



CONTRIBUTION OF EGTCs TO MULTILEVEL GOVERNANCE

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The European Union created an opportunity for its member states to establish EGTCs, bodies with legal personality, in 2006. The revision process of the EGTC Regulation (1082/2006/EC) provides an opportunity to examine the contribution of EGTCs to multilevel governance. An EGTC as an acknowledged legal entity can support new approaches to cross-border governance, the legal framework of an EGTC can promote the cross-border institutionalisation, thus development of a multilevel government in the border areas. The objective of this paper is to address and discuss whether EGTCs are the appropriate policy instruments of multilevel governance. May they facilitate structuring the European Administrative Space?

Keywords: Cross-border cooperation, EGTC, Multilevel governance, European Administrative Space

Introduction

The present paper examines the implementation of the multi-level governance approach in the field of cross-border cooperation and of the partnership principle, paying special attention to relations and interactions between the different levels of government: European, national, regional and local. Nowadays the most appropriate models for institutional cross-border cooperation could be provided by European Grouping of Territorial Cooperation (EGTC). The EGTC regulation is the first example among EU regulations in the course of which a legal instrument grants special rights to local, regional and national public law institutions of the different Member States, in order to develop unified structures with legal personality.

The aim of this study is to comprehensively present one of the key areas of the European regional and cohesion policy, namely the pillars of the territorial cohesion, EGTC. As an acknowledged legal entity, EGTC can support new approaches to cross-border governance, the legal framework of an EGTC can promote the cross-border institutionalisation, that is the development of a multilevel government in the border areas.

The paper **reviews** the relations between EGTCs and multilevel governance (MLG) through the evaluation of the establishment and operation of EGTC's structures. It also investigates whether established EGTC is acting beyond its original scope of purely project-based cooperation or is aiming at gaining higher legitimacy for political cooperation. Therefore the aim of the paper is to highlight the development of a political and administrative multilevel governance culture in Europe.

The study seeks to draw an overview whether the European Union provided a stable, institutional framework for the application of a new, non-national state space concept. May EGTCs facilitate structuring the European Administrative Space?

Is a new territorial cooperation scale emerging through EGTCs?

Can multilevel governance be used as a partnership where local, regional and national preferences can have a more functional approach? Are EGTCs, which are a direct result from the EU support, indeed just programme or project management bodies?

Cooperation across borders is a means of cohesion and regional policy of the European Union. The creation and development of cross-border cooperation systems started with the process of European integration. Concerning Hooghe and Marks (2001, pp. 2-3) the European integration is a polity-creating process in which authority and policy-making influence are shared across multiple levels of government, supranational, national and subnational. According to the multilevel governance model, decision-making competencies are shared by actors at different levels rather than monopolized by national governments.

In the interests of cross-border cooperation systems, it is important to create a multi-level government in which local and regional (self-) governance plays a significant part in the arrangement of public affairs.

MLG is one of a number of modes of network governance which focuses on the relations between the tiers of the EU from the supranational through nation states to subnational levels whether regions or municipalities. The principle of subsidiarity (Treaty on European Union, 1992, Article 3b) plays a specific role – due to the decentralisation of central assignments – in the division of power of states at local and regional level.

The border areas of the countries of Western Europe took the first steps towards organised cooperation as early as the 1950s when the state borders did not correspond to natural linguistic, ethnic, cultural or economic communities. At first it was done spontaneously, lacking any formality, later on the cooperation gradually evolved into appropriate institutional structures. This tendency was enhanced by regional policies in the Union with the beginning of the INTERREG program (1989). The involvement of regional level in structural policy also had potentially significant polity implications. If regions were deemed essential for the success of structural policy, then also these states that lacked a ‘third’ level were expected to create it.¹ The challenges towards MLG is the need to strengthen the Union’s internal cohesion which is based on territorial cooperation. MLG is essential to achieving the territorial cohesion objective which is developing at all levels.

The importance of a cooperation system across the EU’s borders increased after the Eastern enlargement in 2004 and 2007. Cross-border cooperation has started to provide certain functions jointly. With this it exceeded the formal/natural level and achieved a functional level. Owing both to the deeper integration and the enlargement of the European Union, the cooperation within Europe changed in just a few years and in many ways. These changes made it necessary to update the legal framework on which this cooperation must be pinned. During a number of years there have been discussions within the EU on how to construct a stronger legal framework for cooperation which led towards a new European legal instrument. With the adoption of the EGTC regulation in 2006 the European Union elevated the CBCs to the level of the normative regions.

The European Union has established a new legal instrument, a new form of cooperation of the European territorial cooperation (2007-13; Objective 3). What are the best added values from this instrument?

¹ Traditionally unitary nation-states now have to think seriously about regionalization to keep pace with European developments. Bullmann, 1997, p. 17

Cross-border cooperation takes place at various levels through governmental commissions, cross-border regions or between municipalities. The European added value of cross-border cooperation stems from the fact that the European Union is committed to maintaining good neighbourly relations across the whole Union. This work does not only include cooperation with the central governments and the capitals of the neighbouring states, but there is an urgent need to speed up the cooperation at all levels, building European, national, regional, municipal and urban partnerships. EGTCs in the border areas are the cornerstones of such cooperation.

1. Cross-border cooperation is a European task and political objective of the European Union, which needs to be implemented regionally and locally in partnership with the national authorities on the spot. Bilateral or trilateral cross-border cooperation at local and regional levels will therefore remain a necessity over long term, not just in order to overcome psychological barriers but also in order to facilitate partnerships that will balance differences through EGTCs.
2. In order to secure the multilevel governance model the EGTC abolishes borders and brings people closer together. EGTC means cooperation in all spheres of life, at all times, and with the inclusion of all actors in direct proximity to the border. EGTCs are promoting sustainable and social development in the border areas; infrastructure in the sectors of transport, environment, energy, border crossings, electronic communications; working together to address common challenges in fields such as public health; cooperation in the fields of research and technology; people-to-people actions (like cultural and educational exchanges and cooperation); widening investments in territorial and social cohesion (productive investments, human resource development, business-related infrastructure).

Is EGTC a legal tool of MLG?

EGTC was approved by the EU in 2006 (EGTC regulation 1082/2008). A new legal instrument offers a homogeneous legal basis that could be applied directly in all EU Member States on the basis of public (EU) law for all forms of cooperation (cross-border, interregional and transnational), and for both long-term strategic cooperation and project-based cooperation. EGTC is the first European cooperation structure with a legal personality defined by European Law. As a new legal tool EGTC was introduced to bring both uniformity and legal stability into cooperation.

The EGTC regulation is completed by national provisions adopted by each Member State of the EU. EGTCs shall be made up of members within the limits of their competences under national law. According to Article 3 of the EGTC regulation, members of EGTC must be Member States, regional or local authorities or other bodies, governed by public law. EGTC shall be made up of members located on the territory of at least two Member States.

In early 2013, according to the Committee of the Regions, thirty-two EGTC setups were registered along the European Union's internal borders and none in the external border area. National legal provisions were adopted in almost all Member States with the exception of Austria, Belgium and Germany. Due to their strong federal structures the discussions about federal legislation are ongoing. (EGTC Monitoring Report, 2012. p. 3)

Table 1. The legal framework of EGTC setups.

EU Law	Regulation (EC) 1082/2006 of the EP and of the Council
National Law	National legal provision <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Convention (adopted by EGTC members) • Statute (adopted by EGTC members)

There are four key features distinguishing EGTCs from other types of cooperation:

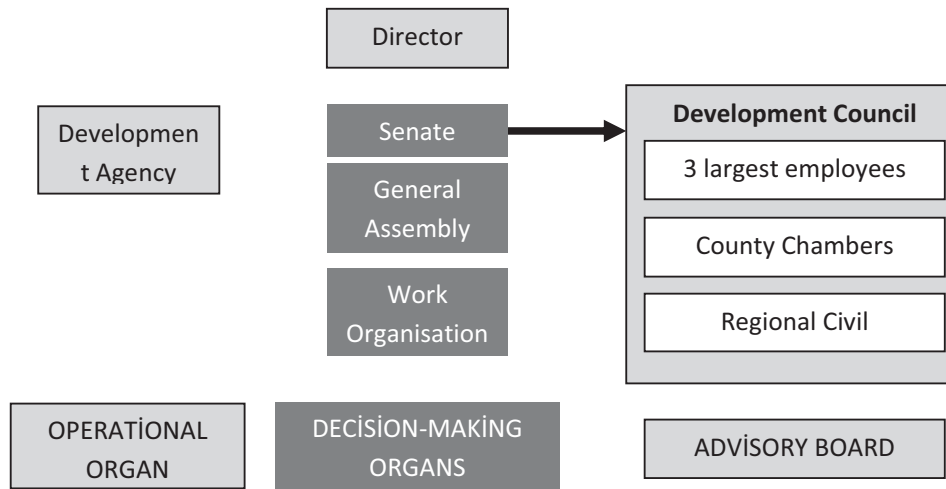
- they have the most extensive legal capacity accorded to legal persons under that Member State national law where EGTC has its registered office (EGTC regulation, Article 1. (3)-(4));
- they have the competence for decision-making;
- they entail the coordination and handling of several cross-border projects and initiatives;
- they have the specific structures necessary for supranational programs.

Cross-border cooperation complementing the territorial state by a multiplicity of spaces of place (Blatter, 2004. p. 534) The basic feature of the institutionalisation of cooperation systems, which is applicable in every case, is framed by an EGTC regulation. Concerning the institutional stability of cross-border governance it is flexible with respect to time and space and the institutional profile can be characterized by variety of cross-border institutions.² EGTC is a formalised structure of cooperation's partnership along the border. Each EGTC has a specific structure, with an assembly, which is made up of the representatives of its members, headed by a director, who represents the EGT and acts on its behalf. The Conventions may provide for additional organs with clearly defined powers, e.g. the senate is the managing body of the general assembly, permanent secretariat and administrative staff, commissions and thematic working groups and experts. One of the major milestones in the development of groupings is hiring staff.³ The success for an operative structure is measured through the availability of funding: the operation of these institutions can be financed by membership fees, common tender incomes and direct subventions of state. The major funding source is the ERFA of the ETC-projects.

Chart 1. The Ister-Granum EGTC between Hungary and Slovakia

² Liesbet Hooghe and Gary Marks distinguishes territorial governance from functional governance. In: Hooghe, L. & Marks, G.: Unraveling the Central State, but how? Types of Multi-level Governance. Types of Multi-level Governance. American Political Science Review, Vol. 97. No. 2. May 2003. p. 236

³ According to EGTC Monitoring Report (2012. p. 89) 19 EGTCs have reported hiring staff, i.e. more than half of all the groupings. In total, there are now about 85 persons working in EGTCs across the EU.



Source: Európai Tükör 2008, 7-8. p 125

Are EGTCs shaping the multilevel governance?

Setting up and operation of EGTCs mean to put multilevel governance into practice. What determines the actual fields of activity of an EGTC? Which actions on the ground can make EGTC an appropriate legal and institutional tool of MLG in border areas?

The building-up and institutionalisation of cooperation systems are largely influenced by the differences of legal and administrative systems, the basic problem that the cooperating organisations have to establish their proper contacts in a particularly heterogeneous administrative environment. The different legal and administrative systems of the connected countries are the root of many difficulties. It is essential for the development of the institutions' operative relations that all participants have the same jurisdiction and legitimacy. However, due to their construction, competence and possibilities the levels in some neighbouring countries are not compatible with their neighbouring counterparts. To provide alternative solutions to problems stemming from legal and institutional deficiencies, the creation of the EU's legal basis for enhancing territorial cooperation in the EU constitutes a major priority for local and regional authorities in the context of the new cohesion policy for the period 2007-2013. (Soós & Fejes, 2008. p. 124)

Table 2. Typology of partnerships.

Type of partnerships	Numbers of partnerships	Comment
Local	15	
Small 2 to 20 municipalities	10	Including EGTCs whose members are also Urban Communities
Medium 20 to 100 municipalities	3	
Large 101 to 200 municipalities	2	One in Spanish-Potoguse and one in the Hungarian-Slovak border areas
Regional	11	
Regional 2 to 6 partners	7	i.e. although institutions at national level are included regional interests prevail
Predominantly regional 2 to 6 partners	4	
Multi-level	2	
National, regional, local for specific purpose	2	
Transnational	4	
Local and regional	3	
National	1	EUKN
Total	32	

Source: EGTC Monitoring Report, 2012. p. 87

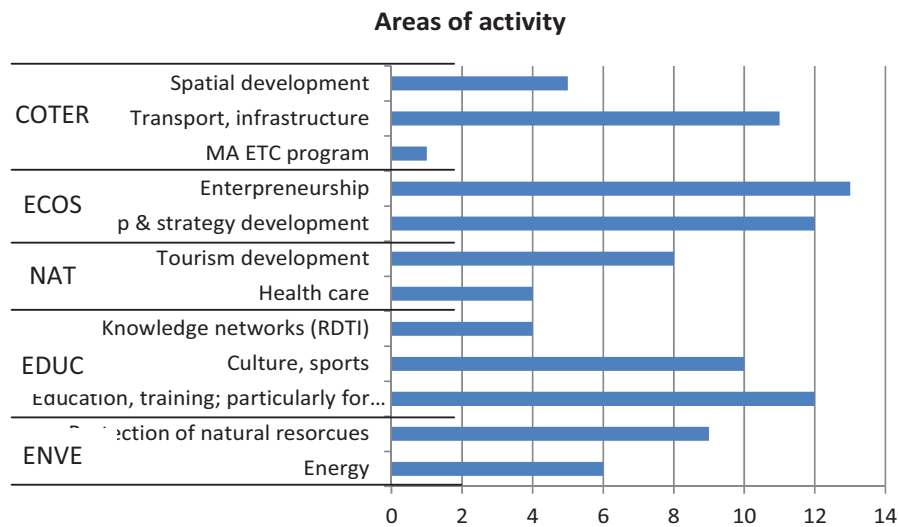
In order to identify where the EGTC establishment process is strong enough to build new pillars of multilevel governance desk research was used to get an overview of the activities of EGTCs. Almost all EGTCs have a website and the CoR online platform contained a lot of information about the basis documents (Convention, Statute) of the past and present developments.

There are significant differences across the 32 existing EGTCs. These groupings represent a total of about 700 institutions. The partnerships range from small-scale, local cooperation to regional-local cooperation and multi-level partnerships including actors from all administrative levels. About one third of all EGTCs are small local partnerships consisting of 2 to 20 municipalities. Another third of EGTCs can be seen as regional partnerships involving 2 to 6 partners.

The coordinated action of the various levels of government and the coordination of policies and instruments are vital to improve multilevel governance. Multilevel governance is not simply a question of translating European and national objectives into local and regional action, but must also be understood as a process for integrating the objectives of local and regional authorities within the strategies of the European Union. Moreover, multilevel governance should

reinforce and shape the responsibilities of local and regional authorities and encourage their participation in the coordination of European policies. (Committee of the Regions, 2009. p. 7.) The dimension of multilevel governance is a heart of the process to establish and manage EGTCs. The areas of application of EGTCs, according to emerging experience during the last few years are varied. The chart below provides a picture of the policy areas, currently covered by the groupings. The main lines of strategy are based on the basic documents of EGTCs.

Chart 2. Areas of activity



Source: EGTC Monitoring Report, 2012. p. 7

Concerning the territorial coverage of EGTC 32 groupings have been established, which can be classified into three groups of Member States.

- Spain, France, Portugal, with a total of seven groupings, have the longstanding history of cooperation in this part of Europe. Their cooperation is one of the remarkable assets that contributed to the success in establishing these groupings. Most of EGTCs take a broad approach to territorial cohesion.
- Along the borders of Hungary, Slovakia, and Romania 12 groupings have been established. The recent past saw very dynamic developments along the borders of Hungary supported by financial incentives from Hungary. Most of these groupings focus on a broad range of regional policy issues, in particular the promotion of entrepreneurship (e.g. through tourism development).

The group of EGTCs located in the core areas of the EU – i.e. the territories of France, Belgium, Germany and Luxembourg – focuses on spatial planning and urban development with initiatives in the fields of culture, sports and education.

Some groupings have been founded for one clear-cut purpose: the EGTC Grande Region acts as a Managing Authority for a multi-lateral cross-border cooperation programme linked to European Territorial Cooperation; the EGTC Hospital Cerdanya manages a cross-border

hospital; the EUKN is an interest grouping to promote urban policies. (EGTC Monitoring Report, 2012. pp. 5-6; pp. 86-91)

Summing up the challenges and future developments: Firstly, constituted EGTCs will be more spread-out across Europe, bringing the benefits of such entities to an increasing number of EU citizens. The presence of EGTC will grow stronger in those countries which currently have a low number of EGTCs constituted: Sweden, Austria, Poland, and the Czech Republic.

Secondly, Hungary continues to lead the way among groupings in terms of participating in new EGTCs. In fact, 15 EGTCs have at least one Hungarian member, and nine of these are partnerships with Slovakian members. 10 EGTCs have French members, 5 of which are groupings that include Spanish partners (8 in total).

Thirdly, drawing up a broad picture with both the established EGTCs and the EGTCs in the pipeline, it could be argued that the geographical coverage of the EGTCs is almost complete. Among the EGTCs in preparation there are many groupings which include countries that are not yet represented in the EGTC landscape. This includes Germany (five EGTCs), Italy (four EGTCs), Romania (four ETCs) and Poland (four EGTCs) in the process being set up. The Baltic States are the exception to the rule since they are not part of EGTCs.

Is EGTC a government tool of MLG?

EGTC is a tool for implementing multilevel governance in the cross-border areas. The cooperation of decentralised partnerships requires strong local and regional governments.

Territorial cooperation is an integral part of regional policy. The EGTC instrument was proposed to overcome the obstacles hindering cross-border cooperation in the EU. In the White Paper on European governance (2001) the Commission highlighted the new and modern ways of multilevel European governance. (N. Dizdarevic, 2011. p. 12) The EU sees the European Grouping of Territorial Cooperation as a genuine crucible for multilevel governance. (CoR, Follow up to the Committee of the Regions' White Paper, 2011. p. 11)

Counterbalancing the dominance of central government, in cooperation systems along the borders, the local and regional authorities come to the fore. The basic problem with different forms of collaboration in the past was that the cooperating organisations had to establish their proper contacts in a particularly heterogeneous administrative environment. The different legal and administrative systems of the connected countries comprised the root causes of many difficulties. It was essential for the development of the institutions' operative relations that all participants had the same jurisdiction and legitimacy. The development and strengthening of the competencies of the local and regional authorities, especially in external relations, started with the process of European integration.⁴ This process in itself posed no threat to the operating system of central state administration since the aim was not to create a new, independent level of

⁴ 'Local authorities shall be entitled, under such conditions as may be provided for by the law, to cooperate with their counterparts in other States'. (European Charter of Local Self-Government, Art. 10. (3))

'Within the limits of the law and their competences and with due regard for the obligations of the State, regional authorities may enter into transfrontier and/or inter-regional co-operation agreements with public bodies in other States. 2. Regional authorities may set up joint transfrontier and/or inter-regional co-operation bodies with legal personality in accordance with the law and, where appropriate, bilateral, multilateral or international treaties governing the establishment and activities of such bodies. 3. Regional authorities should be able to benefit from financial resources from the State, European or international institutions and other public bodies designed to finance transfrontier and/or inter-regional co-operation projects.' (Draft European Charter of Regional Democracy, Art. 41. (1-3))

administration but to connect already existing levels of administration for cooperations. (AEBR, Practical Guide, 1997: B1,7)

The core competences of local and regional authorities are in the context of institution-building of EGTCs, taking into account the prospects for Europeanisation (decentralisation and regionalisation) across a diverse European Union. Referring to the EGTC regulation (EGTC regulation 1082/2006 Art. 3) the creation of EGTC is the right of the cooperating parties. Since local and regional governments are the decision-making bodies of a political authority, decisions about cooperation with the local and regional governments of other countries are to be made with a qualified majority within the governing body. The theory of multilevel governance have seen an increased focus on the emergence of subnational governance structures in the EU. This development, albeit slow yet because the contribution of regional and local levels in cross-border relations to multilevel governance is determined by the extent the central government it broadens their competence in public law. Although there is a clear trend in Europe towards a process of decentralisation the conditions for such shared governance have not yet been met in full. Competences devolved to regions and municipalities vary between the member states.

The following typology of state structure, defined by the EU working group on multilevel governance, distinguishes four types of state systems: federal, regionalised, decentralised and unitary.

Table 3. Typology of state structures

Unitary states	Decentralised unitary states	Regionalised unitary states	Federal states
Cyprus Greece Luxembourg Ireland Portugal Bulgaria Estonia Hungary Lithuania Romania Slovenia	Denmark Finland The Netherlands France Sweden Latvia Slovakia Czech Republic	Italy Malta Spain United Kingdom Poland	Austria Belgium Germany

Source: Metis GmbH: The EGTC: State of play and prospects, 2009. p. 23

EGTCs assist the cooperation of decentralised partnerships; that is regional or local cross-border cooperation systems evolve. All these examples strengthen that EGTC has been recently considered as a significantly important stage in the decentralization process of the European Union as the subject of MLG.

The relationship between local and regional democracy and cross-border cooperation should be seen as complementary notions: effective cross-border cooperation requires strong local and regional governments. Successfully strengthened cross-border cooperation needs an appropriate legislative framework in terms of local and regional governance, administrative reforms and capacity building. But the subnational conditions for good multilevel governance actually depend on the Member States themselves since the actual creation and operation of cooperation systems largely depend on the political attitude of their central governments.

Is EGTC a political tool of MLG?

MLG is not simply a 'division of powers', but rather a 'process of power sharing' structure.

Concerning the Committee of the Regions, multilevel governance represents a political rather than a legal instrument. Does MLG represent a political system with interconnected institutions that exist at multiple levels and have unique policy features? The Committee of the Regions considers multilevel governance to mean coordinated actions by the European Union, the Member States and local and regional authorities, based on partnership and aimed at drawing up and implementing EU policies.⁵ The essence of the partnership model of governance suggested by the Committee of the Regions' White Paper (2009) is an equal and democratic status of local, regional, national and European tiers of government and the voluntary cooperation among these different tiers. (Gal & Brie, 2011. p. 288)

However, multilevel governance fosters interconnection and interaction between different stakeholders through the institutional framework of EGTCs: the creation of broad partnerships between the political, economic, cultural and civil actors, with regional and local authorities and all public or private entities (universities, chambers of commerce, foundations, etc.) with closer cooperation with citizens must include all aspects of everyday life along borders. (Spinaci & Vara-Arribas, 2009. p. 6) All these interactions promote strengthening the horizontal partnerships on the ground, thereby they increase the added value of multilevel governance.

The standpoint of CoR's White Paper underlines that multilevel governance is a dynamic process with a horizontal and a vertical dimension. Its vertical dimension presupposes better coordination and cooperation between the different tiers of government, while its horizontal dimension imposes a coherent implementation of sectoral policies in order to ensure sustainable development and synergy with other relevant policies of the European Union. (CoR, White Paper on multilevel governance, 2009. p. 23)

The forming features of the new form of cross-border governance take account of the best participation practices at local and regional levels. A concrete case for a combination of horizontal and vertical integration is the EGTC Hospital de Cerdanya, where the partners from the region mean the involvement of municipalities, trade unions, professionals and economic actors. The Catalan and French governments (represented by the Ministries of Health in each country) and the French regional health agency developed the detailed project. The Hospital de Cerdanya EGTC (2010) is an example of the successful cooperation between national, regional and local levels: (EGTC Developments on the ground, 2010. pp. 53-54) Grande Region EGTC (2010) acts as a traditional 'project-based' cooperation across borders. With its diverse multilevel members (national, regional and local authorities) the Grande Region specifically represents an example of multilevel governance. (EGTC Developments on the ground, 2010. pp. 56-58)

The ZASNET EGTC (2010) results from a partnership between Portugal and Spain. It is an example of multilevel governance since it assembles municipalities, regional authorities and provinces. (EGTC Monitoring Report, 2011. pp. 105-106)

Multilevel governance is also possible through cooperation with the higher administrative levels. The West-Vlaanderen/Flandre-Dunkerque-Côte d'Opale EGTC (2009) between France and Belgium underpins that process. The EGTC is composed of various types of members with differing competences. It brings together the national /federal government with regions,

⁵ The special Eurobarometer 307 Report on the role of local and regional authorities within the European Union, published in 2009, highlights the fact that shared governance seems natural for Europeans. CoR, White Paper on Multilevel governance, 2009. p. 6

provinces, communities as well as organisations/agencies. (EGTC Developments on the ground, 2010. pp. 44-45)

The European Urban Knowledge Network (EUKN) EGTC (2012) differs from the traditional EGTCs. It made up of Member States national authorities to enhance the exchange of knowledge and expertise on urban development. It may serve as an example for formalising certain areas of intergovernmental cooperation. (EGTC Monitoring Report, 2012. pp. 30-31)

The European Union provided a stable, institutional framework for the application of a new, non-national state space concept (CESCI, 2010, p. 13) This form of governance is flexible and outlines the dynamic system as the new form of multilevel governance: the power-sharing at all levels. Besides the horizontal integration (between different sectors) changes in governance also have an impact on the degree of vertical integration evolving between different administrative tiers.

Through the creation of legal framework partners from different countries and different administrative levels can take joint decisions. Decisions stem from multilevel interactions of administrative systems throughout Europe and develop some common traits that characterize them as European administrations.

The point is that the development of multilevel governance in many respects cannot go without the development of the European Administrative Space. The MLG presupposes the build up of an European Administrative Space. (Ongaro, 2009. p. 1) EGTCs are new actors exercising public authority in this administrative space. The evolving EGTC network constitutes the complementing added value, the distinctive feature of the European Administrative Space.

Closing remarks

Summing up the ongoing processes along the internal borders of the EU:

- Most EGTCs are involved in wide-ranging policy development and strategy building. Over the coming years their focus of action will be subject to change. This type of EGTC explores and develops new forms of governance. In addition EGTCs are generally established to bring together authorities from different administrative levels, including regions, communities or municipalities. Through the creation of legal frameworks, partners from different countries and at different administrative levels can collaborate at local, regional and national levels and make joint decisions and take actions.
- EGTC is truly laboratories of multi-level governance because EGTC brings together partners from different levels of governments. There is a need to open more and more towards economic and social partners.
- The whole functioning of the EGTC legal and operational system requires a strong cooperation between the European, national, regional and local authorities.
- There are high expectations to learn from countries like Hungary, Spain and France and their partners how to use EGTCs in order to implement sophisticated multilevel governance planning practices.
- EGTC is an instrument of multilevel governance and it contributes to the quality improvement of local and regional cross-border cooperation. The EGTC regulation is the first example among EU legal regulations in the course of which a legal instrument grants special rights to local, regional and national public law institutions and civil law organisations of different member states, in order to develop unified structures that can achieve more efficient cooperation. Cross-border cooperation therefore will remain an indispensable factor to facilitate partnerships between neighbouring countries. Partnerships of this kind can built the new multilevel good neighbourly relations on the borders.

- The EU's commitment and assistance need to be matched with the dedication of central governments to implement the necessary administrative and legal reforms. But the top-down support of EGTCs by central governments in some countries is still missing; therefore the political reluctance slows down the elaboration process.
- A successfully strengthened EGTC network requires an appropriate legislative framework in terms of local/regional governance, administrative reforms and capacity building. It is essential for local and regional authorities to possess the necessary power to play their natural role of promoting multilevel governance. Overcoming the obstacles and barriers created by borders due to national law and the differing administrative structures and competences is the willingness of local and regional authorities. But the intention of the central governments is indispensable for the creation and effective operation of EGTC systems.
- The current legal and governmental tools for EGTC shall have to be adapted in order to enable it to reach its potential. It would be desirable to facilitate the participation from third countries of integrated basin strategies (e.g. Carpathian Basin, Mediterranean Basin, Danube River Basin or the Baltic Sea Region). Concrete action plans could serve indeed to map out those areas where EGTCs can substantially contribute to MLG.
- The partnerships, both vertically between local and regional authorities, national governments and the European Union, and horizontally between local and regional authorities as well as public and private sectors and civil society, should be reinforced.
- Despite the developments and the overall success of the EGTCs all over the European Union, some general challenges persist. The external borders, due to the Schengen acquis, are evidently in a disadvantageous situation. The EGTC regulation cannot be applied directly in non-EU Member States. In order to encourage the inclusion of entities from third countries there is a demand to have an international agreement between the two states, further bilateral agreement between the EU Member State and non-EU Member State. Cooperation with third countries within the framework of the EGTC is possible if it is allowed by the national legal regulation of the given non-EU Member State.

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Supporting online material

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31. CoR overview of EGTC setups already in place: <http://portal.cor.europa.eu/egtc/en-US/Register/already/Pages/welcome.aspx>
32. European Grouping of Territorial Cooperation. National provision of Hungary and other Member States
33. <http://egtc.kormany.hu/admin/download/3/10/10000/ETT%20trv.%20angol%21%20ez.doc>
34. <http://egtc.kormany.hu/national-provisions-of-other-member-states>
35. Association of European Border Regions: <http://www.aebr.eu/en/index.php>