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on Objective 3: a challenge for territorial cooperation - the future agenda for cross-border, transnational and interregional cooperation
(2010/2155(INI))

Committee on Regional Development

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MOTION FOR A EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT RESOLUTION

on Objective 3: a challenge for territorial cooperation - the future agenda for cross-border, transnational and interregional cooperation (2010/2155(INI))

The European Parliament,

- having regard to the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union, and in particular Title XVIII thereof,
- having regard to Council Regulation (EC) No 1083/2006 of 11 July 2006 laying down general provisions on the European Regional Development Fund, the European Social Fund and repealing Regulation (EC) No 1260/1999¹,
- having regard to Regulation (EC) No 1082/2006 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 5 July 2006 on a European grouping of territorial cooperation (EGTC)²,
- having regard to Council Decision 2006/702/EC of 6 October 2006 on Community strategic guidelines on cohesion³,
- having regard to its resolution of 7 October 2010 on EU cohesion and regional policy after 2013⁴,
- having regard to its resolution of 6 July 2010 on the European Union Strategy for the Baltic Sea and the role of macro-regions in the future cohesion policy⁵,
- having regard to its resolution of 20 May 2010 on the implementation of the synergies of research and innovation earmarked funds in Regulation (EC) No 1080/2006 on the European Regional Development Fund and the Seventh Framework Programme for Research and Development in cities and regions as well as in the Member States and the Union⁶,
- having regard to its resolution of 24 March 2009 on the Green Paper on Territorial Cohesion and the state of the debate on the future reform of cohesion policy⁷,
- having regard to its resolution of 19 February 2009 on the review of the European Neighbourhood and Partnership Instrument⁸,
- having regard to its resolution of 21 February 2008 on the follow-up of the Territorial

¹ OJ L 210, 31.7.2006, p. 25–78.

² OJ L 210, 31.7.2006, p. 25–78.

³ OJ L 291, 21.10.2006, p. 11–32.

⁴ Texts adopted, P7_TA(2010)0356.

⁵ Texts adopted, P7_TA(2010)0254.

⁶ Texts adopted, P7_TA(2010)0189.

⁷ OJ C 117E, 6.05.10, p. 65.

⁸ OJ C 76E, 25.03.10, p. 83.

Agenda and the Leipzig Charter: Towards a European Action Programme for Spatial Development and Territorial Cohesion¹,

- having regard to its resolution of 1 December 2005 on the role of ‘Euroregions’ in the development of regional policy²,
- having regard to its resolution of 28 September 2005 on the role of territorial cohesion in regional development³,
- having regard to the Commission Communication of 8 December 2010 entitled ‘European Union Strategy for Danube Region’ (COM(2010)0715) and the indicative action plan that accompanied the strategy (SEC(2010)1489),
- having regard to the Commission Communication of 9 November 2010 entitled ‘Conclusions of the fifth report on economic, social and territorial cohesion: the future of cohesion policy’ (COM(2010)0642),
- having regard to the Commission Communication of 19 October 2010 entitled ‘The EU Budget Review’ (COM(2010)0700) and the technical annexes thereto (SEC(2010)7000),
- having regard to the Commission Communication of 6 October 2010 entitled ‘Regional Policy contributing to smart growth in Europe 2020’ (COM(2010)0553),
- having regard to the Commission Communication of 31 March 2010 entitled ‘Cohesion policy: Strategic Report 2010 on the implementation of the programmes 2007-2013’ (COM(2010)0110),
- having regard to the Commission Communication of 10 June 2009 entitled ‘European Union Strategy for the Baltic Sea Region’ (COM(2009)0248 final) and the indicative action plan that accompanied the strategy (SEC(2009)0712/2),
- having regard to the Communication from the Commission of 6 October 2008 entitled ‘Global Europe: Green Paper on Territorial Cohesion: Turning territorial diversity into strength’ (COM(2008)0616),
- having regard to the draft own-initiative report of the Committee of the Regions on ‘New perspectives for the revision of the EGTC Regulation’⁴,
- having regard to the independent report, drawn up at the Commission’s request, entitled ‘INTERREG III Community Initiative (2000-2006): Ex-Post Evaluation’ (No 2008.CE.16.0.AT.016),
- having regard to Rule 48 of its Rules of Procedure,

¹ OJ C 184E, 6.3.2009, p. 95.

² OJ C 285E, 22.11.2006, p. 16.

³ OJ C 227E, 21.9.2006, p. 88.

⁴ Scheduled to be adopted in the 88th plenary sitting of the Committee of the Regions on 27 and 28 January 2011.

- having regard to the report of the Committee on Regional Development (A7-0000/2011),

- A. whereas the European Union currently comprises 27 Member States and 271 regions,
- B. whereas around 37.5% of Europe's population lives in border regions,
- C. whereas informal cooperation arrangements, the Euroregions, Council of Europe initiatives, the successive Treaties and the EU's secondary legislation have all contributed to establishing stronger and more sustainable links between territories,
- D. whereas, although the foundations for territorial cooperation have been laid, many challenges still remain, the nature of which depends on the history and degree of maturity of cooperation arrangements,
- E. whereas, having 'abolished' borders in the Treaties, what matters is lessening their impact on our people's daily lives,
- F. whereas regional policy aims to promote the harmonious development of regions by strengthening economic, social and territorial cohesion in the European Union,
- G. whereas the 'Territorial Cooperation' objective, one of the components of cohesion policy, contributes to 'ever closer union among the peoples of Europe' by reducing the barriers between territories and regions,
- H. whereas territorial cooperation, i.e. cooperation between the inhabitants of different regions, is a learning process which creates a feeling of community and of having a shared future,
- I. whereas citizens must be placed at the centre of the priorities of territorial cooperation,
- J. whereas closer territorial cooperation is dependent on progress made with European integration and coordination in all fields, and whereas territorial cooperation is in itself a testbed for European integration,
- K. whereas the basic regulation governing the Structural Funds and the entry into force of the Lisbon Treaty have considerably increased the importance accorded to territorial cooperation,
- L. whereas the ex-post evaluation of the INTERREG III programmes for the 2000-2006 programming period offers conclusive proof of the added value of this objective for the European project,

Strengthening the ‘territorial cooperation’ objective

1. Points out that territorial cooperation aims to help territories and regions to work together in tackling their common challenges, to reduce the physical, administrative and regulatory barriers to such cooperation and to lessen the ‘border effect’;
2. Is convinced of the European added value of territorial cooperation and the key role it plays in deepening the internal market and fostering closer European integration; calls for territorial cooperation to remain one of the pillars of cohesion policy;
3. Believes that territorial cooperation has proved its effectiveness and that its potential as a source of competitiveness has so far been insufficiently tapped as a result of the inadequate resources allocated to it; calls for the budget for the ‘territorial cooperation’ objective to be at least 5% of the overall cohesion policy budget for the next programming period;
4. Advocates retaining the current structure of Objective 3, which is divided into three components (cross-border, transnational and interregional), and the current emphasis on the cross-border component, which receives at least 70% of the territorial cooperation budget;
5. Considers that a distinction should continue to be made between the cross-border component, which meets the local needs of cross-border population catchment areas, and the transnational component, which facilitates cooperation over wider strategic areas;
6. Calls nonetheless – with a view to ensuring the coherence and continuity of territorial cooperation measures and given the strategic nature of the projects in question – for greater flexibility in exploiting the scope offered by Article 21 of the ERDF Regulation with regard to the location of cross-border and transnational cooperation activities; to that end, calls for a review of the geographical limit of 150 km set for cross-border cooperation programmes for coastal and maritime regions;
7. Calls for forward thinking to ascertain the strategic needs of each border region in connection with the Europe 2020 strategy, and, subsequently, for European territorial cooperation to be integrated in, and tailored to, all levels of strategic planning: European, national, and regional;
8. Calls for funds for territorial cooperation no longer to be allocated by Member State, but at EU level and on a programme-by-programme basis, on the basis of the criteria laid down in Annex 2, paragraph 5 of the basic regulation so as to provide a strategic, integrated response to the needs of each territory or area involved; invites the Commission to consider other relevant, strategic and measurable criteria that could reflect the needs of territories and reduce the emphasis on the most important criterion: demography;
9. Stresses once again the importance of interregional cooperation, but deplores the lack of funds allocated to it; calls for a reduction from 75% to 60% in the Community cofinancing rate of this programme for participants from the regions covered by the ‘competitiveness and employment’ objective, encourages regions to make better use of the scope for interregional cooperation offered by Article 37(6)(b) of the basic regulation; advocates,

therefore, that the ‘interregional’ component of Objective 3 should also be used to facilitate the coordination and running of such projects, to pool know-how and to exchange good practices, on the basis of ever closer cooperation with, and the support of, INTERACT;

10. Supports ESPON in its activities and suggests that its findings should be more readily available so that the stakeholders involved can more easily use them;
11. Welcomes the success of the URBACT sustainable urban development programme and calls for its renewal;
12. Invites the Commission to look into ways of involving local and regional councillors in these Europe-wide networks for the exchange of experiences and good practices;

Mainstreaming territorial cooperation

13. Believes that greater complementarity between the ‘territorial cooperation’ objective, on the one hand, and the ‘convergence’ and ‘competitiveness and employment’ objectives, on the other, is needed; suggests that regional operational programmes should participate in the cross-border and transnational projects that concern them by earmarking funding by territory for priority projects identified in advance and agreed with their partners in the programmes, in accordance with the principles of multi-level governance and the partnership;
14. Encourages the Member States and regions to set up multi-regional operational programmes to address common territorial problems; invites the Commission consider the rule changes which would be needed so that cross-border multi-regional operational programmes could be established along similar lines;

Adopting a territorial approach in implementing other EU policies

15. Points out that the concept of macro-regions, a Council initiative, came into being as an experimental, logical way of coordinating common projects covering a very large territory, with a view to exploiting the advantages of an integrated and multisectoral approach based on common strategic actions receiving support from existing funds; points out that these strategies must neither generate additional expenditure for the EU budget, nor necessitate the establishment of new institutions or the application of new rules;
16. Asks the Commission to conduct an in-depth study of the results of the first strategies implemented; believes that the process has met with a level of interest that should be built on; advocates the use of transnational programmes to support these territorial strategies by coordinating the work of devising, framing and steering current and future macro-regional strategies;
17. Believes that any transnational strategy must take due account of the scope of coordination with the trans-European transport network guidelines and the strategies pursued under the integrated maritime policy;
18. Points out that territorial cooperation concerns both the EU’s internal and external

borders; asks the Commission to consider how to create more effective synergies between initiatives under the ERDF, the Instrument for Pre-Accession Assistance (IPA), the European Neighbourhood and Partnership Instrument (ENPI) and the European Development Fund (EDF);

19. Advocates, therefore, more effective coordination between the various Commission directorates-general concerned;

Facilitating the establishment of European Groupings of Territorial Cooperation (EGTCs)

20. Considers that EGTCs represent a unique, highly valuable territorial governance instrument which meets a need for structured cooperation with reference to financing, the legal status of projects and multi-level governance;

21. Believes, however, that their establishment must be facilitated and calls on the Commission to propose amendments to Regulation (EC) No 1082/2006 of the European Parliament and of the Council on EGTCs without delay, taking due account of the problems identified by the regions and the groupings already in place and on the basis of work undertaken by the Committee of the Regions, with a view to:

- clarifying the status of EGTCs under national legal systems,
- allowing EGTCs to be established by stakeholders based in a Member State and in a third country,
- redrafting Article 4(3) to ensure stricter compliance with the three-month deadline,
- simplifying the laws governing the staff of and the tax arrangements applicable to EGTCs;

22. Calls for the allocation of global grants to EGTCs to enable them to directly manage Structural Fund appropriations, and for the multinational and multilateral nature of EGTCs to be better reflected in regulations governing the other European funds, with a view to improving their access to other sources of financing;

Simplifying implementation

23. Believes that the implementation of territorial cooperation programmes remains overly complicated and considers that Objective 3 needs specially adapted rules;

24. Invites the Commission to propose specific measures which simplify rules on auditing and control, authorise more systematic standard-rate costing, lay down more detailed rules on eligibility for EU funding, make for greater flexibility in the implementation of automatic decommitments, raise the acceptable error rate to 5% and increase technical assistance to 8%, with a view to ensuring that the management bodies concentrate more on the strategic management of projects, rather than whether applications comply with administrative rules;

25. Stresses, furthermore, that arrangements for involving private stakeholders must also be simplified; recommends setting up financial engineering systems, along the lines of the JEREMIE and JESSICA initiatives, to facilitate cross-border projects which generate

revenue, the participation of private stakeholders and the establishment of public-private partnerships;

Raising the profile of territorial cooperation

26. Deplores the low profile of territorial cooperation, in the eyes of both national and local authorities and the general public; asks the Commission to come up with ways to raise the profile of EGTCs with territorial cooperation stakeholders and the general public;
27. Considers that, by contributing to helping to fulfil the Europe 2020 strategy's objective of intelligent and inclusive growth, cooperation on education and culture would raise the profile of territorial cooperation and break down the 'mental borders' that still set citizens apart from one another;
28. Asks for more effective coordination of communication between all stakeholders involved in the process of implementing territorial cooperation initiatives, suggests that all programmes in the same component should be recognisable by their use of the same logo, and invites the Commission, by the start of the next programming period, to come up with a large-scale media and awareness-raising campaign for border regions on the benefits of territorial cooperation ;
29. Instructs its President to forward this resolution to the Council, the Commission and the Member States.

EXPLANATORY STATEMENT

Over the last five years, changes to the basic regulation governing the Structural Funds and the entry into force of the Lisbon Treaty have substantially enhanced the importance of territorial cooperation. The multiannual financial framework for the period 2007-2013 turned the 'territorial cooperation' objective into one of the three pillars of the EU's cohesion policy, replacing the INTERREG Community initiative. Since then, 'territorial cohesion' has become, under Article 174 of the Treaty, one of the three components of cohesion policy, alongside economic and social cohesion. 'Territorial cohesion' is now firmly established as one of the European Union's main priorities.

In your rapporteur's view, the aim of 'territorial cooperation' is to do away with physical, administrative and regulatory obstacles to cohesion and to reduce the 'border effect' between territories and regions in order to enable them to address their shared challenges together, whether those challenges are territorial (services, infrastructure, urban and regional planning), global (globalisation, climate change), economic or societal. 'Territorial cooperation' represents a source of competitiveness which has not yet been properly exploited, one which can help us achieve the objective of 'an ever closer union among the peoples of Europe'.

The INTERREG III ex-post evaluation report for the period 2000-2006 offers convincing evidence of the added value which that objective generates for the European integration process and gives some examples of its successes: 1030 infrastructure projects and more than 18 000 km of roads built or funded, 115 200 job opportunities created, 5800 start-ups and businesses directly or indirectly established or safeguarded, almost 12 000 cooperation networks and structures brought into being, and attendance by more than 544 000 persons (including students) at courses, training programmes, seminars, workshops, meetings or other educational activities¹.

Strengthening the 'territorial cooperation' objective

An ambitious budget

In keeping with the position adopted by Parliament in its resolution of 7 October 2010 on the European Union's cohesion policy and regional policy after 2013, with the standpoint expressed by the Commission in the conclusions contained in the fifth report on cohesion policy, with the recommendations of the Committee of the Regions, and with the conclusions of the informal Council of Ministers for Regional Policy held in Liege on 22 and 23 November 2010, your rapporteur takes the view that 'Objective 3' must be substantially strengthened.

The current multiannual financial Framework allocates EUR 8.5 billion to that objective (a figure which represents only 2.5% of total EU structural spending). During the negotiations concerning the previous programming period, the Commission had called for Objective 3 to

¹ INTERREG III Community Initiative (2000-2006) Ex-Post Evaluation (No 2008.CE.16.0.AT.016).

account for at least 6% of the cohesion policy budget. In 2013, that objective will reach maturity. The demand for cooperation is strong and the needs are immense. Your rapporteur takes the view that Parliament must support the ambitions of territorial cooperation stakeholders by urging once again that this objective should account for at least 5% of the overall cohesion policy budget.

A stable architecture

In your rapporteur's view, this objective must continue to be split into three components, each with its own logic and value.

Cross-border cooperation (73% of the budget) provides funding for the implementation of joint strategies for the regions which are situated along the Member States' internal (and sometimes external) borders and not at a distance of more than 150 km from each other. Its implementation is 'territorialised' at NUTS 3 level and meets the local needs of cross-border regions. Your rapporteur takes the view that a debate on a transfer of eligibility to NUTS 2 level, as called for by certain stakeholders, might undermine the local dimension to cross-border cooperation. However, depending on the nature of the projects concerned use of the scope offered by Article 21 of the ERDF Regulation as regards the location of cross-border and transnational cooperation activities offers a degree of flexibility which should be encouraged. In duly substantiated cases, that article provides for the funding of expenditure incurred outside the area eligible under the programme.

Transnational cooperation (20% of the budget), which is carried out on a larger scale, seeks to promote cooperation between neighbouring regions belonging to the same geographical area with the aim of achieving the Union's strategic priorities in areas such as research and development, the information society, the environment, higher education, mobility, sustainable urban development and the management of natural disasters.

Finally, interregional cooperation (4% of the budget) concerns cooperation among all the regions of the 27 Member States, regardless of their geographical location, and focuses on exchanges of information, experience and good practices.

Experience¹ shows that, when calls for proposals in the area of interregional cooperation are issued, demand exceeds supply by a factor of 10. This mismatch can create an excessive administrative workload for the managing authority and leave candidates feeling discouraged and frustrated. With a view to making savings and improving the quality of projects, a reduction in co-financing rates to 60% (from the current figure of 75%) could be envisaged for participants from 'competitiveness and employment' regions. Your rapporteur also suggests that the regions should make greater use of the possibilities offered by Article 37(6)(b) of the basic regulation, which provides, at the instigation of the Member State concerned, for the inclusion in a 'convergence' or 'regional competitiveness and employment' operational programme of interregional cooperation measures involving a region or local authority in another Member State. The interregional component of the 'territorial cooperation' objective can provide support, coordination, pooling of know-how, exchanges of good

¹ Source: Interreg IV C programme, 2007-2013: First call for proposals: 4832 candidates for 492 projects selected. Second call for proposals: 4671 candidates for 481 projects selected.

practices and strategic back-up for projects implemented in this way. INTERACT would gain in effectiveness if it were involved more closely with the implementation of this component.

URBACT II (which concerns exchanges of information with a view to fostering sustainable urban development) has been fairly successful and should be continued.

In addition, in the context of the debate on the Erasmus programme for local councillors, these exchange networks (INTERACT/interregional cooperation and URBACT) should involve such representatives more closely, with a view to raising the profile of and lending fresh political impetus to these exchanges.

The ESPON programme, which deals with the provision of studies and databases on territorial cooperation and border areas, is an effective instrument. However, efforts are needed to make its results more visible and more accessible to all cooperation stakeholders.

More strategic, mainstreamed territorial cooperation

Although the current distribution of funding between the three components can essentially be maintained, programming must be more strategic and take place at all planning stages. Your rapporteur would like to see cooperation measures coordinated at all levels of governance, in conjunction with a 'Europe 2020' strategy geared to the needs of territories and with the other existing territorial strategies (euro districts, Euroregions, macro-regions, etc.).

Territorial cooperation is sometimes hampered by national considerations which reflect the 'I want my money back' syndrome: Member States and stakeholders share funding for projects on their territory, but without genuine cooperation or genuine European added value. Your rapporteur is proposing, therefore, that budgets should be allocated by territorial cooperation programme, and no longer by Member State, with a view to meeting the needs of the area concerned in an integrated manner. Whilst retaining the main criterion (demography), the Commission might consider other strategic, measurable and relevant criteria which would reflect the needs of territories and reduce the over-emphasis on that criterion. The additional indicators could take account of issues specific to territorial cooperation, such as connectivity and access to infrastructure, also to indicators linked to the Europe 2020 strategy.

In your rapporteur's view, although the territorial cooperation budget should be substantially increased, it will never be sufficient to fund the major cross-border or transnational infrastructure projects which Europe needs in the transport, energy and new communication technology spheres. If the principle of territorial cohesion is to be implemented properly, and in order to increase the European added value of the funding allocated under the 'convergence' and 'competitiveness and employment' objectives, greater complementarity between the 'territorial cooperation' objective and the mainstream is essential.

The proposal is, therefore, that at the beginning of the programming period 'territorial' earmarking should be used to channel 'convergence' and 'competitiveness and employment' funding towards a number of priority projects which have been identified in advance and agreed with the relevant partners, in keeping with the principles of multi-level governance and partnership.

Finally, your rapporteur would like to emphasise the importance of the experiments conducted

as part of pluri-regional operational programmes, such as the ‘Loire’ or ‘Massif Central’ programmes in France, which have a shared territorial basis. The results of those experiments could prompt the Commission to envisage cross-border pluri-regional operational programmes along the same lines.

Adopting a territorial approach when implementing other Community policies

The response to the macro-regional strategies, for the Baltic and for the Danube, has been a mixture of enthusiasm and reservations. Your rapporteur would like to point out that these strategies are neither a new form of intergovernmental cooperation, managed solely by the central authorities in the Member States concerned, nor a new, autonomous unidentified Community object which has no links with regional policy. The ‘three nos’ rule is fundamental: no new institutions, no new rules and no new budget headings for the macro-regional strategies.

However, the thinking behind the macro-regions, an experimental approach based on coordination around joint projects which affect a very broadly defined territory, the aim being to exploit the advantages offered by an integrated, multi-sectoral approach involving joint strategic measures receiving support from existing funds, warrants special consideration, given the results achieved.

Although there is no suggestion of establishing macro-regions throughout Europe, the transnational governance system could be used to coordinate the work of devising, framing and steering these strategies, by identifying where they would be useful and desirable.

By the same token, transnational governance must take account of the scope for coordination with other major Community strategies, such as the trans-European networks and the integrated maritime policy.

Finally, cooperation at the Union’s external borders is characterised by shortcomings and implementation problems, in particular as a result of the lack of synergy between the regulations governing the various funds (ERDF, ENPI, IAP, EDF) and governance problems. The onus is on the relevant Commission DGs to coordinate their efforts in this area more effectively.

Encouraging the establishment of European Groupings for Territorial Cooperation (EGTCs)

In 2006 a separate regulation established a legal tool to facilitate territorial cooperation, the European Grouping for Territorial Cooperation (EGTC). The EGTC can be used in connection with all three aspects of territorial cooperation and represents a unique instrument for territorial governance. It was introduced at the time of the negotiations on the legislative package for the current multiannual financial framework (2007-2013).

The regulation enables national, regional or local authorities to set up joint groupings with legal personality in order to implement cooperation programmes and projects. It thus makes a significant contribution to the multi-level governance model.

Experience gained or in the process of being gained with EGTCs shows that this instrument

works satisfactorily. It has met the need expressed by regional and local authorities for structured cooperation covering financing, the legal status of projects and multi-level governance and it has exceeded even the European legislator's expectations.

However, it is essential that local and regional authorities in the EU should be better informed about EGTCs. Moreover, EGTCs faced quite a few other challenges, mainly legal, organisational or relating to access to financing, in particular during their start-up phase (such as problems in connection with the country of establishment and very lengthy registration procedures).

Your rapporteur would like to join with the Committee of the Regions in drawing attention to a number of problems: the need to clarify the status of EGTCs under national legal systems, problems in securing authorisation to establish EGTCs involving actors situated in a Member State and a country outside the EU, the need to reword Article 4(3) in order to ensure that the three-month time limit within which Member States must approve or otherwise the establishment of an EGTC is strictly complied with and a simplification of the legal provisions governing the staff of and tax arrangements for EGTCs.

In addition, the rules governing access to other European funds must take better account of the specific nature of EGTCs, not simply as a partner, but as a multilateral and multinational European body.

Finally, the award of global grants to EGTCs, in order to enable them to manage structural funds directly, in keeping with the strategy defined by the programme, would facilitate the implementation of projects and foster the establishment of new EGTCs.

Simplifying implementation

Objective 3 provides for complex, multidimensional cooperation between partners from different Member States. These constraints call for specific rules which genuinely simplify implementation.

Your rapporteur is proposing a series of measures requested by actors on the ground, such as a simplification of the audit and control rules, the more systematic use of standard-rate costing, the definition of more detailed rules governing eligibility for Community support, more flexible application of automatic decommitment procedures, and an increase in the acceptable error rate to 5% and in the technical assistance rate to 8%, so that the managing authorities can place the emphasis on the strategic supervision of projects rather than on the conformity of applications with the administrative rules.

Your rapporteur would like to stress, however, that the form of simplification most urgently required is rule stability.

Finally, one problem frequently encountered in connection with the implementation of territorial cooperation is the reluctance of private actors to become involved, given the complexity of such projects and the risks inherent in them.

Your rapporteur is therefore urging the Commission to involve these actors more closely, in

particular by establishing financial engineering systems, along the lines of JEREMIE and JESSICA, in order to facilitate cross-border projects which generate revenue and the establishment of public-private partnerships.

Raising the profile of territorial cooperation

Territorial cooperation suffers from a particularly acute form of the more general problem affecting the Structural Funds: their low profile.

Members of the public in their everyday lives, central, regional or local authorities in the Member States, the European institutions planning long-term policies: all are blissfully unaware of the issues at stake in territorial cooperation. It is necessary to take action at all three levels if territorial cooperation is to become more 'visible'.

The response to this challenge must take two forms:

- the great European idea of territorial cooperation must become the symbolic embodiment of the EU for all its citizens;
- policy-makers and public servants at all levels must become acquainted with the practical aspects of territorial cooperation which may affect their work.

Your rapporteur is therefore calling on the Commission to consider, in particular, ways of raising the profile of EGTCs with territorial cooperation stakeholders and the public.

Finally, more effective communication among all the actors involved in implementing territorial cooperation is also essential - a worthwhile first step would be the use of a single logo, for example. The Commission might also envisage a communication campaign, in conjunction with INTERACT, in border regions.