

TEIN answer to the public consultation - Overcoming obstacles in border regions

This contribution is submitted by the TEIN (Transfrontier Euro-Institut Network, www.transfrontier.eu) a network coordinated by the Euro-Institut, Institut for cross-border cooperation (local grouping for cross-border cooperation) based at the Franco-German Border, in Kehl (Germany).

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Introduction

Knowing that, the European Union (EU) is aiming at:

- Ensuring peace
- Ensuring free movement of goods, services, capital and persons
- Reducing the negative impacts of borders within the EU in order to build an ever more integrated space, not only economically or politically but also on the ground, for the citizens,

it is clear to us that cross-border cooperation can highly contribute to the achievement of the EU goals.

Indeed, cross-border cooperation is about:

- **Solving common problems** like the management of a natural disaster in the border region; ensuring the protection of the children in dangerous situations and whose parents live on the one side and then move on the other side of the border, arresting a burglar who is active on one side of the border and lives and sells his loot on the other side, etc.

The word “common” is very important, as problems should indeed be seen as problems on both sides of the border. For example, the use of a particular chemical fertilizer may be considered an environmental problem on one side of the border but not on the other side...even if there is no border in the ground water.

Problems can also be complementary, for example: unemployment on the one side and shortage of skilled staff on the other side.

Moreover, it is important that both sides of the border recognize the added value of addressing this problem on a cross border basis.

- **Develop common potentials** like scientific cooperation, tourism promotion, cross-border clusters, integrated labour market, etc.

Here again, the word “common” is important: what are potentials that we can better develop by a joint cross-border approach than “alone”?

In some cases, the cross border perspective can also invite the actors to open the scope of their action and develop new potentials they did not see before. Indeed, considering just one side of the border would not allow reaching the critical mass needed to explore and exploit the potential whereas considering the cross-border territory as a whole can open new perspectives.

- **Opening minds** : one has to consider that often borders area still have scars from the history and the major part of the population (including territorial actors) does not know the reality on “the other side” of the border. Latest political development show an increasing tendency to isolationism and fear from the other, mistrust towards the neighbour. The more the borders are open, the more we are facing such fear reactions. Therefore, there is an urgent need for a careful and progressive (but systematic) process of opening the minds: raising awareness of what exist on the other side of the borders, developing curiosity and interest for the neighbouring country, creating a kind of evidence of “cross-bording”, of movement, and exchanges for the whole population. It is also necessary to increase mutual knowledge and understanding, respect, etc. by the actors of CB projects. This issue might not be always sufficiently underlined but is today even more important to highlight than it ever has been.

Thereby cross-border territories, which represents 40% of the EU territory and where 1/3 of the EU population live, are key actors of the EU integration. **Cross-border cooperation is a tool to make the single market and free movement become a complete reality and to preserve peace.** Border territories are not at the margin of states anymore; borders should no longer be seen or

experienced as a barrier but as an enriching interface offering great opportunities to their citizens like new jobs, shopping, health care, tourism, cultural, etc. Moreover, border regions represent - based on cooperation- a valuable testing ground/laboratory for the entire European integration process and furthermore an indicator for the territorial cohesion within the EU.

However, if we agree on the importance of cross-border cooperation, we also have to admit that cooperation is not always as easy as it seems. **Indeed, we do face daily obstacles in cooperation activities and projects, which then have consequences on the daily lives of citizens.**

In fact, obstacles to cooperation remain because of the **lack of knowledge** of the “other”, the lack of appropriate methods for cross-border project management and intercultural work. This creates a need for specialised training, counselling and support to be adapted to the specific characteristics of each frontier.

TEIN -Transfrontier Euro-Institut Network www.transfrontier.eu- brings together 14 training organisations and universities from 8 regions in the European Union with the aim of facilitating cross-border cooperation and providing practical solutions to European cross-border issues: the main objective is to build capacity in cross-border contexts to strengthen European integration. All members have subscribed to a common charter to ensure the organization of the network and the quality of its output. TEIN partners come from maritime borders, old European borders, new eastern borders, post-conflict borders and external borders. For that reason, TEIN is able to measure the needs for capacity building in cross-border cooperation throughout Europe.

Because TEIN is focusing its action on facilitating cross-border cooperation and not facilitating free movement, the target groups of the TEIN members are the actors of cross-border cooperation. Therefore, TEIN’s target group is rather the actors/multipliers in charge of conceiving and implementing projects where users/citizens are the final beneficiaries. TEIN’s actions address the administration, public services and organisations, NGO’s, Chambers of Commerce, etc.

In this context, this contribution of the TEIN will, expose in a first step the main obstacles we are facing. Secondly, we will give examples on how we do experience these obstacles in our daily work and finally we will depict the different solutions we implemented with success in order to overcome these obstacles. Of course, by doing this, we do not pretend to be exhaustive but we will focus on the problems we often face and the answers that we, as TEIN, can provide.

Question 1- What are the main obstacles to cross-border activities in the EU?

1.1 - Are Obstacles intrinsic to Cross-border cooperation?

First, we would like to underline the fact that, in the current situation, obstacles are “normal”. Cross-border cooperation and integration at the border is a relative new phenomenon. Cross-border is about new solutions, innovation, new ways of bridging and binding territories, which were so far used and meant to function independently. Cross-border cooperation is about coordinating sectoral policies on a territorial basis. Thereby, **cross-border activities launched a process of change carried out by some (still few) actors for the benefice of all citizens. It cannot work smoothly.**

Indeed, as the European Union is constituted by national states, which have different legislations, different administrative-political-juridical systems, and different local histories build back-to-back with their neighbouring country, different languages and different socio-economic situations: it is a fact, we have to deal with -also enriching- diversity and **we have to learn to deal with diversity.**

In addition, the introduction of the single market and the **increasing mobility of persons, capital, goods and services of course provide more possibilities and/or force to cooperation** because many issues have to/or can be addressed at the level of the cross-border territory (including the perspectives and issues from each neighbouring country involved) or at the European level. However, depending on the structure of the state (national/federal) and on the organisation of decision-making forces, the partners of a cross-border project might have to involve on one side the national level in the cooperation process. The success of cooperation relies then on the **capacity of the regional / local partner to deal with unbalanced representation in the cross-border decision-making process.**

Cross-border activities means many things: punctual cross-border exchange, exchange of information, exchange of best practices, networks (to exchange information, best practices, to solve problems or to develop common policies), integrated project or policy, shared services etc. Each of them responds to different needs, problems or potential to be developed. **The more the project is integrated and intended to be a long-term project, the more complex it will be and the more obstacles the actors will face** in the realisation of the project. Cross-border activities are a way to supply the European integration process and the efficiency of the single market at the border – in other words, it is a long-term process realised through a series of short-term (INTERREG) projects.

The national states remain sovereign; **cross-border activities have to combine legislations and rules applying in the different territories** (local, regional, national, European) and have to stick to the most restrictive regulation in order to suit to all constraints of the cross-border project / activity. Moreover, the more decisions are taken at national level (integrating needs and constraints of the whole state), the less it will be adapted to the specific situation of the different cross-border regions.

1.2 - Efforts made at EU level remains insufficient

The **EU legislation as well as the EU funds play an important role in contributing to decrease the importance of the obstacles** to cross-border cooperation. However, it is not enough to ensure a smooth cooperation and an unproblematic integration of the territories.

Indeed, we must observe that the fact that the national states have a certain flexibility in the **transposition of EU directives lead to different legislations in the cross-border areas**. Moreover, such regulations as the EGTC regulation do, for sure propose a very interesting instrument, but its implementation remains not always easy. Above all, the **EGTC is a solution for some kinds of cooperation but not for all**.

Regarding the **EU funds and especially INTERREG, we observe seven kinds of difficulties**:

- The finding of the “national” co-funding
- The funding of the preparation / defining process
- The pre-funding of the project (while waiting for the reimbursement through the EU)
- The complexity of the procedures
- The evolving programme’s rules during the project lifetime
- The challenge of stringing together a “process oriented” cooperation defined by the needs of the territory with a “procedure oriented” cooperation imposed by the programmes
- Ensuring continuity

The Madrid convention (COE, 1980) offers a good basis in order to give more leeway to the local authorities to act in cross-border cooperation but unfortunately only 24 EU Countries ratified the convention (13 the first additional protocol, 12 the second and 4 the third...).

Efforts have been made and the EU for sure can work on obstacles in order to remove them but as mobility and needs will increase, new obstacles that were not to be foreseen will appear. **In this respect, it seems to us that is it as important to remove some obstacles definitely where it is possible as it is to learn how to -case by case, border per border- identify (which is not as easy as it seems depending on the nature of the obstacle) and overcome an obstacle to cross-border cooperation.**

1.3 - Type of Obstacles

It is not the aim of this paper to deliver a typology of obstacles but it is important to get a common overview of the nature of obstacles to cross-border cooperation.

Obstacles often mentioned and identified are:

- Those due to different legal, administrative, political, economic, social systems
- Institutional asymmetry
- Language
- Administrative cultures - Working cultures
- Complexity of (administrative) procedures
- Approach, deal with, manage all forms of diversity, overcome mental barriers (from the project partners, from the stakeholders, from the end beneficiaries/users, citizens)
- Change minds, views and perspectives, bringing actors to think in a 360° perspective, thinking out of the box and finding solutions to overcome barriers
- Difficulties to manage cross-border/European funding
- Keep people motivated (in a long run)
- Establish the cooperation in a long term perspective

Those obstacles do not depend neither on the area of cross-border cooperation (health care, education, police, etc.), nor on the territorial level of the cooperation (local, regional, etc.).

Those obstacles exist everywhere but their importance might have a different meaning regarding the border in which the obstacle appears (e.g.: at the Irish-Northern Irish border the language issue might not be as important as at the Italian-Slovene border, but some difficulties linked with the language and different use or understanding of a same word might occur).

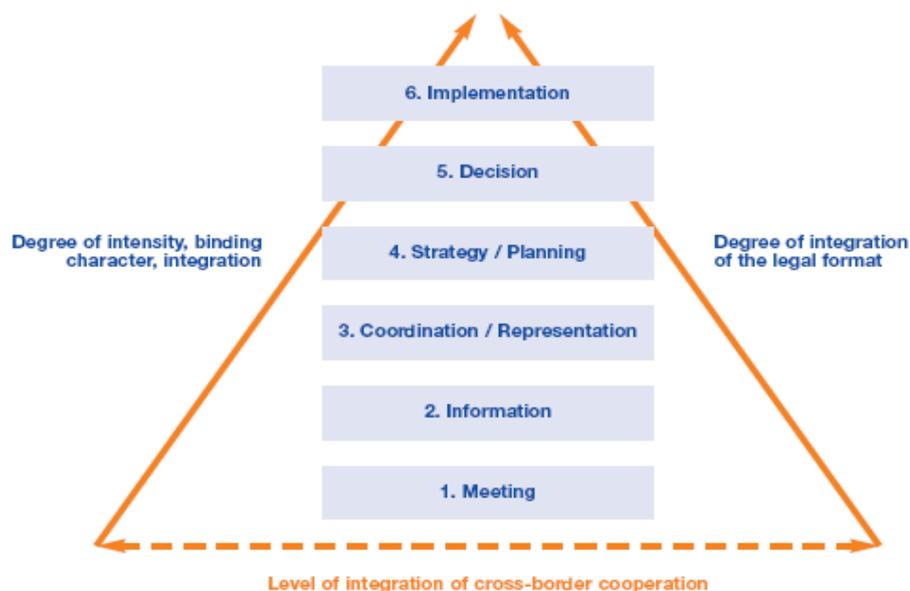
In light of those facts, to us, the main obstacles are the lack of knowledge -and thereby understanding and trust- of the “other” (culture, language, judicial-social-political system), as well as the lack of appropriate methodologies for cross-border project/activity management and the lack of social and intercultural competences. To sum up, to us, there is a lack of capacity of the actors.

If the actors had a better knowledge of the administrative system of the other, they would be able to identify their interlocutor on the other side of the border to find the information they need, they would be able to communicate with him or her because they would be able to speak the language of the other. They would also be aware of the fact that the other is not working the same way and would regularly ask for explanation. They would be able to deal with different hierarchical structure, with different ways of communicating, they would know how to manage an INTERREG project, they would be able to invite all the people they need at their meeting to discuss a problem efficiently and find a solution without missing one of the most important one, etc. In other words: actors with capacities would definitely better and more often use cross-border cooperation as a tool -and recognize its value- in order to solve the problems of their territories or to develop potentials and thereby reinforce the attractiveness of their territory (which is even more important for them and the EU in an always more globalized world).

Question 2 - What form does this obstacle/do these obstacles take in daily life?

2.1. Illustration of the form the lack of capacity building can take within the different levels of cross-border integration

In order to describe more concretely the form these obstacles take in cross-border activities according to our daily practice, we have to come back to the different levels of integration of cross-border cooperation.



Thanks to this scheme developed by Prof. Dr. Joachim Beck, we can highlight the different form the lack of capacities of the actors can take at each stage. As an illustration, we will list the main questions the actors of cross-border cooperation come along with at each level while also clarifying what is meant by these six stages.

2.1.1 - Meeting

At this stage, actors get to know each other, learn about motivation, interests, needs, skills, expectations, cultural and structural aspects of the other actors.

It is important to underline that it is of course the first step of cooperation but meetings are also more generally the spine of cross-border cooperation as they can be from different types (institutional meeting, exchange of information meeting, working meeting, project monitoring meeting, result-oriented meeting, decision making meeting, etc.) and have to be -so to say- included into all the other stages listed in the scheme. Problems, faced at this stage, will occur in all kind of cross-border activity (formalised cooperation, cross-border territorial projects or citizens' activities)

Questions and problems that may occur at this stage are following:

- Identification of the counterpart(s)/the right person(s) (Who has the competences? Which hierarchical representation do I need? Who has the ability to take decisions? Do I have all the actors I need -horizontal and vertical dimension- to address the subject? If there are different actors from the same territory, what are the relation beside the cross-border cooperation?)
- Invitation (Who shall invite? Who is invited? How official -or not- should be the invitation?)
- Agenda (Is one needed? If yes, should it be sent in advance? What does "in advance" mean?)
- Place (On which side of the border shall the meeting be hold? Is this place easily accessible...is the accessibility an important question?)
- Language (In which language will the meeting be hold? What is the level of understanding of the language of the neighbour? Do participants say something when they do not understand? How to deal with different language during a meeting? What about translation/interpretation? What about translation costs?)
- Which results (What are the aim of the meeting and which results should be achieved at the end of the meeting? Do all the participants agree with this?)
- Chair (Is it done by one of the partner? A third person?)
- Communication (How to ensure communication regarding the different communication cultures? Who speaks when? Does everybody have the possibility/the right with regard to hierarchical and institutional relations to speak? Is everything understood the same way?)
- Hierarchies (How to deal with the different hierarchical representations?)
- Supports (Is it appropriate to use visual supports? Or written support? Which method is appropriate)
- Time set (Afternoon? Evening? Lunch? Early morning?)
- Minutes (Who writes them? In which language should the minutes of the meeting be written? Are "full-minutes" needed or just a record of decisions?)
- Evaluation of the meeting and follow up.

2.1.2 – Information

At "information" stage, actors are developing a targeted exchange of information, building basic cooperation structures (like networks) and shaping cooperation ideas.

Questions or problems arising here are following:

- Type of information (What is an important information? For "me"? For my organisation/administration? For "my partner"? Which information must be given in order for the "other" to understand? What is the information level at the moment and what has to be improved?)
- Negotiations (Which information can be given? And which not? Who can give the information and who does not?)
- Exchange of best practices (What is a best practice? Is the best practice on the one side interesting and inspiring for the other side?)
- Exchange of data (Which kind of data? Are they comparable or at least useful in a cross-border perspective? What about data protection?)
- Vocabulary and information (Is a same point understood by every actor the same way?)
- Structuration of the information flow (How formal or informal? Who does it? Who is part of the system? Which kind of information?)

2.1.3 - Coordination / Representation

At “coordination/representation stage”, actors reflect on creating a joint partnership structure and proceed to the first allocation of functions and roles.

For actors, the main questions at this stage are the following:

- Who takes the lead? Who coordinate?
- Which level is implicated (technical, financial, political)?
- Can an actor/an institution represent the whole group/partnership?
- How to ensure the group dynamic? Who could (would be able to) do that?
- How to change perspective
- How do the first ideas regarding governance look like?
- Which procedures should the actors implement in their cross-border activities?

2.1.4 – Strategy / Planning

At “strategy and planning” stage, the actors -after having identified a common or complementary cross-border problematic- are defining a common vision, identifying common objectives and developing a concrete working plan.

- How to combine different perspectives from an apparently same situation? How to find a common legitimacy for action? What about the cross-border added value?
- How to do the assessment of the needs in a cross-border perspective? How to fill in the data gap?
- How to define the target group?
- What about the “under-objectives” of each partner? Are they shared in the partnership? Are they complementary?
- How to make the annual programme of cross-border activities fit with the internal/national priorities?
- Are the actions planned in line with the funding programmes and other funding sources’ rules?

2.1.5 – Decision

At “decision” stage there is a binding commitment of the partners and partnership agreements. The questions that arise at this stage are:

- Is there a political will on both side of the border? How to deal with the regular change of political representatives (election)?
- How to ensure the commitment of all actors/institutions involved at each level?
- How to do a partnership agreement from the legal point of view respecting laws of the two sides?
- How to ensure the communication about the commitment/the agreement internally (other actors of the institutions involved) and externally (other actors or institutions that are not in the partnership but that might be concerned)
- How to monitor the decision making process by respecting the respective national rules, the unbalanced representation and the “absence of hierarchy” in cross-border partnerships?

2.1.6 – Implementation

At this last stage, it is about joint implementation of actions, efficient joint management, fulfilment of requirements by each partner. The implementation can of course take different forms like a cross-border project of course but also an integrated policy, joint operation or a shared service, etc. The questions that are arising here can be following:

- Which form of implementation suits best the need and the possibility of the partner?
- How to set up an appropriate governance structure linked to the respective (administrative) partners' organisations?
- What about the legal form? Is one needed? Then which one?
- Where can the legal information be found (in order to build a structure or a shared service)?
- What about the funding? How to make different funding rules work together?
- How to ensure the continuity after the funding period? How to compensate the loss of 50% to 75% budget?
- How to make the project logic fit in the programme logic?
- What about reporting? What is needed for whom?
- What about communication (Internal? External? Funding partners?)?
- What about the monitoring system? How about output, result and impact? How to build indicators?
- How to proceed to adaption (if more time is needed for one step? If another obstacle which was not foreseen has to be solved before continuing? If there is staff change? Etc.)?
- How to ensure the durability of the support by the "home institution"?
- How to ensure the team dynamic – also if there are changes in the project team?
- How about recruiting some new staff (which legal basis? Which procedure? Which taxes? Cultures? Skills? Diploma?) and how about the integration in the team/the team building?

These lists do not pretend to be exhaustive but raise the importance of addressing those issues in an intercultural and inter-system perspective. Indeed, behind each question, there is a potential obstacle, the main obstacle being not to ask any question (asking the question and thereby launching a reflection process is the first step toward the overcoming of the obstacle).

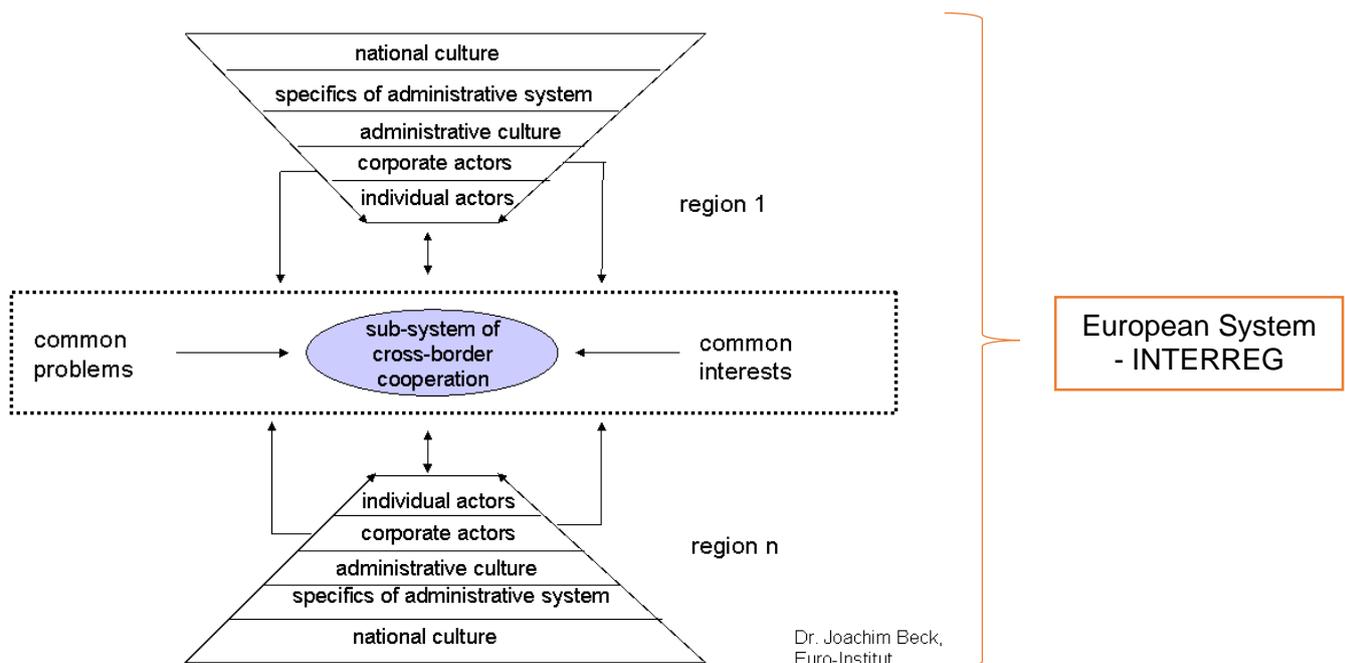
In addition to these lists, is important to us to highlight some transversal issues.

2.2 - Illustration of the form the lack of capacity building can take in cross-border activities - Highlight of some transversal issues

2.2.1 - Connection between the cross-border partnership, the national system and the European system

Prof. Dr. Joachim Beck illustrated this issue with the schema below. This schema underlines the fact that cross-border cooperation is like a sub-system that has to work with (at least) two national systems. Common interests or common problems drive this sub-system but the interaction between the sub-system (when the actor meet and work together) and the national system (when the actors come back in their home institution) is not always neither ensured nor easy.

Cross-border cooperation: inter- institutional and inter-personal dimension



To this schema, we should add the EU System that both the sub-system and the national system have to take into account and to respect if the cooperation takes place within an INTERREG project (NB: in case of implementation of EU Regulation it is part of the national system).

At each stage of integration, many of the questions arising are directly linked to this trilateral connection and how to ensure it.

2.2.2 – “Quality” of the actors

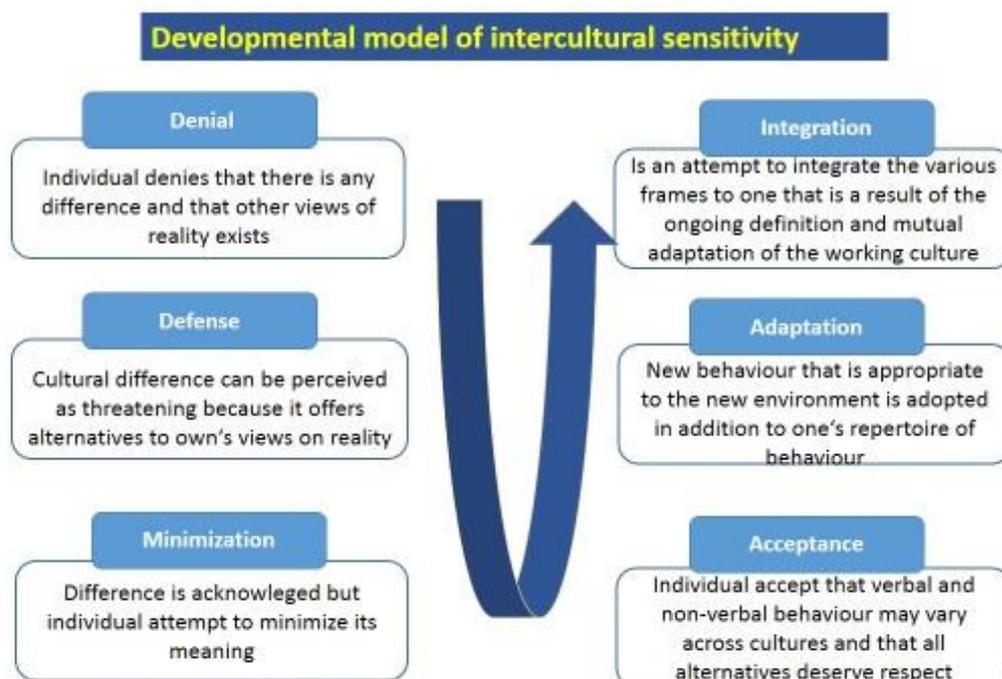
Fact is: the actors are central for the cross-border cooperation. Nevertheless, their statutes can be very different:

- Do they have the competences (content) required for the project?
- Do they have the competences (cooperation) required for the project? Did they work in cross-border cooperation activities before?
- Which hierarchical level do they represent? Are they entitled to make decisions?
- How did they “arrive”: Are they nominated by their home institution? It is a political nomination? Are they involved in this project because they personally wanted to?

In the cross-border cooperation much more than in any other activity, the personal commitment/interest of the actors plays a great role. On the one hand, this is a great resource for the cross border activities. On the other hand, it can also have negative consequences like the time the actors are able to work on the cross-border cooperation activity in addition to their “real job” (if - like it is often the case- the home institution don’t see cross-border cooperation as one axis of the job and don’t foresee a certain time contingent for these activities). Another limit is that the motivated actors might think they know the “other” and thereby underestimate the specificity of cross-border cooperation and its intercultural dimension too.

2.2.3 – Intercultural Dimension

Generally, **the importance of intercultural issues is largely underestimated in cross-border activities**. Cross-border actors might go through different steps -that are explained below- before feeling good, understanding what is going on and being constructive in their cooperation project.



Adapted from Milton J Bennett, "Towards Ethnorelativism: A Developmental Model of Intercultural Sensitivity."

It should be noted that the **development of an intercultural sensitivity is an ongoing process**: it is not because an actor reaches a good level of sensitivity while working on one cross-border project that he or she will always remain at this level.

2.2.4 – Management of diversity

As already underlined in 1.1, **we all have to learn to deal with diversity**.

However, the management of diversity should not be taken for granted and actors might ask themselves:

- How has the communication between the cross-border structures and the original structures been organized? Has there been regular information exchange? If yes, how?
- Does the linguistic factor play an important role? How do partners deal with the language barriers? And with language skills?
- How do the partners integrate the project in their daily non cross-border missions?
- How is the cooperation accepted?
- Are there differences between the working methods of the partners? If yes, which differences? How can the different methods be linked?
- Which difficulties did each partner face considering the gap between the different (cultural) systems (gap between the institutional systems, difficulties to understand the environment and administrative practices of the partner, etc.)? What did the partner learn thanks to this gap (discovering another system, others practices, mutual improvement)?
- Which strategies should be used to overcome issues?
- Are partners able to give positive or negative feedback? Are they willing to listen to constructive feedback? Is there enough trust between the partners?
- How to deal with adaption to the cross-border project (financial, staff, time, etc.)
- How to combine INTERREG funding with national/regional/local funding?
- Which project management methods have been used? According to which system(s) (INTERREG, “method country A”, “method country B”, “3rd way”)? Why? How have the different management systems been matched?

Diversity can in fact apply to people but also working methods, law, funding etc. That is why the management diversity is a transversal issue for actors at every stage of cross-border activities. Behind each cross-border activity, a learning process has to take place: a collective one (merging persons and interests into a common project or a common team) and an individual, personal and developmental one (intercultural learning process, acceptance and readiness to change).

2.2.5 – Language issues

This issue has already been pointed out in the lists (2.1) but it is important to us to highlight it as it represents one of the main cross-sectoral issues in cross-border cooperation.

A common language between partners must be found:

- Do all the actors speak their own language and understand each other?
- Does the partnership chose the language of one of the partner as common language? If yes, how to ensure that the partner who is speaking in his/her mother tongue does not take advantage of it?
- Do the partners chose to use a third language as common language? If yes, how to deal with the different level of understanding and expression in the foreign common language?

- Is the language chosen in the partnership the same one as the programme language? If not how to ensure the coherence between the work within the partnership and the relationship of the project leader with the programme? And if the language of the programme is only spoken by the project leader: how to ensure the trust of the partner towards the project leader?

These are essential questions that have to be discussed at the very beginning of the cooperation process. However, it is also important, even if a “good solution” has been found, to always be aware of the potential consequences of the language issue during the whole project/cooperation lifetime.

To sum up, the main obstacle we can observe -the lack of capacities of the actors- can take various forms within cross-border activities. The description we tried to make might not give a comprehensive view of the forms but still give enough valuable reasons for addressing this obstacle and thus to give a positive answer to the need for capacity building with experienced methods and strong motivation.

Question 3 - What could be done to surmount this obstacle/these obstacles?

The main objective here is to give the actors in the sub-system of the cross-border cooperation the capacities to make the sub-system live and act efficiently and interact as smoothly as possible with the national and the European system.

In order to do so, the Euro-Institut experiences different tools and methods in the Upper Rhine region since 1993. During the last decade, many contacts has been built with other institutions from other EU border regions. The bilateral exchanges and projects showed not only the necessity to gather all the experiences available but also to address the diversity linked with the specificities of the different cross-border territories and their realities. This is how the TEIN is born in October 2010. TEIN is aiming at:

- Exchanging best practices
- Developing training and research that is 'fit for purpose' for cross-border issues and in cross-border contexts
- Capitalizing on learning from different regional initiatives
- Working on new products such as
 - o transferable training modules (e.g. training for cross-border project managers);
 - o methods (e.g. needs-analysis methods in cross-border regions);
 - o tools (e.g. impact assessment toolkit for cross-border cooperation);
- Producing relevant research to be disseminated to actors involved in cross-border cooperation at different levels;
- Increasing knowledge and awareness of cross-border issues (at local, regional, national and European level) by producing high quality work in this field.

The first project the TEIN achieved was the Professionalizing Actors of Transfrontier Cooperation – Transfrontier Euro-Institut Network (PAT-TEIN) project. Eight TEIN partners from five border regions launched it in 2012. The project, which received LEONARDO funding to transfer, merge and adapt pedagogical tools developed at the French-German border, resulted in four regional-specific toolkits for cross-border intercultural project management. This contribution is mainly inspired by the work done within this project (for more information, visit the PAT-TEIN website: pat-tein.eu).

According to our vision, capacities to be developed in order to better face the challenges of cross-border cooperation are the following: increasing knowledge, know-how, but also social and behavioural skills of the actors. The TEIN members are acting in favour of the development of those capacities for actors of the cross-border cooperation. Below we will give some “solutions” (training; accompanying measures; studies and research) in order to address the issues listed under “question 2” and thereby try to give an overview of what the TEIN could provide.

3.1 - Training

As it is mentioned under 2, a key bottleneck preventing the deepening of cross-border co-operation in Europe is the lack of knowledge and understanding of the political and administrative systems of the neighbouring countries. Successful cross-border co-operation needs qualified actors who are able to bridge the gap between the subsystem and its specific functional characteristics and the functional preconditions provided by the different domestic jurisdictions involved. Cross-border

training should be structured according to the needs identified by the actors involved in co-operation in each territory.

3.1.1 - Basic training on cross-sectoral competences

These trainings are about the development of the cross-sectoral skills and competences like:

- Institutional and legal knowledge about the politico-administrative system of the neighbouring countries
- Knowledge about the system of cross-border co-operation itself
- Linguistic skills
- Intercultural skills (communication, norms and values): learning to step out of the own cultural perspective, learning about the respective cultural values, learning to foster and understand the values of the partner.

It is also about providing the actors with the necessary tools and methods:

- Of intercultural management,
- Of cross-border project management (in terms of defining, planning, implementing, monitoring and evaluating cross-border projects) also in the framework of INTERREG
- To build and maintain a solid international partnership
- To prepare and manage cross-border meetings
- To become more actively involved in the preparation of EU law and to better represent local and territorial interests in its formulation.

For example, after having helped an actor to be able to identify his/her interlocutor, training has to help the actors identifying the necessity of **clarifying one's own functioning and understanding the functioning of the partners. Training should then help them** gaining the competence in order to:

- Describe the national, regional and local administrative organization of their country in a simple way
- Explain the skills, responsibilities and interactions of the different administrative levels
- Describe the rules and procedures of one's own organization
- Explain their role, functions, position, mission and activities
- Understand the political and administrative organization of the neighbour, their organisational and legal constraints
- Identify and comply with the rules and the culture of your partners
- Describe the range of rules and procedures that may be encountered in other organizations
- Analyse the competencies, skills, resources, level of experience
- Be able to develop together a 3rd way, new approaches to work together

Thereby the level of trust through transparency and mutual understanding through adapted explanation can definitely be increased.

Furthermore, training on intercultural communication can be seen as the basis to avoid main problems while experiencing cross-border cooperation. In those trainings it shall not be about "how is A" and "how is B" and thereby to explain to A how to work with B without cultural problems. It is about going beyond prejudices and stereotypes, opening the minds in order to see that everybody is different and that even if you think you know your partner very well, you do have to remain open and curious in order not to be blocked at one stage or the other. In fact, one should always ask for explanation, take a step back, analyse, try to understand with the help of the partner why this or that is happening and how to find a common way of pursuing the work efficiently. Thus, training shall also

give the actors to learn to communicate in a heterogeneous context (i.e. developing meta-communication, active listening skills, non-violent communication).

Regarding the development of language competences, TEIN members implemented new models for language learning. Two training experiences can be here underlined:

- The Culture Pro Project (F/S) which was based on the idea of the passive learning of the French/the Catalan language in order to enable people at least understand their partner.
- The tandem methodology (F/D), which enables not only to improve one's language skills in a given language but also to work with a partner and in that way experience cooperation.

Trainings on cross-border management make cross-border actors aware of the challenges they will have to face and help them to assess the need, to structure their partnership in a good manner, to define common objectives that each partner is willing to achieve, to instore a good internal and external communication, to define work packages and results for their project, to analyse the impacts of their project and to measure them with relevant indicators, to organize efficient cross-border meetings, etc. In order to answer this need, the TEIN members worked on the PAT-TEIN Toolkits "Toolkit for intercultural cross-border project management" (www.pat-tein.eu) mentioned earlier. It was important to us that those toolkits are available for the programming period 2014-2020: The toolkits are online since September 2014 and give a first help. Trainings can also be organised at the actors' request. Those trainings build up the needed complement to the help already provided at programme level through the INTERREG Secretariats in order for the project partners to develop strong INTERREG projects. Moreover, it is to be underlined that the Centre for Cross-Border Studies also developed an Impact assessment toolkit, a budget toolkit as well as an evaluation toolkit in order to cover all potential issues of cross-border project management.

3.1.2 – Specialised training

These trainings are oriented towards representatives from the different administrative sectors in the neighbouring states. It is about providing a neutral platform for exchanges between specialists from the different countries so that they can better understand the specific sectoral competences and organisational structures in the other countries, identify differences and similarities with their own - or just allow them to get current information and analysis on policy developments and good practice in the neighbouring state.

Specialised training can also enable actors to play a role of "multiplier". If there is a big need for information in some sectoral area (in case of a legislation change or if there is an increasing need for cooperation activities in this area), the training can be designed in order to give the participants the requested information as well as points of reference (vocabulary, system, etc.) and methodological tools in order for them to better answer the need on the field.

A special attention should be given to the specialised training that highlights best practices. There, the training has to point out that the "copy/paste" mechanism almost never works but that a good experience on the one side can inspire and improve the way of doing things on the other side. This is indeed better to look around, also over the border, than to reinvent the wheel: training can be the place or at least give the tools to participants to analyse interesting best practice and see what can be taken, what should be adapted to one's context. The training can thus be the starting point of a cooperation / transfer project.

Specialised training can also be the tool to enable the implementation of a cross-border agreement by presenting it to the actors who relate to this field and training them to the use of the agreement.

Finally, specialized training can also take the form of peer-to-peer training/training on the job. In fact, in order to fully understand the daily work, the working methods, the way of working, the hierarchical structure, the important issues of the neighbour, the best way is to have the possibility to go on the other side for a job shadowing session. Of course, this has to be well prepared (training before) and analysed (training after) in order to learn from the experience.

TEIN Members here want to underline that for them “training is not equal training”. Cross-border trainings need a high quality level with respect to special issues like:

- Language: none of the participants should be privileged or neglected, all participants should be able to understand what is said and to express themselves also when it comes to technical issues,
- Pedagogy: training methods should be adapted to the target groups. And as we experienced that a French participant for example is not expecting the same things as a German participant; a French speaker will not focus on the same points and will not construct his speech the same way as a German speaker would do (and the other way round), the pedagogical engineering as well as the moderation of the training are essential to cross-border trainings.

3.2 - Accompanying measures

Next to trainings, accompanying measures can help the cross-border actors in different ways. Indeed, a short training of 1 or 2 days might not be sufficient/the right answer: an actor or a team might need to be accompanied over a longer time.

Accompanying measures cover:

- Help to find the right/the needed information
- Moderation of meeting
- Moderation of workshops
- Moderation of working process
- Mediation – neutral space
- Coaching

Accompanying measures can help:

- Finding the right interlocutor, the right partners, funding opportunities
- Developing a “neutral” platform of exchange on common issues
- Finding solutions in order to ensure the coordination of sectoral policies on a territorial basis
- Defining common strategies for cross-border activities
- A partnership or a team to structure itself and work smoothly together

Accompanying measures play a significant role within the process of the cross-border activity. Here the role of the moderator/facilitator of the process is extremely important. The essential point is his/her objectivity: he/she has to have a “neutral” position and be appointed/recognized by the whole group. Sometimes it might be useful to have a tandem (one moderator from each side of the border).

The moderator -bilingual and bicultural- is often a great help in order to overcome the language barriers (in some cases in addition to a translator) and intercultural barriers.

The products of the measures are diverse depending on what the actors need. It can be:

- A strategic action plan for the next years
- A lexicon
- A manual of procedures
- An agreement
- A conference
- A list of resource persons
- Study visits
- Etc.

Specific accompanying measures can be developed for binational integrated teams (in a cross-border structure for example). Indeed, a binational team usually need -even if the team is bilingual and bicultural- more time than a “normal” team to define its way of working. They have to take into account different educational backgrounds, working habits, methods, experiences of each team member but also the different needs and attempts of the stakeholders and funders as well as the legal aspects (regarding the staff and the cross-border project/structure). Accompanying measures for such teams are often between training, coaching, mediation, and offering a space for dialogue and co-construction.

Accompanying measures are not as recognized as training activities, nevertheless they are more and more needed by cross-border actors also because they are really tailor-made and can follow the process of the cross-border activity. Moreover, partners involved in the project are also representative stakeholders of their own party, organisation or structure. In this position, it is not always easy to step out of the main interests of their own organisation in order to identify and focus on common goals. A third party facilitator, with experience in cross-border projects, is an added value in the development of the project as:

- S/he can concentrate on the cooperation process and can structure the work and communication in a way that each partner can contribute to the project
- S/he should ensure that the stakeholders are building together a common ground for the project
- S/he should have no other interest in the development of the project than the cross-border aspects and the project realization
- S/he commits him/herself to take equally into consideration the different perspectives and guarantee equal access to information and decision making processes
- S/he should help to move from a (cultural) perspective and point of view of the project's development to a third way solution agreeable to the different parties involved in the project
- S/he should have a thorough knowledge of the different cultures and systems and help stakeholders to find appropriate solutions
- S/he should have a guiding and coaching role, helping formally or informally stakeholders to learn about the partners, about themselves
- S/he should motivate the stakeholders when the situation seems to be stagnant
- S/he can act as a mediator in case of conflicts between stakeholders.

3.3 - Studies / research

Studies and research go one step further, beyond training or accompanying measures. It allows carrying out a further reflection, to deepen the analysis and thus provide actors of cross-border cooperation with the needed information, data and tools so that they can take informed decisions.

Studies and Research cover:

- Diagnostics
- Feasibility studies
- Potential analysis
- Evaluations (ex-ante, in-itere, ex-post)
- Fundamental research
- Applied research

Studies and research can help to:

- Identify cooperation potential
- Identify limits of cooperation
- Monitor a project
- Evaluating the use of an agreement
- The actors' decision process by giving some recommendation
- Defining new tools and new methods
- Filling the existing data gap
- "Compare" different approaches to find the "best" way

The importance of participatory approaches has here to be underlined. Studies and research projects do not correspond to linear and desk work. Steering groups or scientific committee are really valuable in those project not only because actors can contribute and assess the work done at different stages but also -and this is maybe the most important- because they represent the binding element between the researcher/the study manager doing the job, the principals and the field. Working closely with actors ensure the relevance of the results and recommendations of the study/the research or of the thesis formulated. Moreover, participatory approaches ensures the acceptance by stakeholders (partners) and thereby the increase the probability that recommendations will be implemented (effectiveness of the results produced).

With particular regard to research, it is important to underline the importance of:

- Interdisciplinary and even transdisciplinary research
- The exchange between researcher and practitioners

In fact, as we mentioned it before (1.1), cross-border cooperation is a relatively new phenomenon. Consequently, on the one side practitioners do not have many tools and methods at their disposal yet and do often gain experiences on the field, on the other side academics need real cases in order to develop theories and methods. We can easily conclude that practitioners would be eager to use the results of the research projects to improve their daily work and that academics would appreciate exchanging with experts of the field in order to modeli and conceptualise the practical approaches. Nevertheless, this makes sense only in an interdisciplinary perspective as cross-border cooperation represent a cross-sectoral issue: uni-disciplinary approaches are of course interesting but cannot provide an integrated vision. The Euro-Institut and the University of Strasbourg launched a first interdisciplinary research cycle "live and think cross-border cooperation" (2008-2012). This first experience showed that beyond the comparative perspective in the analysis of cross-border regions

themselves, the challenge was to achieve a mutual understanding between different national scientific cultures too.

The next step could be to continue this work and maybe to find a method to experience integrated transdisciplinary work on a specific issue of cross-border cooperation.

Conclusion

Capacity building measures towards actors of the cross-border cooperation represent a huge challenge and is definitely one of the main solution to overcome existing and future obstacles.

Even if instruments or programmes are existing or will be developed, the capacities of the actors have to be enlarged in order to extend their “national/regional” skills to cross-border skills, to be able to use the instruments and programmes and to build up the necessary mutual knowledge understanding and trust.

Providing capacity building measures in a cross-border territory require the creation of a “neutral platform” which act as facilitator, as link between both (or the three) sides.

Such a platform has to implement and invent adapted methods to the region where it acts, because every cross-border territory has its own specificities (language, culture, system, history, etc.).

Such a platform cannot be, as consultants do, “money driven”: they should be to the major extend “common interests driven” and thereby be able to answer the local needs with the necessary objectivity. Therefore, it is essential that the local, regional and national authorities in each cross border territory support and recognize their platform as their instrument.

That is how the Euro-Institut, which has recently been described by a user as a “driver licence for cross-border activities”, was built in 1993.

All TEIN partners share this basis idea. The TEIN partners, which are universities, training organisations, local networks, cross-border institutions are all providing actors with different types of measures and products. This diversity show how differently the territories answer the need for capacity building and how important it is to let this diversity exist while finding solutions to consolidate them in their platform function. Furthermore, through the network this diversity is becoming a huge potential for innovation: the exchange within the network can help taking distance from one’s own cross-border problematic and also defining new products, new approaches, new modules that can in the end be adapted to each cross-border territory.

To enable the building of the capacities of all actors of all cross-border territories in the EU is certainly a big challenge in which the EU and DG Regio might be a help and a big support if they are convinced about the added value of capacity building for removing cross-border obstacle, which we hope they do.

In conclusion, we must not forget that “Capacity Building” includes the following:

- “Human resource development, the process of equipping individuals with the understanding, skills and access to information, knowledge and training that enables them to perform effectively.
- Organizational development, the elaboration of management structures, processes and procedures, not only within organizations but also within the management of relationships between the different organizations and sectors (public, private and community).
- Institutional and legal framework development, making legal and regulatory changes to enable organizations, institutions and agencies at all levels and in all sectors to enhance their capacities.” (The Urban Capacity Building Network)

This is why we are convinced that together with our TEIN associated partners, the MOT (Mission Opérationnelle Transfrontalière) and the AEER (Association of European Border Regions) and hand in hand with the actors and the EU, we can bring an important part of the answer to the question of the removal of cross-border obstacle in a long-term perspective.