

Summary of the workshop

Towards a European solution for eliminating cross-border legal and administrative obstacles during the *Art of Cooperation 2024 Conference*

Bálna Budapest, 14 November 2024

The second panel, titled 'Towards a European solution for eliminating cross-border legal and administrative obstacles' and moderated by Katalin Fekete, started with **Sławomir Tokarski's** [intervention](#), who is the Director of the DG REGIO (European Commission). He outlined the processes and tasks supported by the DG REGIO in setting the stage for Europe-wide cooperation in this field. He mentioned the milestones of their relevant activities:

- the Cross-border review (2015) which identified more than 300 obstacles;
- the Communication 'Boosting Growth and Cohesion in EU Border Regions' (2017), that called for commitment to remove the obstacles for the first time;
- the b-solutions initiative, a tool for solving obstacles and
- the document 'EU Border Regions: Living Labs of European Integration' (2021).

He also explained the process of adopting the cross-border facilitation tool (FCBS) from the Council conclusion of 2015 calling for a cross-border convention through a European Cross-Border Mechanism (ECBM) until the Council mandate on FCBS reached in last October.

Caitriona Mullan, Senior Expert of the Association of European Border Regions (AEBR) provided a comprehensive [introduction](#) to the b-solutions initiative aiming to analyse border obstacles, and provide support for solving them since 2018. Not less than 165 cases have been analysed so far, which are presented in the 4 compendium reports published by AEBR.. The cases have been listed into four groups: institutional cooperation, public services, labour market and education, and the EU Green Deal.

Jean Peyrony, Director General of the Mission Opérationnelle Transfrontalière (MOT) [spoke about](#) the initiatives and projects analysing and solving obstacles, often with the participation of the MOT. He presented the prehistory of the FCBS tool which started with the Budapest Platform established in 2010 by French, Portuguese, Dutch and Hungarian organisations. The need for managing legal obstacles emerged in 2013, at a debate held in Brussels. In 2015, the Luxembourg presidency introduced the new initiative that led to the Cross-border Review project of the Commission. Another major step was the mapping of obstacles by ISIG in the request of the Council of Europe, where they described the nature of persisting obstacles including many legal or institutional ones. Finally, he briefly introduced the Aachen Treaty which was signed on 22 January 2019 by the French and German political leaders. It aims to give competences and resources to local authorities and cross-border structures. Also, it expressed the need for creating a cross-border committee (CTT) focusing on cross-border observation, common strategy-making, obstacle monitoring, providing proposals, and the analysis of the impacts of new legislations. This method is also adopted on the French-Italian border in the frames of the project titled ALCOTRAITÉ initiating working groups, consultation, and territorial workshops.