

Mr. Michel Barnier.
European Commissioner for Internal Market and Services.
European Commission.
BERL 10/034.
B - 1049 Brussels. Belgium.

Santiago de Compostela, 1 March, 2011

Dear Mr. Barnier,

According to Eurostat data, 37% of the European Union population lives in border territories. On the past 16th February 2011, in the Berlaymont building took place a meeting with the participation of representatives of the Committee of the Regions, Mr. Andrea Forti (in charge of the Europe 2020 Monitoring Platform) and Mr. Giacomo Pides, representatives of the European Commission from DG MARKT, Ms. Pamela Brumter-Coret (Head of Unit of Policy and Coordination of the Internal Market) and Mr. Makis Tikfesis (Policy co-ordinator Development and Coordination of the Internal Market) and from DG REGIO Mr. Jean Peyrony (REGIO/C2-Urban Development and Cohesion Policy Analyst - Specialist territorial cohesion policy).

On the other side of the table were AEBR (Association of European Border Regions), a network which includes more than 200 European border regions; and the Executive Bureau of CECICN (Conference of European Cross-Border and Inter-Regional City Networks) which represents via its six networks more than 500 cities at EU internal and external borders:

- **Mission Opérationnelle Transfrontalière – MOT** - www.espaces-transfrontaliers.eu
- **Rede Ibérica de Entidades Transfronteiriças – RIET** - www.rietiberica.eu/riet
- **Conference of Atlantic Arc Cities – CAAC** - www.atlanticcities.eu
- **Forum of Adriatic and Ionian Cities - FAIC** - www.faic1999.net
- **Medcities** - www.medcities.org
- **Union of the Baltic Cities - UBC** - www.ubc.net

These networks represent the organisations that correspond to more than 37% of the European population without excluding anyone.

Thus, what we are going to propose, following the suggestion of Ms. Pamela Brumter-Coret is a common statement of these representative organizations.

1. - The process of cross-border and transnational cooperation began fifteen years ago following the model of the European Union: EUROPE WITHOUT BORDERS. Therefore, what we are presenting here is the result of fifteen years of experience working in this field.

2. - In these years, it was you, Mr. Barnier, along with Mr. Delors who were the ones who more and better promoted the cooperation policy and better supported us stakeholders in the field. Some of us, within our organizations remember the meetings with you, when you were the Commissioner for Regional Policy. You always welcomed us, we had working meetings with your team - not courtesy meetings, and we always achieved executive, concrete results. So, in a large degree, these proposals are a direct legacy of yours and Mr. Delors influence.

3. - We have two essential objectives and they need to be integrated in a preferential structure for the next programming period 2014-2020:

1. Development of border territories
2. Europe without borders as a reality

Many of our proposals are related to concrete application of Internal Market:

1. The difficulties that exist in public transport systems between countries that do not allow citizens from one city with citizens from a neighbour city located in another country, with which they share economic and educational life, to travel in urban or interurban public transport.

2. The problems of Internet, telephone and mobile phone communications, that causes a company manager of a border territory not to be able to communicate with his client on the other side of the border who is only 5 kilometres away without paying an international call, while a company manager can make a call free of charge inside its own country with his client at a distance of 1000 kilometres, with the offence that this represents in terms of competitiveness.
3. The impossibility an ambulance of a country has in carrying an injured person of another country, though this injured person is closer to the "foreign" ambulance than it is from an ambulance in its own country, but because of absurd question of lights, colours and sirens he cannot use it.

And we could continue with innumerable cases that affect enterprises, public authorities, workers and consumers on subjects such as education, health, transport, taxation, investment, energy, public procurement market etc.

These 37 % of European citizens, Mr. Commissioner, are confronted with day-to-day obstacles and they are the ones that have a great difficulty to understand the European Project, and consequently to believe in it. They belong to that 60 % of citizens that abstain when we are asked in a referendum about the European Constitution or that do not vote in European elections.

Therefore, Mr. Commissioner we want to transmit you the same proposal we made to Ms. Bresso and Mr. Hahn and that we will transmit to Mr. Barroso and to you personally when your agendas allow setting up the meeting with you, as agreed with our Political Bureau.

This common proposal consists in two points:

- To elaborate, in a ten months period, the White Book on Territorial Cooperation with experts of Internal Market, Regional Policy, CoR, CECICN and AEBR.

- To discuss this document, in a European Congress of Borders that will be held at the beginning of the first trimester of 2012 in a border area of the country that will hold the presidency of the European Union at that time, Denmark, congress presided by Mr. Barroso, you, Mr. Hahn and Ms. Bresso.

Finally, the conclusions of the debate on the White Book would be taken in consideration in the next programming period 2014-2020.

Please note, Mr. Commissioner, that what we do NOT ask for money.

We look forward, Mr. Commissioner, to count on your support, as we had in the past, together with the support of Ms. Bresso and Mr. Hahn.

Thank you for your consideration. We stay at your disposal for any further information.

Yours Sincerely.



Xosé A. Sánchez Bugallo

Mayor of Santiago de Compostela and President of CECICN