

PANEL DISCUSSION

“Euroregions in South East Europe: A Successful Instrument for Regional Development?”

On **28 March, 2007** at the

EU Liaison Office of the Euroregion Tyrol – South Tyrol - Trentino,
Rue de Pascale 45/47, 1040 Brussels

PROGRAMME

From 13.00h Lunch Buffet & Registration

14.30h – 14.40h *Welcome and opening remarks:*

Prof. Ursula Männle

Member of Parliament and former Minister in Bavaria,
Member of the Commission for External Relations and Decentralised
Cooperation of the Committee of Regions, Deputy Chairman of
Hanns Seidel Foundation

14.40h – 15.00h *Key Note Speech*

Gerhard Stahl

Secretary General of the Committee of Regions

15.00h – 15.15h *Introduction:*

Dr. Klaus Fiesinger

Head of Department, Central, East and South East Europe,
Hanns Seidel Foundation, Munich

15.15h - 16.45h *Panel I: Experiences in the past and main challenges*

Moderator:

Univ. Doz. Dr. Franz Schausberger

Former President of Land Salzburg, Chairman of
the Institute of the Regions of Europe (IRE), Salzburg,
Member of the Committee of Regions

Panellists:

Oriano Otočan

Member of the Regional Government of Istria in charge of International Collaboration and European Integration, Adviser to the President of the “Adriatic Euroregion”

“Challenges for the Adriatic Euroregion”

Darko Stilinović

Head of Section, Department for Cross Border, Interregional and Transnational Cooperation, Croatian Ministry of the Sea, Tourism, Transport and Development

“Cross-Border Cooperation in Regional Development”

Dr. Wolfgang Gläsker

Representative of Hanns Seidel Foundation in Sofia, Bulgaria

“Experiences and Challenges at a new EU external border: the case of Bulgaria, Macedonia and Serbia”

Bernd Posselt

Member of the European Parliament, Member of the Delegation in the mixed Parliamentary Committee EU-Croatia, Deputy Member of the Delegation for Relations with Countries of South East Europe, President of the Paneuropa-Union Germany

“Historic regions and minorities – explosive mix or binding agent in South East Europe?”

Discussion followed by **Q&As**

16.45h – 17.00h

Coffee Break

17.00h – 18.30h

Panel II: Present situation and outlook to the future

Moderator:

Klaus Klipp

Secretary General, Assembly of European Regions (AER)

Panellists:

Nikola Sobot

Executive Director of the Euroregion “EuroBalkans”

“Prosperity through Stability”

Antún Mihokovic, mr.sc.

Former Mayor of Virovitica, Croatia

Director for European Integration of Virovitica Podravina County

Euroregion Danube-Drava-Save

Pascal Goergen

Diplomatic Representative of the Brussels-Capital Region to the EU (Permanent Representation of Belgium to the EU)

“EGTC: State of play and opportunities for the regions”

Ann-Kerstin Myleus

Deputy Head of Unit, D1 Territorial Cooperation

DG Regional Policy, European Commission

Discussion followed by **Q&As**

- The panel discussion will be followed by a cocktail reception -

BACKGROUND

In South East Europe (SEE), regional cooperation is specifically stressed in the respective Stabilisation and Association Agreements with the European Union. Therefore, Euroregions may function as a motor for European integration in this part of Europe while at the same time serving as an instrument for good neighbourly relations and regional stability.

In the discussion the following questions regarding transnational cooperation within Euroregions shall be raised:

- What is the added value of Euroregions with regard to regional development as well as regional cooperation in SEE?
- Is there a decisive difference in having a region of an EU member state involved in a Euroregion (such as Italy and Slovenia in the “Adriatic Euroregion”, Bulgaria in “EuroBalkans” or Hungary in “Danube-Drava-Sava”)?
- What are the real challenges for the Euroregions in South East Europe? How are pressing needs, such as transport, infrastructure, investment, administrative capacities and the movement of persons, goods and services across the borders addressed?
- How can EU instruments such as the new European Grouping for Territorial Cooperation (EGTC) and the Interreg Programmes add to the success of Euroregions?
- What is the role of civil society in making Euroregions function efficiently? How can Euroregions overcome obstacles like insufficient legal frameworks or the lack of political will?
- Finally, can Euroregions serve as pillars for democracy promotion, economic development and stability?