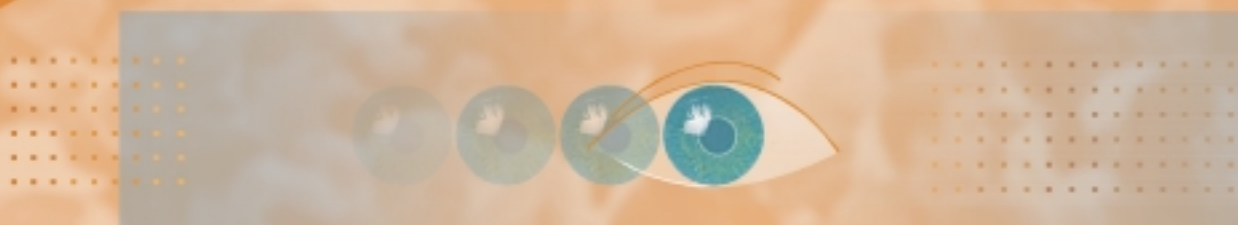




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**BLUEPRINTS FOR FORESIGHT ACTIONS IN THE REGIONS**

# TRANSVISION

**Bridging historically and  
culturally close neighbouring  
regions separated by  
national borders**



OCTOBER 2004

FINAL REPORT

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# THE TRANSVISION BLUEPRINT

## Bridging neighbouring regions belonging to different jurisdictions, i.e., historically and culturally close regions divided by national borders

Within the Enlarged Europe and its neighbourhood, there is an emerging political ambition to maintain and to develop common prosperity, a better cohesion and a peaceful cooperation.

Foresight can make an important contribution to defining new models for linking hybrid neighbouring regions, by mobilising the stakeholders and building cross-regional strategic visions. A strong and well driven foresight, involving the key actors and the decision makers from the different parts of the trans-border area, can also become a learning process and a real instrument for linking regional trans-border partners in a common effort towards the Knowledge-based Europe.

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*Philippe Destatte (Coach)*  
*Pascale Van Doren (Secretary)*

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October 2004

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# Blueprints for Foresight Actions in the Regions expert group

To develop their potential, and find their new role in the emerging EU25+ knowledge-based economy, regions need to widen their focus and go beyond their own innovation landscape to explore the European and trans-regional dimension to the full. Foresight is a key element in the creation of future oriented and outward looking visions and strategies. Many regions considering implementing foresight exercises need help to overcome initial barriers, such as doubts about the usefulness and usability of foresight, problems linking foresight to existing regional mechanisms, as well as simply lack of knowledge on how to set up and undertake foresight activities. Easy to understand practical blueprints on how to set up a foresight activities to suit specific regional circumstances could be instrumental in supporting regions to implement regional foresight.

The “Blueprints” expert group builds upon the existing Foresight knowledge base developed so far mainly at EU level by involving regional experts and policy makers active in earlier exercises, as well as using already available methodological tools and case studies, e.g., the Country specific Guides to Regional Foresight (<http://www.cordis.lu/foresight/cgrf.htm>). The expert group has developed five specific blueprints:

- FOR-RIS: Experiences and ideas for developing foresight in a regional innovation strategy context (RIS/RITTS);
- UPGRADE: Foresight strategy and actions to assist regions of traditional industry towards a more knowledge based community;
- TECHTRANS: Trans-regional integration and harmonisation of technology support mechanisms;
- TRANSVISION: Bridging historically and culturally close neighbouring regions separated by national borders;
- AGRIBLUE: Sustainable Territorial Development of the Rural Areas of Europe.

The blueprints are practical guidelines to the setting up and planning of foresight. They are manuals or roadmaps, not foresight exercises in themselves. The blueprints build upon real problems in real regions, with strong stakeholder involvement.

The expert group was built around a core group of experts on foresight processes, who steered five working groups with regional partners, chosen because of their capacity to initiate actions and influence policymaking. The working groups have been open to outside participation, and the resulting blueprints have been designed so as to provide useful tools for regions not actively participating in the expert group, but facing the same challenges. The work started in December 2003 and its present stage ended with the dissemination conference on September 23, 2004.

Professor Liam Downey, Chairman  
Professor Peter Heydebreck, Secretary



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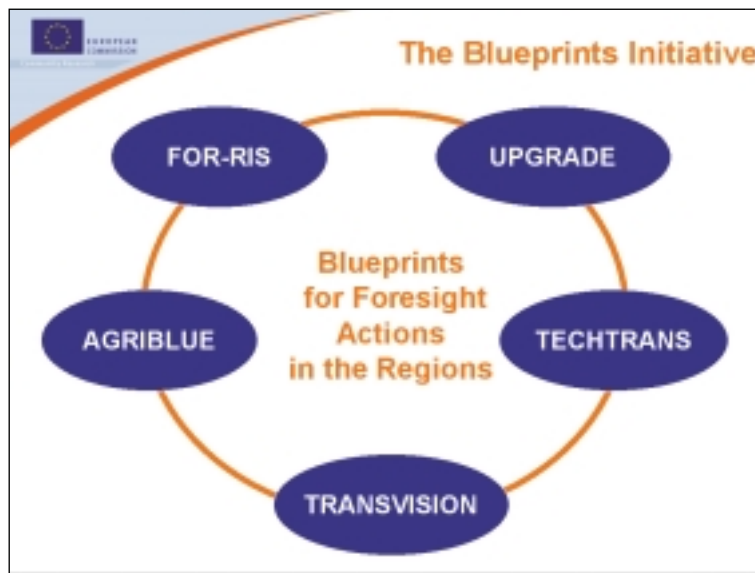




## Introduction

The objective of the TRANSVISION Working Group is the development of a foresight Blueprint for better integration of development policies and support measures between neighbouring regions sharing common borders as well as important

historical, cultural, organizational and developmental characteristics, whilst operating in separate jurisdictions and under different political systems (federal entities, decentralized regions, nation states, etc.).



The TRANSVISION Blueprint consists of a practical framework of concrete sequential steps designed to build cross-regional strategic visions and guide decision making in neighbouring regions.

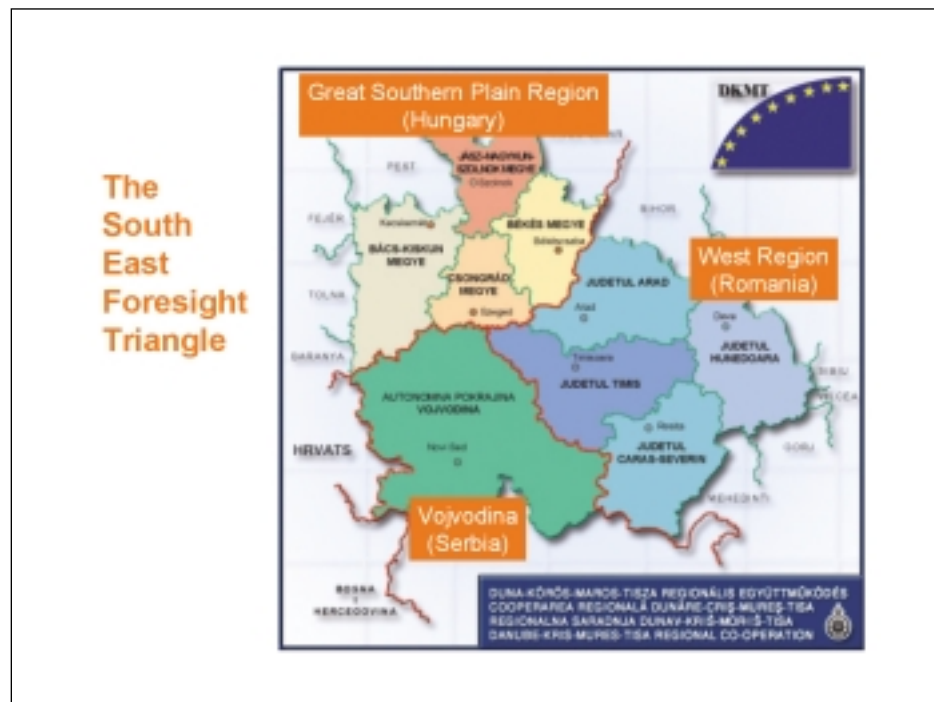
TRANSVISION is built on the experience of two reference subgroups:

- The Large Region partners that have already experimented with foresight with a view to building a common vision and common strate-

gies and that have a long tradition of cooperation and an advanced form of EU integration involving Luxembourg, Lorraine, Saarland, Rheinland-Pfalz and Wallonia;

- The South East Foresight Triangle (See ForesightT): a most promising integration project involving many actors within the territories of the future Europe Union including the Great Southern Plain Region (Hungary), RDA West (Romania), and Vojvodina (Serbia).

## Maps of the two transborder areas



# 1. The rationale for foresight in the regions

## 1.1. Why should transborder European regions launch a common foresight initiative? Or, in other words what are the ultimate benefits?

Both transborder and interregional cooperation do not mean the abolition of central power or borders' states, but to go beyond the borders' related obstacles and to reinforce the national and transborder cohesion. It implies an opened approach and the mobilization of potential synergies between transborder territories or their sub-entities. In that multilevel cooperation, there is a real need to target the transborder cooperation domains, taking into account their impact on territorial development.

The Commission's initiative to set up a harmonised regulatory instrument for decentralised cross-border cooperation, inter-regional and trans-national cooperation<sup>(1)</sup> establishes the grounds to create a legal framework within which regional and local authorities find a common juridical basis which empowers them to deepen common traditional, historical and cultural common interest. In the view of the Committee of the Regions<sup>(2)</sup> this new legal instrument must not only show flexibility but also must support each form of decentralised cooperation, regardless of whether it is co-financed by the European Union or not. It must clearly display the principles of subsidiarity, partnership and bottom-up approach.

The role of regional and local authorities as motors of decentralised cooperation, and their profound knowledge of the needs for such cooperation must be underpinned by the creation of an instrument that facilitates sustainable decentralised cooperation. This would strengthen their role within the regional and local development and enable them to use cooperation as a tool to diminish regional and structural disparities among the European Union's regions and local entities.

The Committee of the Regions has identified a number of forms of added value that are clearly recognisable in the context of trans-European cooperation, especially in the context of cross-border cooperation, with its long-established tradition. These are as follows:

- a European and political added value (contribution to European integration; promotion of convergence between regions, promotion of understanding and preparations for the accession of new member states);
- an institutional added value (apprehending different administrative structures and powers; achievement of solidarity and realisation of partnerships);
- an economic added value (the revival of traditional regional economic areas which were split up by national boundaries in particular in the 20th century; the promotion of cooperation between small and medium-sized enterprises and universities; creation of additional jobs and joint infrastructures; consolidation of the potential of specific regions) and
- a socio-cultural added value (learning of foreign languages; cooperation between partners despite their differences; tolerance towards other religions, working methods and minorities).

<sup>(1)</sup> Proposal for a Regulation of the European Parliament and of the Council establishing a European grouping of cross-border cooperation (EGCC) (presented by the Commission), Brussels, 14.7.2004 - COM(2004) 496 final - 2004/0168 (COD).

<sup>(2)</sup> Outlook Report on the new European legal instrument for cross-border cooperation, Draft, The Committee of the Regions, Brussels, March 31, 2004. (CdR 62/2004 - COTER-026).

The benefits of a foresight exercise are twofold:

- the improvement of the regional actors' capacity to define the conditions of efficient cooperation between different transborder territories while
- building a joint vision of the future;
- providing a framework within which partner regions can optimise foresight inputs with related policy decisions through transborder cooperation.



Foresight offers many incentives for constructing a common vision in areas which share a common past, common challenges, specific threats or opportunities, and increased cooperation (multiplication of links between the stakeholders and decision makers). Though the benefits of foresight are formulated at transborder level, the individual partner regions also benefit from the exercise. In all cases it is the welfare of the people that ultimately benefits. In the 21st Century, interdependencies, complexity and globalisation prevent governments from leading alone and from implementing policies without the support of citizens and stakeholders.

By providing an opportunity to mobilize citizens through collective debate, Foresight has the potential to:

- create mutual trust and activate a learning process;
- through collective work build a consensus for reducing institutional barriers and internal resistance and thereby:
  - ♦ allow governments and decision makers to identify new creative sources of policy-relevant ideas, information and resources;
  - ♦ integrate companies, civil servants and civil society into the policy-making process;
- improve the harmonious integration of the transborder area and thereby:
  - ♦ map the common potential as well as the specificities of the transborder area;
  - ♦ identify a sustainable strategy for transborder territories;
- improve the coherence and efficiency of transborder policies so as to:
  - ♦ integrate all relevant political themes into a common vision;
  - ♦ harmonize the respective regional efforts concerning economic development, as well as infrastructure extension and consolidation with regard to the long-term objectives and timeframe;

- develop a common management of border area problems (renewable resource management, water resource management, management of environmental threats, etc.) by improving information, in order to:
  - ◆ develop multilateral cooperation programmes (economic clustering, tourism, RDTI, etc.);
  - ◆ establish an RDTI cooperation scheme for the development and economic growth of the transborder regions;
  - ◆ design and implement an integrated policy in the field of higher education and research;
- improve relevant actors' participation and competencies in transborder cooperation:
  - ◆ map the main policy-making levels in the transborder territories and the influence of the actors;
  - ◆ identify which actors are involved in policy making (formal/actual involvement, large partnership/expert-based etc.) and to develop means of training, preparation and awareness raising for the actors;
  - ◆ position a transborder area as a European centre of competencies (cultural competencies, multilingualism, cross-cultural mobility, open-mindedness);
- position the transborder area as a competitive partner of EU development so as to:
  - ◆ identify the competitive position of the transborder area within Europe;
  - ◆ improve the capacity of EU candidates to adopt the *acquis communautaire*.

## 1.2. Which specific issues/ concerns should be addressed by the foresight initiative in your region?

Despite the historic progress made in European integration, border areas remain sensitive to cooperation, particularly when they constitute meeting points between regions which have a hybrid legal status. Links on the ground and future projects have materialised and been built on the experiences and ambitions of the local partners, the closest actors and the most operational bodies.

Furthermore, the processes of decentralisation, de-concentration, and even federalisation, which have transformed most European states over the last decades, have deeply altered the status of regional and local actors. Developments towards a post-westphalian system have been very different from one state to another whether we think of the different levels of competence between a German Land, a French region and a Belgian federal entity, to take the example of the Large Region.

In the scope of cross-border cooperation, the development of projects and the carrying out of concrete work vary. They are the result of the actors involved in well-established contacts, sometimes based on affinities, solidarity or deep-rooted mistrust. Cross-border regional foresight has changed this situation by developing a long-term perspective and pushing actors to build a vision of a desired future, as an achievement or a far-reaching step in their relations.

The sustainable development of applied policies or multilevel governance should mobilise local authorities and open up new issues in a cross-border sphere.

The first of these issues is that of the identity and relevance of regional cooperation. It is even more relevant when the societies involved differ, when economic competition is an issue and when history plays an important role. Cross-border areas have often been areas of conflict, and their first common heritage has been military cemeteries. But they are also, for this reason, areas

where ideas of peace, democracy and therefore of Europe are most vivid. The European character may be a unifier of this identity, as is shown by the concept of "small Europes" attributed today to these cross-border regions.

Governance (which is a modern element of cohesion, in the sense given to it by the idea of "national unity" in the 19th and 20th centuries<sup>(3)</sup>) involving actors from three spheres of society (the economy, the State and civil society) working together towards common development, is also seen as a decisive challenge at cross-border level, particularly in the framework of foresight. The latter constitutes a means of mobilisation of the stakeholders working for regional or national economic development. Mobilising actors in cross-border regions is necessary to foresight. This involves the structured organisation of meetings, fora and seminars between the actors in the various regions as well as the progressive

establishment of governance organisations and bodies at interregional level. The Economic and Social Council of the Large Region is from this point of view exemplary, as is the Institute of the Large Region, an association involving key, mainly non-governmental, actors.

Finally, the search for a critical mass that is stronger than the simple sum of partners constitutes the fundamental equation of the collective vision of the scope of cross-border cooperation. Having influence at European Level; creating a competitive area; a research and education platform; developing common strategies of cross-border interest in order to develop projects on infrastructure, communication, research and development and to reinforce the university centres; these constitute just as relevant challenges in the case of cross-border hybrid territories as in regional or national foresight.

### What issues of specific relevance in transborder areas should foresight address?

#### The case of the Large Region

The key issue of Vision 2020 was to have a comprehensive look at all possible components influencing the coherence and the total development of the Large Region. As such, Vision 2020 covers the whole range of relevant political issues.

This general approach forms a new method of holistic policy making and represents a unique opportunity to structure all the interactions of complex foresight processes with other policy fields.

The Political Commission first selected the sectoral topics and themes that most needed to be discussed from different perspectives. As in principle the whole range of political fields was covered, the criterion was essentially about where a political guideline was expected and for which fields there was a real need for more proposals from different perspectives. It was decided that those fields in which considerable experience had already been accumulated would be discussed at a second stage.

Not all policy fields are open to cross-border cooperation.

The Commission discussed the following subjects and made a number of proposals:

- culture;
- education and training;
- higher education and research;
- economy and labour;
- social networks;
- transport and traffic;
- environment and spatial development;
- institutions.

<sup>(3)</sup> We can define the process of governance as the process whereby an organization or a society steers itself, and the dynamics of communication and control are central in that process. Steven A. ROSELL ea, *Governing in an Information Society*, p. 21, Montreal, Institute for Research on Public Policy, 1992.



## 2. Foresight methodology framework

### 2.1. General framework

#### 2.1.1. Dynamics of the foresight interactive process and stakeholder commitment

The central issue in the foresight process is the committed involvement of the stakeholders.

The stakeholders are those people and organizations that have an interest in the foresight exercise because the process or findings may be relevant to their role or action. Stakeholders can be policy makers, civil servants, companies and all interest

groups or citizens affected by the future of the cross-border area. Defining stakeholders and involving them in the process will strongly increase their commitment and willingness to implement foresight findings.

The basis of strategic foresight lies in the stakeholders' capacity to appropriate ideas, which will then lead to a strategy of change. One of the major achievements of Professor Michel Godet was to have shed light on this essential mechanism of foresight: the bigger, wider and deeper collective mobilisation is, and therefore the appropriation of foresight findings, the greater the strategic willpower will be and the more efficient the capacity for action in the field.



Anticipation only becomes an action through the appropriation by not only the decision makers but by all stakeholders. Parallel to this, collective mobilisation and appropriation only lead to action if they are based on a sound and relevant content.

It is necessary to consider mechanisms of implementation and participation of the foresight exercise as essential by paying constant attention to them throughout the process and not simply by viewing them as a compulsory step or stage.

The process of implementation depends upon:

- first of all, the human being as an agent of change and an actor in his/her history, with the capacity and will to carry out this change as the vision gradually unfolds;
- then, the development of the vision as a future situation which is desired and accepted by all;
- finally, the concrete means to achieve the tangible elements which constitute this desired future.

Those who from the start wish to embody the will for change need to adopt an ever-broadening communication policy. The implementation of the results of the exercise will be improved if a large number of foresight actors can be involved as early as possible in the process, thereby allowing them to follow the development of the work, understand the mechanisms and, ultimately, the output.

Foresight needs a broad foundation of competencies derived from what is sometimes called

"regional sciences", such as town and country planning as well as experiences from all branches of society. It is collective intelligence and the pooling of knowledge for the benefit of the common project. The foresight process must involve as many stakeholders as possible so that it can rely on their support during the strategic phase. It should also be noted that the political leaders and sponsors will be more inclined to follow recommendations which a large number of citizens already accept.



In the transborder foresight exercises, it is more difficult to organize successful cooperation between key participants due to the different cultures and languages of the citizens, stakeholders and decision makers. Sharing a vision through foresight requires the participation of stakeholders in every region of the countries concerned. The different degrees of involvement may cause serious problems to the consistency of the exercise. It is therefore strongly recommended that a hybrid foresight team be established that involves members from each participant region.

When policy makers meet and talk together in order to build a vision to be applied to a large area

– as in Vision 2020 – it seems almost impossible to apply while foresight ownership remains purely with decision makers. Foresight is indeed a participatory process, but what level of participation is ever achieved in reality? The TRANSVISION workshops have stressed the importance of including civil servants, think tanks, territorial associations and NGOs in the foresight building process.

Another question that arises is whether it is important to integrate national governments in cross-border cooperation. In any case, foresight must involve all the stakeholders in the work with the ultimate goal of developing "collective intelligence" which should be as broad as possible.



## How can stakeholder commitment be organized in a transborder foresight exercise?

Vision 2020 of the Large Region was developed by a limited group of decision makers gathered in a Political Commission under the chairmanship of the former European Commission President Jacques Santer. Even if considerable top-down dissemination efforts have been carried out, the work of ensuring that there is a common vision among the local actors of the different regions remains to be achieved in the subsequent steps of the process.

To initiate such a process, the SeeForesightT Region partners envisaged the creation of an Open Forum for Cross-Border Cooperation in this area.

### 2.1.2. Foresight and European Commission cooperation programmes

Cross-border cooperation is a central part of the political and economic endeavours central to the European Union. Substantial funds have been reserved to support cooperation across internal and external borders of the European Union, mainly within the framework of the INTERREG initiative<sup>4</sup>. Cross-border cooperation has also been supported within the framework of the Phare and Tacis programmes in Central and Eastern European countries, and in the newly independent states. Subsequently, a large number of cross-border arrangements have emerged, aimed at furthering general European integration, improving economic development, bringing people closer together and solving common environmental problems.

As cross-border cooperation has taken an increasingly concrete form, the need has arisen for effective organizational structures and for actors capable of taking the initiative to decide on actions and implement them.

There are two main difficulties in developing transborder cooperation:

- in many border regions, activities often tend to be framed by national interests and not by a broader cross-border concern. In these circumstances, cross-border misunderstandings and conflicts may arise due to information gaps, as knowledge about systems, rules and norms is often embedded in national identities;
- most of the current transborder experiences have been undertaken either based on top-down or bottom-up approaches. – While the top-down approaches give priority to the overall transborder strategy, they lack concrete application in the field, conversely those undertaken on the basis of the bottom-up emergence of several projects coming from groups of actors, lack coherence with the overall existing transborder strategy. Interreg IIIC is an innovative instrument of interregional cooperation that balances both approaches.

<sup>4</sup> It started with Article 10 – pilot projects in different border regions. Then followed the INTERREG initiative: INTERREG I (1990-1993) for operational cooperation activities; INTERREG II (1994-1999) for operational programmes (A), a number of energy networks (B) and transnational projects (C); and INTERREG III (2000-2006).

## What is the added value of foresight in European cooperation programmes?

### Evolution of strategy planning and cross-border cooperation within the SeeForesightT area

The cross-border cooperation within the SeeForesightT area was initially based on the links between the Romanian and Hungarian borders, within the scope of the PHARE cross-border cooperation programme and outside it as well. The main rationale for such undertakings was the need to harmonize, the long-term objectives and timeframe, local economic developments, infrastructure extension and consolidation and border area problems that need to be addressed on an agreed and joint basis.

Consequently, the interregional cooperation effort (1995-2000) has focused on local institution-to-institution projects, based on a tradition of relationships over the previous decades. These projects were strongly marked by specific interests and investments at local level (city halls, county councils, etc.), and mainly hard measures with short-term impact, rather than soft measures and long-term strategic choices.

The following preliminary exercises should be noted:

- joint elaboration of the Joint Programming Document 2004-2006 for trilateral cross-border cooperation: Romania-Hungary-Serbia, which will be implemented on a bilateral basis (RO-HU, HU-SE, RO-SE), through the financing of projects for economic development, cross-border infrastructure, common environmental challenges and one-to-one actions. The European funds available for cross-border cooperation between the three countries are INTERREG, PHARE and CARDS, CAN for pilot projects and FP 6;
- harmonization between the Regional Innovation Strategy projects for the Regions of West Romania and South-East Hungary through the document Euroregional Concept of Innovation;
- existence of local and regional development plans and strategies that have a cross-border component (e.g. The Regional Development Plan for the Region West Romania 2004-2006 explicitly includes a chapter on cross-border cooperation, as well as specific measures within the Regional Development Strategy);
- cooperation based on the regional innovative strategies: involvement of the regions concerned in the SeeForesightT area – EURO-INNO-REGIO PROJECT. The aim of the project is to start an innovative concept-making process that helps the information flow on innovative issues and promotes innovation in the DKMT Euroregion (Great Southern Plain Region, West Romanian region and Vojvodina) building on the results and findings of the Regional Innovation Strategy carried out both in V. West Romania and the Great Southern Plain Region (HU) with the support of the EC. According to the framework of cooperation between the Great Southern Plain Regional Development Agency and the Romanian West Regional Development Agency, the experts from both agencies are involved in regional innovation through active participation in each other's programmes and forums. Through the cooperation of Romanian, Hungarian and Yugoslavian innovation experts they would like to establish an innovative cooperation scheme to bring about a Euro-regional Innovation Concept and to help the development and economic growth of the region.

### 2.1.3. Added value of foresight in European Commission cooperation programmes

In the complex context of border regions, foresight methods can bring people and systems together across national borders and institutional boundaries through its process as much as through its outcomes, and can be instrumental in building effective regions over several national borders.

Foresight in cross-border cooperation can help to reach a consensus about a common vision and a strategic action plan, the area involving the citizens making the process relevant to their needs.

Transregional foresight methods that involve participative exploration of joint interests with all relevant actors (decision makers, stakeholders, civil society, business, etc.) – constitute a promising way of addressing sensitivities over national borders and creating cooperation across borders and boundaries.

Foresight methods require an adequate management structure with the capacity to orchestrate an open strategy process involving all kinds of actors (government, academia, civil society and industry).

#### What is the added value of foresight in European cooperation programmes?

The Large Region – space-specific and derived from a long tradition of cooperation

In Europe, the Large Region is one of the oldest forms of cross-border cooperation of an institutional nature.

When the new Europe was constituted at the end of Second World War, there was deep distrust between Germany and France. To move forward, they focused on a very special relationship between two regional partners, Saarland and Lorraine, an economic region with a high level of interaction and a long common history of integration. The Saarland was even under French administration until 1955.

In the Large Region the process of cooperation began between communes and progressed gradually to upper territorial levels; they now speak of “irreversible levels of cooperation” and the need for organisations and institutions that are able to face up to this interactive situation. There is “pride expressed in the long tradition of interregional cooperation in the Large Region”.

In 2001, the long experience of cross-border cooperation projects led politicians to propose the development of a common perspective for further development and a common strategic vision. This need was identified by all high-level political representatives at the 5th Summit. The decision to address this issue was taken at the 6th Summit, which took place in Mondorf-les-Bains (Luxemburg), and this mandate was given to the presidency of the following Summit in the Saarland. The political consensus necessary to build a common future vision required the existence of a large degree of confidence in the political will and capacities of all partners. This fundamental decision was a strategic step towards a new level of further cross-border cooperation.

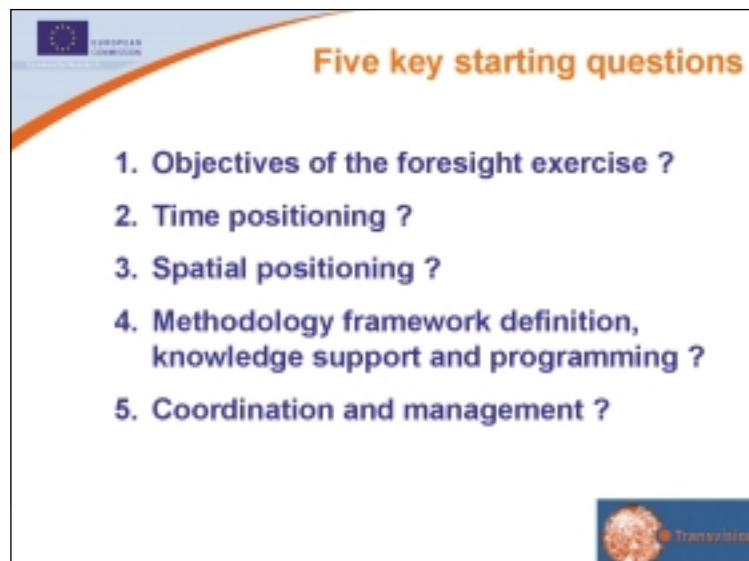
There was the risk that a common vision would show that not all of the multiple cooperation projects that had been initiated had in fact followed the best path of multi-regional cooperation. Notwithstanding these potential risks, the members of the Summit decided to reform and restructure the strategic orientation of cross-border cooperation in the Large Region over the next 20 years.

The foresight process described in Vision 2020 of the Large Region demonstrates that such an exercise requires a very high level of confidence from all the partners. This political confidence does not usually appear overnight, but is the result of long and hard experience of cooperation, gained through involvement in many concrete projects. Where these conditions are met, it is worth initiating an integrative foresight process that includes all possible fields of political cooperation and thereby creates an integrative development perspective.

#### 2.1.4. Preparation of the foresight exercise

Five main elements need to be decided on before starting a foresight initiative, namely:

- the objectives;
- the time frame;
- the spatial positioning;
- the methodology, knowledge support requirements and programming;
- the coordination and management.



#### ***Identification of the main objectives of the foresight exercise***

The expected benefits of transborder foresight exercises have been outlined in the first section of the Blueprint. The importance of organizing exchanges between the main stakeholders of the exercise around the definition of these common objectives cannot be overstressed.. This collective definition of the objectives is of fundamental importance in supporting the general interest as well as mobilisation during the whole exercise. If necessary, these objectives can be adapted according to new issues, events, stakeholder requests, etc.

The organisation in charge of conducting the foresight exercise has to specify the effective requirements and create an environment conducive to the foresight process. This implies:

- gaining the support of the stakeholders;
- setting realistic expectations: unrealistic expectations in terms of the timing and scope of evaluation findings can cause disillusionment;
- developing an effective framework for conducting the foresight exercise;
- managing the whole process with a view to promoting the use of the findings.

## ***Time positioning of the foresight exercise***

It is not uncommon for actors to have difficulties in believing in the concept of thinking and acting today in order to reap the benefits tomorrow. It is very important to take time to explain how the

long time period is a distinguishing feature of the foresight exercise. It is important to demonstrate that we can affect the long term by thinking and acting today. This pedagogical issue is illustrated below.



Timeliness is the essence of the foresight methodology/process. Foresight exercises have to be planned to deliver information when decisions are being made. In transborder foresight exercises, time management is more difficult than in other exercises. As foresight fits into policy and decision-making cycles, the organizer of the exercise has to manage different political agendas.

## ***Spatial positioning of the foresight exercise***

Spatial positioning is a key element to take into account in the planning and implementation of foresight exercises, and particularly in the case of transborder foresight exercises. The first step consists of building a common view of the transborder area to be covered. The transborder "reality" cannot be specifically linked to administrative or political indicators. Also, as the foresight exercise may support the emergence of a new delimitation of the real transborder area, the issue of spatial positioning is critical. This spatial positioning must reflect the national, European and international dimensions of each region, as well as other geographical aspects of the transborder area.

Great attention should be accorded to the definition of the territory and its internal representation. The areas must be understood in terms of their internal dynamics, that is to say through the moving realities of people that are born, live, work and travel there including their leisure and concerns. These elements define regional and territorial identities. Representing the cross-border area in the dynamic of the European Spatial Development Perspective (ESDP) may help to distinguish the relative positions and ambitions, and the needs for complementary strategies to jointly oppose a voluntary scenario in relation to a trend scenario, which could exclude the euro-corridor regions and/or disqualify the area in the long term.

## ***Methodology framework definition, knowledge support preparation and programming***

The foresight exercise must be supported by a transborder database and targeted networks of resources that will commit themselves to the provision of documentation, working group participation, etc. according to a well-defined

programme of work combining transborder (regional and transborder actors/structures) and external knowledge (external experts).

A Gantt chart can be useful to provide the participants with information that may otherwise be hidden or difficult to find and to help plan and monitor the project development (See in annexe the draft of "TRANSVISION Foresight Development Schedule").

### **Coordination and management**

Benefits of foresight exercises should outweigh their costs and limitations. Costs and benefits can be controlled by the careful management of the foresight exercise and by choosing the appropriate methods (scenarios, Delphi, working groups, etc.).

As most transborder areas have defined organizational structures of cooperation at a political

and/or operational level within the framework of EU cooperation programmes, the foresight exercise should be integrated with some of these structures for the following reasons:

1. to benefit from existing transborder cooperation;
2. to support the best integration and added value of foresight in the transborder strategy and projects.

As mentioned in sections 2.1.2 and 2.1.3, foresight may stimulate better convergence between transborder strategies and projects, and in some cases reveal new organizational requirements, for instance new frameworks of cooperation at institutional level. From this perspective, the key requirements are an efficient Steering Committee (members, commitment, etc.) and an effective operational structure of coordination. Careful planning makes the management of foresight easier and contributes to the quality of its outcome.

## **How to prepare a transborder foresight exercise?**

### **Zukunftsbild 2020 on the Large Region**

The Minister-President of Saarland, who is in charge of "Zukunftsbild 2020", proposed the setting up a Political Commission composed of active political decision makers as well as of elder statesman representing all partners of the Large Region. Each of the five Summit members of the Region were represented by at least two persons in the political Commission. It was chaired by a well-known elder statesman acceptable by all sides, and with an acute knowledge of the European and of the Large Region political systems, Mr Jacques Santer (former president of the European Commission and of the State of Luxemburg).

The essential principle in setting up Vision 2020 was that the Political Commission should be completely independent in its proposals and, at the same time, highly competent in dealing with political interregional issues beyond day-to-day matters, so as to reflect on the feasible and even desirable development of the Large Region.

The Political Commission had its first meeting in September 2002 and the results were presented to the 7th Summit in June 2003. There was already a network of interregional working groups of experts of the so-called "Regional Commission SaarLorLux-Trier/Westpfalz". The presidencies of the working groups, in which there is a high level of sectoral knowledge on cross-border issues, were at the disposal of the Political Commission.

A working group of civil servants from all the Summit Regions' administrations was created to support and prepare the work of the Political Commission.



## 2.2. Methodology: The Foresight interactive Process

There is no single right way to organise and conduct foresight; each foresight process is unique. The choice of methods depends on several factors, in particular the objectives of the exercise, associated with institutional and political considerations.

There is a need for clarification and to establish practices that identify the concepts, especially the differences between aims, issues and strategic aspects. It is also important to clarify the difference between forecasting, foresight, futures studies, strategy and planning.

Foresight can be critical to policy improvement and innovation by creating consensus and ownership towards a change process. Working in that way with decision makers and stakeholders improves their understanding and their responsiveness to the needs and priorities identified for the exercise. In using these methods foresighters should pay attention to their legitimacy in order to avoid the confiscation of the process.

The TRANSVISION Working Group undertook the task of developing a flexible and adaptable European transborder foresight model. It is based on the following assumption: if it is possible to understand the construction and the complexity of the future, then it is possible to undertake collective action and to focus on results. Robust methodology that combines scientific rigour with pragmatic governance can have a major positive impact on the credibility of the foresight exercise and its conclusions. Pragmatic considerations have to be balanced with epistemological ones.

The purpose of this section is to provide some guidance on possible methods and the procedures for developing the foresight work programme. How (using which method) should European regions launch a transborder foresight initiative?

The five main steps of the foresight process are:

1. identification and diagnosis;
2. determination of the long-term issues;
3. building the aims and the common vision;
4. bridging the present with the vision by elaborating a strategic programme;
5. making recommendations.



### 2.2.1. Identification and diagnosis

#### > *Description*

The first fundamental step is to identify the common ground for cross-border cooperation taking into account:

- the importance of the history and of the roots of the territories in the identification process;
- the cultural, linguistic and historical links between the territories;
- the different constitutional status of the regional partners and the different level of sovereignty;
- the cross-border minorities and their position in cross-border cooperation;
- the leverage role of RDTI in transborder cooperation; etc.

Secondly, there is a need to identify areas where a critical mass of development can be generated through transborder cooperation such as communication, infrastructure, harmonization of procedures, transborder network development, business cooperation (clusters, etc.), efficient exploitation of complementarities, joint initiatives (e.g. joint research initiatives or institutes, cooperation between incubators or science and technology parks), educational institution reinforcement (cooperation actions and agreements between universities), practical implementation of projects, common vision and promotion of the competitive advantages of the transborder regions.

#### > *The five key questions for the foresight practitioner are*

1. What is our common understanding of the foresight process?
2. How is the area represented and what is the actual situation?

3. What is the place of the knowledge-based economy in the area and how is that area integrated into the enlarged European Union (strengths/ weaknesses/ opportunities/ threats)?
4. What are the main areas to be considered at transborder level? Who are the beneficiaries of the cooperation induced by the foresight exercise?
5. Who are the key stakeholders and the relevant actors that should be engaged in the foresight process?

#### > *Methods and tools*

Foresight activity requires a strong identification process and an in-depth diagnosis of the transborder area's situation. It should use proven methods to identify the key variables: factors of change and visible or hidden environmental actors. At this stage, it is necessary to develop a broad and complete transborder information base in order to avoid working in an environment of clichés and misunderstandings. Both regional and transborder data have to be collected and collated. In order to achieve a common understanding of the foresight rationale, it is essential to collect data on the impacts of cross-border cooperation on the various areas concerned.

Foresight also has to distinguish between mental perceptions of territories and the real situation. The help of the participants, seed events and weak signals are required to identify new perspectives to elaborate more appropriate future scenarios than the simple continuation of the current trends.



## SeeForesightT Area s' SWOT

### **Strengths**

- multicultural traditions and ethnic diversity in the relevant border areas; minorities from several different nations living along the border interested in developing support and cooperation;
- initiatives for cross-border cooperation (institutions, NGOs, different administrative levels);
- availability of high quality agricultural land in flat areas;
- extensive network of high quality higher education institutions in the border areas of all three countries, representing a wide knowledge base and a valuable resource for R&D activities;
- economic complementarity of the border areas;
- high quality, attractive, natural environment offers favourable conditions for diversified forms of tourism;
- skilled workforce, industrial and agricultural tradition.

### **Weaknesses**

- negative demographic trends: decreasing natural growth, significant migration out of the border regions in Hungary and Serbia;
- lack of funds for interregional cooperation with non EU members;
- relatively high level of unemployment in the Hungarian and Serbian border regions;
- lack of regional transport network (rail, road, water), and motorway connections between the border regions;
- underdeveloped network of border crossing points, insufficient links to national transport networks;
- lack of capital, limited competitiveness of SMEs in the border regions;
- low level of FDI in the relevant border regions of the three countries;
- low level of intra-regional and cross-border entrepreneurial cooperation due to lack of mutual market knowledge and limited information flow;
- insufficient development of business infrastructure;
- low productivity in agriculture;
- limited access to, and use of the internet, primarily in rural areas;
- underdeveloped tourism infrastructure and services, lack of integrated tourist information and attractive programme packages;
- in certain parts of the border areas, high levels of industrial pollution; obsolete sewage systems with insufficient capacity;
- lack of joint flood protection structures.

### **Opportunities**

- increased efficiency in public spending, due to the application of EU procedures;
- certain accession of Romania and Serbia to the EU;
- increase in funds available for developing cross-border cooperation;
- increasing interest of potential investors and tourists in the improvement of the infrastructure (roads, border crossing);
- ongoing improvements to connections between the three States have had a positive impact on the border regions;
- stable relations between the three States;
- four pan-European corridors (IV,V,VII and X) cross the border regions;
- the process of EU accession strengthens cooperation, the *acquis communautaire* will contribute to the harmonisation of administration systems;
- improving economic performance of the countries can contribute to the strengthening of cross-border cooperation;
- joint management of EU funds opens new opportunities for relationships and can improve efficiency of cooperation.

### **Threats**

- continuation of the relatively low level of economic development and lack of capital that will reduce interest in cross-border cooperation;
- failure to implement the necessary development of the physical infrastructure limits cross-border cooperation;
- failure to reform the environmental and conservation regulations and institutions would hinder the joint protection of sensitive cross-border areas;
- the gradual introduction of the Schengen rules may set back cross-border relations between EU and non-EU countries and regions;
- a growing gap between the economic development of the three countries can hinder the extension of cooperation;
- significant differences in the time of accession to EU and the different speeds at which the *acquis communautaire* is adopted might lead to compatibility problems;
- relatively high risk of serious natural disasters.

### 2.2.2. Setting out the long-term issues

#### > *Description*

Foresight is a method of thinking about the future in order to analyse what actions should be taken immediately taking into account the uncertainties related to the long term. The foresight process analyses movements affecting phenomena over long periods of time (trends, global drivers, etc.), and uses horizon-scanning mechanisms to identify the main emerging challenges, such as the issues of multi-level governance, fragmentation of European research, future enlargement (potentially to include Romania, Serbia, Turkey, Russia, etc.) and the impact of those challenges on the transborder areas.

The issues of central concern are the major changes actors will have to face and whether these changes have positive (opportunities) or negative (threats) impacts.

Among the main transborder cooperation issues, the following are of particular importance:

- historical, cultural and linguistic ties, economic and market compatibilities, terrestrial and fluvial indivisibility, geographical proximity between main centres;
- different political systems, different concepts of regionalisation and different levels of political jurisdiction;
- similar approaches regarding the importance of the regional level in the national context, decentralization involving newly-established regional development structures, avant-garde vocations within the countries;
- similar higher education systems structures, development of technology transfer and innovation structures, shared participation in the globalized learning economy;
- similar development risks if close cooperation is not established, if efficient joint structures are not built and if the regional resources are not deployed properly;
- learning neighbouring countries' languages, diversity of cultures as a potential for creativity, competencies' networking in scientific and technological areas, development of "European competencies";

- as the environment has no borders there is a need to identify those environmental problems that remain to be solved at interregional level;
- cross-border regional integration is one of the main inputs for success at European Union level.

#### > *The five key questions for foresight practitioners*

1. What are the global driving forces and what has their impact been on the area?
2. How can we select the main issues for building a common vision at transborder level?
3. How can we position the role and the power of actors against these issues?
4. How can we build a strong identity for the cross-border area which takes into account the different specificities of the hybrid territories?
5. How can we combine cross-border cooperation and the subsidiarity approach? Do top-down and bottom-up dynamics provide a solution?

#### > *Methods and tools*

Analysing the potential paths over the long term requires attention to be paid to many sources of change, interaction and complexity. This requires appropriate methods to identify the issues that combine both external and internal trends (impact of global drivers at a local level and impact of regional drivers at a global level).

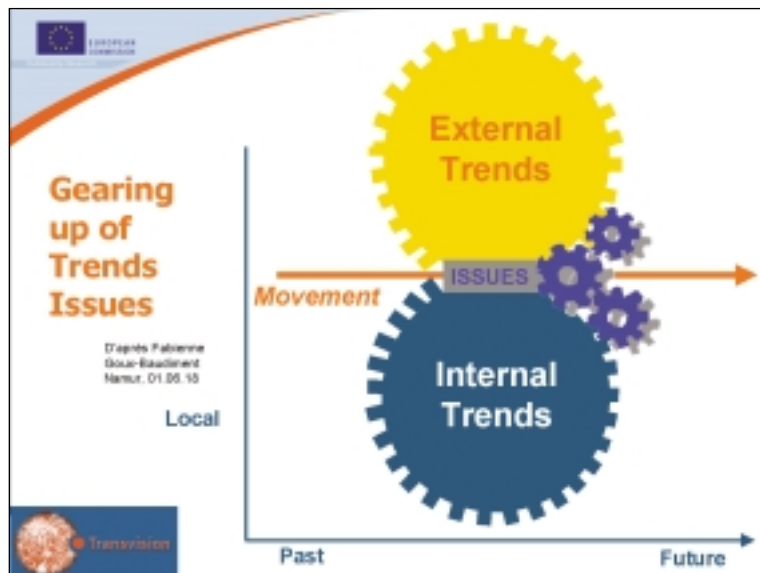
For example, the foresight could use futures workshops and computer-based tools as MICMAC to classify the key variables. Developed by the LIPSOR (Conservatoire national des Arts et Métiers, Paris), MICMAC is a method by which the interrelationships between the variables can be highlighted and the complex multiple interactions between them assessed in a systematic way. A database of variables is built from which a matrix plotting their influence and dependence on each other can be created<sup>(5)</sup>.

<sup>(5)</sup> See <http://www.3ie.org/lipsor/logiciels.htm> (free software).

In developing future perspectives Foresight must attempt to take into account the relative importance of the impacts at regional level of major global trends (technological development; the decline of the nation state; the effects of global financial deregulation; the development of new types of governance, new forms of economic structures, climatic change, etc.). These major trends are long-term movements, which tangibly affect the system and the future development of which it is possible for the observer to anticipate. These trends bring about challenges at local level and may lead to counter trends when actors become aware of them.

Analysing trends at global and regional levels goes together with the identification of affected variables (actors and factors), shedding light on the challenges facing the regions. The time dimension and its development are fundamental in determining the foreseeable changes in the long term as well as the capacity of the region to withstand, adapt or be part of the development.

The identification of discontinuities and changes of direction will complete the panorama of trends and the assessment of challenges. These signals will make it possible to give a collective perspective of the changing reality and map out the developing long-term vision of the cross-border area.



The process of organizing the issues raised (called variables) can be useful to determine the ability of the actors to deal with change.

To ascribe a hierarchy to the challenges, it is possible for example to use an importance vs. control matrix. The actors can be asked to

identify the critical changes and the inertias and assess how to reduce or increase their impact. By positioning the variables or the challenges in the four zones, it is possible to determine the importance of the challenges and their current degree of control<sup>(6)</sup>.

<sup>(6)</sup> Michel GODET, *Creating Futures...*, p. 95.



This kind of matrix can open the discussion about the involvement of actors in change management, about their control of the issues and about their ability to reduce the impact of the changes out of their control.

### SeeForesightT area's issues relating to the cross-border situation

The SeeForesightT partners have identified the following issues:

- joint challenges such as: flood prevention, organized crime, pollution, water resources management, renewable resources, high quality human resources enhanced by networking and clustering (Euro Inno-Regio Project);
- tourism: mapping of cross-border tourism opportunities and a range of tourist activities on offer for the purpose of developing joint tourism packages;
- RDTI: mapping and structuring the cross-border R&D supply, cross-border harmonization of strategies and pilot actions; cross-border innovation chains and pools of expertise, innovation for SMEs, Civil Society (Cross-border NGO development in target fields – youth, social issues, culture, etc.); additional topics include R&D, Civil Society & key sectoral issues;
- female unemployment as women are often not aware of unemployment risks in textile and education sectors, they are not informed about the future;
- governance: foresight should help democracy – check how far the actors take their engagements/contracts; how can we promote and organize the political will; harmonization of strategies launched at different levels; cross-border cooperation at a bilateral and multilateral level between the three regions; the question of increasing compatibility.

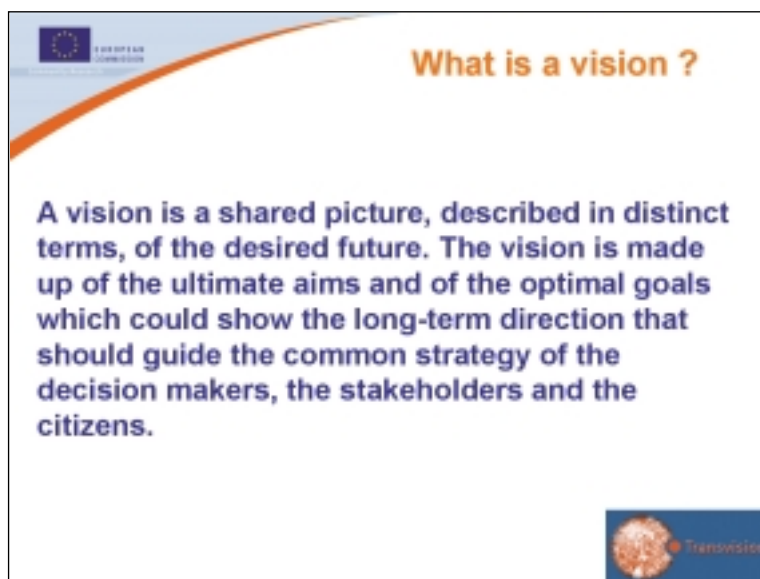
### 2.2.3. Deciding on the aims and the common vision

The exploratory phase of determining the future challenges is followed by the normative phase of defining a future vision aimed at directing the action. In a future with multiple possibilities there may be many responses to the challenges identified. The vision will therefore constitute the desirable future by responding to challenges identified over time and of mobilising all stakeholders,

decision makers, actors and citizens to achieve this objective.

#### > *Description*

This step of the process consists of building a common vision of the future, made up of shared long-term aims. Foresight is fundamentally a creative process. Accordingly, participants have to explore, create and test both possible and desirable futures, including ethical and political choices.



Some outcomes that have to be developed:

- the compatibility of cross-border regional initiatives at bilateral and multilateral levels between the regions;
- the starting point for cross-border cooperation (industrial decline, end of war, etc.).

of parallel strong economic cooperation and real growth?

#### > *Five key questions for Foresight practitioners*

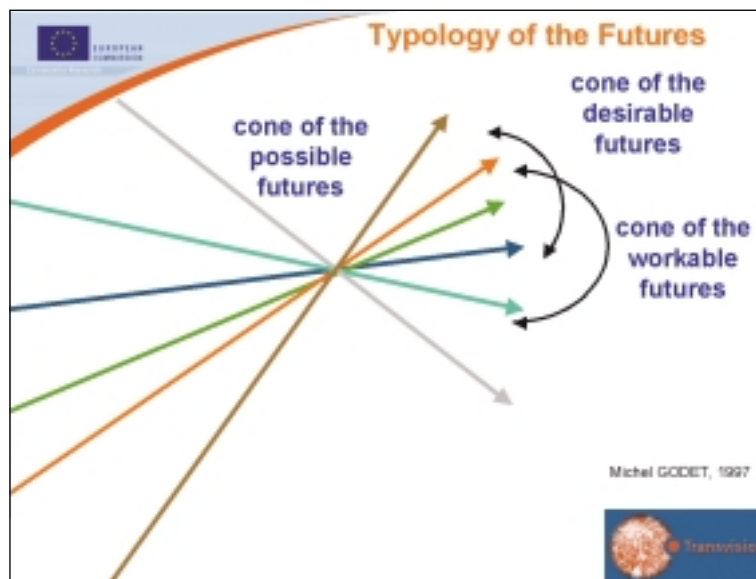
1. How do stakeholders see the development of cross-border cooperation in the future? What possible futures exist? What type of future is desired?
2. What innovative initiatives could cross-border and hybrid territories take together to increase and develop peaceful cooperation as well as fruitful relations between their countries?
3. How can cohesion and cultural, environmental and social consolidation between hybrid territories be guaranteed through the development

4. How can a transborder area integrate a multi-level governance approach of development and the territorialisation of RDTI policies?

5. How can we combine bottom-up and top-down approaches to transborder cooperation to reinforce the coherence between the strategic and operational levels?

#### > *Methods and tools*

The construction of a shared future vision depends on foresight constituting a genuine area of freedom of thought and action. Getting away from the everyday urgency makes it possible to create room for manoeuvre through a collective vision which is both realistic and set against a rigorous and critical background. As is shown in the figure below, desirable futures form parts of the possible futures and vice versa.



The vision must be global, voluntary, workable and have a long-term perspective so as to give direction to the actions and act as a support for the strategy to achieve it.

Many methods may be used to construct this vision, ranging from simple group techniques to more elaborate techniques using for example complex matrices comparing possible futures and desirable futures.

#### SeeForesightT partners' key issues to build the vision

Having regard to previous cross-border experience so far, as well as the trends in the SeeForesightT area, the partners consider that the main focus of the exercise should be economic, and propose that the following preliminary issues be considered in the TRANSVISION group as horizontal themes:

- positioning of the SeeForesightT area within the enlarged European Union;
- building the identity of the cross-border area in the international context;
- exploiting the complementary features of the border region economies, with the aim of setting up cross-border supply;
- consolidating the competitive advantages of each of the regions for the purpose of strengthening the overall cross-border area;
- bringing added-value to the regional strategies and action plans;
- encouraging a permanent mutual learning and exchange process;
- ensuring cohesion and consolidation in the cross-border area;
- improving climate of tolerance, opening up towards establishing working relations, flexibility in setting up a common range of values.

#### 2.2.4. Linking the vision to the present by means of a strategic axis programme

Having described the long-term vision and with it now constituting the objective to be achieved, it is now necessary to conceive and implement the strategy to bring about the desired situation. It will therefore be necessary to link the vision to

the present by drawing up a strategic programme to achieve it.

##### > Description

The objective of foresight is to propose new instruments for action that will function as links between the different issues identified in the proposed vision, and to prepare for these changes. The foresight exercise has a strategic key role to play when assessing the strategic directions.



Some main strategic outcomes are:

- economic exchange: searching for new suppliers, markets, transfer of know-how, commercial relations, etc.;
- correlation of infrastructure investments (European corridors, choice of timeframe for the implementation of projects related to the rehabilitation of roads, railways and other infrastructure);
- mobility of individuals and goods;
- expert exchanges (in academia, public administration, etc.);
- joint use of the available resources and potential on a structured and systematic basis;
- in some specific transborder areas (like the SeeForesightT area), emphasis should be placed on the target of increased decentralization in the three regions of the cross-border area and the place and role of local/regional actors in the foresight process (public administration, chambers of commerce, economic development agencies, research organizations, universities, consultants etc.).

**> The five key questions for foresight practitioners are**

1. What policies and actions are needed to ensure that the future we desire can be attained?
2. How can we consolidate the competitive advantages of each region for the purpose of strengthening the overall cross-border area? What kind of actions should cross-border regions take in order to act globally?
3. How can we organize regional networks of actors (such as universities) into transregional learning networks that are open to the outside and contribute to the ERA and to the Lisbon process?
4. How can we create a new kind of governance for transborder hybrid territories, which provide added value to internal regional strategies and action plans? To what extent can/should full policy integration be attained?
5. How can we build a long-term and sustainable platform of cooperation supported by adequate instruments and cooperation projects? How can we find the “administrative building blocks”?

### To what extent can full strategy integration be attained?

Strategic direction linked with key issues in the SeeForesightT area

- The border regions in all three countries can build on the research and educational infrastructure provided by universities and other institutions, and also on the high quality human resources available.
- Water resources' management: environmental threats in the border area “require joint approaches in order to be addressed comprehensively”, the protection of natural resources in the cross-border area can only be undertaken effectively via joint management systems and facilities capable of joint actions. Rivers and thermal water stocks are common treasures for the three regions. Besides tourism, agriculture plays an important role in water use. Intensive aquaculture systems use thermal water directly as well as the waters deriving from thermal baths and greenhouses.
- Renewable resources: agriculture is strong in all the three regions and with their good quality soils, these areas should be cultivated. There are possibilities for using them for energy plants, as renewable energy resources, or for other uses such as herb growing. Because of the large number of sunlight hours, solar energy might also be a possibility.
- Clustering: cluster building is an innovative cooperative solution and offers specific cooperation initiatives, providing opportunities for SMEs from the partner countries to enhance cross-border business links. Depending on the regional characteristics, the main areas for cooperation and cluster building are software development, biotechnologies for agriculture and food processing, as well as the pharmaceutical and energy sectors.

### > **Methods and tools**

Whether drawing up exploratory or strategic scenarios, it is not possible to disregard the successive stages, which separate the present from the vision of the desired future. In the strategic phase, actors' game will have to be

considered, anticipated and integrated in the approach. The strategic directions will have to be tested on the actors with the aim of adjusting the actions and familiarising the stakeholder with the strategic framework they will be required to implement.



### **What policies and actions do we need to ensure that the future we desire can be attained?**

European competence as one of the main pillars of Vision 2020 for the Large Region.

The Large Region must prove itself as a European centre of competence. Only in this way, will it be able to keep its position as a pioneer. European competence is dependent on having a share in the process of European integration, in all its political, legal and economic dimensions. For example, the best training in community law is provided in a higher education establishment in the Large Region. This technical competence must also be accompanied by cultural competence, particularly in multilingualism, cross-cultural mobility and, above all, open-mindedness. This involves the ability to preserve diversity in the community, to learn from it and to put the knowledge to good use for the common benefit. This kind of European competence must be increased and professionalized in widely differing sectors, such as the economy, education and vocational training, the employment market, etc. The integration processes in these fields must always precede the integration processes in the rest of Europe in order to guarantee and consolidate the progress made by the Large Region in this area.



## 2.2.5. Making recommendations

### > *Description*

Some guidance (a sort of "strategy user's guide") must accompany the strategy proposed. In order to get the support of policy managers, stakeholders and management agencies, who will make effective use of policy advice generated by the

foresight exercise, recommendations must be structured around feasibility criteria and especially:

- political criteria (critical period influenced by elections) feasibility;
- implementation capacity of the decision maker (political competence, budget portfolio size, etc.);
- specific elements that have been observed during the foresight exercise (that are not evident on the agendas of actors);

### How can we build a long-term and sustainable platform of cooperation supported by adequate instruments?

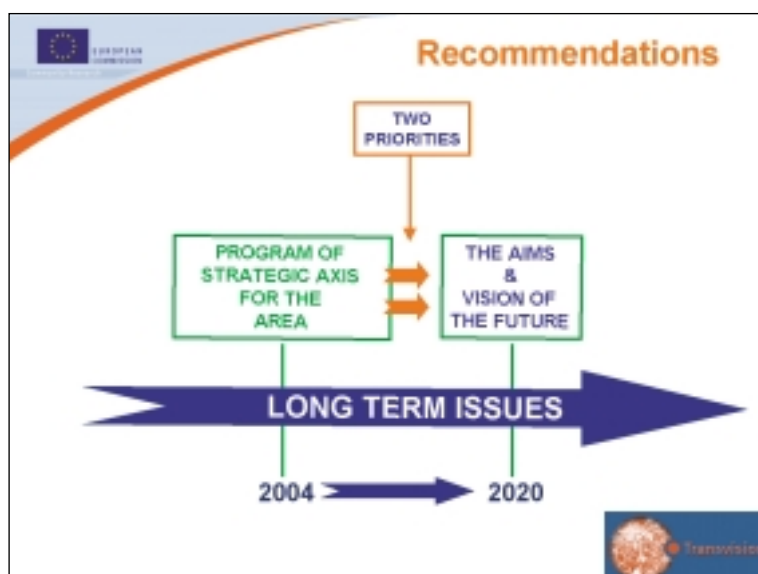
Proposal for the creation of an interregional agency for culture and multilingualism in the Large Region

The first measure to be adopted in respect of a new common cultural policy must be the creation of an inter-regional agency for culture and multilingualism. The mission of this agency, a direct result of the 7th Summit, is to work out a plan for introducing multilingualism to the entire area of the Large Region and all strata of society and then to apply it progressively in close collaboration with the political authorities. It will have the task of improving the coordination and effective commercialisation of the many cultural activities in the Large Region. The range of cross-border cultural activities must be improved and artistic cooperation facilitated in order to attract a greater number of visitors and spectators. The agency for culture and multilingualism could be set up in an interregional arts centre. In addition to its coordinating tasks, it could provide advisory, mediation and planning services, and could take responsibility for harmonising the cultural calendar, organising events on common themes and possibly arranging advertising.

### > *Methods and tools*

It is crucial that actions and tasks are prioritised and that the strategy takes account of the capacity

of the stakeholders to implement the outcomes by measuring, and if necessary adapting the products.





Regional foresight has to emphasise the reliability and usefulness of the findings. It is a necessity to meet the needs of policymakers and stakeholders and to provide them with guidance, to respond to the issues and to stay closely linked to the ultimate aims and the interested parties. Participants involved in the foresight exercise will be aware of the need to make recommendations for immediate action to prepare society for change. Clear findings and recommendations, outlining main alternatives for actions, are more likely to get the attention of decision makers and stakeholders and provoke action. A clear implementation plan is fundamental in order to identify the preparation period and the impact in the future for each action.

In order to communicate findings, a formal report should be published. The report should be easily read, comprehensive and widely available. Presenting foresight findings openly increases credibility and creates pressure to act upon findings. A summary report is useful for a broad and quick dissemination. Delivering the report is not enough. A communication programme,

including workshops, conference and evaluation processes, would raise its impact. Public availability of reports and dissemination meetings are useful to present and stimulate dialogue on findings.

It is important to allow enough time for implementation before any evaluation of the impact of the foresight exercise is undertaken.

**>The five key questions for the foresight practitioner**

1. How far is the strategy developed in the transborder foresight exercise feasible?
2. To what extent are transborder competencies capable of implementing the strategy? Are there new institutional structures required at transborder level?
3. How can the findings be most effectively communicated?
4. How can we define the dissemination plan to improve ownership of findings?
5. How does the specific transborder situation influence the efficiency of dissemination (languages, culture, etc.)?

## How can we consolidate the competitive advantages of each region for the purpose of strengthening the overall cross-border area?

Higher education and research networking in the Large Region:  
2020 Vision pathways

The higher education and research system in the Large Region is very varied. The different establishments enjoy great prestige on the international scene and together constitute sufficient critical mass in the key disciplines and innovative sectors. The balanced spatial distribution of these establishments and their proximity is ideal for promoting an exchange of knowledge and people.

Nevertheless, the Large Region is far from pursuing a coordinated or even integrated policy in the field of higher education and research. Each region has defined its own strategies independently of the neighbouring cross-border regions, and has developed strategic framework conditions increasingly determined by national systems. Against this background, the main pathways proposed by Vision 2020 are the following:

- reorganization of executive powers of all higher education establishments within the “Charter of Academic Cooperation”;
- analysis of the potential of the Large Region;
- harmonization of higher education and research policy;
- networking in the fields of research, teaching and learning;
- exchange of knowledge and people;
- modular structuring of courses;
- common introduction of Master's and Bachelor's degrees;
- networking of science parks and business incubators;
- joint presentation to the outside world.



Map of The Large Region Universities and High Schools (Master's + Bachelor's Degrees)

### 3. Ten lessons learnt from the elaboration of the TRANSVISION Blueprint

1. In transborder cooperation, foresight is still at an embryonic stage. The Large Region experience is an ongoing exercise built on a top-down process without wide citizen or stakeholder ownership. The aims of this exercise should still be achieved. On the other hand, SeeForesightT Region partners expressed the difficulties resulting from the evolution of their situation within the framework of EU Enlargement (Hungary, as a EU Member State since 2004; Romania as a proposed member in 2007; Serbia's participation has not yet been defined), with economic troubles and different positions in the European Research Area (ERA). Some partners considered that it would have been more beneficial for them to cooperate with regions other than the ones concerned in TRANSVISION and raised the question of whether cross-border cooperation could become an instrument to control the most powerful partners.
2. Preparation of this TRANSVISION Blueprint was both a collective effort and a learning process. Two direct results that arose from the work that respond to the apparent weaknesses of transborder foresight experiences are:
  - the will of the Large Region partners to achieve Vision 2020 by opening up the process to a wider group of actors and stakeholders in the area;
  - the strong desire of the SeeForesightT Partners to launch a transborder foresight process built on their Blueprint experience as a concrete pilot project which would respond to their economic needs (see below).

#### What lessons have been learnt from the elaboration of the TRANSVISION Blueprint?

##### Proposals for joint foresight exercise in SeeForesightT area

Foresight exercises will identify actors, technological and managerial and marketing capabilities, the opportunities as well as the necessary conditions for promoting the development of selected industries/sectors/technologies, which will support the technological, economical and social development of the region.

##### Digital integration of SeeForesightT area into the EU information society

The Promotion of Regional Cooperation in the Software (SW) Industry – main project issues:

- education and training for SW industry;
- incubation of SW business and companies;
- investment in SW industry.

Activities should include:

- a feasibility study on the establishment of Regional centre(s) for the education and training of human resources for SW engineering professionals in the region;
- the incubation of technologies and business in SW engineering, which could support the development of other, non-ICT related sectors and services;
- the education and certification of SW professionals;
- the mobilization of pools of potential investors for SW engineering businesses.

## Biotechnologies for better health and sustainable development of SeeForesightT area

Promotion of regional cooperation in biotechnologies (BT) – main project issues:

- research and technological development (RTD) in BT;
- incubation of BT business and companies;
- investment in BT Industry;
- Early Warning Infrastructure in health and sustainable development issues.

Activities should include:

- integration of the regional RTD resources through joint RTD programmes and projects under FP6 and other EU RTD activities, which could support the development of the region and integration into ERA;
- incubation of technologies and businesses in the biotechnology sector;
- mobilization of pools of potential investors in BT businesses in the region;
- establishment of Early Warning Infrastructure in order to prevent the spread of health problems and diseases related to the deterioration of the environment and to pandemics;
- creation of infrastructure for regulations and testing protocols in R&D activities concerning the development and commercialisation of drugs or other products, processes and services that can affect public health.

3. The drawing up of the TRANSVISION Blueprint has fostered and supported the development of a foresight culture, which encourages innovation and adaptation to a changing environment in the partner regions. A rigorous foresight process, carried out on a cross-disciplinary network basis makes it possible to identify the development trends; the continuities, interruptions and changes in the variables (players and factors) in the environment, and also to determine the range of possible futures. Accordingly, it is possible to work out coherent strategies and to improve the quality of decision-making. Foresight provides the context that favours the anticipation of events as well as action to implement the desired changes and to measure new opportunities. Foresight is a way to take a better-informed look at the present. The objective of this systematic approach is to anticipate the effects of change, to define new strategies and to adapt them to the real situation. Foresight techniques are based on listening to citizens and on analysing the relevant parts of the society concerned, in order to identify stable factors and ephemeral influences, to detect the signals and trends that might help to determine not the future but *some possible futures*.
4. For success, serious foresight training is needed in the regions. Seminars, workshops and training courses should be organised to develop foresight skills and specific methods adapted to the different territories. The success of foresight in the regions is closely linked to learning foresight values and methods, acquiring new professional competencies, as well as taking care of ethical values and of the epistemological dimension (positioning foresight as knowledge). Getting the best from the foresight exercise requires discussing practices and priorities for managing the foresight exercise with stakeholders and ensuring links with decision-making processes in the different countries.
5. In preparing the TRANSVISION Blueprint, problems were encountered because of a common confusion between the "ultimate aims" and the "strategy"<sup>(7)</sup>. Foresight has to identify the ultimate aims – the optimal goals – of policies, as its purpose is to promote the general interest. Franz Peter Basten, former General Secretary of the Vision 2020 Political Committee, has pointed out that in the Large Region, the aims of the exercise were *to significantly improve the situation for the people*, and that people had understood that Europe was the first factor in that improvement.

<sup>(7)</sup> For instance, the Lisbon strategy of March 2000 is not a strategy when it requests that Europeans build a sustainable growth economy with more and better jobs or greater social cohesion. In fact, these concepts of sustainability, cohesion and economic growth describe a common vision and suggest related aims in the same way as democracy or freedom. However, the Lisbon strategy is a real strategy when it demonstrates a way to realize these aims: to develop the most competitive and dynamic knowledge-based economy in the world by developing better policies for the information society, R&D and innovation, by investing in people, by combating social exclusion and providing an appropriate macro-economic policy mix.

### How can the outcomes of the transborder foresight exercise be sold? The case of Vision 2020 in the Large Region

After the short period of nine months' work, meeting more than once a month, the Political Commission presented its proposals to the 7th Summit of the Large Region on 30th June 2003 in Saarbrücken.

The Summit that had commissioned Vision 2020 accepted the proposals, without immediately adopting all 90 of them. The decision was made to immediately implement the basic guidelines of Vision 2020 in the daily policies of all partners. This became an important basis for the follow up at interregional level.

All the proposals have to be approved with a view to the short, middle and long-term implementation of inter-regional activities. This implementation of proposals could take up to the year 2020, the date when the Large Region should meet the description set out in Vision 2020.

The further development of the Large Region should be based on three important strategies:

The Large Region should become a region:

- with a European identity and a European way of life;
- with European competence;
- which is a model for European regions.

For the implementation of the proposals, a differentiation was made between:

- agenda projects, which should be set up by all partners of the Large Region on a very large level;
- so-called "lighthouse" projects, which are so unique to the Large Region that each project realised in one particular location in the Large Region would stimulate the development of the whole region;
- five agencies, which should be set up as far as possible to follow up the concrete results of the networking activities of the Large Region partners, especially in the fields of culture and multilingualism, labour and work, science and research, and transport and tourism. Experimentation with the concept of an interregional agency for culture and multiculturalism in the Large Region.

6. Because of the emerging knowledge-based economy, the links between companies, research and territories are extremely important. In transition countries, there is almost no connection between R&D and business sectors: the process of building cooperation between them is very difficult and takes too much time. Coordination of and support for the process of restructuring the R&D system are crucial, as well as the integration of this sector into the economy. Investment from the European Commission would be most welcome.

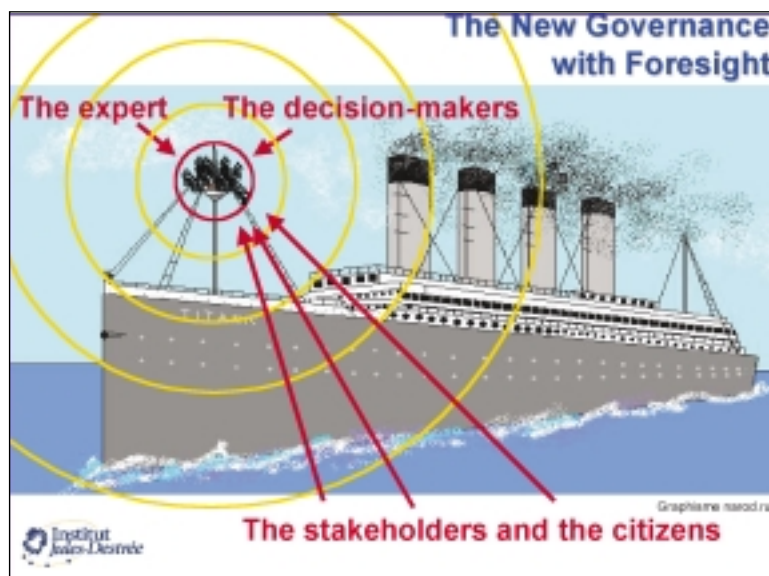
7. There is a good perspective for building transborder governance. Foresight occupies a very important position in the policy formation and decision-making processes and in the toolbox of European public management and governance. The development of the TRANSVISION Blueprint has confirmed that foresight is a powerful tool dedicated to renewing regional governance. New governance requires mecha-

nisms enabling consultation, recognition and participation of all stakeholders in a common project. Foresight can provide an answer to the expectations of the stakeholders in regional and transborder societies:

- to favour the emergence of transborder civil society and the development of deliberative democracy;
- to rebuild trust in the usefulness of political debate and of public action;
- to identify and to take into account the expectations of public service users;
- to respond to local and global issues related to sustainable development;
- to develop the open application of innovative tools (processes, formal techniques and methods) for multi-stakeholders for use in political decision making and debate; as well as for the management of public and private projects.



It should be noted that foresight is specifically geared to anticipate the long-term impacts of policies and that it is particularly relevant to the ultimate aim of ensuring sustainable development.



8. Foresight contributes to the democratic process. Three major dimensions of foresight contribute to highlighting the crucial issues of the future: its social vision; its understanding of the dimension of time and its holistic examination of economic, social, political and cultural changes and of their impact in a given space. Foresight thereby opens up the fields of possible futures. By widening the debate in order to embrace this open future, which is never fully definite, it is possible to identify the issues that arise and the possible choices. It therefore creates a renewed freedom of action and reinforces the confidence of the stakeholders in their ability to deal with their own future. In public life, this range of possibilities gives meaning to democracy. Foresight makes it possible to identify the probable scenarios for the stakeholders' contributions and the corresponding patterns, with a view to bringing about the required developments. A foresight approach also makes it possible to introduce a logic of anticipation (monitoring social problems, for example) and of premeditation (identifying crucial actions) into the public debate, rather than waiting for a solution to appear.
9. Foresight has shown its strong consensus-building qualities in its long-term vision and its creation capacity. It is a tool to coordinate strategy planning and to project development within an interactive framework in transborder cooperation. In this perspective, foresight could valorise the new approach of Interreg IIIC facing the trial of Regional Framework Operation. Moreover, foresight could be developed within the existing programme for cross-border cooperation in the SeeForesightT area, the EU Neighbourhood Programme, including the financial instruments INTERREG (for HU), Phare Cross-Border Cooperation (for RO) and CARDS (for Serbia and Montenegro). Furthermore, there is an initiative to start a strategy for the DKMT Euroregion.
10. Experiences in the Large Region have shown the need for permanent drivers in transversal or thematic fields. The usefulness of continuous foresight teams and of foresight work has been assessed with a view to analysing the evolution of the area and of the original partners inside the global environment. It would be useful to keep the stakeholders mobilised in a proactive process. Such permanent structures could adopt the structure of agencies or of a network of existing trans-border organisations.

In particular in the Large Region, the following questions of continuous foresight have been raised: What is the evolution of the political group created to monitor this exercise? What will the role be of the whole range of regional/national administrations and experts who have committed themselves to collecting adequate knowledge for the exercise? How can progress be made and the enormous efforts be sustained? How can the targeted levels of foresight development (data collection, actors and experts' networking, decision makers' coordination, etc.) be organised

in a network? How can the transborder areas valorise existing cooperation structures or networks? What has to be done to adapt them to transform punctual foresight activities into a sustainable and autonomous instrument?

The essential precondition for increasing the use of foresight findings in transborder cooperation is stressed in the OECD Public Management Programme for evaluation: it is *the commitment and perseverance of those who believe it can be used to improve policy making*<sup>(8)</sup>.

<sup>(8)</sup> Improving Evaluation Practices, Best Practice Guidelines for Evaluation and Background Paper, p. 39, Paris, OECD, 1999, Puma/PAC(99)1.



## 4. Foresight and the Transition to Regional Knowledge-based Economies

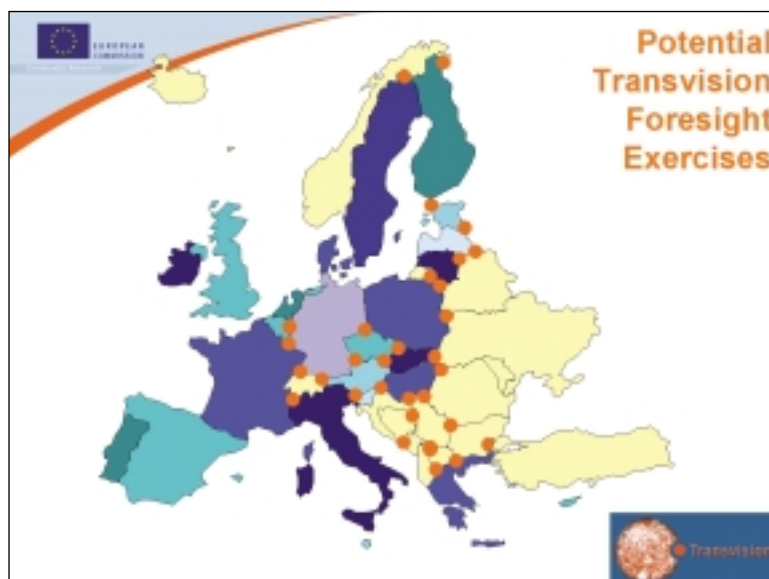
### Transvision Interregional Learning Platform

#### Added Value of the Transvision Workshop held during the Brussels Dissemination Conference

It is with genuine concern for its operational implementation that the Transvision Group has constructed the Interregional Learning Platform, which is a tool for regional and interregional trans-border collaboration to enter into a knowledge-based economy.

- an axis for futures watch and exchange between clusters of transborder regions;
- an axis for the experimentation of regional development strategies within these trans-border clusters;
- an axis for the evaluation of foresight and trans-border development strategies.

The Transvision Interregional Learning Platform could develop along three axis:



### 1. An axis for futures watch and exchange between clusters of transborder regions

1.1. An exact picture of regional, national, federal and European instruments must be at our disposal so that long-term visions and strategies for the regions belonging to transborder areas may be constructed.

1.2. Such a platform would also make it possible to share mutual aspirations, methods, practices and information (analyses of trends, issues, governance systems, etc.) in a permanent cross-border open forum.

## **2. An axis for the experimentation of regional development strategies within the trans-border zones.**

2.1. One nation-state – the Grand Duchy of Luxembourg – and seven regions in two different European zones, involving six other nation-states have developed a transborder Blueprint. Apart from the outcomes awaiting this initiative in the Great Region (Luxemburg, Rheinland-Pfalz, Saarland, Lorraine and Wallonia) and in the South East Foresight Triangle (Great Southern Plain Region, West Romania and Vojvodina), we envision a transborder operation that would follow the path plotted by Transvision and use the Blueprint as a road map. That exercise could follow on one hand a theoretical process to implement the foresight and, on the other, a practical process linked to specific interregional issues (Interregional Blueprint). This is probably the best way of gauging the relevance of the work accomplished and improving its contents.

2.2. Experience can be gained and case studies be carried out in different programmes based on the Transvision Blueprint. Numerous suggestions exist, for example preparing an Interreg, integrating the transborder dimension in a Docup (Planning Document) with the aim of accessing funds that reinforce European cohesion.

## **3. An axis for the evaluation of foresight and transborder development strategies**

3.1. The Blueprints still have to be evaluated, in addition to the quality control carried out by the Core Group and the comparison between the initial goals, the impacts and the results envisaged by Professor Peter Heydebreck during the first part of the Dissemination Conference.

3.2. In more general terms, the evaluation of foresight exercises is a crucial and difficult question. If foresight means mobilising the players in a region in light of long-term objectives, what indicators must be taken into consideration and when in time they should be activated? Evaluation processes can often be used as dissemination and implementation processes (example: Futur, The German Research Dialogue).

### **Towards a Transvision network ?**

Hence, futures watch, experimentation and evaluation could form the three axes and the specifications of a network directed towards the entry strategies of the regional transborder zones in a knowledge-based economy, in which foresight plays a core role as an interaction tool between the three spheres of governance: the governments concerned, the private sector and civil society. Foresight is also central to the process of integrating transborder core issues in regional strategies.

Moreover, the network would constitute an essential back-up for the democratisation of Europe and of its borders. Seen from the Balkans – and the Transvision Group stressed the point – that issue assumes its full significance. However, the challenge is also fundamental everywhere in Europe if, as suggested in the Dissemination Conference by Dr Hanspeter Georgi, Saarland Minister for Economic Affairs, the principle of subsidiarity is – or should be – at the heart of our democracy.

The concept of Transvision functions when it is seen as a bridge between neighbours historically and culturally close to one another but separated by frontiers. Besides, this concept reaches beyond the notion of hybrid and transborder regions, since it has begun to be applied to the Directorates-General of the Commission, a development which shows that we are witnessing the beginning of something new.

## 5. Contacts of regional foresight practitioners/experts

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## 6. Background Papers of the TRANSVISION Working Group

Paper	Availability
<p>Blueprints, TRANSVISION Workshop in Timisoara, March 9, 2004, ppt.  Reactions to initial questionnaire addressed to TRANSVISION Group, Februari 11, 2004  Contribution to Blueprint, April 19, 2004  Contribution to Blueprint, June 6, 2004</p>	Hans Egon Baasch
<p>Blueprints, TRANSVISION Workshop in Timisoara, March 9, 2004, ppt.  Proposed transborder co-operation issues for the work of the TRANSVISION group in the SEEForesight area, 3 p., Timisoara, 12 Februari, 12, 2004.  Info added to the 6 topics according Philippe Destatte slide presentation, Timisoara, March 23, 2004  Contribution to intermediary report, March 25, 2004, 5p.  Maps of SeeForesightT territories, June 7, 2004.  Inputs to the new TRANSVISION structure, Timisoara, June 9, 2004, 3p.  Contribution final report to rationale of foresight exercise, June 11, 2004.  Reply to comments of Zarko Maletin, June 14, 2004, 1 p.  Lessons of TRANSVISION exercise, June 22, 2004.</p>	Raluca Cibu-Buzac
<p>Conclusions after the Workshop in Timisoara, March 18, 2004, 2 p.  Foundations for the Future Strategies of the Regions, Brussels, June 17, 2003  Foresight Blueprints exploratory meeting, Follow-up, Suggestions for the next steps (with Robby Berloznik &amp; Pascale Van Doren), Brussels, July 2003, 5p.  TRANSVISION for bridging neighbouring regions belonging to different jurisdictions  (with Pascale Van Doren), Namur, January 13, 2004, 8 p.  First Outline / Skeleton of TRANSVISION Blueprint, February 16, 2004, 2 p.  Key Questions that Foresight should adress in Hybrid Territories, February 16, 2004, 2 p.  TRANSVISION Working Group, Core Group Meeting, ppt, Brussels, March 20, 2004, 45 sl.  TRANSVISION Working Group, Second Mobilisation Workshop, ppt, Luxemburg, March 22, 2004, 70 sl.  TRANSVISION..., First Draft of Blueprint, Namur, April 6, 2004 (with Pascale Van Doren), 18 p.  Blueprints..., Key Global Issues, May 11, 2004.  TRANSVISION..., Fourth Draft of Blueprint, Namur, June 21, 2004, (with Pascale Van Doren), 31 p.  TRANSVISION Working Group, Core Group Meeting, ppt, Brussels, June 24, 2004, 42 sl.</p>	<p>Daniel Cosnita  Philippe Destatte</p>
<p>Blueprints, TRANSVISION Workshop in Timisoara, March 9, 2004, ppt.  Euro-Inno-Regio Project, March 17, 2004.  Contribution to intermediary report, April 17, 2004.  SeeForesightT Area Context, Szeged, February 12, 2004, 2 p.  Key questions that foresight should adress, Februari 13, 2004.</p>	Tamas Gyurcsek
<p>Comments on TRANSVISION Working Group Meeting  Report of Timisoara Workshop, March 2004.</p>	Suzanne Jakobs

Paper	Availability
<p>The South East Europe Foresight Triangle (See Foresight T),  First preliminary Thoughts of the potential work of the subgroup, 3p.  ppt Timisoara  Proposals to joint regional foresight exercise, v. 1, March 18, 2004.  Proposals to joint regional foresight exercise, v.2, Novi Sad, March 24, 2004.  Comments on the First draft of Blueprint, Belgrade, June 10, 2004.  Comments on final report, June 11, 2004.</p>	Zarco Maletin
<p>Zukunftsbild 2020, Grenzüberschreitenden Zusammenarbeit in  der Grosregion SaarLorLux, ppt, Timisoara, March 9, 2004.  Blueprints for regional foresight, TRANSVISION, Timisoara, March 9, 2004.  TRANSVISION, Second Workshop, Luxembourg, March 17, 2004.  The experience of elaborating the Zukunftsbild 2020 SaarLorLux,  Saarbrücken, March 29, 2004, 3 p.</p>	Martin Niedermeyer
<p>TRANSVISION for bridging neighbouring regions belonging  to different jurisdictions, Namur, December 13, 2003, 4 p.  TRANSVISION, Guidelines for draft n°1 development, Namur, January 21,  2004, 4 p.  TRANSVISION, Guidelines for draft n°1 development: intermediary inputs  (with TRANSVISION partners), Namur, February 12, 2004, 5 p.  TRANSVISION Working Group, Second Mobilisation Workshop, ppt,  Timisoara, March 9, 2004, 11 sl.  TRANSVISION, Working Group Meeting Report, Timisoara March 8, 2004,  March 11 2004, 10 p.</p>	Pascale Van Doren









European Commission

**EUR 21258 – The TRANSVISION BLUEPRINT**

Bridging neighbouring regions belonging to different jurisdictions, i.e., historically and culturally close regions divided by national borders

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The TRANSVISION blueprint is part of a set of five blueprints addressing five different regional contexts developed by the expert group “Blueprints for Foresight actions in the Regions”.

It provides a practical framework designed to build cross-regional strategic visions and guide decision making in neighbouring regions separated by national borders. It comprises two main elements: *firstly*, the rationale for a transborder foresight initiative and *secondly*, the methodology framework for conducting such an exercise. Key questions in relation to both of these dimensions are considered and the ten important lessons learned in the elaboration of the Blueprint are detailed.

