

Summary of the workshop

Management of legal obstacles in the European Union: good practices,

during the ***Art of Cooperation 2024 Conference***

Bálna Budapest, 14 November 2024

The first panel, titled 'Management of legal obstacles in the European Union: good practices' moderated by **Melinda Istenes-Benczi**, started with the presentation of **Sandra Forsén**, Senior Adviser of the Freedom of Movement Council of the Nordic Council of Ministers. She introduced the structure and operation of the Freedom of Movement Council including reporting, registering, labelling, prioritising and solving legal obstacles. As many as 70 obstacles have been solved by the Freedom of Movement Council since 2014. The current agenda contains 30 prioritised obstacles and 100+ unsolvable problems in the database. The Hello Norden network of regional offices provides information on all relevant rules including also taxation and social security.

Martin Unfried, Senior Researcher at the Institute for Transnational and Euregional Cross border Cooperation and Mobility (ITEM at the Maastricht University) introduced ITEM's work on analysing legislative changes from the point of view of their potential impact on the regions along the Dutch borders. ITEM scanned legislative proposals, as many as 150 in 2023, of which 10 was border-relevant. Besides, for the sake of eliminating obstacles, a Dutch-Flemish Pilot Coordination Point was set up in last September. People can submit an online report on an obstacle by answering a few easy questions. ITEM carries out a quick scan, followed by a full analysis, if it is deemed necessary. A cross-border committee consisting of professionals and decision-makers put the questions/problems on the political agenda. He also pointed out that even rich regions such as the Belgian and Dutch ones heavily rely on EU funds in creating and supporting such mechanisms.

Sebastien Gröning-von Thüna, Head of Section of the Federal Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Germany, summarised the post-2020 German achievements on the field of European Territorial Cooperation. Based on the coalition agreement of 2021 expressing the wish to improve the conditions for cooperation in border regions, several changes have been put into practice, such as expansion of cross-border information services, and the creation of regional councils in order to strengthen bilateral cooperation. To strengthen the position of cooperation within the federal government, an interministerial working group on cross-border cooperation (CBC) was created. CBC experimentation clauses and the practice of ex-ante impact assessment (Grenzraum Check) of new legal acts have been introduced in federal legislation, based on the Dutch experience.

Katalin Fekete, Senior Legal Adviser of CESCO introduced the #ACCESS strategic project implemented together with CESCO Carpathia. According to the first experiences, the most important factor for eliminating cross-border obstacles is the willingness of the relevant authorities to cooperate. She presented the intervention logic of the project, including obstacle monitoring, obstacle management and promotion activities. Furthermore, she described the tasks, potential solutions and the outputs reached so far by the partners of the strategic project lasting 6 years.