6th eRegions Conference 2016:

Cross-border eSolutions & eServices Prototypes Development

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<http://eregion.eu/conferences/derc-2016/derc-2016-program>

Panel

**Cross-border eCollaboration of the Actors in the eRegions:**

**Municipality, Chamber of Commerce, Development Centre, University**

**Preliminary Conclusions and Future Steps**

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What is the reason for cross-border collaboration? Is it necessary? What are the advantages to cross-border collaboration? OECD Review of Cross-border collaboration answers these and many other questions; however, for the purposes of the panel discussion the following statement synthesizes the importance of cross-border collaboration, stating that:

*many regional strategies for regions along international borders (including the “smart specialisation” strategies designed for use of EU funds) don't take the cross-border dimension into account, constituting a missed opportunity. As many innovation policy instruments and policies for framework conditions are managed by national governments, regional and local governments need to identify where national action can help or hinder their efforts. Given that national funds often stop at the border, different strategies to finance joint cross-border actions are needed.* (OECD, 2013, par. 7)

As such, panel members were invited that are leaders with experience in their respective areas. The panel discussed the role of the Municipality, regional Chamber of Commerce, the regional Development Centre, and University. Questions that were discussed included (a) the role of each respective institution, (b) projects that have already connected these institutions, (c) experience of becoming a university and its role in cross-border collaboration, (d) who should take on the coordinating role of joint projects among actors in a region, eRegion, and a cross-borders based on the findings of the OECD review, (e) concrete steps that need to be taken to increase the competitiveness of a region in terms of increasing the international profile of a municipality as a whole, (f) whether international competitiveness and enhanced international e-collaboration can be risen by focusing on being a knowledge society, (g) doable joint cross-border actions in the next 12 months.

The panel members agreed that the role of each institution is within their respective interest areas and that there are active cross-border collaborations already in existence. Whether a specific institution should take on a coordinating role of joint projects was a much debatable issue, especially as Slovenia does not have statistical regions, but municipalities and consequently, there is no legal entity to take on the role of coordinator. Similarly, in other countries, cross-border collaboration depends on the organization, their vision, purpose, and mission as well as projects that are being prioritized. Generally, each panel member stated that they find partners on a need to be basis, specifically, that are appropriate, suitable, and meet the criteria to be able to execute projects. All panel members were in agreement that networking, communication, willingness for cross-border cooperation, a vision of the benefits of cross-border (e)collaboration, and experience in cross-border collaboration is vital in the sense that meeting individuals on a face-to-face basis, being trustworthy, seeing the potential benefits and responsive are key to a successful collaboration. The panel members agreed that concrete projects from the panel discussion meetings will be outlined and meetings, such as the Danube eRegion Conference – DeRC are vital to increased and quality oriented cross-border collaboration. An important step towards concrete actions was a follow-up meeting with Dunaújváros delegates at Novo mesto the following day.

Each panelist’s contact information is provided on the DeRC 2016 Program website and may be contacted for further information on cross-border collaboration projects.

Reference

OECD (2013). *OE‌CD Reviews of Regional Innovation.* Retrieved online at <http://www.oecd.org/innovation/regions-and-innovation-collaborating-across-borders.htm>