



Patronage
of the Polish EU Presidency

International Conference
FROM THE "TATRAS" EUROREGION
TO A EUROPEAN GROUPING OF TERRITORIAL COOPERATION

Nowy Targ, 14th – 15th September 2011

ORGANIZERS:

Project Leading Partner: Polish Tatra Euroregion Association
Project Partners: Slovak Tatra Association
Town of Nowy Targ
Town of Kežmarok

CONFERENCE DATES AND VENUE:

The Conference will be held on **14th – 15th September 2011 in Nowy Targ**. At the Centre for Polish-Slovak Co-operation in Nowy Targ, ul. Sobieskiego 2, on the first day, two panel sessions will take place, closing with a discussion and conclusions. In the evening, we invite you to the promotional concert *The Tatras Bring Us Together*, featuring Polish and Slovak artists. On day two, a study visit will be organised to the Polish-Slovak borderland where selected results of the cross-border cooperation in the "Tatra" Euroregion to date will be presented.

CONFERENCE DESCRIPTION AND CONCEPT:

In the continued process of deepening of European integration, territorial cooperation is becoming a major element of the pursuance of the objectives of the European Union's cohesion policy. Pursued by local and regional authorities as well as non-governmental organisations, it yields specific actions and noticeable results. The Tatra Euroregion is a model component of this process. With its 17 years of achievements aimed at developing mutual partnership and trust-based good neighbourhood relations on a borderland, it has become an important player shaping Polish-Slovak cross-border cooperation.



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Nowadays, however, territorial cooperation, in particular on areas closest to borders, must be increasingly effective and efficient. Indeed, the quality of organisation of this cooperation is of paramount significance for the achievement of EU's cohesion policy objectives. In that context, in 2006, by Regulation (EC) No. 1082/2006 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 5 July 2006 on a European grouping of territorial cooperation (EGTC) a new legal instrument was set up – the European Grouping of Territorial Cooperation (EGTC) – enabling cross-border partners to establish a legal person created by Community law and pursue cooperation based on one legal order and a common structure. It is an innovative tool for the organisation of European territorial cooperation. This offers great opportunities for eliminating restrictions which have existed to date, opening new venues for action and strategic cooperation at the highest formal and legal level of organisation.

Euroregions seem to have a special role to play in the process of establishment of EGTCs – being natural and model partners for cross-border cooperation. Because of this, building on the dozen or so years of experience and well established Polish-Slovak cooperation, the “Tatra” Euroregion is engaging in intensive activities to change the legal status of the existing “Tatra” Euroregion Cross-Border Association by its transformation into a European Grouping of Territorial Cooperation. The different stages of the setting of the structures of this legal entity are being carried out under the networking project *From the “Tatra” Euroregion to a European Grouping of Territorial Cooperation* whose partners are the Slovak Tatra Association (Združenie Region “Tatry”), the Town of Nowy Targ and the Town of Kežmarok. This project has been co-financed from the Republic of Poland – Slovak Republic Cross-border Co-operation Operational Programme 2007-2013.

The International Conference organised by the Polish “Tatra” Euroregion Association (Związek Euroregion “Tatry”) will be predominantly of consultative nature. It will become a forum for the exchange of opinions and experience as well as discussions on the role and potential of the EGTC in the context of the “Tatra” Euroregion's work on the establishment of an European Grouping of Territorial Co-operation, review of the Regulation on the EGTC which is now under way, and the on-going consultations on issues which are strategic for the future of the cohesion policy. The importance of these themes and the issues to be discussed is emphasised by the Conference having been granted the Patronage of the Polish Presidency in the Council of the European Union.

We hope that the participation in the discussion of representatives of Polish and Slovak local governments of the borderlands, regional and national authorities, experts from the European Commission, the Committee of the Regions, organizations which support territorial cooperation, the EGTC which have already been established, and other Euroregions and entities preparing themselves to set up an EGTC will help indicate and emphasise the EGTC's potential and role in the process of European integration, and will become an incentive for more effective creation and functioning of EGTCs.

CONFERENCE'S THEMATIC SCOPE:

I. European Grouping of Territorial Cooperation – an innovative instrument for the European Union's cohesion policy:

- EGTC as a tool in the system of institutional implementation of programmes and projects for European territorial cooperation,



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- results to date of the implementation of Regulation (EC) No 1082/2006 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 5 July 2006 on a European grouping of territorial cooperation (EGTC) – discussion of substantive, legal and organisational aspects in the light of the review of the Regulation prepared by the European Commission experience in EGTC cooperation,
- role and meaning of the EGTC from the perspectives of Polish and Slovak national institutions responsible for the implementation of the EGTC Regulation,

II. From the “Tatra” Euroregion to a European Grouping of Territorial Cooperation – practical aspects of establishing an EGTC

- Results of cross-border cooperation pursued to date by the “Tatra” Euroregion,
- Polish-Slovak borderland – analysis of the needs and challenges for the pursuance of strategic cross-border cooperation,
- The “Tatra” Cross-Border Association vs a European Grouping of Territorial Cooperation – expectations and concerns, identification of key challenges for the Polish-Slovak cross-border cooperation,
- Polish and Slovak experience in the establishment of a TGTC, Euroregions as natural and competent partners in cross-border cooperation.

PARTICIPANTS:

Representatives of Polish and Slovak local governments of the borderlands, regional and national authorities, experts from the European Commission, the Committee of the Regions, European organizations which support territorial cooperation, EGTCs already established and other Euroregions and entities preparing themselves to set up EGTCs.



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