
”A global view on Cross-Border Cooperation in the European Union: introducing the RECOT comparative database on existing Euroregions across the EU territory”

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Abstract

Despite the numerous threats faced by the EU’s integration project in recent days, European Territorial Cooperation (ETC) policies have so far kept on track with their programmes in pursuing the added value of cooperation to their social and economic cohesion objectives. Even further, they have indeed contributed in creating strong ties between cross-border actors all along the Union’s internal borders. Since the first INTERREG programme launched already 25 years ago, the Cross-Border dimension has particularly benefited from the continued flows of EU financial support, contributing to the explosion of the euroregional phenomenon across the internal and external borders of the EU.

Euroregions can generally be intended as cross-border organizations spun by the political agreement between at least two sub-national public actors from each side of the border (Perkmann, 2003; 2007; *Mission opérationnelle transfrontalière*, 2015). Although there is nowadays an existing abundance of individual or sectoral study-cases on Euroregions and CBC, generalizations and comparative studies are rare. Which cross-border areas do have successful and innovative euroregions? Which policy areas do successful euroregional projects cover? Under what conditions is an euroregion more likely to survive and to contribute to the definition of effective cross-border policies?

Starting from an extensive exploration of more than 325 possible euroregional experiences, the present paper introduces the results of a comparative analysis which includes 80 currently operating euroregions. Through establishing our own operational definition of Euroregion, we have reduced the initial sample to exclusively those euroregions that were especially active and with relevant projects. The definitive version of the final in-depth database includes the most relevant dimensions of the selected euroregions such as geographical and territorial information, governance structures and institutional arrangements (AECT), sectoral priorities, the general mission and objectives plus a cataloguing of participating actors. This paper will therefore introduce the preliminary results of comparative analysis spawning from the above-mentioned contents, hence proposing an innovative global view perspective on the euroregional phenomena.

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