



24. – 27. November 2015, Uzhgorod - Košice

# 6<sup>th</sup> EUROPEAN FORUM

**ON CROSS-BORDER COOPERATION IN A WIDER EUROPE**

Summary and conclusions

**6<sup>TH</sup> ANNUAL FORUM  
ON CROSS-BORDER  
COOPERATION**

(KOŠICE – UZHGOROD,  
24 - 27 NOVEMBER 2015)

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# BORDER DIALOGUES OVERVIEW

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## INTRODUCTORY WORDS

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In 2009, at a meeting of the Norwegian Barents Secretariat (NBS), Institute for Stability and Development (ISD) and several other organizations was formulated the idea of regular border dialogues on efficient cross-border cooperation along eastern EU border. In 2010, the first of these took place in Uzhgorod, Ukraine and Košice, Slovakia. The series continued at EU borders with Moldova and Ukraine in Chisinau, Moldova, then with Russia in Elbląg, Poland and Kaliningrad, Russia, then in Karelia Euroregion (Joensuu, Finland and Sortavala, Russia), and finally in Kirkenes, Norway and Nikel, Russia at the Barents Sea on the European Far North.

ISD was involved in preparation and organization of all these conferences, which created a network of professionals, civil society activists, regional policymakers and officers of border protection units and customs, involved in exchange of experience as regards cross-border cooperation along the EU eastern border. Thus,

it was considered a great honour to join the team of organizers of the next round of these conferences, which symbolically returned to where it started - to the vivid Carpathian Euroregion.

In November 2015, starting in Uzhgorod and proceeding in Košice we could meet again to discuss with others what progress has been made, as regards the border-crossing procedures and facilities on Slovakia/Ukraine border, as well as and in the field of cross-border cooperation between local administrations, companies, universities and civil society organizations of the whole vivid Carpathian region, where meets borders of Hungary, Poland, Romania, Slovakia and Ukraine.

It follows from the key points of discussions and conclusions of the conference, that this series of border dialogues should continue, while focusing primarily on cross-border cooperation along segments of the EU Eastern Border on its

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southern wing, which are exposed to the need to enhance border security under the influence of migration flow and/or even frozen conflicts, while preserving all already achieved in cultivation of efficient cross-border cooperation and mutual trust between peoples living along the EU eastern border. It is essential to seek for full support of EU and EEA institutions, as well as of involved national and regional governments, and participating civil society organizations. However, these goals may hardly be achieved without sufficient funding from all available sources.

The team of organisers of the 6th European Cross-Border Dialogue headed by Government Office of the Slovak Republic and supported by Norwegian Barents Secretariat, Uzhgorod Branch of the National Institute for Strategic Studies, Consulate General of the Slovak Republic in Uzhgorod and experts affiliated to Institute for Stability and Development from the Czech Republic and Hungary tried to do all pos-

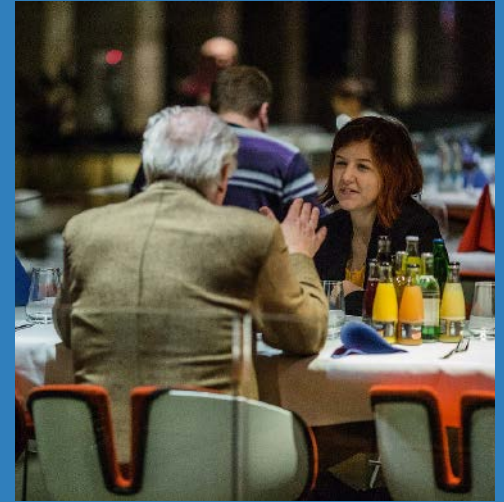
sible to welcome and accommodate more than 200 conference participants from 7 countries and to provide them an opportunity to take part in 13 discussion panels and sessions.

On behalf of organizers, let me thank all distinguished speakers from national and regional governments, as well as chairs, commentators and panellists for deep insight and many inspiring ideas. Specific acknowledgement goes to Norway Grants, the financial support of which enabled this conference to happen.

**Petr Jan Pajas**

Chair, Board of Trustees  
Institute for Stability and Development





**CROSS-BORDER CAFE**, Košice, Club Yasmin, 24 November 2015

Role of Journalists in the border region -Informal discussion with journalists from Slovakia, Ukraine, Poland and Hungary





# 2

## Key Points

### of the 6<sup>th</sup> European Forum on Cross-Border Cooperation in the Wider Europe

When addressing the Border Dialogue 2015 guests and participants, the representatives of governments stressed the importance of the cross-border cooperation, especially that with Ukraine, as a big but currently extremely challenged country, which is a welcomed partner to broader European free trade area. The contemporary wave of refugees creates additional tension and uncertainty as regards the fate and future mechanisms of free movement that we all are already used to within the Schengen Treaty Area. Therefore, it is of great importance to make use of good examples, like those on the Far North EU-Russia border. And it is worth of concentration substantial financial support from Norway Grants (NG) and other EEA or EU resources to continued research and exchange of experience as regards the proper development of the cross-border cooperation, which should be considered as one of the crucial aspects for Europe's security and prosperity.

Thanks to the Norway Grants in the Carpathian Euroregion there are already implemented several concrete project enabling deeper cross-border cooperation as regards nature and cultural heritage protection. We witness intensive tourism development supported by Slovakia and Ukraine. Mentioned was also very good experience with development of European Associations of Administrative Units supported by Hungary – there is a plan to create the Rakoczi cultural route connecting cities and communities of Poland, Slovakia, Hungary and Ukraine along the eastern EU border. It was recognized that especially the Carpathian Euroregion needs more intensive and concentrated development of transportation infrastructures.

There were two main topics of the conference:

- A. **The Cross-Border Cooperation (CBC) as an Important Tool of the Cooperation between the EU and its Eastern Neighbours**
- B. **Promotion of European Stability and Development through Regional Cooperation**

The following texts is an attempt to provide more details as regards the issues discussed on plenary panels or on parallel sessions devoted to specific issues.

The CBC topic had several subthemes, the discussion on which is summarized as follows:

- a. **Local and Regional Development on the Border Regions**
  - i. **Cooperation of Communities on Both Sides of the EU Eastern Border - Experience, Challenges and Perspectives**
    - Discussed were the development of local and regional cooperation networks and their importance for creating or renewing bonds among those living on both sides of the EU border.
  - ii. **EU Border Regime and Local Border Traffic Barriers and Opportunities**
    - Discussed were challenges facing the border customs and security authorities. On one side, the people and companies call for facilitation of border crossing. On the other side there are non-trivial security issues, risk of illegitimate trade and fear of possible penetration of unwanted persons. All that is exposed to limited resources and corruption opportunities, which make the optimal solution of the border regime at some of EU border parts rather

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complicated. What may help are automatic border checks implemented at modern border crossing facilities.

- As a separate, more political than operational issue, appears the process of negotiations about visa facilitation or even visa-free regime on the EU border for citizens of Ukraine. Some aspects of recent development – sharp increase in the number of illegal migrants, proper registering and effective returning policy require more intense cooperation of governments and reinforcement of border control units.

#### **b. Economic Perspectives of Cross-Border Cooperation**

- Panel of practitioners from CBC business development between Slovakia and Ukraine provided a fresh insight into the issues of potential in economic regional and cross-border cooperation.
- As very important were characterized the following proposals
  - Cooperation of chambers of commerce, especially as regards exchange of information about planned activities like economic cooperation forums, fairs, shows and expositions
  - Creating a special border crossing corridor for registered businessmen and employees from border adjacent regions
  - Support of international investments and creation of Greenfields or Brownfields with business support in border regions suffering from high unemployment rate
  - More intensive cooperation as regards development of energy transfer infrastructure and implementation of energy saving policies
  - Existence of micro-loan and granting schemes for small and medium enterprises development, as well as private or public funding programmes
  - Support of traditional handicraft production and related tourism opportunities

- Support of research of all factors where CBC may have a potential for improving living standards in regions along EU eastern border – demographic structure of inhabitants, cultural ties within broader regions, identification of infrastructure development needs, mapping of specific economic and human resources potentials available in the regions

- As regards the specific problems of the Carpathian Euroregion, there was mentioned high level of depression and related unemployment, insufficient or even bad transportation infrastructure. However, reasonable potential for growth consists in investments to infrastructure, services to tourists. Last but not least, simplified visa regulations and special border crossing regime would allow for more intensive use of highly qualified but heavily underemployed human potential on Ukrainian side. These human resources would be welcome at companies on EU side, who often lack experts well prepared in the fields of mathematics, natural sciences and technologies.
- A concrete initiative of cooperation on a project based on a reported example of a successful information technologies (IT) company from Košice has been suggested that would result in a cluster of companies specialized in the information technology and cooperating with universities on both sides of the EU border.

#### **c. Achievements and Perspectives of the European Cross-Border Cooperation Dialogues Initiative**

- The panel provided an overview of achievements of previous five CBC Dialogues. It was stressed that any future CBC conferences should not repeat what has been already discussed. Making an overview of what has been already achieved, the future conferences should open new and contemporary issues, concentrate on feasible solutions with measurable and sustainable results. A functioning database of



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measurable factors characterising the quality and intensity of CBC in various segments of the EU eastern border may provide input for specific programs supported by EU and EEA authorities, as well as governments of neighbouring countries that would in a broad sense focus on regional specific needs in CBC development as proposed by local administrations, businesses and citizens organizations.

- The questions were raised as regards the necessity to preserve the Schengen area functioning without undermining already existing CBC cooperation. It has been also strongly recommended to broaden the scope of the CBC Dialogues towards southern part of the EU border, specifically along borders with Turkey, Macedonia, Serbia, Montenegro and Albania.

#### d. Financial Support of Cross-Border Cooperation Initiatives

- The representatives of organizations involved in implementation of CBC programmes supported by several grant making agencies (e.g. EU funds, Norway Grants or the International Visegrad Fund) used the opportunity to present the main goals, expectations and future trends as regards funding future CBC initiatives and programs. There were raised questions related to proper administration of the funds. The need of providing feedback to the grantees has been accentuated, which includes also the need to invest into proper impact assessment of funded projects and programmes.

As of the Promotion of European Stability and Development through Regional Cooperation, there were held two pairs of parallel sessions devoted to following sub-themes:

##### a. Role of media and civil society in CBC

- The session concentrated on human profile of CBC. A Manifest of CBC in Europe from 2007 was mentioned, as it states that the CBC efficiency is best

tested by existence of an intensive CBC between civil society organizations and their promotion in media. Besides all the factors mentioned in previous panels, the specificity of CBC in the Central and Eastern Europe requires also a closer cooperation of really independent citizens organizations, which should be prevented from becoming government dependent due to the form of their support. We need to know, who is doing what, which initiatives are being implemented, planned or proposed, so that by applying synergy effects we may properly use available financial resources.

- A series of special tasks concerning civil society organizations of Ukraine has been presented. It was stressed that citizens of EU should be fully aware of the difficult situation distressing citizens of Ukraine as regards its economic, political and social development in face of a long-term conflict on the East of Ukraine and along border with Moldavia. The civil society of Ukraine has a lot to learn from their European counterparts as regards appropriate level of cooperation with local administration, local entrepreneurs and other local stakeholders to become a respected partner in regional development planning and in proper use of all CBC benefits. It's a difficult task, where both media and governments with a fair support of watchdog NGOs should cooperate without endangering the national sovereignty and international confidence.

##### b. Through Common Heritage towards Common Future in the Carpathian Euroregion

- The session was a demonstration of positive effects arising from transfer of experience between existing Euroregions - "Carpathian", "Dniepr" and "Dniester". Several possibilities of strengthening this cooperation were presented. The representatives of the Euroregion "Dniester" expressed their

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interest to participate in preparation of the next European CBC Dialogue as an affiliated event to the meeting of several Euroregions representatives in Vinnitsa, Ukraine.

**c. Cross-Border Cooperation Opportunities for Youth and Young People**

- This session was an opportunity to learn more about the Barents Regional Youth Council established in 2004. This body represents inhabitants and indigenous peoples living in the Barents Euro-Arctic Region, which includes the most northern parts of Norway, Finland, and European segment of Russian Federation. The Council provides information and guidance for youth groups, organizations and networks on available national and international resources for funding projects. It organizes training in project planning and creates opportunities for finding and meeting possible cooperation partners both in national and international level on a traditional annual youth meeting.
- On the Norway-Russia border is situated the department Sør-Varanger with the most northern European part of Kirkenes, the very centre of the Barents Region. The cooperation of municipalities of Kirkenes and Nikel, on Russian side, is very intensive. Thanks to it and with full support of governments of Norway, Finland and Russia, the young persons from Norway, Finland and Russia may often meet to dance and listen to music or otherwise play together.
- In Kirkenes is also located the professional theatre Samovarteateret for which it was always natural to cooperate with Finland and especially with Russia - a Russian part is in everything they do.
- Another experience has been communicated from the Carpathian Euroregion established in 1993 that covers the less developed and culturally and ethnically diverse areas along the Carpathian Mountains and borders of five countries: Hungary, Poland, Ro-

mania, Slovakia and Ukraine with overall population of more than 15 million. There operates also the Carpathian Foundation, which provides financial support, training and advisory services to active people and non-profit organizations, in order to help improve living conditions in the region, with special emphasis on community-based poverty alleviation programs in Eastern Slovakia and in Ukraine.

**d. Cross-Border Cooperation between V4 Countries and Ukraine – Present Tools and Opportunities and Perspectives for the Future**

- This closing session was devoted to the specific issues of CBC between Visegrad four countries – Czech Republic, Hungary, Poland and Slovakia with Ukraine (V4)
- From the point of view of Ukraine, the CBC with V4 is a factor related to its EU membership aspirations. However, to fully understand the issue, one has to take into account the fact that many EU related features of CBC have to be also implemented on Ukraine borders with Moldova and, last but not least and most problematic, with Belarus and the Russian Federation. Since 2003 there operates the Euroregion “Dniepr”, which for many years successfully coordinated activities of local administration, private sector and civil society organizations across the borders. However, due to the outbreak of war in Eastern Ukraine and related developments, most of the existing CBC activities with Russia had to be abandoned and financial support of the Euroregion operations ceased to be actively supported by local authorities. Certain hope for improvement is seen with upcoming decentralization reform of Ukraine, since with EU financial support it should give broader powers to local authorities and create more effective mechanisms to involve the public sector to the development and implementation of regional policy. Thanks to International Visegrad Fund (IVF)

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support, the Euroregion “Dniepr” was able to implement several projects on the Ukraine border with Belarus as regards transfer of V4 experience or V4 assistance in assessment of economic reforms with respect to the process of the European integration.

- From the V4 point of view, cooperation with Ukraine is seen as one of its priorities. Government of Ukraine is regularly invited to V4+ summits, and the four countries have already agreed upon division of their responsibilities as regards further development of V4-UA cooperation. The IVF as the main co-funding institution of V4 plays in this process a special role, even if CBC remains only of peripheral interest. As an example of V4-UA project supported by IVF there was mentioned the Civil Servants Mobility Program – a project similar to twinning programmes implemented by EU-15 with EU candidates countries before the 2004 enlargement.
- The IVF plays an important role in the development of the CBC on Ukrainian borders. Besides already above mentioned support to the Euroregion “Dniester”, the IVF grants enabled to determine strategy of the development of the region, to organize study trips of experts to several Euroregions and to implement the project Capacity Building of Local Communities: V4 experience for EaPC. The Euroregion “Dniester”, may be considered a testing laboratory of the co-operation in zones of frozen conflicts. However, resources provided by the IVF cannot be sufficient for realization of bigger investment projects in border regions. Such projects will need financial support from other EU, EEA or even

international sources. IVF grants may serve primarily as a tool for connecting people, enhancing capacities and as a specific school preparing its participants for working under much more demanding conditions of bigger projects.

- The whole V4 group may be involved in the CBC on its border with Ukraine in three main ways, supporting:
  - **Immediate co-operation** between border regions (Euroregions, smaller units as regions, towns or villages)
  - **Exchange of experience and know-how** within cross-border regions in V4 countries (twinning, study trips etc.)
  - **Financing of concrete projects** (IVF grants, grants of V4 state institutions and agencies).

There are some proposals, how to enhance the effect of V4 support:

- To pay focused attention to the CBC in V4-Ukraine programmes as well as in V4 programmatic documents
- To consider establishment of a IVF programme supporting specific CBC projects
- To use the Visegrad scholarship programme for the preparation of experts dealing with the development of the CBC
- To mediate best practices with CBC inside V4 as well as on western and southern V4 borders by supporting a platform of experts capable to facilitate exchange of experience among Ukrainian cross-border regions

# 3

## Border Dialogues Awards 2015

This year's Border Dialogues Award, which is given to people and institutions for their respective outstanding contributions to cross-border cooperation, was presented to Mr. Vazil Hudák, Minister of Economy of Slovak Republic, and to Ms. Svetlana Mytryaeva, Director of the Uzhgorod Branch of the National Institute of Strategic Studies of Ukraine.

In Summer 2009 it was Mr. Vazil Hudák, at that time co-founder and executive director of the Institute for Stability and Development, who together with Mr. Sergij Ustych, at that time Ambassador of Ukraine to the Czech Republic and Slovak Republic and others developed the idea of supporting research and organize dialogues devoted to the specific issues of cross-border cooperation along the eastern EU border. Vazil Hudák played a decisive role in organizing the European CBC Dialogues even after he took responsible positions in the banking sector, and remained supportive to the idea also in recent years, already from a position of the State Secretary of the Ministry of Finance of the Slovak Re-

public and now, as the Minister of Slovakia.

Ms. Svitlana Ivanovna Mytryaeva is recognized for her strong effort in preparing Ukraine for closer relations with the European Union. She assisted in establishment of the Slovak-Ukrainian Research and Educational Centre, which is an example of cross-border cooperation on the field of education, support of research and sustainable dialogue on political aspects of European integration. Svitlana Ivanovna also organized in cooperation with the Slovak Association for International Politics the project "National Convent for Ukraine". Last but not least, she participated in all European CBC Dialogues.

## CONGRATULATION!

**The 2015 Border Dialogue Award is in the right hands!**



**H.E. Minister Vazil Hudák addressing participants of the 6th European Cross-Border Dialogue in Uzhgorod**



**General Director Ján Krak congratulates Dr. Svitlana I. Mytryaeva**



**Uzhgorod (Ilko Gallery), 25 November 2015**





Košice (Hotel Yasmin), 26-27 November 2015



# 4

## Conclusions

### of the 6th European Forum on Cross-Border Cooperation in a Wider Europe, 2015

Taking into account vivid and constructive discussion in the panels and sessions of the Sixth European Cross-Border Cooperation Dialogue (6thECBCD), a group of experts (Sándor Köles, Petr Pajas, Sergii Ustich and Petr Vágner) prepared a summary of main points that were suggested to form conference conclusions. The draft was shortly presented and interpreted by the members of the expert group to the conference participants on its last plenary session. It was agreed that the conclusions should be finalized using eventual additional opinions and suggestions of chairpersons and commentators of panels and sessions. During December 2015 and January 2016 the group received several new recommendations to the conclusions and formulation.

The final text of the conference conclusions is as follows:

#### **Conclusion #1: People are our Treasure.**

The most important value as regards the cross-border cooperation (CBC) between peoples living along the European Eastern Border (EEB) that may be attributed to the series of six CBC Dialogues consists in the existence of a pool of personalities – politicians, officials, entrepreneurs, scholars, technicians, journalist, civil society activists, artists and others, who know each other and may thus form a fundament for further development of mutual understanding and respect in people-to-people, nation-to-nation relations across the political borders on the East of the European Union.

This network of personalities may be used as a resource for continuing development of friendly and cooperative relations between border security and

police units, local administrations, companies and civil society organizations on both sides of the European Eastern Border (EEB). This may result in better use of human resources and economic potential of border regions, leading to steady growth of the quality of life in border regions, whose further progress in economic, cultural, and social life is more and more dependent on the quality and intensity of cooperation in both directions across borders.

#### **Conclusion #2: The specificity of the Carpathian Euroregion.**

The Carpathian Euroregion – a territory along the Eastern and Central Carpathian Mountain Range – needs additional impetus from improved cross-border cooperation for its further development: New projects, joint actions and initiatives, new forms of economic and cultural cooperation, rapid and efficient completion of insufficiently developed regional and international transportation infrastructure, as well as increased number of better equipped border crossing posts with increased border-crossing capacities supported by more sophisticated security measures. In order to achieve these objectives, it's essential to enable full use of experience accumulated from successes and failures of CBC projects implemented in other regions along the EEB. The ultimate objective of this process should be creation of legal and administrative environment, in which the synergy effects from all projects realized in CBC along the EEB may be fully implemented.

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### **Conclusion #3: Complex and Specific Strategy for Financing of CBC Initiatives**

The current practise shows that existing financing tools are not adequate and far from being sufficient as concerns funding of regional CBC projects along the EEB. Thus, it appears essential to appeal to the institutions of the European Union (EU), European Economic Area (EEA), Visegrad Group countries (V4), national and regional governments along the EEB to develop, and as early as possible, to implement a specific strategy of how to initiate and finance innovative and sustainable CBC activities, maximizing the synergy stemming from similar projects on one side and optimizing financing of them on the other side.

Of special importance appears to be coordinated support of activities on the level of communities, civil society organization and companies involved in CBC projects with sustainability potential. Such projects should focus on creation of economically sound shared cultural, social and other services: support of tourism, building and maintenance of transportation infrastructure, exchange of cultural activities, joint protection of environment, and joint industrial or agricultural enterprises. All these projects should correspond to the needs and have full support of citizens living along the borders those contemporary divide regions with common past.

New financing initiatives should be focused on Euroregions or on concrete local projects, as well as to support from experts and exchange of resources between governments, regions and municipalities along EEB and from within EU. Without strong support from EU and national governments and without producing tangible and sustainable results, the energy invested into conferences on CBC and all of the potential created in this way may be lost.

### **Conclusion #4: Making Protection of the Schengen Border and CBC along it an Objective of the whole EU**

We may not stay blind and deaf in face of challenges created by conflicts affecting Ukraine and other regions along the EEB. We must be able to face the migration wave from Middle East countries suffering from civil wars and terrorism, be it Afghanistan, Iraq, Pakistan, Syria, or any other country. We should prepare ourselves to possible future global challenges resulting from growing tensions due to climate changes.

Thus, it appears essential to accept and implement such measures along the EEB that would enable secure protection of the outer Schengen EU borders, while improving conditions for continual trust building through more intensive CBC of peoples and nations living and companies operating along the EEB.

The specific attention should be given to enabling visa provision rules for Ukrainian citizens, especially for those with higher working potential, for students, scholars, experts and researchers, as well as for all citizens, who seek cooperation and/or job opportunities.

Special attendance should be given to specific border crossing regime for citizens living within a well-defined band along the EEB that would facilitate tourism, access to jobs and family encounters. The CBC development along EEB should become a clearly formulated objective of the EU and EEA institutions with sufficient support from various funding initiatives.

### **Conclusion #5: Use of Accumulated Experience from the Series of European CBC Dialogues.**

In order to enable proper use of experience accumulated during the six CBC Dialogues, it is recommended to initiate a special project aimed at a



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team of CBC experts, who should elaborate a complex of documents summarizing and illustrating the opinions of citizens, entrepreneurs, administrators, and politicians involved in CBC projects realized and/or planned within regions along the EEB.

The network of experts who took part in the CBC Dialogue series together with other regional key stakeholders with good practice experience, specific knowledge and proven skills may be utilized as a pool of experts for this purpose.

The project would need financial support from available EU and/or EEA funds, as well as other regional funds, like the International Visegrad Fund, Black Sea Trust for Regional Cooperation, Balkan Trust for Democracy and other governmental and independent foundations. It's essential to provide support for open and constructive discussion about feasible recommendations for further CBC improvements and about impacts of their possible implementation with those, who might be affected or involved within the range of their responsibilities. The outcomes of this work should be addressed to all authorities acting in the regions along the EEB, as well as to the European Commission and European Parliament, V4 Presidency and national governments of affected countries.

#### **Conclusion #6: Proper Education as a Basis for CBC in Efficient Use of Human Resources**

It is important to promote cooperation between colleges and universities operating in the regions close to the EEB, as well as internationally operating public and private universities of the Wider Europe, as regards development of innovative curricula oriented on common regional history and cultural heritage and focused on better understanding of differences between people living along both sides of the EEB. This should in-

clude development of university research, as well as much broader or more intensive exchange of scholars and students across the EEB.

Nevertheless, all CBC projects must be based on a clear vision, measurable goals, with a road map leading to their achievement with visible milestones alongside, and tools for final assessment of what has been really achieved.

#### **Conclusion #7: Reliable Data are Important**

One of the initiatives created within the European CBC Dialogue series was an idea of creating a CBC Index as a tool based upon usage of data collected in a systematic and sustainable manner that provide measurable indicators of the intensity, character and trends in several aspects of the CBC within a set of regions along the EEB. The database related to the CBC Index should include also data about all existing or planned initiatives focused to the improvement of the quality of life in studied regions.

Since Ukraine is facing many challenges, the database should include data from all Ukrainian regions and should also reflect the new administrative structure of Ukraine that is currently being implemented. Such a database complemented with a set of measurable indicators might serve also as a tool for transferring good practice between regions along EEB. This includes especially the proper use of very positive experience of the Barents Euro-Arctic Council as well as Euroregions on the Finland-Russia border and those where V4 countries participate.

#### **Conclusion #8: Moving Forward**

It is understood that the Institute for Stability and Development (ISD), as an organization that has been at the

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beginning of the CBC Dialogue series and participated in setting programmes of all six conferences since 2010, should be encouraged to continue in these efforts. However, in order not to repeat every time the same or similar issues and to provide for achieving concrete and measurable results, it is strongly recommended to limit the future dialogues to concrete CBC issues. Future con-

ferences should enable reaching consensus and agreement on common positions or facilitate opening of joint projects between participating organizations and authorities. It's also strongly recommended to broaden the scope of regions along the EEB involved in this initiative, with special emphasis to regions of the Balkan Peninsula.



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to donors, partners and supporters

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**Mr. Igor Slobodník**, State Secretary of the Ministry of Foreign and European Affairs of Slovak Republic

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