

ITEM Annual Conference 2018

'Cross-border cooperation: challenges ahead'

Friday 16th November 2018 | 10:00 AM to 6:00 PM | European Committee of the Regions Rue Belliard 101,
B-1000 Brussels

The 2018 ITEM annual conference will focus on 'cross-border cooperation and the challenges ahead'.



The ITEM annual conference 2018 which is organised in cooperation with the European Committee of the Regions and the Directorate-General for Regional and Urban Policy of the European Commission will be about setting up strong networks for people and society in European border regions, about collaborating in cross-border labour markets, about improving information on the impact on border regions of laws and about building mutual trust.

Languages: English, German, Dutch (translation to/from Dutch, English, German)

PRELIMINARY PROGRAMME:

Moderator: Simone van Trier and Martin Unfried

10.00-10.30 [Arrival of guests](#)

10.30 -11.30 [Welcome and key note speeches](#)

Prof. Hildegard Schneider - Professor of European Union Law and Board ITEM
Mrs. L. Andersson Pench - Director, European Territorial Cooperation, Macro-regions, Interreg and Programme Implementation I DG Regional and Urban Policy,
European Commission
Mr. Spyros Spyridon – Vice-Chair of the COTER commission, European Committee of the Regions
Mrs. Eva Tarselius Hallgren - Senior Advisor, Department for the European Union Ministry for Foreign Affairs, Sweden

11.30 - 11.50 [Presentation of ITEM'S cross-border impact assessment 2018](#)

Short presentation by Mr. Martin Unfried - senior researcher ITEM

Prof. dr. Hildegard Schneider - board ITEM, will be handing over ITEM'S cross-border impact assessment 2018 to:

- Mr. Thomas Antoine, Secretary-General of the Benelux,
- Mr. Jeroen Lenaers, European Parliament,
- Mr. Martín Guillermo Ramírez, secretary-General Association of European Border Regions.

11.50 - 12.15 [Speech](#)

Mrs. Caroline de Gruyter - European Affairs correspondent for the leading Dutch newspaper NRC Handelsblad

12.15 - 13.45 [Lunch](#)

13.45 - 14.00 [Speech](#)

Mr. Jaap Hoeksma - author of the book 'Theory of Democratic Integration'

14.00 - 15.00 [Plenary panel sessions on cross-border cooperation: cross-border](#)

1st Panel: impact assessment

At different governmental levels, there is a lively debate about new ways to better assess the impact of national or EU policies on cross-border territories. DG Regio and the Committee of the Regions are for instance actively searching for better instruments to improve the own territorial impact assessment and to better incorporate cross-border aspects into their routines of regulatory ct assessment. National governments, as for instance the Dutch, are analysing internal scrutiny procedures in order to better understand the consequences of their own policies. ITEM has in recent years developed a bottom-up approach for a cross-border impact assessment for a specific cross-border area and will present the results of its third edition. What are the current developments with respect to all these activities? What are useful tools at what level? How can border-regions actively contribute with own resources and the use of their own regional experts and better influence decisions at national and European level?

Mr. Martin Unfried - senior researcher ITEM
Mr. Zintis Hermansons - project expert, ESPON EGTC (European Grouping of Territorial Cooperation)
Dr. Hynek Böhm (member of TEIN), Technical University of Liberec, Czech Republic
Mr. Johan van der Valk - project manager CBS
Mr. Eleftherios Stavropoulos - DG Regional and Urban Policy

2nd Panel: Recognition of Qualifications

The panel and information session on the recognition of qualifications seek to explore different facets of the topic. Recognition plays an important role in the mobility of both students and professionals. However, these parties are confronted with obstacles as recognition procedures may be costly in terms of both money and time. Moreover, some individuals even see some of their diplomas and experience unacknowledged by a refusal of recognition requests. In this panel and information session, leading experts in the area of the recognition of qualifications discuss, from their respective backgrounds, how their organizations seek to facilitate recognition and how to enhance mobility through improved recognition in the future.

Mr. Justus de Hooge, Projectmanager, Dutch Ministry of Education, Culture and Science.

Mr. Lukas Schmüling, Bezirksregierung Düsseldorf

Mr. Koen Nomden, Team Leader Transparency and Recognition of Skills and Qualifications, Directorate-General for Employment, Social affairs and Inclusion, European Commission

Mrs. Julie Anderson, Policy officer, Directorate-General for Education and Culture

Mr. Konstantinos Tomaras, Deputy Head of Unit, Directorate-General for Internal Market, Industry, Entrepreneurship and SMEs (DG Grow)

Prof. dr. Hildegard Schneider, Professor of European Union Law and Board ITEM

3rd Panel: Cross-border cooperation: governance future of cross-border regions

The interest of cross-border territories have to be articulated at the political level. Joint objectives, plans and programmes have to be coordinated across the border by public and private bodies. There is still a diverse picture of governance structures ranging from long-established and institutionalised Euro-Districts or Euro-Regions to loose and weaker cooperation structures and ad-hoc INTERREG coordination. Is there a certain trend today? Do we see for instance still more EGTC in the making? Does organisation matter and how contribute European Programmes to the institutional setting? How strong are political cross-borders governance structures currently? And to what extent are they important for the successful development of cross-border labour markets, infrastructure and good relations of neighbouring regions? The panel will discuss how to strengthen capacities and cooperation structures in order to better cope with the challenges and obstacles described in the Commission's Communication 'Boosting Growth in Border-Regions' (2017).

Mrs. Sandra Sodini, director EGTC GO

Mr. Michael Déjózé, director Meuse Rhine Euregion

Mrs. Nathalie Verschelde, Deputy Head of Unit "European Cross-border cooperation", DG Regional and Urban Policy - European Commission

Dr. Thiemo W. Eser, Head of Division for International Affairs and European Territorial Cooperation, Ministry of Sustainable Development and Infrastructures, Luxembourg

Mr. Claes Håkansson - Senior Advisor, Nordic Council of Ministers

15.00 - 15.15 [Short break](#)

15.15 - 16.15 Three Information sessions (parallel)

1. **Cross-border impact assessment**
Session leader Mr. Martin Unfried

2. **Recognition of qualifications**
Session leader prof. dr. Hildegard Schneider

3. **Cross-border cooperation: governance future of cross-border regions**
Session leader Mrs. Nathalie Verschelde

16.30 -17.00 Concluding speech

Mr. Claes Håkansson - Senior Advisor, Nordic Council of Ministers

Mr. Thomas Antoine - Secretary-General of the Benelux *(invited)*

17.00-18.00 Networking and Drinks