

The EGTC as a tool for cross-border multi-level governance

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Abstract

Far from signalling the optimal organisational design and legislative framework for stimulating cross-border, transnational and interregional cooperation processes across Europe, the European Grouping of Territorial Cooperation (EGTC) affects various aspects of multi-level governance. In accepting this, this chapter discusses potential benefits of EGTCs as a tool to boost cross-border multi-level governance, based on the analysis of the EGTC implemented strategies. This chapter proposes a novel conceptual framework to classify cross-border EGTCs based on their contribution to reducing border barriers and increasing the: (i) strategic, (ii) intermediary and (iii) rogue type of territorial capital of the cross-border region. It concludes that only a few ongoing EGTCs have been effective enough to respond to the main territorial development issues faced by the cross-border regions they cover. In this context, the author suggests a strategic makeover of several EGTCs with a view to concentrating on specific, rather than generic, strategic policy goals. In particular, several EGTCs' strategic foci should shift to reducing border barriers and promoting cross-border or transnational spatial planning.

Keywords: EGTC, Multi-level governance, cross-border barriers, cross-border spatial planning, European Territorial Cooperation, cross-border cooperation.

I. Introduction

Regulation (EC) No 1082/2006 of 5 July 2006 established the European Grouping of Territorial Cooperation (EGTC) legal tool that constituted an innovative response by the European Union (EU) to solve concrete problems faced by stakeholders to “establish a legal instrument capable of providing a strong legal foundation for cross-border cooperation” (CBC) (European Committee of the Regions - CoR, 2009: 9). Soon after, it became a central tool for sub-national entities to organise and establish territorial cooperation processes in the EU (Evrard & Engl, 2018). Later modified by EU Regulation 1302/2013, the EGTC can be viewed as a multifaceted legal instrument to ease European Territorial Cooperation (ETC), by allowing financial autonomy, the possibility to have a direct external representation and recruitment of staff. At the same time, it raised new legal challenges and developed new standards for CBC (Evrard, 2017).

Initially, and according to Regulation No 1082/2006 (EC) (Article 1.2), the main objective of an EGTC was “to facilitate and promote cross-border, transnational and/or interregional cooperation (...) between its members (...), with the exclusive aim of strengthening economic and social cohesion”. This was a clear limitation of its strategic vision, since territorial development encompasses not only social and economic development, but also other crucial dimensions and related components such as environmental sustainability, territorial governance and spatial planning (Medeiros, 2019a). On a positive note, the same Regulation recognised the importance of the EGTC tool, invested with legal personality, to overcome the obstacles hindering territorial cooperation.

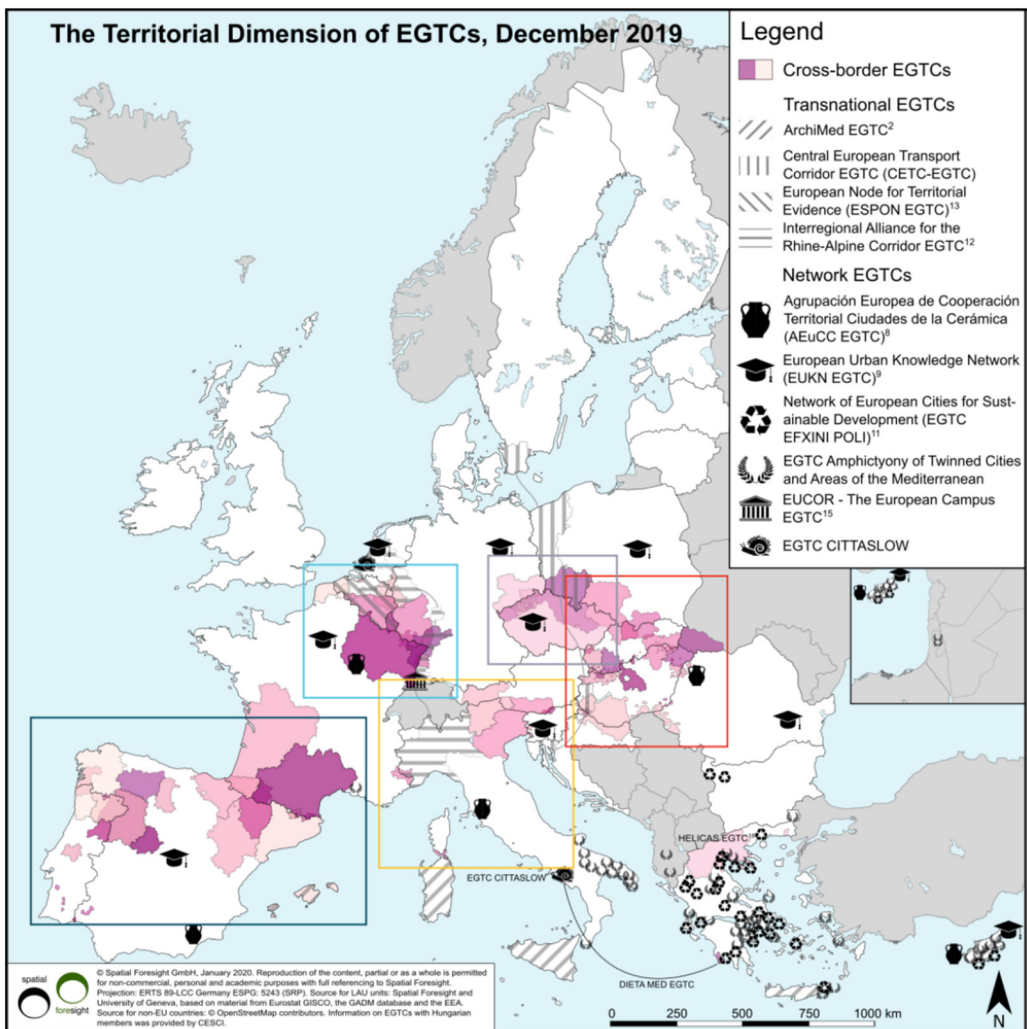
In view of experiences from the first EGTC experiments, the ‘updated’ EGTC Regulation (1302/2013), amongst several other substantial changes, recognised that the purpose of an EGTC should also include “strategic planning and the management of regional and local concerns in line with Cohesion Policy and other Union policies, thus contributing to the Europe 2020 strategy or to the implementation of macro-regional strategies” (EU, 2013: 305). At the same time, the goal of strengthening EU territorial cohesion (Faludi, 2010; Medeiros, 2016) was added to the longstanding EU policy goal of strengthening socioeconomic cohesion (Article 1(2)). This was in line with the Lisbon Treaty, which formally added the territorial dimension to EU policy goals (Faludi, 2013; Medeiros, 2017).

Almost 15 years since the EGTC Regulation was approved, to date (early 2020), there are 75 EGTCs in Europe.¹ Until 2017, they covered 100 European Nomenclature of Territorial Units for Statistics (NUTS) 2 and involved four ‘third countries’ (Albania, Palestine, Switzerland and Ukraine). Moreover, they covered around 28% of the total

¹ Information provided by Slaven Klobucar (CoR) in 25-02-2020 via e-mail

EU population and employed around 500 persons (CoR, 2017). It is also interesting to note that, since the initial growth phase between 2008 and 2013 when 46 EGTCs were established, only 29 EGTCs were established from 2014 to 2019. Indeed, since the first EGTCs were implemented in 2008, some EGTCs have lost momentum or did not accomplish the CBC activities they intended to facilitate. These EGTCs seem to never have been operational and already closed (Karst-Bodva EGTC); their tasks were time-limited (Grande Région EGTC); or they did not pass audit controls and hence recommendations were issued for winding them up (UTTS EGTC). This may imply that more EGTCs will be dissolved by force or after losing their purpose in the coming years. (CoR, 2017)

Figure 1: EGTCs in December 2019



Source: <https://portal.cor.europa.eu/egtc/ressources/Documents/CoR-EGTC-monitoring-report-final-study-2019.pdf>

Furthermore, from a geographical distribution standpoint (Fig. 1), it is possible to observe that vast parts of the European territory have not yet adopted the EGTC legal tool. These include the Nordic and Baltic countries, and also the United Kingdom and Ireland. More particularly, EGTCs seem to be clustered in a few EU border areas, as most have a cross-border character:

- North of Portugal and Spain;
- France and Spain;
- South of Netherlands, France-German border, Belgium and Luxembourg;
- Hungarian and Slovakian borders, and northern Czech border + South of Poland border;
- Northern Italy borders and eastern Austrian and Slovenian borders.

At a more general level, the spread of EGTCs have reinforced the institutionalisation and the integration of CBC processes in Europe, and ultimately contributed to “change patterns of the European multilevel governance system” (Evrard, 2017: 138), by stimulating decision-making processes to take place and the organisation of CBC exchanges and debates in a constructive way (Decoville & Durand, 2016). In this context, the next section will discuss the EGTC added value as a tool for cross-border multi-level governance, based on available literature. The third section debates potential advantages for a (de)territorialism resulting from cross-border multi-level governance processes. The following section applies a conceptual framework to classify EGTCs based on the analysis of their strategies and achievements. The final section of this chapter concludes.

II. The EGTCs added value for cross-border cooperation

Territorial cooperation, being a process of collaboration between different territories, encompasses distinct facets and components (Medeiros, 2015). In Europe, at the national level, CBC is the most salient territorial cooperation process, both in the number of ongoing projects, and in the amount of EU funding (EC, 2017). Notwithstanding, ETC is a minor goal of EU Cohesion Policy, financially speaking, since it has never reached more than 3% of the total financial package of this policy (Medeiros, 2018a). Even so, EU CBC processes (read Interreg-A) have been pivotal to promoting territorial integration processes (Reitel et al., 2018) and to foment bottom-up development processes via the rapid development of cross-border structures, like the EGTCs (Guillermo-Ramirez, 2018).

As we speak, the process of CBC in Europe has been formally implemented for more than 50 years in the Northern and Northwest European territories, making their cross-border areas the most mature and integrated ones in Europe (Decoville & Durand, 2016; Medeiros, 2019b). The following are the cross-border areas affected

by the first two generations of the INTERREG-A programmes, which include, for instance, the Portuguese-Spanish cross-border area (Gordon & Guillermo-Ramírez, 2019; Medeiros, 2014a). The less mature and integrated cross-border regions are those located in eastern and south-eastern European territories. In this context, the implementation of EGTCs, as a concrete tool to foment CBC processes, can be seen as an opportunity for these European cross-border regions to catch-up with the rest. But what exactly can be the added-value of EGTCs to the EU CBC process? Here are some potential benefits:

Mitigating border barriers

As the EU cross-border review initiative has shown, the most persistent border barriers in Europe are of an administrative and legal nature (Medeiros, 2018b; Svensson & Balogh, 2018). In this regard, EGTCs have the potential for boosting the institutionalisation process (Lange, 2018) aimed at overcoming obstacles which hinder territorial cooperation (Evrard & Engl, 2018). The crucial argument is that, by being invested with legal personality, EGTCs “have extensive legal capacity accorded to legal persons under that Member State’s national law” (Article 1(4) of the regulation (EC) No 1082/2006). Likewise, cultural and institutional borders can be mitigated by the implementation of EGTCs. The former can be reduced by the intensification of closer contacts between several actors across the border area, and by the implementation of potential cultural cross-border initiatives (read projects). The latter can be reduced, as EGTCs offer “subnational authorities an alternative legal framework with which to consolidate cross-border governance through institutionalization” (Ulrich, 2020: 57-8). Certainty, EGTCs are seen as “the only EU instrument with legal capacity aiming especially at facilitating territorial cooperation. In comparison, the Euroregion is a fuzzy type of cooperation since it does not benefit from a unified status established by the EU or other international organisations” (Elissalde & Santamaria, 2008 cited in Evrard, 2016: 514).

Establishing cross-border planning

Cross-border planning can be understood as a “systematic preparation and implementation of a spatial-oriented policy or plan, in a border region, with a view to anticipating spatial changes, and in order to have direct or indirect positive effects on spatial activities, with the ultimate goal of reducing the barrier effect and enhancing territorial capital” (Medeiros, 2014b: 368). Cross-border planning can benefit from the implementation of EGTCs, due to their legal capacity, and institutional arrangements. This is especially evident in bottom-up cross-border planning arrangements (Braunerhielm et al., 2019), as they require the involvement of local citizens and actors in their elaboration. At the same time, EGTCs provide an ideal platform for implementing cross-border planning projects (i.e. Interreg or other EU financed projects) which can provide several forms of cross-border

information. This includes the realisation of cartography at the cross-border scale as well as cross-border atlases, and also the establishment of cross-border statistical observatories (Decoville & Durand, 2019). However, it is important to stress the potential limitation to implementing cross-border planning processes. On the one hand, planning is still very much a national territorial level competence (Faludi, 2010). On the other hand, as Terlouw (2012: 362), postulates “the relations of territorial administrations are more vertical and cross-scales, rather than being horizontal and crossing borders. It is therefore very difficult to develop cross-border governance at the scale of the Euroregions”. Worse still, EGTCs are unpopular with some governments (Faludi, 2018b) and regions (Medeiros, 2013) as they are seen to interfere with elements of national and regional jurisdiction and territorial supremacy.

Promoting territorial development and cohesion

The aim of strengthening economic and social cohesion is clearly present on the initial EGTC Regulation (1082/2006). The goal of territorial cohesion was then added in the 1302/2013 Regulation. All these policy goals are a sign that the EU sees EGTCs not only as a means to achieve territorial development for EU cross-border areas, but also as a policy tool to achieve a far more challenging policy goal: territorial cohesion (Medeiros, 2019a). But if cohesion is a complex policy goal to be achieved, as it requires that less developed territories show more positive development trends than more developed territories in a baseline scenario, the goal of territorial development is not so impossible to achieve. One way to achieve this goal is to make EGTCs preferential platforms for implementing projects covering all dimensions of territorial development (Schönlau, 2016). And indeed, by now, several EGTCs are supporting a myriad of development areas, such as tourism, transport/infrastructure, spatial development, culture/sports, education and training, rural development and environment (Evrard, 2017). Moreover, there are good reasons to exploit the EGTCs’ potential for promoting cross-border entrepreneurship (Smallbone & Welter, 2012), although several face concrete obstacles of a financial and legal character, “including a lack of recognition of EGTCs in national legislations and strategic inconsistencies” (CoR, 2017: 121), which prevent them from fully exploiting their territorial development potential.

It is not by chance that only five Euroregions created after 2007 did not adopt the EGTC formula (Noferini, et al., 2020). Seen as catalysts for promoting cross-border regions’ endogenous potential (Brenner, 2000) these Euroregions and other CBC entities are also crucial for engaging in lobbying for a continued interest in the territorial dimension of EU policies (Lange & Pires, 2018). In this regard EGTCs, as the ‘new kids on the block’ of CBC entities, should be at the forefront of promoting CBC processes in Europe. Here, their importance is particularly relevant since borderlands are “arenas in which issues concerning the future of European integration become manifest” (Faludi, 2018b: 8).

III. EGTC (de)territorialism and cross-border multi-level governance

In his latest book, Faludi (2018a) presents a neo-medieval vision for a Europe unaffected by territorialism. In essence, this vision supports the relation between member states enmeshed in crisscross relations, as opposed to the current neatly stacked shoulder to shoulder paradigm (Medeiros, 2019b). However, as Perkmann (1999) already asserted in the late 1990s, if governance is understood as a process of creating causal relationships between ‘governing’ institutions, the process of CBC governance has been a reality in Europe for decades now. This could signify that Faludi’s foresight of a sea of spatial relations within Europe has been partly triggered by the European CBC governance process, in particular with the financial support provided by the Interreg.

In a broad sense, governance “means rules, processes and behaviour that affect the way in which powers are exercised at European level, particularly as regards openness, participation, accountability, effectiveness and coherence” (EC, 2001: 6). As the term implies, multi-level governance embraces participation of non-state actors in decision-making processes (Newig & Koontz, 2014). In their seminal work on multi-level governance, Hooghe and Marks (2010: 17-20) identify two distinctive types. Type I is strongly associated with the notion of federalism, since it is “concerned with power sharing among general purpose governments operating at just a few levels”. Conversely, Type II has a more flexible design in which “jurisdictions are task specific rather than general-purpose; memberships are intersecting; jurisdictions are aligned not on just a few levels, but operate at numerous territorial scales; and where jurisdictions are intended to be flexible rather than durable”. Does this mean that EGTCs fit within multi-level governance Type II? In view of the fact that they are task-specific, have intersecting memberships and a flexible design, this could place them well within that category.

Some authors, however, have proposed different approaches to analyse cross-border multi-level governance. Perkman (1999: 664), for instance, distinguishes three effects of cross-border governance: (i) the delivery of European policies: local networks play an essential role in implementing INTERREG-A programmes; (ii) the creation of unstable and spatially nested inter-territorial coalitions; and (iii) the provision of a strategic space for the emergence of new actors in border areas. Strictly speaking, all of these effects can couple with the implementation of EGTCs. Indeed, as a process of institutional building and European integration (Harguindéguy, 2007; Stead, 2014), CBC empowers participating actors, not only in horizontal networks, but also in vertical spatial relations (Perkmann, 1999). These vertical institutional relations sometimes challenge regional and/or national dominance (Medeiros, 2013).

Most fundamentally, in an era of political and economic restructuring, policy-making responsibilities are increasingly devolved to non-state networks, or extra-local actors and forces. This formulation of multi-level governance processes is useful to the extent that it generates “a neat, parsimonious model that imposes a modicum of order on an increasingly complex world and is more nuanced than analytical frameworks equating power and authority solely with the state” (Baker et al., 2018: 193). Multi-level governance involves both formal (legal enactment, collective bargaining and joint and unilateral coordination) and informal (competitive, normative or mimetic isomorphism) processes (Marginson & Sisson, 2006). At the EU level, increasing interactions between countries (de Prado, 2007) have stimulated cross-border multi-level governance, especially after the implementation of the INTERREG-A programmes (EC 2007; Medeiros, 2010).

For some, the multi-level polity of the EU can be conceptualised in a single-level model of intergovernmental interactions (Scharpf, 2010). The basic argument is that multi-level governance is often characterised by autonomous units, such as EGTCs, interacting to pursue some governance objective (Slaughter & Hale, 2010), to shape policy processes in a particular context (Enderlein et al., 2010). These autonomous units are willing and capable of contributing to the policy-making process without supervision at the national level (Piattoni, 2010). On the whole, cross-border multilevel governance entails not only the translation of European or national objectives into cross-border regions’ development strategies, but also the appropriate involvement of local and regional authorities in implementing these strategies (Panara & Varney, 2013). Again, these mobilisation effects (Gänzle, 2017), provided by EGTCs, can play a crucial role in materialising all these governance aspects.

Reshaping multi-level systems of government, however, takes a long time, and may need certain adaptations (OECD, 2017). Hence, the EGTCs seeking to take centre stage in cross-border multi-level governance processes, just like existing Euroregions and similar CBC structures (Medeiros, 2011), require time to consolidate their ‘steering role’ as cross-border multi-level governance entities, following the examples of transnational organisations (Bache & Flinders, 2004). In this regard, a brief overview of implemented EGTCs shows that less than 15 have more than 10 years of existence. Hence, in theory, older EGTCs are better prepared to provide local and regional actors uniform and differential opportunities in implementing cross-border strategies employed at several levels, including the subnational one (Plangger, 2019). It is important to bear in mind, however, that “as soon as cross-border cooperation is intensified and institutionalized, many problems occur that are linked to the role of the cross-border territories in the making” (Chilla et al., 2012).

Crucially, several decades of cross-border multi-level governance institutionalisation, in several European cross-border regions have not had positive effects only. These

CBC institutional building processes, which include EGTCs, face institutional trapping processes associated with the risk of multiplication of decisional centres and the concentration of powers on a few politico-administrative levels (Zanon, 2013). Likewise, scaling down processes such as the implementation of CBC entities, require procedural and structural adjustments in order to increase the effectiveness of regional policies, as well as the interplay between different levels of government and the organisation of regional interests (Benz & Eberlein, 1999). On the other hand, “institutional conditions can never fully explain what strategies are brought forward in social and political practices; they only offer conditions (particular opportunities and constraints) that vary between different institutional contexts” (Salet & Thornley, 2007: 198).

IV. EGTC strategies: a proposed analytic typology framework

Until 2017, the CoR published its EGTC monitoring report on an annual basis. This report, however, was mostly based on a collection of factsheets from each approved EGTC, including a description of individual EGTCs, their geographic location, etc., complemented with some interesting generic data related to their functioning. As far as we know, no study has been published with an overall in-depth assessment of the main effects (results and impacts) of EGTCs’ implementation. This is also out of the scope of this chapter, as it would require funding and consequent elaboration of an appropriate evaluation methodology, in order to assess, for instance their territorial impacts (Medeiros, 2017), and their contribution to facilitating and promoting CBC processes (Stephenson, 2016), in the case of cross-border EGTCs, which are the majority. This annual CoR EGTC monitoring report is now intended to be issued every five years, after the one published in May 2020. In 2018, however, an EGTC Good Practice Booklet was published by the CoR. Despite not being a detailed evaluation report, it presented some interesting conclusions regarding the potential effects of EGTCs in several dimensions, which are summarised below (CoR, 2018: 7):

- *EGTCs and social cohesion:* are suitable as cross-border micro-laboratories to develop public services, new public transport and new approaches for cross-border education;
- *EGTCs and spatial planning:* can play an important planning role in functional areas such as environmental protection, transport planning, integrated tourism and economic cooperation;
- *EGTCs and territorial integration:* can create new opportunities for cross-border integration;

- *EGTCs and territorial governance*: are strategic players and suitable for promoting the interests of local and regional authorities at the EU level, mostly through their networks;
- *EGTCs and project implementation*: can combine multiple tasks and functions mirroring the versatility of the instrument.

In their seminal work on EGTCs, Evrard and Engl (2018) differentiate ongoing EGTCs based on their source of financing and recruited staff. As regards the former indicator, they conclude that there are two prevailing groups: (i) the ones with a mix of diverse sources of funding, with no one source dominating the others; and (ii) the ones mostly financed by members. These members come “from different public administrative levels and from at least two different EU member states, and can implement various tasks and purposes – under the premise of contributing to territorial cooperation and European cohesion” (Caesar, 2017: 248). Moreover, almost 50% of staff was recruited specifically for EGTC activities. These authors also conclude that “75% of the EGTCs are equipped with additional organs to those envisaged by the EGTC regulation” (Evrard & Engl, 2018: 223).

Using a different approach, Lange (2018) uses an eight-parameter analytic framework to overview EGTCs: (i) how networks operate; (ii) how leadership is implemented; (iii) how supportive institutions are; (iv) the economic cost of the operations; (v) the organisational capacity; (vi) the rate of change in bureaucratic processes; (vii) how institutionalism is created; and (viii) the local embeddedness in involving local communities. This approach, in our view, is particularly comprehensive and touches several elements of the EGTC cross-border multi-governance process. To be implemented, however, it requires a deep analysis, mostly based on qualitative elements obtained via interviews.

For Perkmann (2007) cross-border governance structures can be analysed based on their organisational development, the appropriation of cross-border activities, and diversified resource bases (Nelles & Durand, 2014). In a complementary way, Blatter (2004), bases his analysis of different architectures of CBC governance on five parameters: (i) structural pattern of interaction; (ii) sectoral differentiation; (iii) function scope; (iv) geographic scale; and (v) institutional stability. All these approaches are relevant. However, as Durand and Lamour (2014: 209) stress, cross-border multi-level governance “remains dependent on the state and its mutation/reconfiguration in its own territory”. In this context, these authors propose three different forms of state centrality from multi-level governance across the state borders: (i) supervisory; (ii) strategic; and (iii) para-diplomatic, whereas Fricke (2015: 854) proposes 11 properties to analyse CBC territorial and functional governance:

- *Type of actor*: constitution of members;
- *Legal status*: formal basis of cooperation;

- *Organisational structure*: existence of several bodies;
- *Decision-making*: regular internal mode;
- *Membership*: difficulty of entry and exit;
- *Thematic scope*: functions and duties;
- *Functional relationship*: thematic scopes;
- *Geographic scope*: mandated territory;
- *Level of actor*: territorial tiers of the formally participating members;
- *Relationship of spatial perimeters*: intersection of mandated territory;
- *Tradition*: date of establishment.

As can be seen, cross-border multi-level governance is multifaceted and complex to analyse. Also, as Kramsch and Hooper (2004) recall, European cross-border regions face multiple governance dilemmas. These conclusions fit well into the author's experience in assessing CBC programmes over the past 20 years. Even so, this chapter proposes a simplified typology to classify the multi-level governance of cross-border EGTCs, based on the analysis of their proposed strategy and potential achievements, via the reading of the CoR information and the EGTCs' websites (Table 1):

1. Rogue Types of EGTC:

- Do not have a clear and distinctive strategy focused on reducing the main border obstacles associated with the cross-border area;
- Present a generic territorial development strategy, mainly focused on improving socioeconomic cohesion, following from the text of the EGTC EC regulation (Regulation (EC) N° 1082/2006);
- Have not implemented any CBC project or have implemented only a limited number of low budget CBC ones;
- Result, many times, from individual ambitions, rather than local/regional networking and institutional arrangements;
- Do not provide a clear multi-level governance added value to the affected CBC region;
- Do not have a clear CBC development vision.

2. Intermediary Types of EGTC:

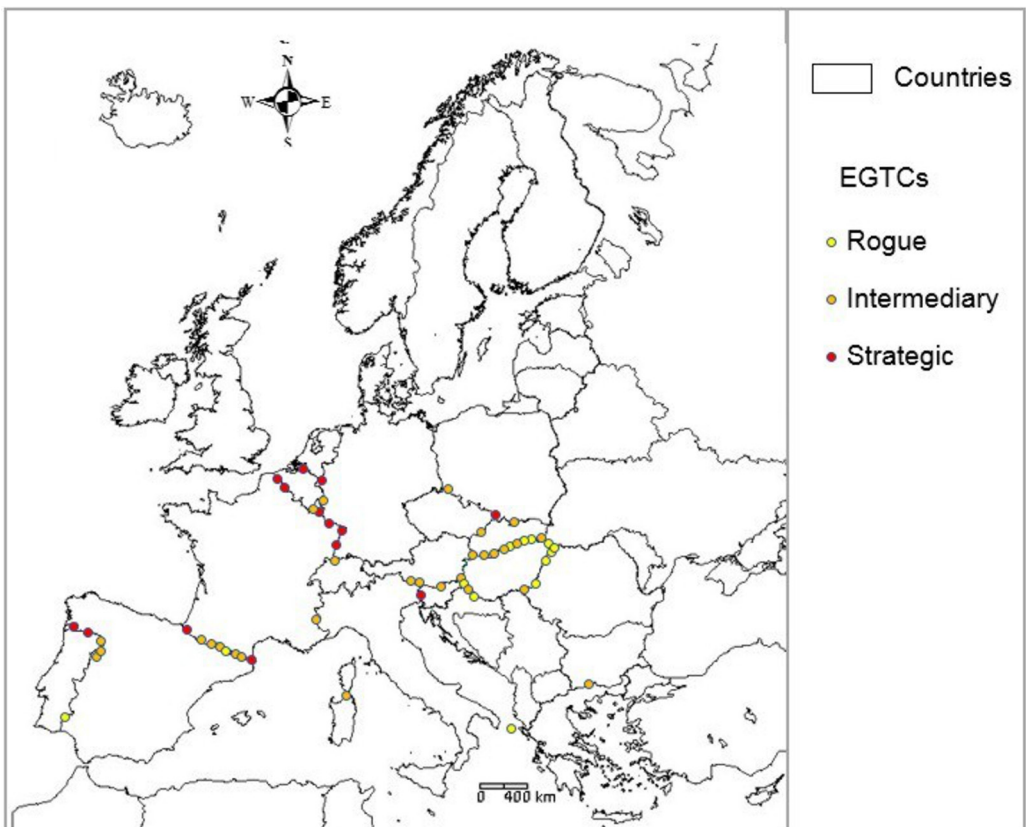
- Do not have a clear and distinctive strategy focused on reducing the main border obstacles associated with the cross-border area;
- Present a sound territorial development strategy. However, this does not necessarily translate into a targeted cross-border development strategy in view of the needs of the cross-border region;
- Have been implementing CBC projects. However, most of these are not financed via EU funding;
- Result from local/regional networking and institutional arrangements;
- Provide some additional value to cross-border multi-level governance of the affected CBC region, in particular by providing a voice for local and regional stakeholders;
- Need to improve their CBC development vision.

3. Strategic Types of EGTC:

- Address, directly or indirectly, the need for reducing the main border obstacles associated with the cross-border area;
- Present a sound territorial development strategy focused on the specific needs of the cross-border region;
- Have been implementing several CBC projects, some of them financed by EU funding;
- Result from local/regional networking and institutional arrangements, with close collaboration at the national and EU level;
- Provide a clear added value to cross-border multi-level governance of the affected CBC region, in particular by providing a voice for local and regional stakeholders;
- Have a sound vision of CBC territorial development.

When applied to all examined CBC EGTCs (Fig. 2), this simplified analytic typology shows that most ongoing EGTCs are far from an ideal institutional envelope to foster cross-border multi-level governance processes. Indeed, based on this classification, only 14 EGTCs are included in the ‘strategic’ type of EGTC. Eight of these are located in the mature and intense CBC areas covering Benelux, Germany and France. Two of them are being implemented in a quite dynamic CBC area (North of Portugal – Galicia, Spain). The other two are located in Eastern Europe. For the most part, and according to our classification, most ongoing CBC EGTCs are included in the ‘intermediary’ type. This means that they have the potential to improve their strategy and implementation process in order to augment their policy effectiveness in several domains. As far as the ‘Rogue’ type EGTCs, there is a case to see their dismantling over the coming years, unless they radically change their strategic approach to implement sound and relevant CBC territorial development strategies.

Figure 2: Cross-border EGTCs strategic approaches typology



Source: Own elaboration

Table 1: EGTCs strategy analysis

| EGTCs | Countries | Year | Territorial Capital | | | | Barrier Effect | | | | Main Actors | | | | Main Funding | | | | CB MLG | | | | |
|--|--------------|------------|---------------------|---------|-------------|----------|----------------------|------------------------|-----------------|-----------------|---------------------|---------------|-------|----------|---------------|----|----------|----------|--------|-----------|--------------|-------|--------------------|
| | | | Economy | Society | Environment | Planning | Research / Knowledge | Economic-Technological | Cultural-Social | Accessibilities | Institutional-Legal | Environmental | Local | Regional | Interregional | EU | National | Regional | Local | Strategic | Intermediary | Rogue | Hired Direct Staff |
| Abauj - Abaujban | HU-SK | 11/06/2010 | X | X | | | | | | | X | | | | | | X | | | | | | X |
| AEUCC Cities of Ceramics | IT-FR-ES-RO | 07/01/2014 | X | X | | | | | | | | | | | | X | | | | X | | | |
| Alizette - Belval | FR-LU | 13/02/2012 | X | X | X | | | | | X | | | | | | | | | X | | | | X |
| Amphictyony | EL-CY-IT-FR | 01/12/2008 | | | X | | | | | | X | | | | | | | | | | | | X |
| Archimed | IT-CY-ES-EL | 06/03/2011 | | | | | | | | | X | | | | | | | | | | | | X |
| Arrabona | HU-SK | 07/06/2011 | X | X | | | | | | | X | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Bánát - Triplex Confinium | HU-RO-RS | 05/01/2011 | X | X | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Bodrogközi | HU-SK | 11/04/2012 | X | X | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| CETC - Central European Transport Corridor | SE-PL-HR-HU | 23/04/2014 | | | | X | | | | | | X | | | | | | | | | | | X |
| Duero - Douro | PT-ES | 21/03/2009 | X | X | X | | | | | | | X | | | | | | | | | | | X |
| DIETA MED | IT-EL | 09/03/2017 | | X | | | | | | | | X | | | | | | | | | | | X |
| Efxini Poli - Solidarity Network | EL-CY-BG | 02/08/2012 | X | X | X | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | X |
| EMI - European Mycological Institute | ES-FR | 10/05/2016 | | X | X | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | X |
| Espacio Portalet | FR-ES | 03/06/2011 | X | X | X | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | X |
| ESPON - European Node for Territorial Evidence | EU + EFTA | 19/01/2015 | | | | X | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | X |
| EUCOR - The European Campus | FR-DE-CH | 24/02/2016 | | | | X | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | X |
| EUKN - European Urban Knowledge Network | CY-BE-CZ-... | 03/12/2012 | | | | X | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | X |
| Euregio Senza Confini | IT-AT | 21/12/2012 | X | X | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | X |
| Euregio Maas-Rhein | BE-DE-NL | 23/11/2017 | X | X | X | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | X |
| Euregio Tirolo - Alto Adige - Trentino | AU-IT | 13/09/2011 | X | X | X | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | X |
| Eurocidade Chaves - Verfin | PT-ES | 17/07/2013 | X | X | X | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | X |
| Eurodistrict Pamina | FR-DE | 01/12/2016 | X | X | X | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | X |
| Eurodistrict Saar Moselle | FR-DE | 06/05/2010 | X | X | X | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | X |

| EGTCs | Countries | Year | Territorial Capital | | | Barrier Effect | | | | Main Actors | | | Main Funding | | | | CB MLG | | | | | | |
|---|-------------|------------|---------------------|---------|-------------|----------------|----------------------|------------------------|-----------------|-----------------|---------------------|---------------|--------------|----------|---------------|----|----------|----------|-------|-----------|--------------|-------|--------------------|
| | | | Economy | Society | Environment | Planning | Research / Knowledge | Economic-Technological | Cultural-Social | Accessibilities | Institutional-Legal | Environmental | Local | Regional | Interregional | EU | National | Regional | Local | Strategic | Intermediary | Rogue | Hired Direct Staff |
| Novohrad – Nógrád | HU-SK | 21/12/2011 | X | X | X | | | | | | X | | | | | | X | | | | | | X |
| Novum | PL-CZ | 16/12/2015 | X | X | | | | | | | | | | | X | | | | | X | | | |
| Pannon | SI-HU-HR | 28/03/2012 | X | X | | | | | | | X | | | | | | | | | X | | | |
| Parc européen / Alpi Marittime - Mercantour | IT-FR | 29/05/2013 | | X | | | | | | X | | | | | | | | | | X | | | |
| Parc Marin International - Bouches de Bonifacio | FR-IT | 11/03/2013 | | X | | | | | | X | | | | | | | | | | X | | | |
| Pays d'Art et d'Histoire Transfrontalier | FR-ES | 28/01/2015 | | | | | X | | | | | | | | | | X | | | | | | |
| Pons Danubii | SK-HU | 16/12/2010 | X | X | X | | | | | | | | | | X | | | | | X | | | X |
| Pontibus | HU-SK | 08/01/2016 | X | X | X | | | | | | | | | X | | | | | | X | | | |
| Prineus - Cerdanya | FR-ES | 22/09/2011 | X | X | | | | | | | X | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Rába - Duna - Vág | HU-SK | 10/12/2011 | X | X | X | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | X | | | |
| Sajó - Rima / Slaná - Rimava | HU-SK | 03/04/2013 | X | X | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | X | | | |
| Secrétariat du Sommet de la Grande Région | LU-DE-FR-LU | 28/08/2013 | X | X | X | | | | | | X | | | | | | | | | X | | | X |
| Spoločný region | SK-CZ | 22/05/2012 | X | X | X | | | | | | X | | | | | | | | | X | | | X |
| Svinka | HU-SK | 09/03/2013 | X | X | X | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | X | | | X |
| TATRY | PL-SK | 29/03/2013 | X | X | X | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | X | | | X |
| Torysa | HU-SK | 09/10/2013 | X | X | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | X | | | X |
| TRITIA | CZ-PL-SK | 25/02/2013 | X | X | X | | | | | | | | | | | | | | X | | | | X |
| Tisza EGTC | HU-UK | 26/10/2015 | X | X | | | | | | | X | | | | | | | | | | | | X |
| Ung - Tisza - Túr - Sajó UTTS | HU-RO-SK | 15/01/2009 | X | X | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | X | | | X |
| Via Carpatia | SK-HU | 31/05/2013 | X | X | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | X | | | X |
| West-Vlaanderen/Flandre-Dunkerque-Côte d'Opale | FR-BE | 25/03/2009 | X | | | | | | | | X | | | | | | | | | X | | | X |
| ZASNET | PT-ES | 13/10/2010 | | X | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | X | | | X |

Source: Own elaboration based on the CoR EGTCs portal and the internet sites of the EGTCs

V. Conclusion

A few years ago, someone contacted the author of this chapter to find out what could be an interesting theme for a Ph.D. thesis related to CBC issues. At that time, the answer was simply that the one million-dollar question related to CBC processes is whether EGTCs provide the answers and solutions they were expected to deliver. In other words, are EGTCs a success story? By now (early 2020) no study has been found which delivers a sound and reliable answer to these questions. It is possible to argue, however, that in face of the systematic rise in the number of EGTCs in Europe, since 2006, it would appear reasonable to conclude that this is indeed a kind of success story. The observation of their proposed strategies and achievements so far, nevertheless, might point in a completely different direction altogether. To fully answer these fundamental questions there is a need to add an extra layer of scientific analysis to existing studies. However, this is not the goal of this chapter. Indeed, the CoR EGTC Monitoring Report, although providing updated and relevant information on the current scenario of the EGTC implementation in Europe, does not serve as an impact assessment study of their implementation.

Another useful entry point to analyse the complexity of assessing the implementation of EGTCs is their legal flexibility in several domains. In concrete terms, most EGTCs have a cross-border character. This means that a sound assessment of their main territorial impacts requires a tailor-made policy evaluation procedure. In this chapter, the author decided to apply a simplified analytic typology framework to assess the cross-border EGTCs based on their strategies and achievements. The analysis was mainly done by reading the information from the CoR EGTC portal and the EGTCs' web pages. This means that a more detailed analysis is required for a more precise and sounder evaluation. Even so, the results obtained could provide a useful entry point to address mainstream assumptions about how successful EGTCs are.

In detail, the proposed typology divides cross-border EGTCs into three distinct types. Firstly, the Rogue EGTCs have a loose strategy mainly focused on providing socioeconomic cohesion and have not demonstrated the capacity to deliver high budget CBC projects targeting the reduction of the main border barriers in the targeted cross-border area. For the most part, these EGTCs result from an individual personal ambition/vision rather than a local/regional mobilisation to increase the process of cross-border multi-level governance. As could be expected, most of these Rogue EGTCs are mainly located in the east and south of Europe, where, as previously mentioned, the cross-border maturity levels are not yet very high, when compared with the north-western European territories. On the other extreme of the proposed typology are the Strategic EGTCs. These, instead, propose not a generic but a focused intervention territorial development strategy. The strategy, in certain cases, directly stresses the need to reduce border barriers and promote cross-border

planning. In other cases, this goal is expressed indirectly. But just as important, Strategic EGTCs have shown institutional and administrative capacity to manage EU funded CBC projects, and function as vital local/regional networking platforms to reinforce cross-border multi-level governance processes. As such, these types of EGTC provide a clear added value for the development of the cross-border region and ultimately to reducing cross-border obstacles of all sorts. In an ideal scenario, these Strategic EGTCs would dominate the spectrum of implemented EGTCs in Europe. However, that is not the case, since only 14, mostly located in the CBC mature areas of Benelux, France and Germany, were identified as such, based on the proposed criteria.

On an intermediate level are what the proposed typology denominates as Intermediary EGTCs, which are the majority group, located in all European cross-border areas which have incorporated this legal tool. This excludes the Nordic countries, the United Kingdom plus Ireland, and the Baltic countries. To change this scenario, existing Rogue and Intermediary EGTCs should evolve into Strategic EGTCs, in order to increase the utility perception of this EU legal tool to all the member states which have not yet incorporated them into the group of cross-border entities.

As happens with Euroregions, the EGTC maturation process requires time, especially in countries where the regional level is feeble, from an institutional and planning capacity viewpoint. Indeed, the initial perception, for some, that the EGTCs would constitute a new 'Eldorado' for the cross-border regions' development process has now disappeared. Hence, as happens in several other domains, the Darwinian 'survival of the fittest' rationale will apply to current and future EGTCs. The ones with solid local/regional networking and a clear strategic vision to develop the territorial capital of the cross-border area and to mitigate the main cross-border barriers will ultimately endure. The remaining ones will either be defunct or act as a burden to tax payers, with no or few positive contributions to the development processes of their cross-border areas. In the meantime, and until the 'One Europe, One System' paradigm becomes a reality, EGTCs will serve as a 'fast-food EU policy tool' which can provide immediate and rapid solutions to mitigate legal and administrative constraints associated with the presence of administrative boundaries in Europe.

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