

CONNECTIVITY, COHESION AND LEGITIMACY IN CROSS-BORDER CONTEXTS



Karl Schmude

Ministry for Transport, Building and Regional Development Mecklenburg-Vorpommern

Input statement for COMMIN final conference

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Some kind of foreword

Since the entire lecture has been labeled as having „input“ character, the author will put forward some controversial issues to invite for discussion.

These statements are by no means an official statement of any project or organisation.

Starting point

The input statement should (...) touch the following issues:

- Necessity of functional cross-border regions (macro-regions, transnational development zones, etc.)
- Examples of good governance in functional cross-border regions and for the establishment of cross-border regions (e.g. transport, sectoral clusters, city networks)
- Factors hampering the development of functional cross-border regions

Do we need functional cross-border regions?

Statement 1: There is no need for extra „cooperation“ incentives.

- If a true benefit is to be expected, cross-border or transnational cooperation will be driven forward by powerful stakeholders.
- Those partners who are really relevant for [economic] cross-border or transnational cohesion (i.e. investors, economic stakeholders, tourists) will cooperate anyway.
- EU – and especially Interreg – funds blur the picture: They lead to administration-driven projects which no one really needs.
- Proof: Foreign direct investment in EE, LV, LT

INTERREG IV A

Ziel

- Grenzspezifische, lokale Probleme überwinden

Merkmale

- Geographische Förderfähigkeit auf NUTS III-Ebene (Kreise)
- 20 % Mittel auf angrenzende Gebiete
- 10 % Mittel auf Gebiete außerhalb EU
- Seegrenzen < 150 km förderfähig



Do we need functional cross-border regions?

Statement 2: The larger a „macroregion“ is, the more artificial it is.

- Pro: The VBNDZ „macro-region“ stretches from Umea / SE over Häme / FI, the Baltic States and Poland to a small town near Berlin.

These regions have nothing much in common, apart from being partners to an Interreg B project.

- Contra: Barents region

BSR INTERREG III B Macro Region Projects

-  Baltic+
-  STRING II
-  Seagull-DevERB
-  South Baltic Arc
-  Via Baltica Nordica Development Zone
-  The Baltic Palette II
-  South Baltic Four Corners
-  Barents 2010



Do we need functional cross-border regions?

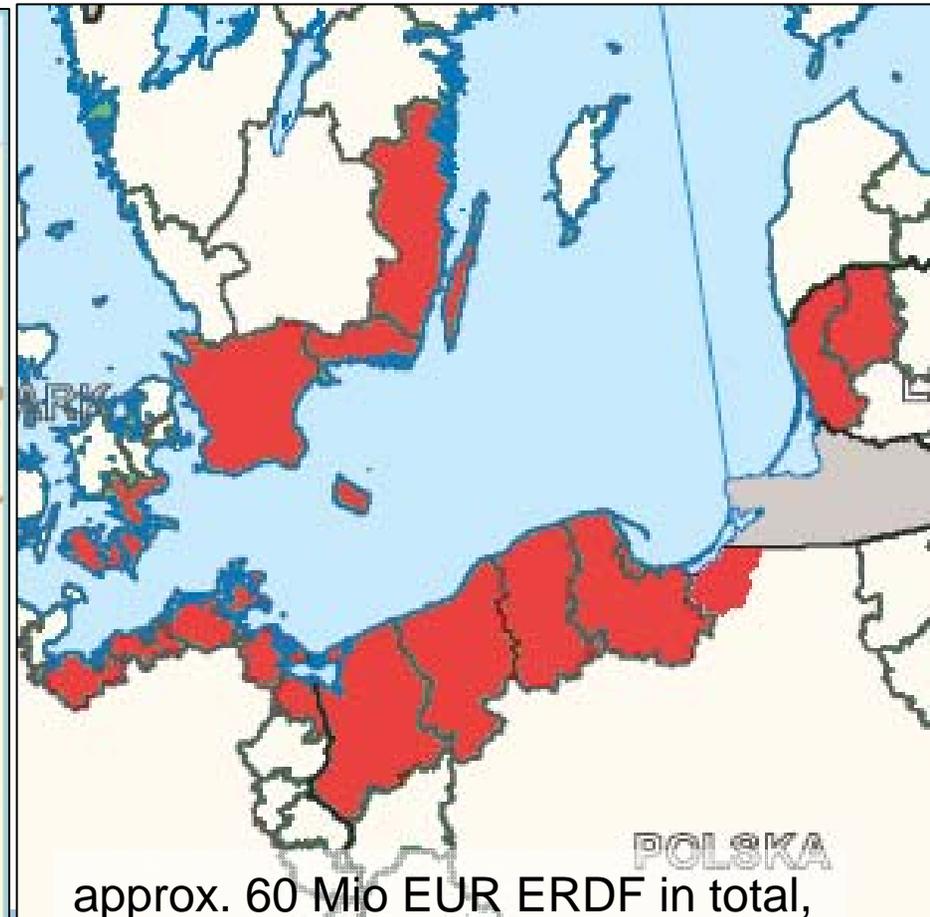
Statement 3: Do not fight for new „regions“, but against borders.

- Instead of thinking in large „macro-regions“, stakeholders should better work at lowering thresholds and perforating borders.
- A generous border regime will let stakeholders discover their opportunities at the other side. There is no need to draft long, non-binding documents for strategic development.
- Example: The main issue for Kaliningrad is not to be integrated in a macro-region (e.g. „South Baltic Arc“ or „Seagull“), but to have permeable borders.
- Example German-Austrian border: No „macroregion“!

INTERREG IV A „Pomerania“ / „South Baltic“



approx. 50 Mio EUR ERDF on MV-side

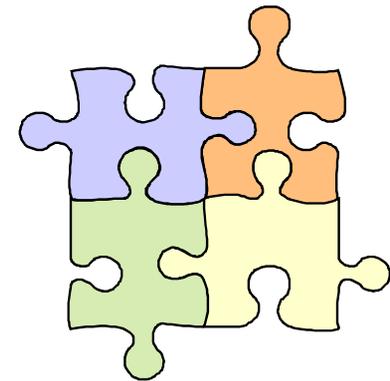


approx. 60 Mio EUR ERDF in total,
thereof 6 Mio EUR on MV-side

How can you get good cross-border governance?

Statement 4: You may try to grow potatoes, but not governance.

- „Best practice“ = Öresund (SE / DK), DE / A
 - „Still a long way to go“ = Oder region (DE / PL)
 - SE / DK and DE / A: Long history of cooperation on national level, not too different identity and language, +/- growth region
 - DE / PL: World War II still not over, different identity and language, +/- declining region
- => Good cross-border relations take > 50 years to develop.



How can you get good cross-border governance?

Statement 5: Do not trust Bananas.

- Example South Baltic Arc / SEBco (DE / PL / RU / LT / LV)
- + Very pragmatic: Cooperation identified some concrete win-win opportunities, no over-ambitious and general „transnational development concept“, no efforts of „transnational management“
- - Region is too large, no „region-building“ possible, no feeling of coherence, „common transnational management“ is an illusion
- Regional politicians are by nature committed to their regional voters

How can you get good cross-border governance?

Statement 6: International „city networks“ are an academic invention.

- A true, functional network does not mean occasional visits between the mayors, but a dense pattern of cooperation in all spheres, especially in business
- A true network includes a division of responsibilities
- By nature, a real multipolar network across national borders will be very difficult to establish

- True city network: Mälardalenregion / SE (?), Randstad / NL (?), Metropolregion Hamburg (?)
- Paper network: Baltic Palette (SE / FI / RU / EE / LV)

Baltic Palette



Decide for yourself: Is this a real network?

In other words: Is the relation between the cities stronger than those of the cities with their surrounding regions?

Why does cooperation get stuck?

Statement 7a:

The well-known „external“ reasons are everywhere the same...

- Language barriers
- Cultural barriers
- Legal barriers which are impossible to tackle on local level
i.e. visa regime RU / EU
- Painful recent history leading to distrust

(etc. pp. ad lib.)

Why does cooperation get stuck?

Statement 7b:

... but we may be blind to „internal“ obstacles.

- Too high ambitions, too low real outcome
(„transnational strategy for sustainable development“)
- Wrong partners (typical: Spatial planners cooperating in the fields of transport infrastructure, economic development etc.)
- Partners without mandate for negotiation / without real power
- Game theory: You can be sure to lose nothing by non-cooperation across borders; but you can not be sure to win by cooperation.
Example: Guben / Gubin

Thank you!

Karl Schmude

Ministry for Transport, Building and Regional Development MV

Ministerium für Verkehr, Bau und Landesentwicklung MV

karl.schmude@vm.mv-regierung.de

<http://www.sebco.eu>

Questions to be discussed

- How can cooperation between different sectors and different levels of authority be improved?
- How do networking and cluster strategies contribute to the overall BSR aims of sustainability, competitiveness and territorial integration?
- How can barriers to cross-border regional integration and regional development be neutralised?
- What sort of institutional framework is necessary for functional cross-border regions?