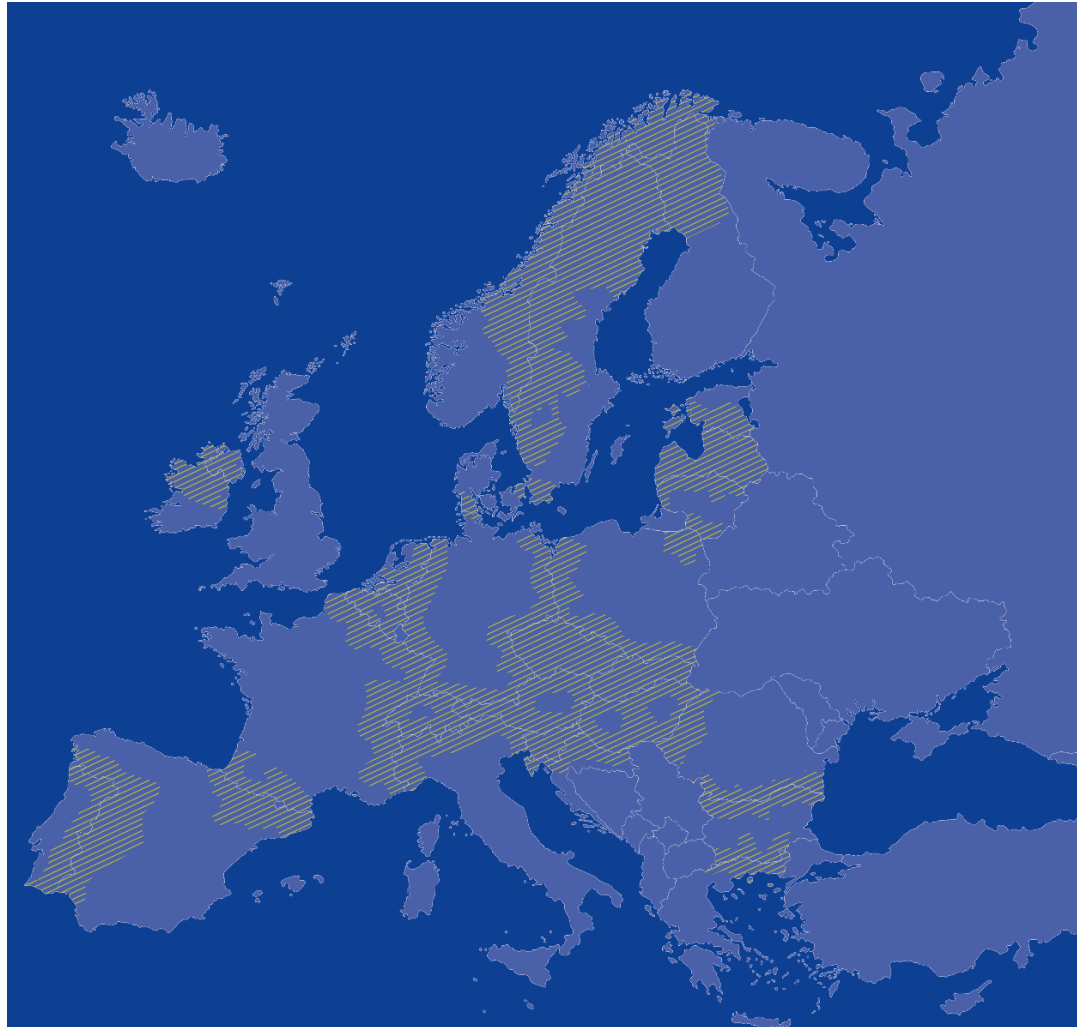




b-solutions 2.0: Solving Cross-Border Obstacles

Tájékoztató workshop – Budapest, 01 February 2023





Objective:

identify and promote
sustainable methods

of resolving border obstacles

of a legal and/or administrative nature

along EU borders, inclusive along borders with EFTA and
IPA countries

promoted by the European Commission's Directorate-
General for Regional & Urban Policy (DG REGIO)

managed by the Association of European Border Regions
(AEBR)

Background information

- 40 land borders between the 27 EU Member States, the EFTA countries and the UK
- 448 regions (NUTS3 level) located alongside at least one border;
- 30% of Europeans live in these regions

Despite the financial (ERDF and Interreg) and the legal (EGTC) tools already at disposal of border regions:

- > Legal and administrative barriers still affect many aspects of life in border regions (see *Cross-Border Review*, 2015)
- > Persisting obstacles are a clear brake to the development of the endogenous growth potential of border regions (see study by the university *Politecnico Milano*, 2017)

> Methodology:

through calls for proposals, AEBR collects information on obstacles to cross-border cooperation faced by practitioners in border regions throughout the European Union and, where available, solutions.

Outcomes of *b-solutions*:

4 calls for proposals (2018 - 2021) leading to 90 cases showcased in:

- 2 compendiums of reports
- 3 thematic booklets
- 1 illustrated storytelling booklet

2 calls for proposals (2022 – 2023) leading to 120 additional cases

> Which kind of support is provided by *b-solutions*?

b-solutions provides technical support through legal experts who cooperate with the selected cases

>in defining the obstacles and

>proposing solutions to them.

The experts are selected upon participation to a call for expression of interest and are matched with the selected cases on the basis of:

>their expertise

>their language proficiency and

>their understanding of specific territories.

> How does it work?

Through field visits, experts carry out the analysis for 9 days.

During the visit, the expert writes a case report, including:

- a description of the obstacle with indication of the legal/administrative provisions causing the obstacle
- a description of possible solutions
- a full list of all legal provisions relevant to the case with the correct citation both in the original language and in English
- an executive summary

>Which are the expected results?



- Suggestions for solutions to specific obstacles hindering cross-border cooperation;
- Raised awareness of cross-border cooperation's dynamics and specific needs;
- A network of actors in border regions and new potential for mutual learning;
- Innovative proposals for the implementation of new approaches by regional/national authorities and/or via EU instruments

>>see *b-solutions'* publications:

<https://www.b-solutionsproject.com/library>

b-solutions 2.0's call for proposals

Goal : identify and promote further 120 cases and sustainable methods of resolving border obstacles of a legal and/or administrative nature

Target : Public bodies in border regions (including public equivalent bodies); and
Cross-border structures with legal personality, established under public or private law

Scope: border regions along EU internal **land and maritime borders** and along EU borders with EFTA and IPA countries

Themes: institutional cooperation, public services, labour markets and education and European Green Deal

b-solutions 2.0 also supports the implementation of 30 cases of cross-border obstacles of a legal and/or administrative nature through workshops

Cross-border Institutional Cooperation

“Many border obstacle arise from the existence of different legal systems and administrative procedures which collide [...], creating uncertainties and complexities”
(DG REGIO’s Communication "Boosting Growth and Cohesion in European Border Regions")



Institutional Cooperation

Most common issues: different legal applications,
diverging administrative procedures, lack of legislation to
allow for common projects

Cross-border Labour Markets & Education

“Labour mobility is the most important area affected by border obstacles”
(DG REGIO’s Communication "Boosting Growth and Cohesion in European Border Regions")



Employment and
Education

Most common issues: completing an apprenticeship, having one's skills and competences fully recognised, accessing job vacancies, recruiting staff, obtaining legal certainty on fiscal issues, securing full social security coverage, obtaining professional insurance for medical staff, complicated procedures to obtain professional certificates and information provision

Cross-border Public Services

“[There is a] the need to provide a stronger and more stable framework for cross-border public services.”
(DG REGIO’s Report "EU Border Regions: Living labs of European integration”)



Cross-border Public Services

Most common issues: (Health) access to ambulances on the whole cross-border territory, different systems and costs of services, qualification of staff, management of water supply; (Transport) different legal frameworks regulating transport projects, lack of mutual recognition on certificates regulating vehicles’ emissions, different requirements for train freights, national-specific requirements to set up infrastructures

Implementing the European Green Deal

“National borders between Member States often fragment natural territories, making their management and protection less effective, especially when different legal frameworks apply. This has an impact on biodiversity and resource efficiency, amongst other issues..”

(DG REGIO’s Report "EU Border Regions: Living labs of European integration")



Green

Most common issues: uncertainties on how to establish a green public transport system (bike sharing), different national standards for resource management (water, wind turbine), lack of coordination and information exchange between the border authorities managing a nature reserve/park/protected area

b-solutions 2.0 - call for proposals



Eligible to:

- Public or public-equivalent bodies
- Cross-border entities with legal personality (EGTC, Euroregion and similar structures)

> share what obstacle you face in
your region!

***b-solutions 2.0* - call for proposals**

Information required:

- General information on the applicant
- Title of the proposed advice case
- Description of a real and documented obstacle encountered
- Explanation of the potential increase in cross-border cooperation if the obstacle were solved
- Description of the applicant's or partner's mandate to devise the solutions
- Explanation of the replicability potential of the action
- Definition of the specific border

> share what obstacle you face in your region!

b-solutions 2.0 - call for proposals

Useful information:

Accessible at: <https://www.b-solutionsproject.com/call-for-proposals>

Guidelines to the application and FAQs: <https://www.b-solutionsproject.com/call-for-proposals>

Deadline: 28 February 2023

Contacts:

Mariane and Cinzia available at: b-solutions@aebr.eu

Or at: +49 1764 20 90 666 / via Zoom (<https://calendly.com/b-solutionsaebr/30min?month=2023-01>)

Examples from Hungary and neighbouring countries



Multi-lingualism	AT-HU-SK	Office of the Lower Austrian Government, Department of Pre-Schools/Kindergartens and Schools	Bilingualism in the Tri-Border Region AT-HU-SK
Institutional cooperation	HR-HU	PANNON EGTC	CrossMarkets - Enhance cross-border selling at local farmers' markets
Institutional cooperation	HU-SK	Arrabona EGTC	Cross-border share of municipal management services
Employment	HU-SK	Ister-Granum EGTC	Cross-border staffing difficulties – ambiguous application of social and health insurance regulations
Employment	HU-SK	Arrabona EGTC	Coorcurity: Facilitating the coordination of social security systems for cross-border workers and pensioners
Institutional cooperation	HU-HR	Mura Region EGTC	Tour guide practice and their activity on both sides of the Hungarian and Croatian border
Institutional cooperation	HU-RO	Gate to Europe EGTC	Analysis of legislative borders in employment, especially in agricultural field
Institutional Cooperation	SK-HU	EGTC Via Carpatia	Legal status of a branch office of an EGTC in the partner country
Public Services (health services)	HR-RO-RS	DKMT Danube-Kris-Mures-Tisa Euroregional Development Agency	Ambulance service across the Schengen border
Public Services (health services)	HR-RO-RS	DKMT Danube-Kris-Mures-Tisa Euroregional Development Agency	CB health insurance in the DKMT Euroregion



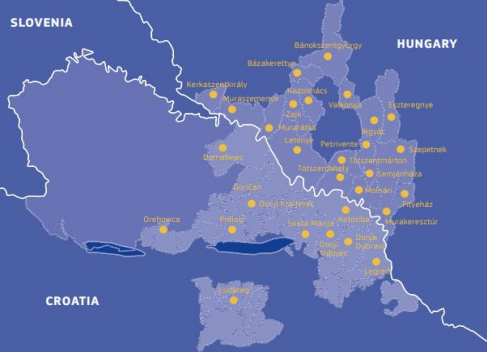
Analysis of legislative borders in employment, especially in the agricultural field

The territory of the Gate to Europe EGTC is comprised of a total of 35 local authorities along the Romanian-Hungarian border, formed by small cities and villages, in which the local economy is highly dependent on the agriculture sector.

Yet, the small-scale farmers and producers in this border area, who are primarily self-employed and work in agriculture full-time, face several **difficulties** when attempting **to sell their goods** (mainly fruit and vegetables) **across the border**.

OBSTACLES:

- **different permits** are required in each countries to sell agricultural products
- different **national regulations** regarding the trade of local agricultural products and permits, with a territorial limitation of sales
- language barriers, especially for Hungarian citizens



Tour guide practice and their activity on both sides of the Hungarian and Croatian border

Along the Hungarian-Croatian border, kayak and canoe tours on the river are a driving force for local sustainable economic development on both sides of the border in terms of ecotourism.

However, the **authorisation process** for river tourism activities on the Mura River is **complex** and the lack of harmonised regulations on river tourism between the two countries has made it difficult for tour operators. There is also a lack of information and awareness of the different rules.

OBSTACLES:

- lack of a coordinated administrative and legal framework: The national laws differ regarding the **training system** and **authorisation procedures** for cross-border water tourism tour guides. The training varies greatly, since there are different theoretical and practical training levels for tour guides in each country
- Training certificates from one country are **not** automatically **recognised** in the other country
- Need for greater awareness and information sharing regarding the different regulations on accidents



Cross-border staffing difficulties – ambiguous application of social and health insurance regulations

Citizens along the border of Hungary and who commute to work in the neighbouring country often face an array of administrative challenges, primarily stemming from having to navigate the two **different social security systems** in each country.

The **lack of knowledge and/or agreement** between the countries on how to apply these in practice results in the **lack of a clear procedure** and guidelines that should be followed and applied equally in each country has posed a challenge to citizens' mobility and free movement between the Member States. Many administrative hurdles have arisen.

OBSTACLES:

- the **lack of information** available on the application for the necessary certificate
- a **delay** in the **procedure** of registration to the national security systems

Additionally, this situation also results in a costly process as assistance is required from accountants in both Member States for the different accounting procedures, taxation rules and social security systems, as well as the risk to lose some of the wages



Stay tuned!

The latest updates on *b-solutions* can be found on the online platform of the European Commission's "Border Focal Point Network" at the sub-section "*b-solutions*".

More information on *b-solutions* can be accessed on the website <https://www.b-solutionsproject.com/>

Köszönöm!