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**STEERING COMMITTEE ON LOCAL AND REGIONAL DEMOCRACY  
(CDLR)**

**NEIGHBOURING CITIES AND TOWNS  
DIVIDED BY AN INTERNATIONAL BORDER  
Final activity report**

Secretariat Memorandum  
prepared by the  
Directorate General 1 – Legal Affairs  
Directorate of Co-operation for  
Local and Regional Democracy

## **Foreword**

In 2000, the (former) Select Committee of Experts on Transfrontier Co-operation was requested by the Steering Committee on Local and Regional Democracy to carry out a study “on the specific problems of towns separated by a frontier”. This study should help the Steering Committee to perform the ad hoc terms of reference given to it by the Committee of Ministers, following the adoption of Recommendation 85 (2000) of the Congress of Local and Regional Authorities of Europe, which read as follows:

“to prepare a study on the specific problems of towns and cities divided by national frontiers, and draw up measures to lessen the effects of this division on local inhabitants”.

A study on “Towns whose public services are highly integrated with another town in a neighbouring country in Europe”, prepared by Professor Helga Schultz (with the co-operation of Ms Katarzyna Stoklosa and Ms Dagmara Jajesnia-Quast) of the Viadrina University of Frankfurt/Oder (Germany) represented the basis for the establishment of an Outline report by the Secretariat, which the Committee of experts approved in March 2002. The Committee also agreed to expand the list of examples of “good practice” of co-operation between neighbouring cities and invited its members to communicate the relevant information to the Secretariat on the basis of a new questionnaire.

In the meantime, the Committee of Ministers extended up to 31 December 2002 the deadline for the completion of the above mentioned terms of reference.

The LR-CT adopted the final activity report on this activity at the meeting it held on 10-11 October 2002 and submitted it to the CDLR for further adoption and communication to the Committee of Ministers.

**(DRAFT) FINAL ACTIVITY REPORT****NEIGHBOURING CITIES AND TOWNS  
DIVIDED BY AN INTERNATIONAL BORDER***Contents*

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## ***Introduction***

In 2000, the (former) Select Committee of Experts on Transfrontier Co-operation was requested by the Steering Committee on Local and Regional Democracy (CDLR) to carry out a study “on the specific problems of towns separated by a frontier”. This study should help the Steering Committee to perform the ad hoc terms of reference given to it by the Committee of Ministers, following the adoption of Recommendation 85 (2000) of the Congress of Local and Regional Authorities of Europe, which read as follows:

“to prepare a study on the specific problems of towns and cities divided by national frontiers, and draw up measures to lessen the effects of this division on local inhabitants”.

At the request of the (former) Select Committee of Experts on Transfrontier Co-operation, a study on “Towns whose public services are highly integrated with another town in a neighbouring country in Europe” was conducted in 2001 by a team of experts from the Viadrina University (Frankfurt/Oder, Germany) led by Professor Helga Schultz. This study was submitted for consideration to the Select Committee first and subsequently to the Steering Committee on Local and Regional Democracy (CDLR).

In the light of the comments made, the (renamed) Committee of Experts on Transfrontier Co-operation (LR-CT) prepared an Outline report containing an overview of the situation prevailing in some “divided cities” in Europe, giving some concrete examples of “good practice” of joint management of public services and containing a list of measures to lessen the consequences of the division on local inhabitants.

The CDLR has approved the Outline report and the list of measures attached to it.

***Recommendations to the Committee of Ministers***

1 The Outline report on “Neighbouring cities and towns divided by an international border” should be communicated to the Congress of Local and Regional Authorities of Europe and be made public on the Council of Europe’s website.

2 The Steering Committee invites the Committee of Ministers to draw the attention of member states to the “measures to lessen the consequences of the division on the local inhabitants” whose implementation they should consider.

3 The Committee of Ministers should also transmit the Outline report to the Committee of Advisers on the Development of Transfrontier Co-operation in Central and Eastern Europe for information.

4 The Steering Committee will continue to pay attention to the issues of “divided cities” as they constitute good laboratories of further intergation at the European level.

5 To this end, the information on “good practice” of joint management of public services, public utilities, innovative solutions to common problems and organisation of joint events should be regularly updated and made available to all those interested, for instance in the framework of the “Loreg” database of the Council of Europe.

**OUTLINE REPORT ON  
NEIGHBOURING CITIES AND TOWNS  
DIVIDED BY AN INTERNATIONAL BORDER**

**Introduction and definitions**

The terminology used to describe the situation covered by the report varies in the literature. Reference is often made to “twin towns”, “double towns” and “divided towns”. This reflects various realities: “twin towns” are cities that may be geographically distant but engaged in various forms of partnerships; “double towns” often function as “couple towns” characterized by a relationship of complementarity and substitution, or even of subsidiarity and competition. This is not necessarily correlated with separation due to the existence of an international border, with which “divided cities” are often associated.

Also, the word “divided” seems to imply some sort of “enforced” separateness while many factors – history, geography, economy – may have been at the origin either of one city splitting into two, or generating a separate neighbourhood, or even of two cities being independently established close to each other.

For the purpose of the outline report, the cause of the situation whereby a “couple” of settlements are today separated by an international border is not relevant. Furthermore, the very notion of “division” is questionable in as much as international borders may have become less of an obstacle to the movement of people and goods as a consequence of bilateral agreements or of complex political decisions (such as European integration). Therefore, it could be assumed that the cities under investigation can be better described as “neighbouring towns” or cities.

The study recorded 18 “couples” of neighbouring cities<sup>1</sup> (while the number of towns possibly coming under the same definition is much greater and, depending on classification and authors, even higher than 100 across Europe) lying at three types of international borders: between two European Union member states, between one EU and one non-EU member state, between two non-EU member states<sup>2</sup>. This distinction is obviously relevant when one compares the different types of regulations affecting the movement of persons and goods across those borders. However, the types of co-operation that can be established between the two neighbouring cities and the possible obstacles that they may be confronted with seem to be less related to the types of international border than to such factors as political will, domestic competence and financial and budgetary capability.

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<sup>1</sup> See Appendix A.

<sup>2</sup> See Appendix B.

## **Conditions and realities**

History affects cross-border co-operation. When separateness is long established, also closeness has developed in parallel: Co-operation has progressively become entrenched in the mentalities and the working habits of municipal authorities. When the same situation has been the result of recent, often traumatic or sudden events, populations and municipalities have had little time and insufficient tools to overcome the consequences of an abrupt separation.

The existence of minorities in the neighbouring cities and the use of a common language can act as factors of closeness and encourage co-operation (one aspect of which is, at the individuals' level, the rate of "mixed" marriages). The possibility of using a common language in the neighbouring city is a powerful encouragement for citizens to cross the border and for local elected representative to establish direct contacts and engage in co-operation. However, the issue of language seems mostly related to the existence of a minority (irrespective of its legal status) speaking the "neighbour's" language. Whether the population not belonging to the said "minority" also speaks the "neighbour's" language is in fact less evident. Bilingualism may only characterise a numerical minority.

The existence of a border is a defining requirement of the study and therefore border crossing is an indicator of the impact of the border on every day's life. Border crossing has increased dramatically between all European countries over the Nineties. This is a consequence of both the progressive elimination of internal EU borders and the disappearance of the main restrictions to the free movement of persons that existed between Western and former Communist countries. However, the difference in the legal status of EU internal and external check-points means that a number of limitations and conditions still exist which translate into the longer waiting time required to cross an external EU frontier than an internal one, irrespective of the number of checkpoints available. In addition, crossing a non-EU border may also be a lengthy and time-consuming experience especially when there exist passport and/or visa requirements. It has to be acknowledged that both the need for strengthened sovereignty of the new states on the one hand and the pressure by the European Union for security on her future external border on the other, play a crucial role here.

Is the setting up of separate lanes for local and transit traffic a solution to this problem? There seems to be evidence that distinguishing local and transit traffic for the purpose of border crossing makes life easier for local commuters, who are not mixed with long-distance traffic and passengers. The same applies to the lifting of the visa requirement, which some (non-EU) countries have negotiated for the benefit either of their citizens in general or of the local residents.

Motivation for border crossing is dependent on several factors, but does not seem related to the type of frontier. Shopping, meeting friends and relatives, using sport and leisure facilities or attending cultural events are motivations commonly used with similar frequency to cross EU and non-EU borders. The only and obvious difference in pattern is the motivation related to work and profession, which is much lower for the Eastern external borders of the EU than for the other types of frontiers.

Shopping tourism should not however be rated as a “second class” inter-relationship. Shopping is an important factor of every day life as it connects people. It is a first ranking economic factor for the development of border cities. It improves the role of these cities for their hinterland and is an essential supplement to tourism.

As regards commuting for work purposes, the differences in economic development, the de-industrialisation and the closing down of plants in some former communist economies, especially in frontier areas, and the very limited access to the European Union’s labour market explain why this factor is relatively low both across the Eastern external borders of the EU and across at least some non-EU borders.

### **Co-operation of municipalities**

Cross-border co-operation develops not simply as a self-organisation process; even if there are the best conditions and circumstances such as common history, shared interests, bilingualism, kinship and open borders, it does not grow from grass roots. It requires a certain amount of institutionalisation, i.e. the signing of agreements, the establishment of procedures, the setting up of common bodies, etc. This may eventually lead to the joint consideration of issues and the adoption of common solutions, to be implemented jointly or separately but in a co-ordinated form.

Institutionalisation has made substantial progress during the last ten years, as the number of agreements between municipalities has more than tripled in comparison with the preceding decade. This trend affects cities both within the EU and outside the EU, including cities at the Eastern external borders of the European Union. A certain amount of financial support from the European Union (notably in the framework of the INTERREG and PHARE-CBC programmes) clearly helped and supported the trend. Euroregions or similar co-operative entities have also played a role in giving a stable framework for co-operation to cities and other territorial authorities.

Institutionalisation usually proceeds in stages. The first stage is the implementation of single projects, such as the establishment of a joint library (Baarle-Baarle, B/NL), sewage plants (Oberndorf-Laufen, A/D, Guben-Gubin, D/PL), gas and water supply (Guben-Gubin, D/PL, Gorizia-Nova Gorica, I/SLO). The second stage usually involves moving from the project to institutionalised dialogue, including regularly planned joint meetings. In this connection, one can distinguish between the meetings of mayors and their staff, and the meetings of municipal councils. This helps to frame what could be called a joint approach to local policy. The third stage is the eventual setting up of joint bodies or even public corporations. After a long(ish) period in the second stage, the third one becomes almost inevitable.

This progressive institutionalisation is driven by internal dynamics and not by outside factors or impact, nor even – so it seems from available evidence – the existence and availability of EU funds. There are no (recorded) examples of neighbouring cities after a period of co-operation leaving the common path and cutting connections. The towns follow the path to closer union despite all obstacles in domestic law, limited resources, differing traditions and cultures, even diverging interests at state level.

Progressively, the cities raise their common goal from merely “saving money” by implementing specific projects together to a beneficial development on several levels. While it can be safely assumed that the “money saving” argument is still a cornerstone of co-operation, the wider, positive view of co-operation has become equally entrenched.

Can this process lead to the eventual setting up of some sort of joint institutions? A few examples exist such as the Provincia Bothniensis (between the cities of Tornio and Haparanda, FIN/S), Eurode (between Herzogenrath and Kerkrade, D/NL), Eurotown (between Görlitz and Zgorzelec, D/PL). Joint bodies or corporations take over the cross-border competences of the communities and assume new responsibilities in project development and crisis management, and also in decision-making and local policy. This is not detrimental to the competences of the constituent entities according to domestic law. The decision making process is usually described as long and complicated, as in addition to the local municipalities also state authorities need to be involved. The legal environment is usually insufficiently developed to cope with this new phenomenon, as the joint bodies do not have decision-making powers (their recommendations need to be acted upon by the municipal assemblies or councils) and enjoy very limited financial autonomy (they can request funds from the EU for instance, for joint projects).

## **Networked public services**

Networked public service is the main subject of co-operation, as the connection of public services offers more advantages than simple “money saving”: it improves the quality of life and the living conditions of the citizens and is closely connected with environmental protection. The sectors that seem to lend themselves most to co-operation are: public transport, fire-fighting, water supply, sewage plants management, health care services, gasworks, refuse collection, street cleaning, power station management.

Public transport and fire fighting come first, as they respond directly to day-to-day needs at relatively low cost for the taxpayer, without heavy investment or complex legal regulations being necessary. Waterworks and sewage plants are on the contrary costly investments, strictly regulated in technical requirements and relatively expensive to run (in local taxes). The fact that they come as a significant example of joint management is perhaps an indication more of a need for a joint approach (in terms of “money saving”) and of urgency for common solutions than of a widespread reality. Common use of gasworks and power stations seems rather rare, as is refuse collection and street cleaning. Arrangements in the sector of public health care are tried but not widespread.

Another way of looking at these agreements is to compare the stages of integration of the various services. Evidence tends to show that cities move from one sector (stage one), to two-three sectors (stage two) to five to seven sectors (stage three) as if there were clear economies of scale in jumping from three to over five integrated sectors.

There is also a differentiation between the neighbouring towns in the former Eastern bloc and those in the West. The former remain in the first stage of the process, with only one or two linked sectors (mostly transport) thus signalling a marked difficulty of transforming institutionalisation into lasting co-operation backed by budgetary and financial capability.

## **Specific sectors of co-operation**

Public transport is the preferred and most urgent sector of co-operation. In the sample, every second city responding to the questionnaire mentioned it. In most cases, the common transport is achieved through the establishment of a common network of public transport serving both cities or a greater area. The network can be owned and managed by the city, or by a public or private corporation (upon tender). The development of common transport is often used as a means of promoting old town centres, reducing air pollution by diminishing individual transport and shortening queues at border crossing points (as buses have priority over cars). Sometimes the setting up of common transport facilities clashes with long established interests, such as those of private taxi companies, and the setting up of a bi-national taxi company may be a second best option to the common public transport network.

Assistance in fire-fighting and emergency assistance is also one of the most widespread examples of co-operation between cities. However, apart from the assistance provided in rescue operations, this co-operation requires that some technical prerequisites are defined in an agreed form: single call number, same radio frequency, compatible hoses, etc. This sometimes involves state authorities and/or their prior agreement on a number of issues that cannot be dealt with at local level only.

Sewage and water supply have a high ranking among common public services but common facilities are still rather scarce. Heavy investment and maintenance costs are an obvious obstacle. Different standards may also play a role in delaying the implementation of the project or in increasing its cost. Often, the states have to come to an agreement on the feasibility, financing and upkeep of these facilities, depending on domestic legislation. Sewage plants are often at the origin of sustained co-operation expanding when successful to other public utilities. In all cases the respondent cities signalled either the existence of jointly managed sewage plants or their intention to build one.

Refuse collection and street cleaning also seem an obvious case for co-operation, especially when one city is capable of providing the appropriate treatment to both entities (incineration, recycling, etc.). Yet most states prohibit the export of refuse or waste. The current situation seems to be that all towns have rubbish collection and street cleaning facilities and that although space for closer co-operation exists this field is not seen as being so urgent as water and sewage plants.

The connection of gas and power supply seems a similarly complicated field, although it can clearly work as a commercial relationship where one entity sells and the other buys the commodity. Examples can be found between cities in Western Europe, while there seem to exist no successful examples on the Eastern frontiers of the European Union. Investment is probably an obstacle to the linkage of grids and networks. The upgrading of existing facilities, which are often outdated, could offer good opportunities to create joint companies of neighbouring cities.

The improvement of public services remains an important part of urban planning in most neighbouring cities. Sometimes, plans focus on the vision of a common city centre for the citizens of both towns, or at least on (already ambitious) commonly agreed spatial planning perspectives for both cities. This approach to spatial planning shows how far cities have gone in accepting each other as a genuine partner and an essential component of common life. Despite its somewhat "utopian" dimension, joint spatial planning is often a decisive step from the stage of managing together specific tasks to that of planning a common future, with all its implications for citizens' participation, decision-making by the political bodies involved and the reduction if not disappearance of the "barrier" effect of the frontier.

The geographical vicinity and the existence of two linguistic and cultural environments in both neighbouring cities would seem to make it obvious for the citizens to exploit this opportunity and choose the school to which to send their children so that they can grow up truly “bilingual”. Reality is less rosy: education is often a state responsibility and it may prove very difficult either to set up common schools, or to exchange teachers to teach each other’s language in the opposite school. Freedom to choose the school in either country, although not widespread, seems less of a problem, albeit subject to state regulations on the mutual recognition of diplomas. The possibility of conditional attendance at schools in the neighbouring city is often linked to specific projects, which introduce exceptions to the regulations applying to national school systems. Looking at the situation in language teaching, the pupils in most neighbouring towns receive or could receive instruction in the neighbour’s language at school. Three quarters of the sampled cities use this practice, which covers cases of both obligatory and optional learning of the neighbour’s language.

Without improving the command of the neighbour’s language, progress in cultural co-operation remains limited. Culture is an essential part of common urban life in neighbour cities. As mentioned above, visiting cultural institutions and events in the partner city is not the least of the motivations for border crossing. A distinction could be made between visiting permanent facilities such as libraries and swimming pools and attending specific events, such as concerts, opera performances and museum exhibitions. Also, in order to increase the attractiveness of such facilities, reduced-price tickets are often offered or information desks and cultural windows are opened in the neighbouring city. Common festivals are also an occasion to improve and demonstrate citizens’ engagement in cross-border affairs.

Associations and the media also play a role in bringing together the communities of the neighbouring cities. However, there seems to be scant evidence of genuinely bi-national associations, the citizens of either city being free to become members of the association of their choice (significant exceptions are international associations such as Lions or Rotary Clubs which, in border cities, often have bi-national clubs). The media situation is mixed. Most newspapers published in border areas and read in border towns do provide information on what happens beyond the border, mostly relating to cultural and sports events, local politics and urban development (in as much as it affects the local community). The frequency of such information seems on average to be weekly rather than daily, and rarely dwelling on the “dark side” of local life. Petty crime and scandals receive little if no attention at all. A possible explanation lies with the role the press sees for itself in promoting a positive approach to transfrontier co-operation, by avoiding negative examples which might adversely affect the efforts conducted at political level to bring the populations closer together.

## **Conclusions**

Neighbouring towns have developed and strengthened positive forms of co-operation and even integration. They have overcome a history of divisions and developed urban life on a bicultural basis and under European labels. They have tested the limits of legal harmonisation and shaped new institutional forms.

The strong points of neighbouring cities are: common language or access to two languages, open borders (especially within the European Union), integrated or easily accessible public services including schools, dynamic cultural life, media coverage of both sides of the frontier.

Some examples of “good practice” in joint management of public services are given at Appendix C to this outline report.

Weaknesses in neighbouring cities are: inequality of resources, marginal location and unequal size, often coupled with limited budgetary capability; visa requirements (especially between EU member and non-member states) and undifferentiated border crossing facilities; reduced capability for joint institutions and decision-making bodies.

In the field of public services, the most frequently quoted ones are those that require limited investment and running costs, such as public transport. Heavy infrastructures such as sewage plants, water and gas supply, power plants are often top priorities but receive limited implementation, as they require financial capabilities that go beyond the possibilities of the cities involved. New trends towards joint spatial planning are encouraging signs of a forward-looking approach that overcomes the scars of the recent past.

The European Union funds have so far played a limited yet concrete role in helping to induce some cross-border approach in dealing with issues that affect neighbouring towns across the Eastern borders of the European Union. This trend should continue as the enlargement of the European Union involves more states.

**APPENDIX A**  
**CITIES SURVEYED**  
**(from returned questionnaires or published information)**

Town A	Town B	People A	People B	State A	State B	Border River
1. Laufenburg	Laufenburg	2,006	8,300	CH	D	Rhine
2. Baarle-Hertog	Baarle-Nassau	2,128	6,100	B	NL	No
3. Oberndorf	Laufen	5,435	6,439	A	D	Salzach
4. Valka	Valga	6,820	15,500	LV	EE	Varzupite
5. Tui	Valença	15,827	13,769	E	P	Minho
6. Tornio	Haparanda	22,617	10,412	FIN	S	Torne
7. Český Těšín	Cieszyn	26,000	36,000	CZ	PL	Olza
8. Guben	Gubin	27,000	19,000	D	PL	Neisse
9. Rheinfelden	Rheinfelden	32,000	10,600	D	CH	Rhine
10. Buchs	Schaan /Vaduz	32,551	32,426	CH	FL	Rhine
11. Komárno	Komárom	38,000	22,000	SK	H	Danube
12. Gorizia	Nova Gorica	38,800	14,700	I	SLO	No
13. Herzogenrath	Kerkrade	46,500	51,500	D	NL	No
14. Irún/Hondarribia	Hendaye	13,000/15,000	57,000	E	F	Bidasoa
15. Görlitz	Zgorzelec	62,421	35,600	D	PL	Neisse
16. Frankfurt (Oder)	Ślubice	72,000	16,907	D	PL	Oder
17. Narva	Iwangorod	74,572	11,892	EE	RUS	Narva
18. Rousse	Giurgiu	186,737	74,190	BG	RO	Danube

## APPENDIX B

### TYPES OF EXISTING FRONTIERS AND CONTROLS

Neighbouring cities and towns	Border type	Joint border control	Obstacles in fields <sup>3</sup>	Check Points
1. Laufenburg-Laufenburg	EU-external	Yes No control	1, 2, 3, 4	1
2. Baarle-Hertog-Baarle-Nassau	EU-internal			>3
3. Oberndorf-Laufen	EU-internal	No control		1
4. Valka-Valga	Non-EU-border	Yes	1, 2, 3, 4	3
5. Valença-Tui	EU-internal	No control		1
6. Tornio-Haparanda	EU-internal	No control		>3
7. Český Těšín-Cieszyn	Non-EU	Yes	2, 3, 4	3
8. Guben-Gubin	EU-external	Yes	1, 2, 3, 4	2
9. Rheinfelden-Rheinfelden	EU-external	Yes	1, 2, 3, 4	3
10. Buchs-Schaan/Vaduz	Non-EU-border	No control	2	2
11. Komárno-Komárom	Non-EU	No	2, 3, 4	1
12. Gorizia-Nova Gorica	EU-external	n. D.	1, 2, 3, 4	n. D.
13. Herzogenrath-Kerkrade	EU-internal	No control		>3
14. Irun/Hondarribia/Hendaye	EU-internal	No control		3
15. Görlitz-Zgorzelec	EU-external	Yes	1, 2, 3, 4	2
16. Frankfurt (Oder)-Słubice	EU-external	Yes	1, 2, 3, 4	2
17. Narva-Iwangorod	Non-EU	No	1, 2, 3, 4	1
18. Rousse-Giurgiu	Non-EU	No	1, 2, 3, 4	1

<sup>3</sup> Fields: 1 = Passport and/or Visa control; 2 = Work permit; 3 = Customs examination; 4 = Property market restrictions.

## APPENDIX C

### **EXAMPLES OF SUCCESSFUL TRANSFRONTIER CO-OPERATION BETWEEN NEIGHBOURING CITIES AND TOWNS DIVIDED BY AN INTERNATIONAL BORDER**

The “best practice” of transfrontier co-operation between divided towns is well illustrated by the examples of Haparanda/Tornio (Sweden-Finland), Baarle-Hertog/Baarle-Nassau (Belgium-Netherlands), the trinational agglomeration of Basel (France-Germany-Switzerland) and the Consortium Bidassoa-Txingudi (Spain-France). These examples could serve as an example for divided towns in non-European Union member states where the legal framework for transfrontier cooperation is still weak and therefore, joint urban planning and the joint provision of public utilities meagre.

Co-operation in the delivery of public services in divided cities can bring about great economic benefits in terms of cost reduction and economies of scale and therefore, when designing their transborder cooperation agreements, the municipalities of divided cities in Eastern Europe could draw on the experience of their Western European counterparts and use it as a guide to successful co-operation.

The successful transfrontier co-operation between these towns is securely based on the long-established legal framework of cooperation and in particular, the **transfrontier co-operation agreements** between the municipalities. In Baarle-Hertog and Baarle-Nassau the transfrontier co-operation agreement between the two municipalities covers virtually all activities relating to economic, social and legal co-operation. As part of the Benelux Agreement there is a joint administrative body. Tornio and Haparanda also have an agreement on cooperation covering organisational, economic and labour issues. The town of Saint-Louis (France), Weil-am-Rhein (Germany) and Basel (Switzerland) have signed around 20 agreements in various fields of co-operation, for instance in water management. Using the possibilities offered by the Treaty of Bayonne between France and Spain, the towns of Irun and Hondarribia (Spain) and Hendaye (France) have set up a co-operation body (Consortium Bidassoa-Txingudi) registered under Spanish law and established in Irun (Spain) to cover all fields of competence of the member municipalities.

**Public services and urban planning.** The municipalities of the above mentioned towns closely co-operate in the delivery of public services to citizens. The municipalities of Baarle-Hertog and Baarle-Nassau share the costs of waterworks and gasworks, street cleaning, refuse disposal. The cities also have linked utilities like a sewage plant, the fire fighting service and a joint public transport network, financed jointly by municipalities. Tornio and Haparanda have an agreement on fire and rescue services and ambulance, heating services, a joint sewage plant and an agreement on tourism. They also have an agreement on co-operation between hospital laboratories and interestingly, a local bus connection between the cities that is run jointly by the private transport companies in the two cities. The towns of the

trinational agglomeration of Basel share public services mainly in the fields of hospitals, electricity delivery and public transport. The towns have started under Interreg II A the project “trinational agglomeration of Basel” consisting in the joint urban planning of the three towns.

Further and closer co-operation activities are planned in Tornio and Haparanda concerning the establishment of urban centres, infrastructure development and cooperation on environmental issues. A co-operation project called “At the borders” (På gränsen in Swedish and Rajalla in Finnish) is being implemented with the aim of building a common core city (Eurocity) and within the framework of this project, a common general plan and a regional border area development plan with streets, roads and buildings. Part of the project is the centre for legal issues called Rättscentrum-Oikeuskeskus with the aim of establishing a common office for state authorities at the Swedish-Finnish border.

The cities of the Consortium Bidassoa-Txingudi have established a Strategic development plan for the years 2002-2003 and also prepared a study on Tourism development. They have already engaged in joint action to raise awareness to the euro in the local business community, promote the employment and establish tourist routes across the region.

In the field of **cultural events**, their joint management is also a speciality of such cities as Cieszyn (Poland) and Český Těšín (Czech Republic) which have a tradition of several cultural festivals for over 10 years (the “festival of Three Borders”).

**REVISED****MEASURES TO LESSEN THE CONSEQUENCES OF THE DIVISION  
ON LOCAL INHABITANTS**

1. In order to lessen the consequences on local inhabitants of the existence of an international border lying between their respective communities, member States should consider adopting or amending, as appropriate, domestic legislation with a view to making it possible, for territorial authorities or communities belonging to two or more different states, to enter into the appropriate legal agreements, having regard to the Madrid Outline Convention on Transfrontier Co-operation between Territorial Communities or Authorities, as appropriate.
2. Due attention should be paid to the model agreements appended to the Madrid Outline Convention, whose use should be encouraged.
3. The competent state authorities and territorial communities or authorities should co-operate closely with a view to the identification of issues of common interest, of their respective responsibilities and of ways and means of dealing with them in the interest of local inhabitants.
4. Joint co-operation bodies should be established at the level of territorial communities or authorities, in order to exchange information, plan and implement joint action and ensure that issues raised by one side do not remain unanswered by the other side.
5. Direct communication links (phone, fax, websites, e-mail addresses) should be established between divided municipalities in order for the competent persons and departments to exchange information quickly whenever necessary.
6. Border crossing points reserved for local commuters or special lanes for cars and buses originating in the neighbouring town could be established, having regard to the relevant national or international regulations applicable.
7. Where appropriate, and in accordance with domestic legislation and international obligations, visas should be provided at low or no costs, for multiples entries and in the neighbouring towns, to local inhabitants for commuting purposes.
8. The access to services and facilities open to the public (libraries, theatres, swimming pools, sporting facilities, etc.) in either town should be open on equal footing also to the inhabitants of the neighbouring town.
9. Whenever important facilities that are beneficial or relevant to the population of both towns only exist in one town (hospital, pharmacy, bus or railway station, etc.) care should be taken to ensure that opening hours and operating modalities are suitable to the needs of the population of both towns.

- 10.** Information on services and planned events open to the public (opening hours, timetables, conditions for access, fees, calendars, etc.) should be made available in both towns also in the language (s) of the neighbouring town.
- 11.** Local media should be encouraged to pay regular attention to the events occurring in the neighbouring town and publish information and/or stories in the neighbour's language(s) as well. Joint information services (website, journal, radio or television stations) could be provided to both populations, in more than one language where appropriate.
- 12.** Local and regional authorities should be encouraged to provide their information (bulletins, news services, websites, etc.) also in the language of their neighbouring state.
- 13.** The provision of public services by one municipality to the neighbouring municipality should be envisaged whenever in the interest of both populations and basing on sound economic justification. The needs and interests of the neighbouring population should be taken into consideration at the planning stage of any major local project. The impact of a major project on the neighbouring population (increased inflow of visitors or users, more street traffic, need to provide information in additional languages, etc.) should also be assessed and included in the planning procedure.
- 14.** The establishment of joint management companies for the provision of public services to both towns (public transport, water and gas distribution, refuse collection, sewage, etc.) should be considered in the framework of spatial planning at the scale of the whole frontier area.
- 15.** The establishment of joint bodies for civil protection, fire fighting and rescue operations in case of accidents or natural or man-made disasters, or their management in a co-ordinated way, should be encouraged, having regard in particular to Recommendation Rec(2002)3 of the Committee of Ministers on transfrontier co-operation in civil protection and mutual assistance in the event of natural and technological disasters occurring in frontier areas.