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## **Central European Service for Cross-Border Initiatives**

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**1067 Budapest, Teréz körút 13.**

**Public benefit annex  
Year 2020**

## Short introduction of CESCO

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

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

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

CESCO's main objectives:

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

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

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

## **Our office-holders in 2020**

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

The President of the Association is dr. Tamás Tóth, agricultural economist and professor of Szent István University.

Vice-presidents:

- Zoltán Szögi, CEO, Edutus University
- dr. Zsuzsanna Fejes, Deputy Director, associate professor, University of Szeged, Faculty of Law and Political Sciences, Institute of International and Regional Studies

Members of the association's presidency:

- dr. Jože Gričar, professor emeritus of economics (University of Maribor, Slovenia)
- Peter Kubičko, municipal and IT consultant (Slovakia)
- István Szabó, Vice President, Szabolcs-Szatmár-Bereg County Assembly

Members of the Supervisory Board:

- Kálmán Nagy (President), Vice President of Zala County Assembly
- István Oláh, cluster manager, CybAlr cluster
- dr. Attila Tilki, Member of Parliament, member of the Hungarian delegation of the Council of Europe

Our association has 52 members, most of them are local or regional level municipalities in Hungarian border regions. Moreover, professional organisations, EGTCs and individuals participate in the activities of CESCO. In 2020, none of the members quit; two individuals, Gabriella Nagy and Zoltán Szögi became new members.

## From the life of our association

### Mosaics from the life of the association

We postponed our general assembly in 2020 due to the pandemic, then it was finally held online on September 14. At the general assembly, the participating members accepted the annual report of the association, the presidency and the supervisory board, the working and budget plans for 2020, and they decided on the recruitment of two new members and noted the withdrawal of one member. The general assembly agreed for the association to join the European Cross-Border Citizens' Alliance.

Our plans for 2020 included a series of visits of the Secretary-General aimed at building membership relationships, but it was only possible in case of the Bács-Kiskun regional level municipality (February 20) and the Szabolcs-Szatmár-Bereg regional level municipality (February 24) due to the epidemiological situation.

For the year of 2020, we originally planned a member study trip to the Austrian-German border region, and we started to prepare for it, but the epidemiological situation made it impossible to implement, so we were forced to postpone it.

In line with the general assembly postponed due to the epidemiological situation, the Supervisory Board held its first meeting on September 2, then held its kick-off meeting, following the re-election of its members, on November 26. At the former occasion, they commented on the proposals to the general assembly, checked the portfolio of contracts from the second part of 2019 and the implementation of the 2019 decisions by the Presidency, the General Assembly and the Supervisory Board; at the latter, the new president of the Supervisory Board was elected, and the division of work between members and the work plan and rules of procedure of 2021 were approved.

In 2020, we published our association newsletter on a quarterly basis (March, June, October, December) in Hungarian and in English, as well as our newsletter for our members in Hungarian. In addition, we regularly published news on the Futurium portal of the European Union, and in the La Frontera magazine of the Association of Borderlands Studies in 2020, we put a lot of work into to renewing our online appearance.

Our co-workers in 2020:

- Melinda BENCZI: strategic planner, project manager, political scientist
- László DARÁNYI: junior strategic planner, economist
- Kitti DUBNICZKI: chief planner, landscape architect
- Éva GANGL: chief GIS expert, geographer
- Teodor GYELNÍK: senior research fellow, political scientist

- Roland HESZ: chief analyst, geographer
- Enikő HÜSE-NYERGES: project manager and strategic planner, economist
- Dr. Norbert JANKAI: senior legal adviser, lawyer
- Viktória JÁNOSI: GIS expert, geographer
- Mátyás JASCHITZ: director, geographer
- Olivér KRISKA: junior GIS expert, geographer
- Zsombor NAGY: junior strategic planner, economist
- Gyula OCSKAY: secretary general, political philosopher, economist
- Éva ROMÁN: administrative assistant
- Annamária VAS: office manager, economist, human resources manager
- János VERES: lawyer, the coordinator of CESCO's Cserehát development activities

Our work was supported by 4 volunteers and 3 scholarship holders during the year.

We continually try to strengthen the professionalism of the work organisation. Last year we supported the doctoral studies and the consultancy studies of three co-workers (Melinda Benczi, Annamária Vas and Gyula Ocskay). In addition, we support the improvement of language skills of our co-workers.

Increasing the efficiency of our internal, work organisation processes is another permanent objective of ours. In connection with this, we re-tuned the management mechanism of the work organisation in 2020, adjusted the job descriptions of our colleagues, and created an outsourcing policy, an administration protocol, and new Word and PowerPoint templates.

We tried to increase the international visibility of our work in several ways. We also used external, development services, in order to modernise our website and newsletter platform. These were finished at the beginning of 2021. We published our activity report during autumn.

In 2020, we organised a 'CESCI Light' night only one time due to the epidemiological situation, with the goal of broadening the horizon of our co-workers. Our colleagues Kitti Dubniczki and Melinda Benczi described their experiences in Vietnam with a high level of social science approach. All of these events are open for our members as well.

## Social responsibility

Even though the organisation completes tasks with public benefit, in the fields determined in its Statutes, we have also strengthened our social responsibility in different directions since 2019.

As the epidemiological situation allowed, we continued the tutoring we started last year for primary school children in the House of Inclusion Temporary Home of Families in Zugló (Befogadás Háza

Zuglói Családok Átmeneti Otthona) operated by the Maltese Aid Service in the 14<sup>th</sup> district of Budapest. Our co-workers several times donated to the residents of the temporary home of the families operating within the framework of the Budapest Methodological Centre of Social Policy and its Institutions (Budapesti Módszertani Szociális Központ és Intézményei (BMSZKI)), also located in the district, during this difficult period, and we also helped to procure the necessary furniture to the social spaces of the home.

Our association has been concerned by the fate of the social and rural development initiatives taking place in Cserehát for several years, and we continuously support the local economic development activities of the Cserehát region in a targeted manner, which is permanently lagging behind (in the border area). To this end, we provided community organisation, project development and territorial planning support during 2020 (partly through the local employment of a local lawyer).

Within the work organisation, we continued to green our processes, further developed our waste management, and set up bicycle docks in the basement of the building that holds our office as well (we made some of them available to residents).

## Border research, scientific activities

Since the beginning, our association has been actively participating in conducting research along the borders and has been aspiring to strengthen the scientific grounds of its professional activity. Consequently, we take part in scientific conferences, workshops and we ourselves organise such events as well. On the other hand, we try to be present with our own publication in international scientific discussion too. Finally, we gladly join to the work of the emerging research teams in the field of border studies. In 2020, we started cooperation negotiations with the National Civil Service University about a workshop on border studies to be set up within the framework of the university, in cooperation with CESCO, but the results of this process are not tangible yet, since the consultations stopped due to the epidemiological situation.

## Scientific events

During 2020, the pandemic allowed us to organise and participate only at online events, but our co-workers took part in several of these events.

### **Strategic cooperation agreement with the Institute of Economics and Law of the Ukrainian National Academy of Sciences and the Law Faculty of the National University of Uzhgorod, during a two-day-long conference**

On February 10-11, the National University of Uzhgorod hosted a scientific meeting and ceremony, during which the representatives of the Economic and Legal Research Institute of the Ukrainian National Academy of Sciences, the Law Faculty of the National University of Uzhgorod and the Central European Service for Cross-border Initiatives (CESCI) signed a cooperation agreement. The parties recorded the beginning of a strategic cooperation in the memorandum, aimed at facilitating cross-border cooperation at Ukraine's western borders.

In order to coordinate technical assistance, the three partners signed a Memorandum of Cooperation, which sets out a framework for joint work in the future. The signing ceremony was attended by Andrii Guk, Head of the Ukrainian Office of the Council of Europe, József Buhajla, Consul General of Hungary in Uzhgorod, and Myroslava Oleksandrivna Lendel, Deputy Rector for Academic Policy and Research at the National University of Uzhgorod. The ceremony was followed by a scientific meeting called 'Developing cross-border cooperation in Ukraine in the light of European integration: status, challenges, prospects'. At the meeting, experts from the academic sphere and the managers of the Tisza EGTC outlined the potential role of cross-border cooperation in the Euro-Atlantic integration of Ukraine.

Following the signing of the cooperation agreement, the parties identified the geographical scale of their joint activities (the area of the Tisza EGTC, the Eastern Partnership and Visegrád countries, and the European stage, namely at EU and Council of Europe level) and topics (scientific research, education, legislation and the day-to-day practice of cross-border co-operation), in which cooperation started already in 2020. Experts from the three institutions took part in preparing a guide of cross-border cooperation published by the Council of Europe delegation in Kiev and with the help of a successful thorough Visegrád tender, they began to develop a legal and capacity-building framework for border regions in Ukraine, involving Polish, Czech and Slovak partners.

Further professional events we participated in; our scientific presentations

Date	Location	Event
2020.05.21.	Poznań (online)	The world in the age of pandemic and post-pandemic period
2020.06.3-5.	online	A conference of the Association of Borderland Studies (ABS) called 'Borders in the time of COVID-19'
2020.09.23.	Brenna (online)	A conference called 'Territorial and Inter-Organisational Cooperation 2020'
November 2020	Budapest (online)	Video presentation at the Corvinus University of Budapest
1 December 2020	Budapest (online)	Presentation at the Scientific Department of the Eötvös Loránd University

## Participation in scientific projects

The association participated in the implementation of one scientific project in 2020.

### Frontem (Moving borders: models for the EU?)

The Frontem project covers the Jean Monnet network cooperation supported by the Erasmus+ programme and coordinated by the University of Strasbourg (professor Birte Wassenberg), which examines border management practices and citizens' ways of perceiving borders in five border regions, in partnership with the Victoria University of Canada. CESC also joined this initiative, launched in 2019, and regularly participated in the relevant workshops during 2020, as well as in the development of the tool-kit to be created as a result of the project.

During the year, we also participated in the preparation of another Jean Monnet network project, this time under the direction of the University of Victoria, which also received support, but its implementation will begin in 2021.

The events regarding the implementation of the scientific project:



Date	Location	Event
2020.05.04.	Strasbourg (online)	The kick-off meeting of the Frontem project
2020.06.26.	Strasbourg (online)	The workshop targeting the development of tools regarding the Frontem project
2020.10.16.	Strasbourg (online)	Partner meeting about the Frontem project

## Scientific publications

The co-workers of the association engaged in extended scientific activities in 2020 and several publications of CESCO were published.

### Cross-Border Review 2020

The yearbook of the association is published on an annual basis and is compiled by noted, international authors and contains publications from all over the world. In the publication of 2020, whose editor-in-chief was James W. Scott (Karelian Institute), the writings of several noted authors, such as Martin Barthel, Alicja Fajfer, Hannah Heyenn, Marnix Mohrmann, Hayley Trowbridge, Roberto Rodolfo, Georg Uebel, Joni Virkkunen, Michael Willoughby, Jussi Laine and Anna Casaglia can be found. The authors touch upon popular topics of border studies, such as borderscapes, border safety, migration and borders, and dialogue based cooperation along the border. The publication also includes a review of Frank Furedi's latest book called *Why Borders Matter*, and a research report on the impact the COVID-19 pandemic had on the borders.

We would like to develop the yearbook into a journal with an international reputation, and for this purpose, with the help of the editor in chief, we prepared a proposal for a global publisher.

### 15 years of the EGTCs. Lessons learnt and future perspectives

With the support of the Ministry of Justice, within the framework of the Legal accessibility project of 2020, the lessons learnt and the future perspectives of the use of the 15-year-old EU legal instrument in 2021 were summarised by the leading European experts of the topic (Marcin Krzymuski, James W. Scott, Sara Svensson, Frédéric Durand, Antoine Decoville, Eduardo Medeiros, Peter Ulrich, Alice Engl, Jean Peyrony, Estelle Evrard). The volume, the foreword of which was written by dr. Judit Varga, Minister of Justice, was recommended to the readers by Judit Varga and Martín Guillermo Ramírez, Secretary-General of the AEBR, at the Borders Forum, organised by the MOT on November 9-10.

### Publications of the co-workers of CESCO (2020)

Gyelniák, T. – Jaschitz, M. (2020): Banat-Triplex Confinium (BTC). In: Wassenberg, B. & Reitel, B. (eds.): Critical Dictionary on Borders, Cross-Border Cooperation and European Integration. Peter Lang. Brussels, pp. 97-98.

Gyelniák, T. (2020a): Carpathian Euroregion. In: Wassenberg, B. & Reitel, B. (eds.): Critical Dictionary on Borders, Cross-Border Cooperation and European Integration. Peter Lang. Brussels, pp. 159-163.

Gyelniák, T. (2020b): EuRegion West/Nyugat Pannonia. In: Wassenberg, B. & Reitel, B. (eds.): Critical Dictionary on Borders, Cross-Border Cooperation and European Integration. Peter Lang. Brussels, pp. 319-320.

Gyelniák, T. (2020c): Euroregion Danube-Kriş-Mureş-Tisa (DKMT). In: Wassenberg, B. & Reitel, B. (eds.): Critical Dictionary on Borders, Cross-Border Cooperation and European Integration. Peter Lang. Brussels, pp. 406-407.

Gyelniák, T. (2020d): Novohrad-Nógrad. In: Wassenberg, B. & Reitel, B. (eds.): Critical Dictionary on Borders, Cross-Border Cooperation and European Integration. Peter Lang. Brussels, pp. 628-629.

Gyelniák, T. (2020e): Why Borders Matter: Why Humanity Must Relearn the Art of Drawing Boundaries. [Book review: Why Borders Matter: Why Humanity Must Relearn the Art of Drawing Boundaries by Furedi, F. Routledge, Taylor & Francis Group, London and New York.] In: Scott, W. J. (ed.): Cross-Border Review. Yearbook 2020. European Institute of Cross-Border Studies, CESCI, Budapest, pp. 143-148.

Hesz, R. (2020a): Arrabona. In: Wassenberg, B. & Reitel, B. (eds.): Critical Dictionary on Borders, Cross-Border Cooperation and European Integration. Peter Lang. Brussels, pp. 69-70.

Hesz, R. (2020b): Euroregion Sajó-Rima/Slaná-Rimava. In: Wassenberg, B. & Reitel, B. (eds.): Critical Dictionary on Borders, Cross-Border Cooperation and European Integration. Peter Lang. Brussels, pp. 447-448.

Hesz, R. (2020c): Mura Region. In: Wassenberg, B. & Reitel, B. (eds.): Critical Dictionary on Borders, Cross-Border Cooperation and European Integration. Peter Lang. Brussels, pp. 610-611.

Hesz, R. (2020d): Pons Danubii. In: Wassenberg, B. & Reitel, B. (eds.): Critical Dictionary on Borders, Cross-Border Cooperation and European Integration. Peter Lang. Brussels, pp. 660-661.

Hüse-Nyerges, E. – Gangl, É. (2020): A mentés határon átnyúló integrációjában rejlő potenciálok Magyarországon. Tér és Társadalom, 34(2), pp. 129-150.

Jankai, N. – Ocskay, Gy. (2020): II. chapter. Az európai területi társulások európai jogi keretei. In: Jankai, N., Fetyko, J.I., Jacenko, Sz.Sz., Lazur, J.V., Ocskay, Gy., Sanchenko, A.J. & Ustymenko, V.A. (eds.): Ukrajna európai területi társulásokban való részvételének intézményi és jogi dimenziója. Tisza Korlátolt Felelősségű Európai Területi Társulás. Ungvár, pp. 13-71.

Jaschitz, M. (2020a): Rába-Danube-Váh. In: Wassenberg, B. & Reitel, B. (eds.): Critical Dictionary on Borders, Cross-Border Cooperation and European Integration. Peter Lang. Brussels, pp. 668-670.

Jaschitz, M. (2020b): Via Carpatia. In: Wassenberg, B. & Reitel, B. (eds.): Critical Dictionary on Borders, Cross-Border Cooperation and European Integration. Peter Lang. Brussels, pp. 813-814.

- Jaschitz, M. (2020c): The role of the EGTC in cross-border spatial planning. In: Ocskay, Gy. (ed.): 15 years of the EGTCs. Lessons learnt and future perspectives. CESCO, Budapest, pp. 123-144.
- Jevcsak, J.B. – Zardi, A. – Lazur, J.V. – Ocskay, Gy. – Sanchenko, A.E., – Soshnikov, A.O. – Ustyomenko, V.A. – Fetyko, J. I. (2020): Transcordonne pyvrobotnitstvo: pravovy osnovi ta uspishni praktiki. Posybnik. (eds.): Huk, A. K. & Sanchenko, A. E. Rada Evropi (Council of Europe), Kiyv.
- Medeiros, E. – Ramírez, M. G. – Ocskay, Gy. – Peyrony, J. (2020): Covidfencing effects on cross-border deterritorialism: the case of Europe. *European Planning Studies*, DOI:10.1080/09654313.2020.1818185
- Ocskay, Gy. (2020a): Changing interpretation of the EGTC tool. In: Ocskay, Gy. (ed.): 15 years of the EGTCs. Lessons learnt and future perspectives. CESCO, Budapest, pp. 37-62
- Ocskay, Gy. (2020b): Cross-border territorial impact assessment. In: Medeiros, E. (ed.): *Territorial Impact Assessment*. Springer. Basel, pp. 123-142.
- Ocskay, Gy. (2020c): Central European Service for Cross-Border Initiatives (CESCI). In: Wassenberg, B. & Reitel, B. (eds.): *Critical Dictionary on Borders, Cross-Border Cooperation and European Integration*. Peter Lang. Brussels, pp. 164-166.
- Ocskay, Gy. (2020d): Euroregion Ipeľ-Ipoly. In: Wassenberg, B. & Reitel, B. (eds.): *Critical Dictionary on Borders, Cross-Border Cooperation and European Integration*. Peter Lang. Brussels, pp. 418-419.
- Ocskay, Gy. (2020e): Ister-Granum. In: Wassenberg, B. & Reitel, B. (eds.): *Critical Dictionary on Borders, Cross-Border Cooperation and European Integration*. Peter Lang. Brussels, pp. 564-565.
- Ocskay, Gy. (2020f): Tisza. In: Wassenberg, B. & Reitel, B. (eds.): *Critical Dictionary on Borders, Cross-Border Cooperation and European Integration*. Peter Lang. Brussels, pp. 767-769.

## Cross-border planning

Since the foundation of CESCO it conducts extended planning activity and uses its results during the preparation of European Union programs. Comparing to the previous planning portfolios, our work was even more diversified in 2020.

## Tasks related to programming

Regarding the planning period of 2021-2027, the planning material to be reviewed was also commented on by our colleagues, with special emphasis on borderlessness.

During the year, we continuously developed and updated our GIS and territorial statistical databases, and also expanded our knowledge of planning methodology. In order to better meet the growing needs for GIS analysis, we implemented significant and targeted IT improvements in 2020 in order to modernize and expand our relevant capacities. We replaced the old (decades-old in some cases) elements of our hardware park with upgraded instruments, and we subscribed to GIS and graphics softwares.

We regularly helped to prepare the programming documents of different levels, for example the development of the strategy that targets the complex development of the Economic Development Zone of North-West Hungary regarding the cross-border aspects; the planning targeting the integrated development of the Hungarian-Slovenian border region; and the preparation of the development activities of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade in the Carpathian Basin.

## Preparation of plans on settlement level

### **Development concepts of middle-sized cities**

At the invitation of Hétfa Research Institute, at the end of the previous year, we joined the elaboration/updating of the development concept of two Hungarian towns along the border, Sátoraljaújhely and Esztergom, and the activities were completed at the beginning of 2020. We also participated in a workshop targeting the development the future methodology of a planned programme for the development of Hungarian medium towns.

In case of Esztergom, we also examined the possibility of raising the legal status of the town to a county.

In the autumn of 2020, we received a request from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade to examine the potential energies and the existing development ideas of Pápa according to the applied methodology in case of cross-border towns, and then to propose a revision of its development concept. Strengthening of Pápa as an attractive medium town became a concept guideline following consultations at the local level, field trip and statistical, GIS and document analysis. The material

includes a comprehensive situation assessment covering the territorial situation, infrastructure and logistics of the town, and we also prioritised three key areas in terms of development opportunities: labour market, place of residence and tourism. The elements of the development concept were also built around these themes, through the expansion and systematization of project ideas received from the local level.

### **Development concepts of cities beyond borders with significant Hungarian minority**

In cooperation with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade, we have elaborated concepts for developments to be implemented in cross-border cities with Hungarian support, in which a significant Hungarian community lives. The elaboration of the concept started in 2017 and the rework and update of the given urban drafts became part of our daily tasks. In 2020, the concept of the Târgu-Mureş in Romania, which had already begun in the previous year, had to be completed first, then it had to be fundamentally reshaped and updated based on the renewed local aspects.

We also started analysing work in connection with the development of Oradea, also in Romania. In this case, the higher-level Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade negotiations, which are beyond our control, did not reach a level where the concept development could begin. So in the end, we only made an in-depth situation analysis and a short concept outline.

## **Plans on regional level**

### **Updating of the development strategy of the Raba-Duna-Váh EGTC**

Our association was commissioned by the Raba-Duna-Vag EGTC to update the development strategy elaborated by CESC in 2014-2015, before the upcoming new budget cycle of the EU. Most of this work was carried out in 2019, but the incorporation of member opinions and the finalisation of the material took place in 2020.

### **Elaboration of the territorial development and institutional development strategies of the Via Carpatia EGTC**

Our association has been commissioned to develop the territorial development and institutional development strategies of the Via Carpatia EGTC, which we completed with the active involvement of the relevant actors. The aim of the former document was to coordinate the territorial development ideas and activities of the two regions and to define the scope of possible joint developments, while the latter strategy examined the direction in which the EGTC could be further developed.

### **Drávaszög Development Programme – Situation Analysis and Strategy**

On behalf of the Economica Hungarica Foundation, our planning tasks for 2020 included the creation of the Drávaszög regional development programme in Croatia. A substantial amount of the planning work (fieldwork, statistical and GIS analysis, document analysis, concept proposal) was carried out during the year, but partly due to the epidemiological situation, the completion of the socialization tasks was postponed to 2021.

### **Lučenec-Filákovo-Salgótarján axis**

Also on behalf of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade, planning work began as a development concept for the Filákovo-Salgótarján city pair, which became regionally significant on a local initiative by including Lučenec and its surroundings and the relevant demand for the joint development of major transport infrastructure connecting the affected areas of the two countries in the planning process. The outline consulted with the city councils was submitted by the end of autumn.

### **Ister-Granum EGTC — The project that targets the valorisation of water related cultural heritage**

Ister-Granum EGTC together with 6 partners, with the support of the INTERREG EUROPE program, implements the project that prepares developments regarding the protection of the ecosystem to utilize the water related cultural heritage. Within the project WAVE, firstly every partner has to carry out a status analysis on the topic for which CESCO was subcontracted. We finalised the analysing document, which was finished by April, after the evaluation of the experts of the project, then we presented the document at an online meeting.

## **Tasks related to programming**

### **First phase evaluation of cross-border programmes**

During 2018-2019, the organisation carried out the 'first phase' evaluation of four CBC programs concerning Hungary. The completion of one of these works (the Hungarian-Slovak-Romanian-Ukrainian ENI Programme) has not been possible yet (due to external reasons because of the delayed operation of the programme), so some of these tasks and their final phase have been postponed to 2020 as well. In the framework of the activity, a mid-term evaluation of the programme was carried out according to the EU nomenclature – in terms of efficiency, effectiveness and impact. The evaluation was finalised, it was accepted by the concerned stakeholder.

### **Territorial analyses of cross-border programmes 2021-2027**

In the previous year, we started the preparation of three cross-border programmes (Hungarian-Slovak INTERREG, Hungarian-Serbian INTERREG IPA CBC, and the NEXT neighbouring countries programme including four countries) as public service, but the majority of the related tasks became 2020 activities. In all three cases, our duty was to elaborate the territorial analysis (regional analysis) that prepares the programme strategy: collecting and analysing statistical data, geoinformatically processing them; organising workshops with the involvement of local and regional stakeholders; doing extended surveys.

In case of the Hungarian-Slovak program, we organised six sectoral webinars, the main conclusions of which were incorporated into the finalised analysis. The transfer of comments for territorial analysis was carried out and the task was finished in September.

In case of the Hungarian-Serbian programme, the participants needed to significantly clarify and deepen the first-round territorial analyses, in addition to another questionnaire, new regional and sectoral workshops (4) were organised and evaluated, in addition to deepening the territorial analysis. After processing and handling the received comments and making the necessary additions, the document was successfully finalised in October.

The analytical work of the four-country programme could only start at the beginning of 2020, with the development of a methodological framework. The epidemiological situation outweighed the original methodology and schedule developed for the involvement of regional actors, and the use of innovative, online solutions became necessary. In the next phase, the development of the territorial analysis and involvement of territorial actors with questionnaires began. After the first reading of the territorial analysis was finished, we organised 4 webinars, which provided opportunities for local experts to form quantifiable and evaluable opinions. After the incorporation of the comments, the work was finished in December.

In addition to the above, at the request of the Italian-Romanian Urbasofia, leading the planning consortium, two experts of our association, Éva Gangl and Gyula Ocskay participated in the preparation process of the next Hungarian-Romanian INTERREG program. During 2020, they primarily contributed to the establishment of the relevant territorial analysis with document analysis and territorial statistical database building activities, as well as mapping tasks based upon them.

### **The Territorial Strategy of the Danube Transnational Programme (DTP2)**

During 2019, the organisation made the Territorial Analysis of the next Danube Transnational Programme (DTP2) of 2021-2027, which provides evidence for the programming process of 2020. As a continuation of this work, we prepared the DTP2 Territorial Strategy as a public service in 2020, which, given the identified challenges, considers the territorial relevance of each thematic area, relevant actors' opinions and ideas regarding the next programme and the regulatory/policy framework of the planning process. Later, the Territorial Strategy was a basis for the programme template.

## Evaluation of the Central Europe Transnational Programme

At the invitation of Urbasofia, we participated in a tender for the evaluation of the Central European Transnational Programme as a consortium member, but we did not win the tender.

## Incorporating cross-border aspects into the (national) operational programmes

In consultation with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade, we also made efforts throughout the year to develop the methodology of a domestic border town program, in addition to the attempts to develop relevant policy. In the end, this methodology unfortunately did not become a part of the new territorial operative programme (TSDOP Plus). However, the Ministry delegated Mátyás Jaschitz, Director of CESC, to the monitoring committee of the Territorial and Settlement Development Operational Programme (TSDOP), and Gyula Ocskay received an invitation from the Komárom-Esztergom regional municipality to the CBC working group preparing the next territorial operational programme. Through these forums, we continue to try to display borderlessness during programming and implementation.

## Planning, programming related events

Date	Location	Event
2020.01.29.	Budapest	Professional workshop of small and medium town development methodology
2020.02.04.	Esztergom	The first workshop of the local supporting group of the WAVE project
2020.02.25.	Budapest	Working group meeting of the Danube Transnational Program
2020.03.04.	Esztergom	The second workshop of the local supporting group of the WAVE project
2020.03.05.	Szeged	Programming workshop of the Hungarian-Serbian INTERREG IPA CBC
2020.03.09.	Budapest	The first Hungarian-Slovak INTERREG programming sectoral workshop
2020.03.11.	Budapest	The second Hungarian-Slovak INTERREG programming sectoral workshop
2020.03.11.	Budapest	The third Hungarian-Slovak INTERREG programming sectoral workshop
2020.03.12.	Kecskemét	Programming workshop of the Hungarian-Serbian



Date	Location	Event
		INTERREG IPA CBC
2020.03.31.-04.01.	Aarhus (online)	Presenting the analysing studies of the Ister-Granum EGTC at the online meeting of the WAVE project
2020.04.27.	Budapest (online)	Hungarian-Slovak planning workshop in the topic of 'heritage management'
2020.04.28.	Budapest (online)	Hungarian-Slovak planning workshop in the topic of 'facing social challenges'
2020.04.30.	Budapest (online)	Hungarian-Slovak planning workshop in the topic of 'economic developments'
2020.05.28.	Esztergom (online)	The third workshop of the local supporting group of the WAVE project, the presentation of the finalised analysing document
2020.06.04.	Budapest	Consultation about the Drávaszög Development Strategy
2020.07.02.	Budapest	Consultation with the city council of Esztergom
2020.07.07.	Vienna (online)	Online professional workshop within the framework of the Central Europe Transnational Programme
2020.07.15.	Košice	Via Carpatia, engineering workshop
2020.07.20-21.	Budapest	The 4. meeting of the planning working group of the Danube Transnational Program
2020.07.28.	Bucharest (online)	Hungarian-Romanian INTERREG CBC planning kick-off workshop
2020.07.29.	Osijek	Drávaszög field workshop
2020.08.04.	Dudince	Meeting of the Hungary-Slovakia INTERREG CBC Programming Commission
2020.09.10.	Budapest (online)	Thematic workshop of the Hungary-Serbia INTERREG IPA Cross-border Cooperation Programme
2020.09.17.	Budapest (online)	Programming Commission meeting of the Hungary-Serbia INTERREG IPA Cross-border Cooperation Programme
2020.09.29.	Salgótarján	Consultation about the joint urban development concept of Salgótarján and Fiľakovo
2020.09.29.	Budapest	Consultation about the urban development concept of Pápa
2020.10.21.	Budapest	Online workshop with the Hétfa Research Institute evaluating TOP

Date	Location	Event
2020.10.22.	Budapest (online)	Demonstrating the Territorial Strategy of the Danube Transnational Programme at the Danube Strategy Annual Forum
2020.11.03.	Budapest (online)	The 5. meeting of the planning working group of the Danube Transnational Program
2020.11.04.	Budapest (online)	The meeting of the planning working group of the Danube Transnational Programme with the national coordinators of the Danube Strategy
2020.11.16.	Budapest (online)	The webinar of the Hungary-Slovakia-Romania-Ukraine NEXT CBC programme - with Hungarian participants
2020.11.19.	Budapest (online)	The online webinar of the Hungary-Slovakia-Romania-Ukraine NEXT CBC programme - with Romanian participants
2020.11.19.	Budapest (online)	The online webinar of the Hungary-Slovakia-Romania-Ukraine NEXT CBC programme - with Ukrainian participants
2020.11.20.	Budapest (online)	The online webinar of the Hungary-Slovakia-Romania-Ukraine NEXT CBC programme - with Slovak participants
2020.11.25.	Miskolc	The demonstration of the territorial development strategy of the Via Carpatia EGTC
2020.12.10.	Satu Mare	Consultation about the urban development concept of Satu Mare
2020.12.16.	Budapest (online)	Meeting of the Hungary-Slovakia-Romania-Ukraine NEXT CBC Programming Commission

## Cross-border project development

Since the beginning, we have been supporting the preparation and development of cross-border projects, so that the scientifically valid, cross-border integrated strategies get implemented. In 2020, this activity included the professional support of a new tool, called territorial action plans for cross-border employment.

### Project development activity

#### **Territorial action plans for employment (TAPE) on the Hungarian-Slovak border**

The Slovakia-Hungary INTERREG V-A programme uses several innovative solutions, partially thanks to the programming carried out with the help of CESCO. Consequently, in a unique way, two European Groupings of Territorial Cooperation (EGTC) manage the small project basis. The Hungarian based Ister-Granum EGTC takes part in the infrastructural project as a Slovak partner, and the representative of the EGTCs can participate with observer status at the meetings of the Monitoring Board.

Within action plans (TAPes), the programme provides support for the development of employment of some areas to strengthen labour mobility in the border regions and to develop the border regions that are disadvantaged from economic and social point of views. For successful implementation, our association provided continuous technical assistance to the Joint Secretariat and the applicants. In 2020, this meant the monitoring of certain TAPE projects and professional interventions if necessary. Many EGTCs have submitted action plans and won significant amounts of funding. We introduced the TAPes, coordinated by the Pons Danubii EGTC and the Via Carpatia EGTC in our newsletter. We participated in the opening event of the latter action plan in Gagyvendégi. In case of the action plan, preparing the new development axis intended to connect the motorway M3 in Hungary and the motorway R2 in Slovakia, we managed to exchange partners with our support.

#### **Elaboration of tenders for the Hungarian-Slovak INTERREG program**

Regarding the Hungarian-Slovak programme announcement in 2019, we prepared a successful tender for the Arrabona EGTC and the Ipoly Valley EGTC, in connection with which we performed follow-up tasks during 2020.

#### **Project development related to CESCO's professional program**

Apart from the tenders prepared for external stakeholders, CESCO compiles projects also for the implementation of its professional program. In 2020, one of our V4+ submissions was successful in this field, and we participated at the opening event of the Heal Now project targeting cooperation between Austrian-Hungarian hospitals that was successfully submitted last year.

In addition to the above, we participated in the compilation of the tender documentation to be submitted to the Hungarian Tourism Agency by the Municipality of Esztergom. The goal of which is the renovation of the monumental spa complex in the city center.

Project development related events

Date	Location	Event
2020.07.15.	Budapest	Giving presentations on the synergies of the SECCo2 and the Power4BIO projects
2020.07.23.	Gagyvendégi	The kick-off groundbreaking of the Beautiful Cserehát action plan
2020.09.18.	Budapest	Power4Bio Project workshop, the presentation of the SECCo2 project
2020.09.23.	Nitra (online)	Presenting the Secco platform within the framework of the POWER4BIO project
2020.11.30.	Vienna (online)	Participating in the opening conference of the 'Heal Now' project

## Cross-border institutional development

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

## Support for the foundation of European Groupings of Territorial Cooperations

### Support of the foundation of Euro-Contrôle Route (ECR) EGTC

CESCI was commissioned back in 2015 by the Brussels based ECR professional network to provide professional support for the foundation of a network EGTC. Over the last years, the process progressed quite slowly, since 14 member states' transport authorities showed interest in the cooperation, therefore the founding document of the Dutch based association had to be adjusted to 14 countries' legislation.

We continued to help the process also in 2020 with our technical advice on institutional development, but the partnership has still not reached registration. As a result of Brexit, the British authority had to leave the network, which led to the withdrawal of several other members. Throughout the year, we were in touch with the management of the network and we answered in online form the questions of legal nature arising from time to time. We made serious but unsuccessful efforts to the Hungarian authority to keep the EGTC in the preparatory working group.

### EGTC program

Since the establishment of CESCO in 2009, it has played an important role in the establishment and professional support of EGTCs with Hungarian participation, and in the policy development concerning them at national and EU level. This diverse activity remained continuous in 2020 as well. The work generally supporting the Hungarian EGTCs was carried out in close cooperation with the competent department of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade, and the necessary activities were coordinated at regular joint consultations also in 2020.

### EGTC workshops

In 2012, we created the EGTC workshop as a forum of networking and exchanging of experience. It is held 3-4 times a year and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade took over its organisation in 2018. Even though, organising and financing the workshop is not CESCO's duty anymore, we are still actively involved in the preparation of certain workshops and we help the work with professional lectures and consultation.

In 2020, two workshops were held: in Budapest (July 8) and in Kóspallag (July 30-31). One of the important topics of the first meeting was the ongoing planning of the EU financial period of 2021-2027, which was touched upon in several presentations, while the Secretary-General of CESCO, Gyula Ocskay talked about how COVID-19 impacted the lives of people living in the border region. At the second meeting, besides evaluating the conclusions of the 2014-2020 programming period relevant to the EGTC, the organisers also provided expert presentations of current news for the 2021-2027 period. The process of the thematic preparation of the INTERREG programs was demonstrated by Mátyás Jaschitz, the director of CESCO.

### **Individual support of EGTCs**

In 2020, we provided general legal and professional support for Hungarian EGTCs. Many Hungarian EGTCs raised the question, how the general assemblies could be held during the pandemic. We informed the concerned EGTCs about the applicable legislation in each case and we also gave a detailed description in order to properly implement the meetings. At the request of the Mura Region EGTC, the statutes and convention of the association were modified. The modification was made after consultations. In 2021, another amendment task is expected to manage the opinions of the members. The constitutional documents of the Ipoly Valley EGTC were also modified in 2020. Unfortunately, personal consultation was postponed due to the epidemiological situation, but after we received the aspects of change, the preparation of the amendments began and was completed in 2021. The Arrabona EGTC came up with the idea to restart the Győr-Dunajská Streda bus service, regarding this we provided information on the legal background.

We also prepared an updated membership map for several EGTCs and sent an updated 2020 map of the Hungarian EGTC network to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade. We compiled a source map for the BTC EGTC, peer-reviewed the anniversary volume of the Tisza EGTC and incorporated the Via Carpatia EGTC in two professional initiatives dealing with the management of small project funds. The Gate to Europe EGTC made an analysis on cross-border effects of COVID. We translated it into English and we promoted it at the EU level. We participated (in online form many times due to the epidemiological situation) in several EGTC professional events (conferences, project development workshops), typically as speakers.

In our newsletters, we regularly reported on the current activities of Hungarian EGTCs, as well as on the domestic and European developments and policy processes affecting the operating conditions. Regarding the ongoing cross-border programming, we also separately requested the opinion of the relevant Hungarian EGTCs and informed them about the relevant developments.

We started to develop the EGTC monitor in 2017 which is an information platform concerning European groupings of territorial cooperation with Hungarian interest. All important information is available on the platform – in Hungarian and English – about the Hungarian EGTCs, legal framework and policy context of their operation, thus ensuring the visibility of the results of the Hungarian EGTC network at European level.

We implement our institutional development activities without any extra charge.

Institutional development related events

Date	Location	Event
2020.03.10.	Brussels (online)	Consultation with the EEA EGTC working group
2020.06.08.	Budapest	EGTC workshop
2020.06.25.	Warsaw (online)	Participating in the Steering Committee of the ECR
2020.07.30.	Kóspallag	EGTC workshop
2020.09.08.	Budapest	Consultation with the representatives of the Mura Region EGTC
2020.11.09.	Paris (online)	The EGTC conference of the MOT – the Forum of Borders, Paris
2020.11.25.	Miskolc	Demonstrating the institutional development strategy of the Via Carpatia EGTC
2020.12.03.	Budapest	Digital Public Administration Summit 2020

## Cross-border policy-making

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

## Participation in European policy-making

### **Working group at EU level to deal with the impacts of the pandemic**

The COVID-19 pandemic in the spring of 2020 resulted in an almost hermetic closure of the EU's internal borders, which simultaneously hindered the enforcement of the four freedoms (free movement of people, goods, capital and services), which were previously considered to be EU acquis, and the implementation of cross-border projects and programmes. The political climate has significantly changed, the case of cross-border cooperation has become neglected. That is why the Legislative Directorate of Committee of the Regions initiated the creation of a small working group at the end of March, to which the French Mission Opérationnelle Transfrontalière (MOT), the Association of European Border Regions (AEBR) and the Regional Policy DG of the European Commission (DG REGIO) were invited, as well as the CESCI. The working group held its online meetings every 2-3 weeks, and as a result, several initiatives launched to revitalize border regions: a separate news platform for the development in border regions was set up on the COVID-19 platform of the Committee of the Regions (CoR) (our association added 2-3 news to the feed per week), and the CoR also collected stories on border closures using a questionnaire (which we also promoted); a citizens' consultation was launched on the future of cross-border cooperation, and we took part in the preparation of the other language versions of the consultation and we shared it in Eastern Europe; and we continuously shared information about changing border regimes. The aim of the CoR consultation is to create a long-term vision by 2050.

### **European Cross-Border Citizens' Alliance**

One of the main achievements of the EU working group is the establishment of the European Cross-Border Citizens' Alliance on the initiatives of the MOT and with the participation of the AEBR and the CESCI, the aim is to preserve the cross-border integration achievements over the last 30 years. The Committee of Regions joined the initiative, as well as institutions and private individuals who consider that building of cross-border relationship is important. During the year, we constantly promoted the objectives of the Association, contributed to the preparation of other language versions of the call for proposals and shared it in Central and Eastern Europe through our network connections. The association created a policy action plan and summarised its opinion on borders to the new regional high commissioner.



## **Legal accessibility**

In the last few years, we were actively involved in the EU initiatives for tackling still existing legal and administrative obstacles that hamper the cross-border cooperation and mobility. We have made our voice heard in the EU discourse on the removal of cross-border legal barriers, cross-border institutionalized cooperation, funding rules and models for cross-border development. In 2020, this meant activities, such as participation at the events of the 18<sup>th</sup> European Week of Regions and Cities, organised at the 30<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Interreg, or joining the European-level efforts to adapt to the new situation resulting from COVID-19. We also completed the questionnaire made by the European Commission in this topic and we encouraged others to do the same through our networks.

## **Involving financial instruments in the CBC programs**

We prepared a summarising study on how external financial instruments can be involved in cross-border programs. The study was based on technical material jointly prepared with the MOT at the request of the EIB in the previous year, as well as on the EU documents published in the meantime.

## **European Week of Regions and Cities**

The European Week of Regions and Cities, the largest annual event on regional policy in Brussels, was organised online this year due to the epidemiological situation. The emphasis was on empowering of citizens, held between October 5-9, on cohesion and cooperation, held between October 12-16, and on environmental protection, held between October 19-22. The co-workers of CESCO participated at 20 workshops and we partly moderated one of them.

## **Cross-border public transport**

As a member of a consortium, led by the German KCW, we submitted an application for a tender by the European Commission for the exploration of cross-border public transport services and the identification of missing links. The tender was not successful.

## **Participation in Central European policy-making**

### **SECCo2: Youth for cross-border partnership and cohesion of Danube and Adriatic-Ionian Strategies**

We continued to update and promote the digital information platform established in 2020, within the framework of our project (Sharing Expertise on Cross-Border Cooperation within the Danube Region) implemented with the help of the Danube Strategic Project Fund, even after the project ended.

### **Interministerial Working Group of the Danube Region Strategy, PA10**

We continued to be active and permanent participants of the Danube Region Strategy Interministerial Working Group organised by the Department for Water Diplomacy and the Danube Region Strategy at Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade, and with our professional background support, we actively helped to strengthen the interests of cross-border cooperation in the processes related to PA10. Related to this, we constantly participate in the work of the Danube Local Actors Platform (D-LAP), we prepared a professional proposal to support cross-border cooperation and gave a presentation on the role of legal obstacles at the extended meeting of the PA 10 Steering Committee.

### **Legal accessibility between V4 countries**

As a result of our 2018-2019 project, called *Legal accessibility between V4 countries*, in a study and in a guide, we summarized the conditions and ways to develop a mechanism facilitating mobility, applicable to the Visegrad Four. With this study, we contacted the Ambassador of the Czech Republic in Budapest and asked him to undertake to represent our efforts to establish the mechanism, which he gladly undertook. The first meeting would have taken place at the end of September in the presence of the ambassadors of the other two Visegrad countries and the representatives of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade, but this was hindered by the coronavirus pandemic. We attempt to continue it in 2021.

### **Cross-border cooperation for the Europeanisation of the Ukrainian borders**

In 2020, we put strong emphasis on Eastern (basically Ukrainian) and Balkan networking. Within the framework of this, led by CESCO and in international cooperation, we submitted a tender to the Visegrád Fund, called 'Cross-border cooperation for the Europeanisation of the Ukrainian borders'. In addition to CESCO, the project partners include the Economic and Legal Research Institute of the Ukrainian National Academy of Sciences, the Law Faculty of the National University of Uzhgorod, the Institute of Political Science of the University of Prešov, the Geographical Institute of the Polish Academy of Sciences and the Technical University of Liberec. The tender received a favourable assessment. The goal of the project is to boost cross-border cooperation by improving national (creating a legal framework), regional and local (capacity building) conditions. The opening conference of the tender was held online on November 24. This was followed by compiling of a policy document that was aimed to formulate proposals for the Ukrainian state authorities to develop a regulatory framework supporting the cross-border activities of local and regional authorities, based on the experience of the V4 countries.

### **Our further activities at macro-regional level**

In the autumn of 2020, we submitted an unsuccessful tender together with our Italian (ISIG) and Serbian (CESCI Balkans) partners at the request of the European Commission to procure a professional service for the Western Balkan EU integration of the Adriatic-Ionian Strategy. At the same time, the knowledge acquired this way also helped CESCI to work as a member of a winning consortium in 2021 on the future of the Danube and Adriatic-Ionian macro-regional strategies within the framework of the ESPON programme.

With the involvement of Slovak (including CESCI Carpathia), Polish and Ukrainian partners, we applied for the Black Sea Trust fund tender to expand the Košice Platform with experts from the Black Sea countries. Regarding the tender evaluation, no feedback was received until the end of 2020.

## Participation in national policy-making

### Legal accessibility

Tasks like, revealing the existing legal and administrative obstacles and proposing initiatives that help to eliminate these obstacles play more and more significant role within our activities related to the cooperation in border regions. With the support of the Ministry of Justice, we could implement our fifth project of this topic in 2020. This time, cooperation of emergency stations on both sides of the borders and the exploration of legal environment of cross-border rescue represents the domestic aspect in the process. However, the epidemiological situation made it partially impossible to implement the relevant professional consultations and the implementation of this project element was postponed to 2021. Our aim is to support the mutual territorial cooperation of emergency services with cross-border nature along the Hungarian-Austrian and the Hungarian-Slovak borders. Also within the framework of this tender, we published a volume of studies on the occasion of the 15<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the EGTC tool and a comprehensive report on the impact of the border closure due to the pandemic on border regimes, primarily focusing on legal aspects.

### B-Solutions projects

The European Commission has commissioned the AEBR to launch an EU-wide project to help to identify and propose solutions to legal and administrative barriers at internal borders. We already examined an obstacle in 2019, regarding the cross-border machine rental system of the Arrabona EGTC. The summary of this is included in the collection, published by the AEBR in 2020. In 2020, we won the commission to analyse another four obstacles along the Hungarian borders. The implementation of these analyses was shifted to 2021.

### Cross-border accessibility in the Hungarian-Serbian border regions

We successfully participated in the call of the Homokhátságért Association, whose object was to analyse the Hungarian and Serbian legislations relating to cross-border trade of local products.

Involving the CESCO Balkans, we developed a study on the sale of these products across the border within the framework of the TASQ project.

#### Policy-making related events

Date	Location	Event
2020.04.08.	Brussels (online)	The first meeting of the EU epidemiological working group
2020.04.14.	Vienna (online)	Participation in the meeting of the EUSDR's Danube Local Actors Platform (D-LAP)
2020.04.22.	Brussels (online)	Meeting of the epidemiological working group
2020.05.06.	Brussels (online)	Meeting of the epidemiological working group
2020.05.19.	Brussels (online)	Meeting of the epidemiological working group
2020.05.28.	Zadar (online)	ESPON seminar on territorial development and green transition
2020.06.03.	Brussels (online)	Meeting of the epidemiological working group
2020.06.05.	Gronau (online)	The online forum of the AEBR called 'New borders, new opportunities'
2020.06.11.	Brussels (online)	Meeting of the epidemiological working group
2020.06.16.	Paris (online)	The pre-meeting of the European Cross-Border Citizens' Alliance
2020.06.15-16.	Vienna (online)	Participation in the meeting of the EUSDR's Danube Local Actors Platform (D-LAP)
2020.06.18.	Brussels (online)	Meeting of the epidemiological working group
2020.06.29.	Paris (online)	The pre-meeting of the European Cross-Border Citizens' Alliance
2020.07.02.	Brussels (online)	Meeting of the epidemiological working group
2020.07.07.	Vienna (online)	The meeting of the Danube Strategy PA10 Steering Committee to discuss the policy document aiming to involve youth
2020.09.03.	Paris (online)	The pre-meeting of the European Cross-Border Citizens' Alliance
2020.09.04.	Budapest	Meeting of the EUSDR interministerial working group
2020.09.07.	Budapest	Consultation with the Czech ambassador about the V4 accessibility mechanism in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs

Date	Location	Event
		and Trade
2020.09.16.	Vienna (online)	The extended meeting of the Danube Strategy PA10 Steering Committee, presentation on the legal obstacles
2020.09.18.	Brussels (online)	Meeting of the epidemiological working group
2020.10.08.	Paris (online)	The pre-meeting of the European Cross-Border Citizens' Alliance
2020.10.14.	Brussels (online)	The panel organised by the EU epidemiological working group at the European Week of Regions and Cities
2020.10.21.	Vienna (online)	7th Danube Participation Day
2020.11.18.	Brussels (online)	Meeting of the epidemiological working group
2020.11.24.	Lublin (online)	Organising the kick-off online seminar of the project called 'Cross-border cooperation for the Europeanisation of the Ukrainian borders'
2020.12.08.	Brussels (online)	Meeting of the epidemiological working group
2020.12.17.	Berlin (online)	The AEBR B-Solutions project launch workshop

## Cross-border knowledge sharing

We conduct an extended, information and knowledge sharing activity (during which we also try to learn as much as we can), which means that the local stakeholders can become more and more successful at establishing cross-border cooperation.

## Capacity development

### **Annual conference and the cross-border school of the AEBR**

We followed the 2020 general assembly and the annual conference of our important strategic partner, the Association of European Border Regions (our association is also a member of it), in online version. Related to the event, the fourth cross-border training (Cross-Border School) took place as well. On behalf of our association, Kitti Dubniczki, chief planner, gave a presentation at the conference on CESCO's cross-border planning experience, using the example of the Tisza EGTC.

### **Specialist training at the EDUTUS University**

Providing adequate human resources is a key pillar of strengthening the local EGTC network. To this end, a one-year-long cross-border development specialist training course, which can be completed besides of working, was developed with the support of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade and with the professional contribution of CESCO and it was launched at the EDUTUS University. The goal of the programme is to train professionals, based on their previously acquired basic qualifications, who will gain special knowledge in cross-border developments and this could address the lack of specialists in EGTCs.

## Information, knowledge transfer

### **Professional seminar of the Oradea Process**

The Oradea Process is one of our activities to strengthen our relationships with neighbouring states. The Initiatives France-Europe Centrale et Orientale and the CESCO held the professional event facilitating cooperation across the Hungarian-Romanian border for the sixth time. The topic of the workshop this year is the continuation of last year's event: cross-border integrated planning and development.

### **The advantages of cross-border cooperation that are relevant for the European project – 100 years after Trianon**

The event, which was aimed at strengthening relationships with neighbouring states and was organised by CESCO together with the French Embassy in Hungary, the French Institute in Budapest, the Mission Opérationnelle Transfrontalière and the Initiatives France-Europe Centrale et Orientale, was held on 28 October 2020 and was called 'The advantages of cross-border cooperation that are relevant for the European project – 100 years after Trianon'. The aim of the online seminar was to focus on cooperation, like the reconciliation between Germany and France, instead of the border-related approaches that generate tensions between the neighbouring nations.

### **Borders Forum (Paris)**

The Mission Transfrontalière Opérationnelle (MOT), the European Commission and the Committee of Regions jointly organised the first Forum of Borders in Paris on 9-10 November 2020. The aim of the conference was to provide a platform where local, national and European stakeholders across borders can discuss the day-to-day challenges, obstacles and projects in these European areas. At the online event, in which more than 700 people participated, at the request of CESCO, dr. Judit Varga, Minister of Justice, represented the Hungarian position, and Zoltán Bara, Director of the Pons Danubii EGTC, shared the experiences of local actors. During the two-day-long forum, the book about the 15 years of EGTCs, published by CESCO, was launched.

### **The conference organised for the fifth anniversary of the cooperation of the AEBR Balkans and the CESCO Balkans**

The cooperation of the AEBR Balkans and the CESCO Balkans had its fifth anniversary on 16 December 2020. In honour of the joint work so far, an online conference was organised with the active help and participation of CESCO (Budapest) to meet with the European partners and to discuss the past, present and especially the future of cross-border cooperation in the Western Balkans. The conference was moderated by one of the strategic planners of CESCO, Melinda Benczi. The event was called 'Functional cross-border regions as engines of the EU integration in the Western Balkans' and touched upon topics such as the history of the AEBR and the CESCO initiatives and cooperation, as well as professional conclusions on how functional regions and integrated, cross-border cooperation can be a useful instrument for building trust and capacity. Lecturers were leading experts on the subject, like professor Andreas Faludi and the founding director of the Spatial Foresight, Kai Böhme. Olivér Várhelyi, the commissioner for the enlargement and neighbourhood policy of the EU, greeted the participants in a video message.

Also with significant contribution and partial financial support of CESCO, a joint celebratory publication and study on the situation and opportunities of cross-border cooperation in the Balkans will be prepared.

Knowledge sharing related events

Date	Location	Event
2020.02.06.	Budapest	Consultation at the EDUTUS University about the relaunch of the cross-border development specialist training
2020.05.12.	Lille (online)	INTERREG webinar on holding online events
2020.06.17.	Paris (online)	The first webinar on cross-border government by the MOT
2020.06.26.	Novi Sad (online)	Consultation about the joint publication of the AEBR and the CESCO Balkans
2020.08.06.	Budapest	Presentation on cross-border cooperation at the diplomat training academy
2020.10.06.	Bázakerettye	Presentation at the conference of the Mura Region EGTC: 'Why are local OP sources needed for cross-border cooperation?'
2020.10.05-22.	Brussels (online)	At the European Week of Regions and Cities, the co-workers of CESCO participated in 20 workshops, and one of them was moderated by the Secretary-General of CESCO
2020.10.28.	Budapest (online)	Online webinar called 'The advantages of cross-border cooperation that are relevant for the European project – 100 years after Trianon'
2020.11.04.	Eupen (online)	Holding a presentation at the conference of the AEBR called Cross-Border School
2020.11.05-06.	Eupen (online)	The annual conference and general assembly of the AEBR
2020.11.12.	Debrecen (online)	Oradea seminar
2020.11.26.	Vienna (online)	'Danube Energy+' demonstrating event
2020.12.16.	Novi Sad (online)	The joint, 5. annual conference of the CESCO Balkans and the AEBR Balkans



## ***Basic data needed for defining a public utility status***

### ***1) Contribution to fulfilling common social and individual needs***

According to the data of the Public Utility Annex of the year 2020 related to target groups, the association's services are equally available to persons other than the association's board members, employees or volunteers.

### ***2) Proper resources at disposal in respect of the former two closed business years (2019, 2020)***

The following alternative conditions apply:

a) the annual average budget surpasses HUF 1 million (de facto in 2019-2020: 166.341 HUF)

b) overall taxed outcome of the two years (baseline year) is not negative: 1.762 HUF)

personal charges (expenses), without taking into consideration officials' allowances, are at least a quarter of all charges (expenses) (de facto in 2019-2020: 66.55 %)

### ***3) Account of appropriate social support after the two previously closed business years***

The following alternative conditions apply:

all expenses related to public utility activities make up at least half of all expenses on a two-year average (de facto in 2019-2020: 78.52 %)

## ***Account of allocations by objectives***

### ***Allocation to senior officers***

In 2020, the association provided an allocation of 480.000 HUF to president dr. Tamás Tóth as a presidential honorarium.

### ***Account of assets used for public activities***

**Equity: 42.098 HUF**

**Aim of utilization: public utility activities**

## ***Resource supply and social support indicators***

Resource supply indicators	Fulfilment of indicator	Value
Ectv.32.par.(4) a) $(B1+B2)/2 > 1.000.000$ Ft	Yes	166.341 Ft
Ectv.32.par.(4) b) $K1+K2 \geq 0$	Yes	1.762 Ft
Ectv.32.par.(4) c) $(I1+I2-A1-A2)/(H1+H2) \geq 0,25$	Yes	0,66655
Social support indicators Fulfilment of indicator Value		
Ectv.32.par.(5) a) $(C1+C2)/(G1+G2) \geq 0,02$	No	0,00
Ectv.32.par.(5) b) $(J1+J2)/(H1+H2) \geq 0,5$	Yes	0,7852
Ectv.32.par.(5) c) $(L1+L2)/2 \geq 10$ ps	No	0 ps

### *Basic data needed for defining a public utility status*

	Previous year	Base year
<b>B. Total annual income:</b>	<b>189.331 HUF</b>	<b>143.350 HUF</b>
<b>D. Public utility income:</b>	<b>160.007 HUF</b>	<b>120.290 HUF</b>
<b>E. Normative grant:</b>	<b>0 HUF</b>	<b>0 HUF</b>
<b>F. Support from EU structural funds and Cohesion Fund</b>	<b>0 HUF</b>	<b>0 HUF</b>
<b>G. Adjusted turnover</b>	<b>0 HUF</b>	<b>0 HUF</b>
<b>H. Total expenditure</b>	<b>188.488 HUF</b>	<b>142.406 HUF</b>
<b>I. Personal charges</b>	<b>115.642 HUF</b>	<b>104.552 HUF</b>
<b>J. Public utility expenditure</b>	<b>140.194 HUF</b>	<b>119.622 HUF</b>
<b>K. Profit/Loss after taxation</b>		<b>843.000 Ft</b>
<b>919.000 Ft</b>		
<b>L. Number of volunteers assisting the association's operation (in accordance with regulation LXXXVIII/2005 on public utility volunteer activity) (persons)</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>4</b>

### *Personal expenditures*

	<b>1000 HUF</b>	<b>Previous year</b>	<b>Amendment of previous year</b>	<b>Base year</b>
<b>A.</b>	<b>Personal expenditures</b>	<b>115642</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>104552</b>
<b>A.1.</b>	<b>Wage charges</b>	<b>83644</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>86371</b>
<b>A. 1 .A.</b>	out of it: commissions	4498	0	5997
<b>A. 1 .B.</b>	out of it: honorarium	0	0	480
<b>A.2.</b>	<b>Other personal charges</b>	<b>15574</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>4146</b>
<b>A.3.</b>	<b>Wage contributions</b>	<b>16424</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>14035</b>
<b>B.</b>	<b>Allocations by the association</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>