Proposal for the Board meeting of CESCI to be held on 31 May 2021

3.1 item on the agenda: 2021 work plan

The information in the work plan for 2021 relates to the activities that have already been partially implemented at the time of the General Assembly. We are presenting each acticity in the usual grouping.

1. Border studies, scientific activities

In the past few years, CESCI gained recognition at European level in the field of border studies through its conferences and publications. We are planning to publish our yearbook called *Cross-Border Review* in 2021, edited by James W. Scott, which will be available online, and we will deliver it in paper form to several university libraries of Europe.

Our co-workers are regularly publishing in domestic and international journals and collection volumes. In this regard, we have to meet several requests in 2021.

In order to strengthen our scientific activities, authorised by the General Assembly in 2019, we are planning to establish a research institute in cooperation with the National Civil Service University.

The coronavirus pandemic has significantly pushed back our activities in connection with scientific conferences, but the increasingly widespread online form of organisation makes it possible to participate in an event like this either as an audience member or as a performer. We are regular participants of events of the network development project under the management of the University of Strasbourg, within the framework of the Jean Monnet programme, as well as the network examining border crossings under the management of the Victoria University, also within the framework of the Jean Monnet programme.

2. Cross-border programming and strategic planning

The CESCI plays an imporrtant role in the preparation of several cross-border and transnational programmes relating to the budget period of 2021-2027. Out of these programmes, the establishment of the territorial analyses for the Hungarian-Slovak, the Hungarian-Serbian and the four-country NEXT programmes was concluded in 2020 (on a document level). However, at the request of the Managing Authority operating in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade, the related professional activities and their background support are prolonged to 2021. We got involved in the next Hungarian-Romanian planning as the subcontractor of an Italian main contractor. Based on our agreements with the Managing Authority, we begin the impact analysis of three cross-border programmes in the second half of 2021.

The organisation is consciously getting involved in the development policy-making (in close professional consultation with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade) in relation to the Danube basin. During 2019, we made the Territorial Analysis of the next Danube Transnational Programme (DTP2) of 2021-2027, which provides evidence for the further programming process. As a continuation of this work, we created the first version of the DTP2 Territorial Strategy in 2020, which determines the logic of the future programme, but the finalising tasks are postponed to 2021.

At the request of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade, it became our permanent task to formulate development concepts of cross-border, Hungarian-populated towns (e.g. in 2021, the update of the materials of Târgu Mureş, Sfântu Gheorghe and previous towns), and we are constantly updating and maintaining these concepts, as requested by the Ministry. However, we have planning tasks postponed to 2021 in relation to Pápa and Esztergom as well.

We are also performing planning tasks on a regional level like the above; such tasks are expected in the Braşov region and Drávaszög in 2021.

In addition to the above, the CESCI continuously supports in a targeted manner the local economic development activities of the Cserehát region, which is permanently lagging behind (in the border area). To this end, we provide community and project development and territorial planning support (partly through the local employment of a local lawyer).

3. Institution development

The founding process of the Euro-Contrôle Route EGTC began in the summer of 2015, for which CESCI provided advisory services. It has been determined over the past few years (based on our decision preparatory study) that the headquarters of the new association bringing together the transport authorities of 14 EU countries will be Hague. Based on this, we created the statute and convention of the EGTC, the approval process of which began in 2019. The activity of the founders is not consistent; therefore the process became excessively long. Meanwhile, the British member left the consortium due to Brexit, which caused further complications, making the successful conclusion of the procedure completely uncertain.

One of our most important missions is that we continuously provide legal and professional assistance to EGTCs with Hungarian participation in the preparation of their official documents, the amendment of their constitutional documents and their development work. We treat the technical support of the European groupings of territorial cooperation (EGTCs) with Hungarian participation as a priority issue. Within the framework of this, we are participating in the preparation and implementation of the EGTC workshops organised by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade, and we are constantly helping the work of the association with advice. After a long development work, we launched the EGTC monitor, which is an information platform concerning European groupings of territorial cooperation of Hungarian interest. All important information about the Hungarian EGTCs and the legal framework and policy context of their operation is available on the platform – in Hungarian and English. This platform is significantly increasing the visibility of the results of the domestic EGTC programme, we can keep the international involvement and content of the platform updated with continuous development work, and we are constantly expanding and developing the data base of the completed monitor.

4. Project development

Project development represents only a small margin of our activities. By that we mean the preparation of our own tenders, but we provide professional advice to external actors as

well, by compiling source inventories, project development workshops, developing tenders, and providing professional support for the tenders already selected.

5. Policy-making support

Participation in shaping relevant domestic and EU policies is an increasing part of the activities of CESCI. We regularly comment on the domestic policy documents in progress. In this field, reviewing operational programmes and forwarding comments to the responsible authorities will be particularly important after 2021.

Within the framework of our initiative called *Legal accessibility*, we have been performing extensive analytical activities over the past few years on identifying legal and administrative obstacles complicating borderlessness. We are going to continue the series of projects implemented with the support of the Ministry of Justice in 2021 as well. On the one hand, a part of the professional programme (bilateral agreements on the subject of cross-border rescue) planned or 2020 is postponed to 2021 due to the epidemiological situation. We are drawing up comprehensive reports at the expense of last year's support about the effects of border closure due to the pandemic on borderlessness. On the other hand, we are launching a new programme, during which we are identifying the legal solutions of the institutionalisation of urban agglomerations based on the French model; and we will try to raise the legal accessibility between the Visegrad countries to a higher level, by organising a forum and a conference.

We received support from the Visegrad Fund in 2020, in order to strengthen the cooperation across the Ukrainian border. Our project partners include the Economic and Legal Research Institute of the Ukrainian 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 aim of the project is to contribute to the Europeanisation of the borders between Visegrad countries and Ukraine. The specific goal is to boost cross-border cooperation by improving national (legal framework), regional and local (capacity building) conditions. We are coordinating this project as a senior partner.

We are active participants of the priority area 10 of the Danube Strategy, which prioritises cross-border cooperation between institutional cooperations. We are participating in the work of the interministerial committee coordinated by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and

Trade as well as the activities of the local actors' platform of the PA10, and we are regular participants and presenters of the macro-regional events in the subject. We are taking part in these in 2021 as well.

As a member of the consortium led by the Spatial Foresight from Luxembourg, we participate in the development of territorial scenarios concerning Danube and Adriatic-Ionian macro-regions, within the framework of the ESPON programme.

We are in close cooperation with the EGTC platform of the Committee of Regions at European Union level, as well as the DG Regional Policy of the European Commission. Following the pandemic, the two institutions created a small professional working group, and in addition to the MOT and the AEBR, the CESCI was also invited. We are holding online consultations 1-2 times a month. The European Cross-Border Citizens' Alliance was established following the consultations of the working group, the main objective of which is to affect the policy development at community and national level, representing the interests of people living in the border regions. In 2021, we are actively participating in the work targeting the establishment of a perspective vision of the cross-border cooperation by the Committee of Regions.

We take part in legal accessibility at EU level as well, within the framework of the so-called *B-Solutions* project, to which we delegated experts who can provide assistance with the solution of a given legal obstacle along the border.

6. Cross-border knowledge sharing

Important objectives of our organisation are sensitisation, the constant dissemination of professional accomplishments, and mediation between actors at local, regional, national and community level involved in cross-border cooperation. These activities (e.g. membership services, events for local actors, publications, etc.), partly in relation to the new planning period, will also allocate significant resources in 2021. However, the pandemic has had a particularly negative impact on our cross-border knowledge sharing activities recently, as we have not been able to travel to or organise professional events. Nonetheless, it is among our plans to participate in as many professional events as possible at least in the online space, with the usual activity.

Our plans include the organisation of the next seminar of the Oradea Process again, as well as the Szentgotthárd Forum, which was cancelled last year.

As we do every year, we are going to be active participants of the series of events including the annual General Assembly and conference of the AEBR this year as well, since we are a member of the organisation of our important strategic partner.

We would like to expand our range of services provided to our members. Besides the publication of a member newsletter and the organisation of a member field trip introduced in previous years, we would like to explore the opportunities arising from the online space more. Our aim is to expand the number of members of CESCI and to strengthen the commitment of members.