

Intercultural Competence as a Key Factor for Effective International and Cross-Border Cooperation

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The Importance of the Local Economy in Cross-Border Cooperation

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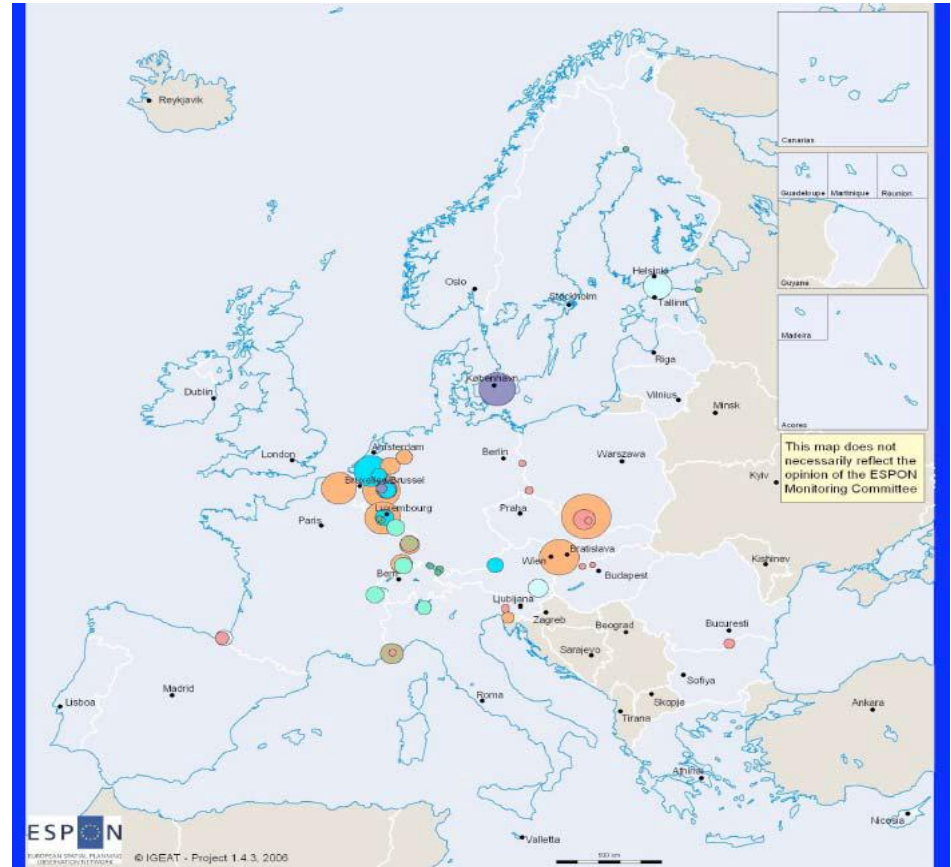
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Assumptions of cross-border co-operation as a development resource

- Based on economic complementarity/synergy
- Addresses pragmatic issues (problems and opportunities)
- Creates a sense of 'shared region' (a site of cross-border integration)
- Reduces mental borders (contributes to mutual understanding)



"Cross-border polycentric metropolitan regions"



Cross-Border Economic Regions

- Are found in areas with a high degree of economic and functional interdependence
 - Geneva
 - Luxemburg (La Grande Region)
 - Basel
 - Öresund Resion
 - Dutch-German border areas (Nijmegen-Kleve)
 - French-German border areas (Strasbourg, Saarland)
- In these areas we find political co-operation as well (even if it lags behind the economic connections)
- But what about regions farther away from the European "core"? Here this question of creating cross-border economic networks is much more difficult

Development Issues in CE-European Borderlands

- Generally, national and European peripheries with multiple disadvantages
 - demographic decline and ageing populations
 - lack of diversified economies
 - small firms
 - weak urban networks
 - lack of connectivity to major centres



German-Polish Borderlands: experiments in European integration

- Symbolic of a new European Order post-1989
- Selective public-sector networks
- Euroregions and other CBC institutions created
- Learning process in the use of European regional development resources
- Role of local economies?



Cross-Border Markets: Technical Fundamentals

- Develop over time and as a function of:
 - Price differentials
 - Supply and demand issues
 - Complementaries
 - Border openings and harmonisation of standards
 - Open labour markets

Cross-Border Economic Regions? This is the hard part...

- Social Capital needed (personal trust and wider societal trust = networks)
- Knowledge Base must be developed
- Intercultural competence is required (e.g. understanding and dealing with other rules)
- Favourable conditions for action are essential (e.g. support programmes that address the right groups and right actions, local political support)

Idea: Re-thinking European Cohesion?

- EU's vision of territorial cohesion and economic dynamism has been based on the experiences of Core Europe and the big centres
- The EU is now thinking about "place-based strategies" that involve greater bottom-up participation and improved consideration of local situations and local economies – explicitly promoted by the Polish presidency
- The precondition for this working is the inclusion of new actors
- In the case of cross-border regional situations in CE, this generally means increasing the intercultural competence of the business sector and groups associated with it
- Third sector (social economy entrepreneurs and actors) is a very good place to start



Example: Local Economies and the “Third Sector”

- Development of social capital and local economic networks between organisations
- Bridges institutional gaps, builds local capacities
- Pioneers of social economy development: e.g. health, education, training, culture, business development
- Political benefits for regional levels
- Pragmatic focus
- Resilient despite potential political constraints



Thank you for your kind attention



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