management and border detection. Our Association, together with the Babeş-Bolyai University in Cluj-Napoca, conduct research on the Hungarian-Romanian border and organize related professional events, as well as we participate in the compilation of a tool-kit in order to facilitate the practical application of research results. The another Jean Monnet project is the consortium, led by the University of Victoria in Canada that works with the issue

of *border security functions*. As part of this work, we have the opportunity to develop a database on the borders of Central Europe.

Furthermore, we are active in the field of Visegrád cooperation: we submitted a **tender**, together with University of Szeged, for the **OTKA call**. Within the framework of this tender, we plan to analyse the system of tools for multilevel governance at the V4 level. What is more, we are also involved in the research project led by **Hynek Böhm** that analyses the border aspects in the educational curriculums of the V4 countries.

## 2. Cross-border planning and programming

The main activity of our Association includes planning (mainly cross-border) and programming tasks. In 2022 and 2023, we implement (within the framework of our public benefit tasks) an impact analysis, at the request of the Hungarian Managing Authority working within the frame of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade, of **four cross-border programs that are now coming to an end**: the Slovak-Hungarian and Hungarian-Croatian Interreg, the Hungarian-Serbian IPA-Interreg and the ENI CBC (Hungarian-Slovak-Romanian-Ukrainian) programs.

In the Hungarian-Slovenian border region, based on the bilateral agreement of the two governments, the implementation of the development plans of the Slovenes in Hungary and the Hungarians in Slovenia will be supported by 5-5 million Euros annually in the next 5 years. The **development plan** underpinning the joint program was also worked out by the CESCI staff.

We participate in the **TEVI project** that is going to end in 2022. It is supported by the ESPON program and managed by the Spatial Foresight in Luxembourg. It aims to draw the territorial vision of the Danube and Adriatic macro-regional strategies. Within the project of the Tisza EGTC, **Revital I**, we contribute to a plan that aims to revitalize the collapsed salt mine and its area in Solotvyno (Ukraine).

Our Director, Mátyás Jaschitz, is an active member of the monitoring committee of the Hungarian **Regional and Settlement Development Operational Program**, where we try to apply the aspects of cross-border regional development.

## 3. Cross-border institution building

CESCI is a recognized expert at the European level on cross-border governance and institution building. Within this context, we have been supporting the process of establishing a European Grouping of Territorial Cooperation by the **European national transport authorities** for years. The establishment could have been implemented years ago, but the composition of the founding members is in a constant change. Accordingly, we provide advisory support to the members of the network in

agreement with the national legal order of the new members. It is expected that the registration will not be achieved in 2022.

In 2021, we won an assignment to develop a feasibility study for the **joint management organization of the Hungarian-Austrian world heritage site of Fertőtáj**, as well as to develop the organizational framework and to carry out a one-year follow-up task. The study is expected to be finalized during the spring.

We continuously provide assistance to the **work of the EGTCs with Hungarian participation**, mainly by preparing maps and by providing legal advice. Within the latter area, we have received three inquiries so far in 2022: coordinating the amendment of the founding documents of the Ipoly-Valley EGTC and the Ister-Granum EGTC, amending the rules of procedure of the supervisory board of the RDV EGTC. We continue to expect similar requests during the year.

After 2018, our Association will once again organize the **workshops of the Hungarian EGTCs**. According to our plans, we will organize three such workshops in 2022. In addition of transferring EU and domestic policy information, we will also provide an opportunity for the managers of the groupings to exchange knowledge at the workshops.

#### 4. Policy support

Our Association provides comprehensive policy support at both national and EU level on issues that relate to cross-border cooperation. Since 2021, we have been performing this **together** with the two most important professional organizations, the **Association of European Border Regions (AEBR)** and the **MOT**, based on a joint declaration that was signed on 7<sup>th</sup> of October 2021, in Strasbourg. We presented our plans for cooperation to Elisa Ferreira, European Commissioner for Cohesion and Reforms, in an online meeting on 25<sup>th</sup> of February 2022. On 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> of April in Eupen (Belgium), at the invitation of AEBR President Karl-Heinz Lambertz, we prepared a roadmap along which we plan to provide coordinated assistance to the European Commission in the coming years. Our cooperation is already a close one with the other two associations, we participate at their general assemblies and professional events (e.g. at the second Borders Forum which is going to be held by the MOT in June).

We are active members of the **EUREGHA** network, in which we participate in the working group on cross-border healthcare cooperation. We can present ourselves for the first time, as a new member, at the General Assembly in Brussels in June.

Our most significant professional event in 2022 is the international conference that is going to be held in the French Institute on **cross-border territorial monitoring**. It will be held together with the Institute and the MOT, just two days before the General Assembly. The presenters themselves portray Europe, but the event aims to contribute

to the development of a system that helps to examine cross-border developments at the European level.

Besides of these, we regularly **comment on** the emerging European Union policy documents.

At the macro-regional level, we participate in the activities that relate to the **Priority Area 10 of the Danube Strategy** (e.g. at the events of the local actors platform) on the one hand, as well as we are also a permanent member of the Hungarian **inter-ministerial working group**; and, we want to be actively involved in the work of the **cross-border governance network of the Western Balkans**.

Our project, supported by the International Visegrad Fund, was launched in 2019, with the aim to develop cooperation **along the borders of the western Ukraine**, to provide the necessary legal background and to develop the capacities of the local actors. We cannot implement this project as planned because of the war in Ukraine; nevertheless, we were able to deliver 6.5 tonnes of food and 50 boxes of health aid to Ukraine from the unused amount of money with the approval of the Board of the Fund.

On the basis of the Slovak-Hungarian cross-border program, which is still to be accepted by the Commission, we can start to implement a **seven-year strategic project** jointly with CESCI Carpathia at the end of the year. Aim of the project is to identify and systematically remove the existing legal and administrative barriers between the two countries.

We continue to participate in the **HealNow project**, which supports Hungarian-Austrian cross-border healthcare cooperation, and we also help to develop similar cooperation along our other borders.

## 5. Knowledge sharing

Our Association attempts to facilitate knowledge sharing among the local actors, hence ensuring the effectiveness of cross-border cooperation. The creation of an **online course on European Territorial Cooperation** (MOOC) represents a prominent role within these activities in 2022. We won the call of the European Commission as a member of a consortium led by the University of Strasbourg. We, together with our partners, prepared the first version of the curriculum by February and it will be further developed during the year.

It is regular that our staff-members hold professional lectures for students at Hungarian **universities**, and we also help to mentor the **scholarship holders of the Pálfi István Foundation**. Other platforms for knowledge sharing are the following ones, our quarterly **newsletters** (association, member and EGTC newsletter), the online

**EGTC monitor** that presents the activities of the Hungarian EGTCs, as well as our events, from which we highlight the **seminar in Oradea** which aims to develop the Hungarian-Romanian cross-border cooperation using the French experience; and the **forum in Szentgotthárd** which is a regular framework for meeting and exchanging professional information between the Slovenian and Hungarian actors. The main topics this year will be the application of the EU's integrated territorial policy instruments in the case of the former, while the latter will focus on the elderly economy and the planned Hungarian-Slovenian cross-border fund.

**Study trips** are organized for our members and these serve the process of knowledge sharing, too. In 2022, we will organize a trip to the GO EGTC on the Italian-Slovenian border, in the area of Gorizia and Nova Gorica. The two cities jointly will have the title of European Capital of Culture in 2025; although, exemplary cooperation is taking place in a number of other areas between them. Within the frame of the trip, our members can visit the important places of the First World War from the Hungarian point of view with the help of a professional tour guide.

## 6. Development of the Association, social responsibility

At the last General Assembly, a decision was made to transform the **management of the work** of the Association: two directors would take over the day-to-day work of CESCI, while the Secretary General would be mainly responsible for relations with the members, for external relations, as well as for an organizational strategy of the Association. This change also means a professionalization of the administration of the Association in the future.

We constantly improve the **knowledge of our staff**. Currently, two employees are in the process of completing their PhD studies with the support of the Association. The planning team further deepens its knowledge, which was gained at the geoinformatics training during the last year, through online courses. Furthermore, we develop our English language skills at joint workshops.

In addition to our public benefit activities, we have made significant steps in the recent years. The first challenge in 2022 was the **war in Ukraine** and we have provided a wide range of assistance. On the one hand, we have provided information, through our Ukrainian partners and through the Facebook group in cooperation with the AEBR, to the refugees, who have arrived to Hungary; we brought relief packages for the volunteers who work at the Nyugati Railway Station in Budapest; as well as the remaining amount of the V4 tender was sent to Ukraine with the approval of the project partners and the Board of the Fund. On behalf of the Association, our Secretary General received an invitation to the crisis round table in Esztergom.

At the initiative of our Board member, Professor Jože Gričar, we prepared the **Hungarian guide towards aging**, which was prepared on the basis of the Slovenian publication. It contains extensive information on Hungarian social, health, elderly education and silver economy organizations and institutions. As a result, the Professor initiated the cooperation of publishers who prepared similar publications in Central Europe. Our Association was asked for the coordination of this.