

## **Annex**

### **to the agenda point 4 of the General Assembly of the Central European Service for Cross-Border Initiatives of 31 May 2023**

#### **Agenda 4.1: Approval of the work plan for 2023**

Honourable General Assembly,

The work plan for 2023 is presented in a grouping by 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 organise events, publish our scientific journal, the *Cross-Border Review*, on an annual basis and participate in international research networks. We would like to further strengthen these activities in 2023. In this area, we plan to pay special attention to strengthening the Research Group on Cross-Border Cooperation (in Hungarian: HEK) of CESCI and the University of Public Service, led by our president, Dr Zsuzsanna Fejes. We also aim to further develop the research group's international project proposals. From CESCI staff, Melinda Benczi, Teodor Gyelník and Gyula Ocskay are directly involved in the scientific work of the research group.

In addition, we will continue to participate in the implementation of two Erasmus+ Jean Monnet projects. The aim of the Frontem (Frontiers in Motion) project, led by the University of Strasbourg, is to examine five European border regions from the perspective of border management and border perception. Our Association, together with the Babeş-Bolyai University in Cluj Napoca, carried out studies on the Hungarian-Romanian border, the results of which will be published and presented at various professional events in 2023.

The consortium, led by the Victoria University in Canada, deals with border security functions, within the framework of which, we are able to develop a database on Central European borders.

The primary benefit of these activities is to organise national and Central European actors from the various relevant disciplines in a joint research network in order to provide a scientific background for practical developments with their research. In addition, the research group can make use of the practical results of CESCI's activities.

#### **2. Cross-border planning and programming**

The main activity of our association includes (mainly cross-border) planning and programming tasks.

CESCI plays an important role in the evaluation of several cross-border and transnational programmes related to the 2014-2020 budgetary period. At the request of the Managing Authority operating within the MFA, our participation in the impact analysis of the Hungarian-Slovak,

Hungarian-Serbian and Hungarian-Croatian CBC programmes started in 2022, which will also be carried on during 2023. The impact analysis of the Hungarian-Slovak-Ukrainian-Romanian CBC programme is expected to start in 2023.

Similarly, we expect that, following the cooperation agreement between the two states, we will also take part in the preparation of the programme to be launched in the Hungarian-Slovenian border region.

We are also involved in the planning activities of some EGTCs. In connection with the Revital I project of the Tisza EGTC, we contribute to a plan to help revitalise the collapsed salt mine of Solotvyno (Ukraine) and its region. Furthermore, for the Via Carpatia EGTC, we are assisting in the development of a tourism action plan in Gömör/Gemer.

One of the important dynamic components of the foreign economic activity in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade is the establishment and compilation of urban and regional development programmes, decision-supporting state-of-play analyses, concepts, project lists, programmes and action plans taking place along our borders and in the Pannonian Basin. Since 2017, CESCI has been providing permanent professional “background” support, according to the Ministry’s current requests, for this task that is often difficult to plan in advance.

These, typically short-term, high and special resource-needed, professional grounding tasks are expected to continue throughout 2023. As far as we know, we will have to develop a cross-border development concept for the Slovak town of Šahy. Further tasks may include revising previously prepared documents and conducting analytical work on the cross-border influences of urban zones in Hungary.

### **3. Cross-border institutional development**

CESCI is recognised at European level as an expert in cross-border governance and institutional development. In 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 taken place years ago, but the composition of the founding members is constantly changing. Accordingly, we provide advisory support to the members of the network in accordance with the national legislation of the new members. It is expected that registration will not take place in 2023.

Since its establishment in 2009, CESCI has played an important role in the founding and professional support of EGTCs with Hungarian participation, and in the shaping of their respective national and EU-level policies. This wide range of activities will continue in 2023, including regular consultation with policy level stakeholders, individual requests from the EGTCs (e.g. legal advice, plotting of thematic maps, conference participation, etc.) and the establishment of new groupings. Since 2022, we have provided not only professional but also organisational and financial support for the EGTC workshops. In addition, we must maintain our activities to develop and keep up-to-date the EGTC Monitor (which is an information platform for European Groupings of Territorial Cooperation with Hungarian participation – in Hungarian and English). The plans for 2023 include visiting EGTCs with Hungarian participation, monitoring their professional activities, supporting them with personalised consultations and contributing professionally to improving their international visibility.

#### **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 organisations, the Association of European Border Regions (AEBR) and the MOT, based on a joint declaration that was signed in Strasbourg on 7 October 2021. Our cooperation is already working closely with the other two associations, we participate at their general assemblies and professional events, but we also want to jointly apply for EU procurements and tenders.

We are active members of the EUREGHA network, in which we participate in the working group on cross-border healthcare cooperation and on the European health digital space. We expect joint application activities in this collaboration as well.

The usual tasks of CESCI include the general professional, policy-making and development support of national ministries and cross-border cooperation actors (local and regional authorities, institutions, EGTCs, etc.) both at EU and national level. These tasks will be ongoing in 2023 too, as the new planning period enters the implementation phase. In particular, our role in the Territorial Operational Programme's Monitoring Committee, in the context of the revision of the Schengen Code and in the context of the cross-border aspects of the planned activities of the Economic Development Zones can be highlighted.

The organisation is also consciously involved in the development policy of the Danube Basin. Within the priority area 10 of the Danube Strategy, we play an active role in cross-border capacity development and cooperation, both through the work of the inter-ministerial working group and the working group in the priority area. We regularly prepare professional background materials and participate in professional and policy events concerning the development policy of the Danube region.

We will also actively participate in the work of the cross-border governance network of the Western Balkans.

In 2023, b-solutions, a European project launched by DG REGIO and managed by AEBR, to remove legal and administrative obstacles in border regions will continue. Following the request of AEBR, we promoted the new b-solutions call. In addition, during the year, we will be involved in exploring a number of cases and developing legal accessibility proposals.

In the framework of the Slovak-Hungarian cross-border programme, in 2023, together with CESCI Carpathia, we can start the implementation of the six-year long strategic project aimed at identifying existing legal and administrative obstacles between the two countries and systematically eliminating them. This task, in addition to being an integral part of CESCI's strategic goals, will present a major professional challenge and resource need for our organisation in the coming years.

#### **5. Knowledge sharing**

Sensitisation, continuous dissemination of our professional achievements, mediation between local, regional, national and community-level actors involved in cross-border cooperation are important objectives of our organisation. Within this framework, in 2023, we intend to maintain the initiatives of the Oradea Process (which has been designed to improve Romanian-Hungarian cooperation since

2012) and the Szentgotthárd/Monošter Forum (which has been serving the Slovenian-Hungarian dialogue since 2015). In addition, we provide regular professional support in the education of students aiming to develop the Hungarian border regions. These activities (e.g.: services to the members, events for local actors, publications, etc.) will also commit resources during 2023.

It can be considered a regular activity, that our team members give professional lectures to the students at Hungarian universities, and we also help the fellows of the Pálfi István Foundation with mentoring.

Further platforms for knowledge transfer are our quarterly newsletters (association-level, member and EGTC newsletters, announcements).

The study trips organised for our members also contributes to knowledge sharing, which is a tradition that we intend to continue in 2023.

## **6. Development of the association, social responsibility**

In 2023, we continuously and consciously strive to professionalise the daily operation of the working organisation. In addition, we continuously develop the individual knowledge of our employees, both professionally and linguistically.

We have also taken significant steps in the field of social responsibility beyond our public benefit activities in recent years. We will carry on this activity in 2023, according to emerging opportunities and needs (that can be met by CESCI).