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Cross Border Studies

Scenarios for the Future of Cross-Border Cooperation

10 October, 2016

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Cross-Border Cooperation 'post-Brexit'

- **Cross-border cooperation 'post-Brexit' should be a priority**
- The **centrality of the border to the conflict** -- increased dangers arising from uncertainties about the nature of the border
- Increased tensions re **Migration and citizenship issues**
- **Social and economic cohesion** in the border region and other disadvantaged areas at risk



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Cross-Border Cooperation 'post-Brexit'

Risks of the UK withdrawal from the EU / loss of EU funds:

- cross-border cooperation will be given less priority by the governments in Belfast, Dublin and London
- policy divergence may make the conditions for cross-border cooperation more difficult, increasingly reverting to 'back-to-back' policy development
- reduction of funding for cross-border cooperation increases the likelihood of a return to piecemeal cooperation with little regional impact
- CSOs and LAs will struggle to replace EU programme funds – loss of key personnel and 'soft infrastructure'



Cross-Border Cooperation 'post-Brexit'

Local Authorities:

- risk of greater legislative and policy divergence
 - removal of a common EU legislative framework will hinder cross-border integration and co-operation
- activities focused on the sharing of learning and good practice probably less vulnerable to shifts in policy direction
- work programmes will need to respond to any challenges emerging from 'Brexit'



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Cross-Border Cooperation 'post-Brexit'

Co-operation *across EU's external frontiers*

facilitated & supported by framework for European Territorial Co-operation (e.g. Norway, Switzerland and third countries or territories neighbouring outermost regions)

BUT

- **Continued participation in EU cross-border cooperation programmes would require adherence to EU cohesion policy, EU regulations and continued financial contributions.**
 - participation in EU programmes will be at the discretion of the UK Government
 - would financial contributions come from the central government or from the devolved budget?



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Cross-Border Cooperation 'post-Brexit'

- Cooperation can take place **outside the EU funding programmes**, e.g.:
 - **Karlsruhe Agreement** (1996) between France, Luxembourg, Germany and Switzerland facilitates and promotes cross-border cooperation between local and regional authorities and local public institutions in their common areas of competence

BUT

- requires both **political will** and **financial resources**



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CBC in the post-Referendum period

- **the commitment to cross-border cooperation embedded in the Good Friday Agreement must remain a priority for both the UK and Irish Governments**
- **the ‘soft infrastructure’ to support cross-border cooperation – must be protected and nurtured**
 - statutory cross-border bodies
 - links at Departmental and local government level
 - civil society networks and projects
- **existing EU directives and regulations should remain in place** until proposed changes have comprehensive territorial, equality and environmental impact assessment



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Funding CBC in the post-Referendum period

Measures needed to sustain cross-border cooperation **before and after Article 50:**

- Guarantees to cross-border and transnational projects currently funded under EU 2014-2020 programmes
- Continued eligibility of Northern Ireland (and those parts of Wales and Scotland currently involved in INTERREG programmes with Ireland) in the European Territorial Cooperation Programmes and transnational programmes e.g. Horizon 2020, Erasmus+, Life and Europe for Citizens
 - **This will require a financial commitment from the UK Government**
- Irish and UK Governments ensure new and sufficient resources are available for the social and economic development of the border region, including local authority- and civic society-led projects
 - On the UK side, **additional funding allocations should be derived from the UK's current contribution to the EU budget** that will revert to the Treasury post-withdrawal, not from the 'block grant'
- Additional funding allocated by the UK and Irish Governments to the Peace IV programme to address the challenges of inter-community conflict and cross-border relationships in the post-referendum context
- a 'Peace V' programme, funded by the UK and Irish Governments – in consultation with CSO and LAs -- to address the challenges of inter-community conflict and cross-border relationships in the context of the UK withdrawal from the EU



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OPEN DISCUSSION

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