



Brussels skyline

Minutes from Meetings in Brussels February 9th

On February, 9th, John Walsh and myself had three meetings in Brussels:

- 1 With DG Regio regarding EGTC's
- 2 With CPMR
- 3 With the European Economic and Social Committee (EESC)



Dirk Peters

Regarding EGTC's

We were kindly greeted by **Dirk Peters**, Senior Specialist for European territorial cooperation and EGTC at DG Regio, **and Alfonso Alcolea Martinez**, administrator on EGTC & cross-border cooperations at the Committee of the Regions.

The subject is EGTC's.

They pointed out that no EGTC's have been created north of Brussels. Sweden and Ireland are quite negative to EGTC's, France and Hungary are the most positive.

An EGTC exists for the execution of a task which two bodies on each side of a border have to do anyway but can do better jointly.

An EGTC has no special EU funding. The EGTC has to be financed by its members.

An example of interest to ESIN is the European Association of Cities of Ceramics

www.aeuucc.eu, a network of 4 national associations of cities.

An interesting approach to EGTC's is innovation procurement: to develop technical solutions such as biogas, learning systems for distant schools, micro wind energy and waste handling in cooperation with enterprises.

After the meeting, they have kindly sent us European and national EGTC implementing rules from Ireland, Denmark, Sweden and Finland.

Conclusion

ESIN can create an EGTC. The smartest way to do it seems to be to start with two or three partners in one of the ESIN regions (Mediterranean, Atlantic or Baltic). This, however, would strongly contradict the aim of ESIN to be a pan-European organisation. There is no simple solution to the financing of the EGTC.

Meeting with CPMR

We met with by **Panos Coryannakis** and visited the CPMR office, superbly situated at the Rondpoint Schumann very close to the European Parliament.

It is yet to be discussed how the admission of French islands to Smilegov is to be administered – by CPMR or by ESIN?

We discussed an information/learning session with Croatia and France on the evening of the 23rd of June, just before the Smilegov dissemination in Brussels 24th of June and the Islands Commission meeting on June 25th.

Conclusion

If ESIN would plan a meeting in Brussels, there are meeting rooms at CPMR which we may use.

We ought to be represented in Brussels on June 24 and 25.

Meeting with the EESC

Panos arranged for us to take part of the **European Economic and Social Committee**, which has a **Study Group on Smart Islands**.

The President of this group is Mr **Simons** from the Netherlands, rapporteur is **Anna Maria Darmanin** from Gozo. Members who participated at this meeting were **Pierre Jean Coulon** from France, **Michalis Antoniou** from Cyprus, **Meelis Joost** from Estonia, **Lourdes Caverio Mestro** from Spain, **Krzysztof Ostrowski** from Poland and **Carlos Alberto Pereira** from Portugal.



EESC meeting room

I enclose minutes from their previous meeting.

There is no expert in the group but they have listened to **Godfrey Baldacchino** and **Panos Coroyannakis** was asked to give his views on the concept of "Smart islands" which was much appreciated.

When asked for a definition of "island", mrs Darmanin answered that "The definition which exists is contested" (nicely put). She also pointed out that "there are separate groups of islands that have specific development issues, small and medium-sized islands scattered all over Europe."

Mr Antoniou from Cyprus pointed out that "it is important to include every island."



Anna Maria Darmanin

Mrs Darmanin said that “smart can be either energy, technology or transports and includes the use of all resources including human.”

As it became clear that the study group lacks a common, modern definition of islands, ESIN proposed a simple matrix where islands are defined on a political axis and on a geographical axis – two very important dimensions when dealing with the development of islands (= multigovernance and accessibility):

		Political dimension			
		Local community - no jurisdiction	Municipality	Region State Province	Country
Geographical dimension	Overseas				
	High seas				
	Coastal				
	Bridged				

Mrs Darmanin said that she “...would appreciate if, from your experience, you would give me indicative values to your matrix. That would help me tremendously.”

With the help of Godfrey and Panos, I am have asked you to put your national figures

into the matrix. Godfrey is using his network, professor **Beate Ratter** from Hamburg has kindly provided German values, **Jonathan Taglialatela** has given us Italian numbers, **Denis Bredin** has made the French part and **Denis Bradic** the Croatian, **Elle** from Wormsi has reported on Estonian islands and **Anders Källgård** is supporting us when it comes to Swedish and Danish numbers.

Conclusion

It is with great joy that we see how an European Commission institution needs ESIN. The matrix can be of use in other contexts, too.



John and Christian

ESIN representatives in the capital of Europe, which is also the capital of the comic strip