Cross-Border Cooperation: possibilities, but also challenges and obstacles – A point of view from Flanders, Belgium
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• 2. **Council of Europe:** all CoE instruments for CBC have been approved by Flanders

• 3. **European Union**


  • Limited implementation: f.i. consent for Flemish entities to participate given by the Flemish minister for Home Affairs

  • 5 EGTC with Flemish participation

  • Keep it simple: complex structures drains money and means away from the real purpose, which is to enhance CBC.
• **4. Benelux Union**

• CBC treaty of 1986 replaced by Treaty of 2014 (keeping of the advantages of 1986 and new ones, like the possibility of the establishment of branches)

• 3 forms of CBC:
  • 1° BGTC: legal personality, can take decisions which bind the citizens;
  • 2° Common organ, platform for CBC consultation, no legal personality
  • 3° Administrative agreement

• Four BGTC, four common organs and eleven administrative agreements have been established, all situated along the Flemish/Dutch border
• Advantages of CBC on the base of the Benelux set of instruments for CBC:
  - No prior consent is required;
  - Flexibility: different forms for CBC

• Situation of the Flemish municipality of Baarle-Hertog and the Dutch municipality of Baarle-Nassau: enclaves.

5. The Belgian - French agreement for CBC
• Signed in 2002
• Only two applications
6. **Border consultation between Flanders and the Netherlands**

- Regular CBC consultation takes place between Flemish and Dutch authorities.

- The agenda of the meetings has the following structure:
  
  - 1° to inform;
  
  - 2° to tackle the obstacles through the assignment of the competent authorities for dealing with the concerned issues and follow-up;
  
  - 3° an common exploration of possibilities for CBC.
7. Impact of territorial reforms on the development of CBC

• Territorial reforms take place in Flanders

• They concern mainly the amalgamation of municipalities and the slimming down/ the decrease in competences of the provinces.

• The new amalgamated municipality will accede to the CBC forms of which one or more of the previous municipalities belonged.

• Larger municipalities will bring more governance capacity to them, which will give on its turn more capacity to them for dealing with CBC issues.
8. Difficulties, challenges, obstacles to CBC in Flanders

- Cumbersome structures in some EGTC
- Different languages
- Different administrative cultures
- Different cultures
- Different political or policy importance/priorities

Thank you for your attention!

edwin.lefebre@kb.vlaanderen.be