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What are the challenges of cross-border cooperation in the territory of the ADZM?

On our territory, the challenges of cooperation are numerous:

Our structure, constituted in the form of an association, encourages the public administration from the territories of Medgidia (Romania) and Silistra (Bulgaria) to involve in exchanges and commune projects, in particular through those which we set up.

Another objective is to encourage the public and non public key actors from the two territories to become involved in major social, economic and cultural change.

In addition, another challenge for the ADZM is to increase the competitiveness and quality of life through joint research and education, especially through continuous training and development of public services.

Finally, another stake of the ADZM is to restore and sustain the natural heritage.

All of the cross-border projects that we carry out aim at answering to these challenges.

What are your expectations regarding the MOT? Why have you joined the network?

By joining the Mission Opérationnelle Transfrontalière, the ADZM initially wished to join a network of actors on cross-border cooperation. The objective is to establish contacts and to organize partnerships with other territories in Europe. The ADZM also wishes to take part in various concrete projects and to benefit from a transfer of good practices as regards cross-border cooperation. Finally, the ADZM considers setting up an EGTC (European Grouping of Territorial Cooperation) in order to structure the cross-border territory. It thus hopes on the Mission Opérationnelle Transfrontalière to help it, within the framework of its operational assistance, to implement and to organize this project.

Cross-border cooperation between Romania and Bulgaria

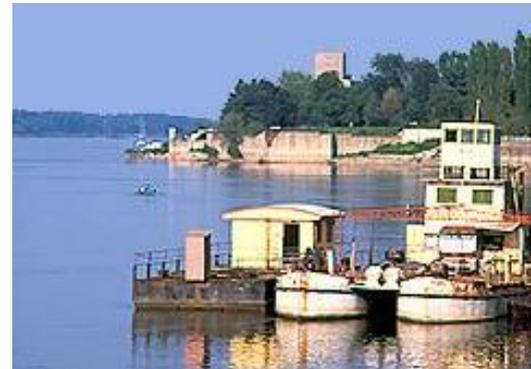
A new Romanian member

The Association for zone development of Medgidia (ADZM*), located on the border between Romania and Bulgaria has just joined the Mission Opérationnelle Transfrontalière network.

Located in the south-eastern Romania, in Constanta County, the ADZM is a public - private associative institution. Its territory, covering an area of 629 km², is essentially rural and its main activity is agriculture. It has a population density of 52 inhabitants per km². It includes Medgidia, a Romanian town of 45,000 inhabitants located on the intersection of several communication routes: motorway, river and railway. Cross-border cooperation is conducted mainly between the territory of Medgidia and that of Silistra, in the north-east of Bulgaria.

The objectives of the ADZM association are to increase the social capital of population, to strengthen the community spirit, to promote local actions based on local citizens initiatives and to improve their quality of life. The association endeavours not only to enhance the dynamics and cooperation between these territories, but also to guarantee access to top-quality services.

The ADZM, in his quality as urban and rural municipalities association, participated in the preparation of the local strategy for development. It also conceived in the period 2007/2009 five joint collaboration projects between Medgidia and Silistra areas.



The Danube at Silistra, Bulgarian-Romanian border

These are mainly concerned with town and country planning, infrastructures, environment, and economic development: for example the project "Business without borders" aims at making tools for cross-border economic cooperation in the design of transport infrastructure and services in the Industrial Park of Medgidia. Another flagship cross-border project named "Nature of friendship without frontiers" wants to restore ecosystems through afforestation Medgidia area of 350 hectares and Inspection Center design and training for natural resources. A third project of the ADZM, "Border route" consists of building an access road to facilitate the connection between the north of Bulgaria and the Industrial Park of Medgidia.

* www.galmedgidia.ro

Progress for Franco-Italian cooperation

Significant progress has recently been made between France and Italy in the area of cross-border cooperation.

Firstly, in the field of natural spaces, the National Park of Mercantour and the "Alpi Marittime" Natural Park, which meet at the border and have been twinned since 1987, have just launched work to draw up an integrated cross-border plan for 2010-2013¹. Furthermore, following the transposition of the European Grouping of Territorial Cooperation (EGTC) into Italian law (see below), the International Marine Park of the "Bouches de Bonifacio", between Corsica and Sardinia, has been able to advance with its project to form a common management structure. The statutes for the creation of an EGTC are currently being drafted in close cooperation with all the partners². This project's Franco-Italian steering committee should meet before the end of the year. Finally, following the fires which afflicted Corsica and Sardinia this summer, France and Italy have appealed to the "European Forest Fire Tactical Reserve" within a European civil protection framework.

This mechanism will allow them to make joint use of two canadairs³.

Transposition of EGTCs into Italian law

This summer the Italian authorities adopted legal provisions regarding EGTCs. The law (No. 88/2009), which came into force on 29th July 2009, still has to be completed by an inter-ministerial decree establishing the budgetary and accounting rules of EGTCs. Following this the provisions laid down in this decree will have to be integrated in the Franco-Italian EGTC statutes. Requests for the creation of an EGTC should be sent to the General-Secretariat of the Presidency of the Council of Ministers in Italy which will decide, following the assent procedure conducted by the Ministries and Ministerial Departments concerned (including the Foreign Ministry, Ministry of the Interior, Economic Development, Presidency of the Council-Department for European Policies and Regional Affairs...).

¹ www.parks.it/parco.alpi.marittime

² www.parcmarin.com

³ www.ec.europa.eu/environment/civil/index.htm



In the wake of the Maastricht conference:

"Practical Approaches Towards Effective European Transfrontier Cooperation"

The conference "Practical Approaches Towards Effective European Transfrontier Cooperation" that was held in Maastricht (Netherlands) on 6th and 7th July 2009 was organised by the City of Maastricht, the

Province of Limburg and the Associations of Netherlands Municipalities in cooperation with the Netherlands Ministries for the Interior and Foreign Affairs and the Council of Europe. The objective was to ascertain the factors that enhance or hinder cross-border cooperation throughout Europe.

The conclusions of the works have been published in the form of a Final Declaration. Its purpose is to contribute to the work of the Congress of Local and Regional Authorities of the Council of Europe in the context of the drafting of the third Protocol of the Madrid Outline Convention on 'Euro-regional Cooperation Groupings'¹. Depending on the progress made on this preliminary text, the Council of Europe's Conference of European Ministers responsible for Local and Regional Government, whose 16th session will take place in the Netherlands (Utrecht) on the coming 16th and 17th November², could be the occasion on which Member States sign and ratify this third protocol.

Proposals for cross-border cooperation

The participants of this conference - including the director-general of MOT, Dr. Hans-Günther Clev - underlined in this Final Declaration³ the integrating role of borders. Several recommendations were adopted and appeals launched to the Council of Europe, to European Ministers responsible for Local and Regional Government, EU Member States and the Congress of Local and Regional Government of the Council of Europe. Among the recommendations are:

❖ *"Member States of the Council of Europe should see in transfrontier cooperation one of the major challenges to effective democratic governance in the 21st century. They should adopt or adjust their policy to the effect that:*

- *the legal framework for transfrontier cooperation is adjusted to meet the needs of local and regional authorities to cooperate with their neighbours across borders;*
- *transfrontier cooperation is recognised as one of the dimensions of multilevel governance in the domestic legal order;*
- *European Union Regulation 1082/2006 on EGTCs is implemented and the necessary domestic legislation adopted without delay in EU member states;*
- *"dedicated" agencies, such as the MOT in France, the Benelux Committee on transfrontier cooperation, are set up in order to advise, accompany and train local and regional authorities in the various stages of transfrontier cooperation and institution-building;*
- *favourable conditions are created for the civil society to become more actively engaged in transfrontier cooperation and to act as a partner providing feedback on local needs and possibilities".*

❖ *"Local and Regional Authorities [...] should exchange transfrontier cooperation experience through exchange of best practices and staff entrusted with the management of transfrontier cooperation".*

¹ This protocol aims at providing the legal provisions which shall govern the capacity and establishment of such groupings.

² <http://www.coe.int>

³ For further information and the text of the Final Declaration, please see: www.vngi-events.nl

Agenda

■ White paper

The Committee of the Regions launched a public consultation on the white paper on multilevel governance which is open until 30 November 2009. www.cor.europa.eu

■ **"International conference on cross-border cooperation: the Russian Federation, the European Union and Norway"**, 28-29 September in St. Petersburg (RUS) www.investa.spb.ru

■ **Open Days 2009** "Global challenges, European responses", 5-8 October, in Brussels (BEL). **EUROMOT** is organising a workshop on 6 October on: "Local cross-border territories at the service of citizens". www.opendays.europa.eu

■ 17th plenary session of the Congress of Local and Regional Government

13-15 October in Strasbourg (FRA)
This session's agenda includes:
"Cross-border cooperation in Europe" and the presentation of the draft-report on the state of cross-border cooperation in Europe by its rapporteur Karl-Heinz Lambertz. www.coe.int/t/congress

■ "International conference on cross-border, regional cooperation and Euroregions' development"

15-16 October in Odessa (UKR), organised by the General Department of Foreign Economic Activity and European Integration of Odessa Regional State Administration, and AEBR. www.aebr.net

■ **Conference "The complexity of taxes and social insurances in European border regions"**, 23 October in Brussels (BEL), organised by the Öresund Committee, in conjunction with the Committee of the Regions, within the framework of the Swedish Presidency of the European Union. www.espaces-transfrontaliers.eu

■ **Conference "Cross Border Regions"**, 5-6 November, in Copenhagen/Malmö (DNK/SWE), organised by the Öresund Committee, within the framework of the Swedish Presidency of the European Union. www.oresundskomiteen.dk

■ **AEBR general assembly and annual conference 2009** "Cross-border cooperation after 2013: regional answers to current European challenges", 5-7 November in Ghent (BEL). www.aebr.net

Press review

■ A cross-border guide, Sud Ouest, 1st September 2009

"The Bidasoa-Txingudi Cross-border Consortium has published the third version of the cross-border tax guide. It gives useful legal advice and provides information aimed at facilitating the everyday life of the citizens in the Bidasoa-Txingudi basin who may have recourse to both legal systems..."

■ Switzerland will impose the second pillar on cross-border workers, La Tribune de Genève, 2nd September 2009

"Bad news for cross-border workers: from now on the Swiss inland revenue will be able to tax capital when their 2nd and 3rd pillars return to France. Despite the fight of the "Groupement transfrontalier" against this alteration to the retirement income tax system..."

■ The National Committee on Decentralised Cooperation launched its French Atlas of decentralised cooperation and other actions abroad, Lettre hebdomadaire du Carrefour - Sénat, 14th September 2009 - www.diplomatie.gouv.fr/cncd

"The National Committee on Decentralised Cooperation (CNCD) launched its French Atlas of decentralised cooperation and other actions abroad in August. This Atlas cartographically lists all international actions undertaken by French territorial communities..."

■ A European strategy for the Baltic Sea, European Parliament release, 15th September 2009

"[...] The European Commission submitted its strategic proposal for the Baltic region on 10th June..."

■ Cluster, poles, networks etc., Dernières Nouvelles d'Alsace, 17th September 2009

"Presented on Tuesday on the occasion of the 1st Cluster Forum of the Upper Rhine, a survey illustrating an unpublished map of the clusters and corporate networks in the three riverside regions of France, Germany and Switzerland..."

