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Foreword

Colette Fitzgerald
Head of Office
Office of the European Commission in Northern Ireland

I am delighted to contribute to the 2014 Journal of Cross Border Studies in Ireland and I would like to thank Ruth Taillon, Director, and all her colleagues in the Centre for their co-operation with my Office during the course of this year in promoting greater awareness of the Centre’s work among other European regions.

These are challenging times for the European Union and, from the UK perspective, the debate is getting underway in earnest about the possibility of an in/out Membership referendum after the UK general election in 2015. I am not going to enter that debate here but I would simply like to record how important Membership of the EU has been to Ireland and Northern Ireland and to the Border Region in particular.

The obvious benefits are financial and both parts of Ireland have received billions of pounds worth of EU investment creating thousands of new jobs and boosting competitiveness by helping to transform our infrastructure, assisting our businesses and universities, developing the skills of our workforce, supporting our farmers and protecting our environment. The less obvious benefits can sometimes be taken for granted: the right to live and work in other EU countries, easier travel for holidays and business, the benefits of the Single Market helping Europe compete on the global stage and importantly, opening up networking opportunities with other EU and worldwide regions. And, not least, capping mobile roaming fees within the EU!

Networking in today’s connected world is vital for success whether in business or in research. That is why I am so pleased that during 2014, the Centre was able to further develop and enhance its relations with other regions across the EU particularly through the Transfrontier Euro-Institut Network (TEIN). This is an important platform for sharing the Centre’s findings on cross-border issues with others and to exchange experiences on boosting social and economic growth in border regions and thereby create better living and working conditions for citizens in those regions.

The different articles and reports in this year’s Journal attest to the range of activities and studies over the past year to support the development of a flourishing border region. I congratulate the Centre on a very successful 2014 and I wish Ruth and her team all the very best for their continued success in 2015.
Chairperson’s Introduction

Dr Helen Johnston

This year the Centre for Cross Border Studies (CCBS) celebrates its 15th anniversary since establishment in 1999. Over the 15 years CCBS has developed a reputation for thorough and high quality research, information provision and collaboration. During its relatively short history the CCBS has been part of the embedding of the peace process, worked to support North-South co-operation and developed a European dimension to cross-border working.

This last year has been one of change and consolidation for the Centre. The most significant change was in the Centre’s leadership as Ruth Taillon took over as Director from the previous founding Director Andy Pollak in June 2013. A number of new staff members joined the team as we welcomed Anthony Soares as Research and Policy Manager, Thomas Haverty and Martin McTaggart as Research Assistants and Claire Toner as Administration Officer.

On the work front it was a year of consolidation. The two year project, The Ireland-Northern Ireland Cross-Border Cooperation Observatory (INICCO-2), funded by the INTERREG IVA Programme, began in early February 2013 building on the INICCO-1 project which ran from 2008 to 2012. The Centre has also maintained its work in providing secretariat and support services to the Standing Conference on Teacher Education North and South (SCoTENS) and Universities Ireland.

Increasing policy engagement took place with a number of policy submissions and meetings with senior politicians and public servants on both parts of the island. This included engagement with the Oireachtas Good Friday Agreement Committee. Of special interest to them was the work of the Border People information service for people crossing the border to live, work and study. The current phase of this project, which is part of INICCO-2, involves training citizen information advisers in the two jurisdictions on cross-border information provision.

The continued quality and quantity of the work is a tribute to Ruth, the Deputy Director Mairead Hughes and the staff of the centre – Anthony, Thomas, Annmarie, Eimear and Claire. Also acknowledged is the work of Patricia McAllister who retired as the Director’s PA and Events Manager in December 2013.

The Board of the Centre plays an important developmental and oversight role. I’d like to thank the Board for their ongoing support to the work of the Centre and for
their ideas and good governance. We thank Ciaran O’Cuinn for his contribution as he moved abroad to take up an international appointment and welcome Maurice Manning and John Doyle to the Board. More recently, we have mourned the untimely passing of Ann McGeeney. Ann was a valued and energetic member of the Board, bringing a wealth of knowledge of cross-border working at both local and national levels to Board discussions as well as judicious counsel. She will be deeply missed. It was also with sadness that we learned of the demise of one of our founding partners, the Workers’ Educational Association. We thank the partners with whom we continue to work and our various sponsors.

As the challenge of cross-border work continues we will strive to meet our strategic goals of delivery of high quality research and services, and further developing networks and relationships with key partners at local, regional, national, EU and international levels.

The Journal of Cross Border Studies in Ireland has a new format for 2014. In recent years, we were able to produce a glossy, full-colour Journal that incorporated our Annual Report. We have taken the decision to publish the Centre’s Annual Report for 2013 separately in an online-only format (at www.crossborder.ie). While financial constraints have dictated this new format for the Journal, it continues to maintain the high-quality content achieved by our former Director and editor, Andy Pollak. Another change is that the Journal now includes a number of reviews of publications that we believe will be of interest to our readers. The 2014 Journal reflects the work of the Centre and the new and enhanced relationships we have developed with colleagues on the island of Ireland and across Europe.

The work of the Centre takes place within the wider national context. There were few significant political cross border developments in Ireland in the past year but parts of the island are starting to show the welcome signs of economic growth after the ‘great recession’. Not all parts of the island are sharing in this economic recovery, however, as discussed at the January 2014 CCBS/ICLRD annual conference on ‘Cross-border Economic Development and the Border Development Zone (BDZ) Concept’. This BDZ concept explores the potential of a joint economic development approach across the whole Ireland-Northern Ireland cross-border region, an area which lags behind on a range of economic indicators. The article here, Towards a Border Development Zone, by Philip McDonagh and Maureen O’Reilly is based on their research presented at the January 2014 joint CCBS/ICLRD Conference. Since then, the BDZ Steering Group, chaired by Mr Padraic White, has continued to meet and the draft Solidarity Charter for the Economic Revitalisation of the Irish Border Development Corridor is the product of their work since the conference. The draft Charter, now in the public domain for consultation and possible amendment, will be discussed and we hope endorsed by border corridor Local Authorities in the first half of 2015.
A notable development in the Centre’s work has been an increasing engagement with other European border areas through the Transfrontier Euro-Institut Network (TEIN), a network of 12 organisations from nine EU border regions. Anthony Soares, who joined the Centre in 2013 as Research and Policy Manager, has been responsible for developing a Toolkit for Inter-Cultural/Cross-Border Project Management being developed with our TEIN partners. The All Island Local Authority Forum is presented as one of the case studies in this Toolkit. Dr Soares’ article considers the work and context of the All Island Local Authority Forum, and how it should be seen as representative of the potential value of cross border cooperation, and whether that potential has been fully realised. Dr Hynek Böhm, Vice-Chairman of Institut EuroSchola, the TEIN partner organisation in the Czech Republic, has contributed an article comparing EU governance forms for cross-border cooperation.

The Centre has been actively engaged with TEIN partners and others across Europe who are working on cross-border cooperation, sharing our experiences and learning from theirs. In September 2014, CCBS Director Ruth Taillon was invited to speak at a Council of Europe seminar in Strasbourg on Prospects for Effective Transfrontier Cooperation in Europe. We are delighted to be able to publish here an article by Dr Andreas Kiefer, Secretary General of the Council of Europe’s Congress of Local and Regional Authorities. His article, Europe on the Threshold of a New Dimension in Cross-Border Cooperation, is reprinted with permission from a Euro Institut publication, Grenzüberschreitende Zusammenarbeit mit deutscher Beteiligung Ein Erfahrungsaustausch (Cross-border cooperation with a German exchange participation).

An invitation from the University of Strasbourg in December 2013 was the catalyst for Ruth Taillon’s article, Cross-Border Cooperation and Peacebuilding in Ireland. This article written for the publication “Castle-talks on Cross-border cooperation” of the FARE Review by the Centre Raymond Poidevin (University of Strasbourg) is based on a presentation made at the Borders and Governance Conference in Strasbourg on 3 December 2013. It is reprinted here with the kind permission of Professor Birte Wassenberg.

Peacebuilding in Ireland is the subject of two other articles offered here. Dr Anna Bryson reflects on the use of the interview as a tool with which to connect people to their past and to one another, drawing on the practice of the PEACE III project, Peace Process: Layers of Meaning. This project involved collaboration between Queen Mary, University of London, Dundalk Institute of Technology and Trinity College Dublin. In this article Dr Bryson reflects on some of the connections that were made across three jurisdictions and on the ways in which these relate to the cause of peacebuilding. Lynn Carville, likewise, shares learning from a PEACE III-funded cross-border project, Women and Peacebuilding: Developing Shared Learning. The contextual framework for this project was the United Nations Security Council Resolution 1325. The project involved more than 1000 women from across Northern Ireland and the border
counties in discussions about how their lives have changed since the beginning of the Peace process and the signing of the Good Friday agreement in 1998. The final part of the project has involved developing a toolkit that focuses on effecting institutional change in Northern Ireland using a UN 1325 framework. This toolkit is reviewed elsewhere in the Journal by Ruth Taillon.

Peacebuilding is the subject also of Transforming Conflict Through Social and Economic Development: Practice and Policy Lessons from Northern Ireland and the Border Counties, reviewed here by CCBS Research Assistant, Thomas Haverty. Dr Katy Hayward, a member of the CCBS Board, has reviewed European Border Regions in Comparison: Overcoming Nationalistic Aspects or Re-Nationalization? Dr Anthony Soares, has likewise reviewed a book focused on European borders: Border Encounters: Asymmetry and Proximity at Europe’s Frontiers.
Towards a Border Development Zone

Philip McDonagh and Maureen O’Reilly

The origins of the concept
The cross border region of Ireland and Northern Ireland faces a unique set of economic development challenges. Not only does it experience the economic problems arising from the existence of the border, including different trading conditions, a different currency and different institutional arrangements, but it also faces the legacy of the Troubles and their impact on the economy of the area.

The Centre for Cross Border Studies was awarded INTERREG IVA funding to undertake a ‘basket’ of eight research, training and information projects in 2013-2015. Among these projects is ‘Towards a Border Development Zone (BDZ)’. This research project, building on a proposal in the 2009-2012 CCBS research project Cross-border Economic Renewal: Rethinking Regional Policy in Ireland (by Dr John Bradley and Professor Michael Best), was designed to explore the potential of a joint economic development approach across the whole Ireland/Northern Ireland cross-border region.

In their 2009-2012 study, Bradley and Best said that the measure of success of such an initiative would be ‘the rebalancing of the border region economy, and particularly of the north-west and mid-border regions, so that it is less dependent on external financial subvention, and is able to generate resources for development internally from a revitalised small-scale manufacturing and service sector base that has the potential for higher external sales and ultimately a greater international export potential.’

Bradley and Best outlined three dimensions to the establishment of such a ‘Border Development Zone’:
1. **Spatial:** to define the cross-border region ‘where the twin challenges of peripherality and ‘border’ policy fault lines need to be addressed’;
2. **Sectoral:** to identify a range of productive sectors which are uniquely suitable and adaptable for promotion within such a ‘Border Development Zone’ (e.g. environmental, manufacturing, food processing); and

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1 A presentation based on this research was given at the Annual CCBS/ICLRD Conference in the Cavan Crystal Hotel on the 30-31 January 2014.
3 For the purposes of this project, the cross-border region is defined as the following counties: in Republic of Ireland — Donegal, Sligo, Leitrim, Cavan, Monaghan and Louth; in Northern Ireland — Derry/Londonderry, Tyrone, Fermanagh, Armagh and Down
3. **Institutional**: to identify the kinds of cooperative policy frameworks and actions that will be needed if the ‘Border Development Zone’ is to have a greater prospect of participating in all-island prosperity.

Bradley and Best emphasised that that the objective should not be to design new institutions from scratch, but to ‘propose ways that elements of the existing institutional policy framework can be improved and refocused in order to overcome the weaknesses caused by coordination failure, mainly by articulating a shared vision of the challenges faced within the ‘Border Development Zone’. The existing framework could be said to include the local authority cross-border networks such as East Border Region, ICBAN and the North West Region Cross Border Group.

Bradley and Best quoted the views of former IDA Managing Director (and Chair of Louth Economic Forum), Padraic White. At a conference in Cavan in November 2011 Mr White emphasised the limited control that the border region has over its own development and the risk of the region becoming ‘economically stranded’. White’s conclusion was:

> ‘The immediately adjoining border areas have common economic threats, but also have a strong common interest in maximising their joint strengths, and the district councils and counties in this ‘Border Development Zone’ can drive economic development by cooperation and sharing successful ideas’.

**Existing economic situation in Border region**

Attempts to present a picture of the state of the economy of the cross-border region are beset by data issues. Despite European efforts to establish consistent approaches to data collection and presentation across Member States, it is still difficult to bring together data for both sides of the Border region that will illustrate the state of the local economy on a common basis.

Despite these difficulties, estimates of unemployment and participation rates for the two border regions have been generated for the purposes of this study. These data show that in 2012 there was a total workforce of over 500,000 in the region, of whom roughly 60% were living in Northern Ireland and 40% in Ireland. There were also over 60,000 unemployed persons in the two border regions, of whom the majority (61%) were living in the Border Region of Ireland. The labour market in Ireland has suffered much more from the economic recession than the Northern Ireland labour market. This is reflected in the much higher unemployment rate of 17.7% in the Border Region of Ireland, compared with 7.4% in the border region of Northern Ireland. The Northern Ireland border region also has a higher participation rate (59.9%) than the Border Region of Ireland (53.3%)
Table 1: Unemployment and participation in the cross-border region

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Border Region</th>
<th>NI border region</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Q3 2012</td>
<td></td>
<td>2012</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>In employment (‘000)</td>
<td>172.4</td>
<td>299</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unemployed (‘000)</td>
<td>37.2</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>In labour force (‘000)</td>
<td>209.6</td>
<td>323</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unemployment rate</td>
<td>17.7%</td>
<td>7.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participation rate</td>
<td>53.3%</td>
<td>59.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IRL/NI unemployment rate</td>
<td>15.0%</td>
<td>7.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IRL/NI participation rate</td>
<td>60.2%</td>
<td>60.6%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: CSO, Quarterly National Household Survey; DETI, Labour Force Survey; 2012 Local Area Database

Current regional development strategy in Ireland

Regional development strategy in Ireland is set out in the National Spatial Strategy 2002-2020 and was designed to achieve a better balance of social, economic and physical development across Ireland, supported by more effective planning. The Strategy was particularly relevant to the Border Region as it identified three new ‘Gateway’ towns all located in the Border Counties ie Dundalk, Sligo and Letterkenny which was matched with Derry in Northern Ireland. The Strategy was designed at a time when the economy was growing very fast but since the collapse of the property boom and the associated financial crisis, the Strategy has become less relevant. The Minister for Environment, Community and Local Government announced earlier this year that the Strategy was being set aside and that a review would be undertaken of the appropriate framework for spatial/regional development for the country.

Meanwhile, in April 2012 the Irish Government announced its intention to close the 35 City and County Enterprise Boards across Ireland and replace them with 31 Local Enterprise Offices. While the County Enterprise Boards have operated independently of Government, the Local Enterprise Offices will involve a Service Level Agreement between Enterprise Ireland and the Local Authorities. Enterprise Ireland will negotiate Service Level Agreements with all Local Authorities, which will set out budgets and project evaluation methods as well as a series of demanding metrics and targets for the delivery of services by the LEOs, including the numbers of jobs and businesses to be supported.

The creation of the Local Enterprise Offices will result in the establishment of a local first-stop shop for new entrepreneurs and existing micro-enterprise and small business owners. The offices will deliver the combined functions of the former County Enterprise Boards and business development units of the Local Authorities, as well
as developing an enhanced service to business at local level. Where businesses have clear high growth potential, they can be fast-tracked to the next level of support from Enterprise Ireland or other State agencies.

The changes will also take place in the wider context of major changes in the system of local government in Ireland. In October 2012, the Government launched *Putting People First, a Programme for Effective Local Government*. Proposals include streamlining of local government structures at sub-county, county and regional levels and a reduction in the number of Local Authority seats along with the devolution of a substantial range of reserved functions to local government with scope for further expansion.

One of the effects of these very significant structural changes is that it has generated a lot of activity in all levels of regional and local government in Ireland. It is clear that the specific challenges in the Border Region of increasing the level of economic development and the opportunities for greater cross-border cooperation have taken a back seat while the system copes with the major change process.

**Sub regional development strategy in Northern Ireland**

The Regional Development Strategy for Northern Ireland 2035 was launched in March 2012 following a period of consultation. The vision statement set out in the Strategy is as follows:

> “An outward-looking, dynamic and liveable Region with a strong sense of its place in the wider world; a Region of opportunity where people enjoy living and working in a healthy environment which enhances the quality of their lives and where diversity is a source of strength rather than division.”

The Spatial Framework has a number of components including the Metropolitan area of Belfast and a North West Region centred on Londonderry whose catchment area includes a large part of Donegal. There are also a number of hubs and clusters of cities and towns, a rural area and six gateways and corridors. However there is no specific recognition or acknowledgement of the border area except in the North West. However, the Executive Summary points out that:

> “The region can benefit from collaboration with its neighbours on both a North/South and East/West basis.”

A key plank of the NI Executive’s *Review of Public Administration* in Northern Ireland is a restructuring of local government with increased powers being devolved to local level. The 26 existing local authorities are being reduced to 11 new Councils which will have new powers in the area of planning, roads, urban regeneration, community development, housing, local economic development and local tourism. It is also proposed that the Councils will have a new statutory duty of Community Planning. The reform process will be completed by April 2015.
As in Ireland, this reform process has generated a lot of activity and internal planning. As a result some areas of Council activity, such as cross-border co-operation, have slipped down the priority list.

The Economic Strategy for Northern Ireland 2011-2015 does not have a strong sub-regional development element. One of the cross-cutting principles in the Strategy (alongside Equality and Sustainability) is ‘Balanced Sub-Regional Growth’ which is described as follows:

“We will ensure that all sub-regions are able to grow and prosper, whilst recognising the importance of Belfast and Derry/Londonderry as key drivers of regional economic growth.”

However there is little further recognition of the principle in the rest of the Strategy except for references to economic development in Belfast and Derry/Londonderry. Invest NI has six regional offices outside Belfast, of which five are located in the border region – North Western in Derry, Western in Omagh and Enniskillen and Southern in Newry and Craigavon. The role of these offices is to work with Invest NI clients and other businesses located in the area in all areas of Invest NI activity but particularly in encouraging business growth and promoting employment and employability. Invest NI does not have any sub-regional targets in its Corporate Plan.

An Economic Pact signed by the Northern Ireland Executive and the Westminster government in June promised that the two bodies would look for a “new way forward on enterprise zones and planning reform, as well as initiatives to drive investment in infrastructure, promote new businesses and boost tourism”.

The British Government would be willing to consider designating a range of sites within any Northern Ireland Enterprise Zone as designated areas for Enhanced Capital Allowances (ECAs), should the Executive propose them. Businesses in these areas would then be entitled to 100% first-year allowances on qualifying plant and machinery expenditure, subject to state aid considerations. The Executive is currently examining the potential designation of Northern Ireland as an Enterprise Zone.

**Cross-border Framework for Co-operation**

In June 2013 the two governments issued a joint Framework for Co-operation between the two spatial strategies – the Regional Development Strategy for Northern Ireland and the National Spatial Strategy for Ireland. The purpose of the Framework is to facilitate economic recovery through more effective planning and prioritisation of investment.

The Framework acknowledges that many of the key planning and development issues are the same in both jurisdictions, including the regional differences between the more urbanised East and the more rural West, the economic challenge of recovery
from the recession and the need to meet environmental targets. It also draws attention to the need for both governments to work together to provide ‘a more comprehensive and co-ordinated approach to integrating datasets’ and making this information widely available.

It identifies four areas for priority co-operation:

- Enhancing Competitiveness
- Competitive Places
- Environmental Quality
- Spatial Analysis

The International Centre for Local and Regional Development (ICLRD) was instrumental through its work over a number of years in securing the agreement of the two governments to this Framework for Co-operation. The ICLRD has welcomed the publication of the Framework, saying that it will be helpful in the light of local government reform and ‘bringing together local authorities, cross-border bodies and the regional networks in the Irish Border Region who share common challenges and opportunities’.

The Framework clearly provides a basis for exploring further the Border Development Zone which could be one of the areas identified by the two Departments for further consideration. It has been suggested that proposals for the establishment of a Border Development Zone might include a recommendation that some form of joint Planning Framework should be developed for the Border Development Zone.

**Local authority development strategies**

There is a wide range of economic development strategies already in place for County Councils in the Border Region of Ireland and the local authorities in the border region of Northern Ireland.

In the Border Counties of Ireland the County and City Managers’ Association (CCMA) has produced a useful report, *Supporting Enterprise, Local Development & Economic Growth*, which presents the results of a survey of local authority economic development activity across the whole country. This illustrates the range of activities in which Councils are engaged and concludes that this is much wider than was previously acknowledged. These activities include financial incentives, support for business networking events, infrastructure and enterprise, tourism/heritage/sporting events and collaborative ventures with other agencies. This research will provide the basis for Local Action Plans for enterprise support that will be developed by Councils.

In Northern Ireland local Council economic development activity is also wide ranging. Councils have limited powers to undertake economic development and have drawn down European Structural Funds to supplement their own resources. Many of the strategies have been prepared in support of applications for assistance and activities
typically include the following:
• Entrepreneurship and small business support
• Sectoral support programmes
• Tourism and event development
• Urban and rural regeneration
• Investment attraction

Re-structured Councils under the Review of Public Administration will be granted some additional powers in relation to economic development which may involve transfer of some functions from Invest NI.

There are also two important local economic development strategies for areas within the Border Development Zone which deserve particular mention: the Louth Economic Forum and the One Plan for Derry/Londonderry.

Cross border network development strategies
The three cross border networks – the North West Region Cross Border Group (NWRCGB), the Irish Central Border Area Network (ICBAN) and the East Border Region Committee (EBRC) - were specifically designed to respond to the unique economic and social needs of their respective border regions. From an examination of the programmes of activities that were approved under INTERREG IVA, it would appear that each has developed a distinctive set of initiatives to respond to their local development needs:
• The NWRCBG’s funding under INTERREG IVA has been strongly focused on the development of the North West Science Park due for completion in June 2014.
• ICBAN has opted for a mix of strategic and programme/project driven initiatives including its Strategic Planning Initiative aimed at ensuring that national strategies are translated in a meaningful way at a central border region level.
• The EBR has adopted a project and programme driven approach under three key themes – Enterprise, Tourism and the Environment.

If the Border Development Zone concept is to be developed it would be important that there is a more integrated and coordinated approach to cross-border development among these representative groups.

INTERREG V 2014-2020
The Special EU Programmes Body is the Managing Authority for the forthcoming European Territorial Co-operation programmes in Northern Ireland and Ireland – INTERREG V and PEACE IV. An initial round of consultation was undertaken last year and the Ireland-Northern Ireland INTERREG V Programme for the period 2014-2020 will be issued for public consultation very shortly.

While the details of the proposed Programme are not yet available there are a number of important features which can be anticipated based on the regulations and the
initial consultations:

- The new regulations ask for a focus on results rather than process and this will be reflected in the Programme;
- The Programme is likely to focus on a narrower range of sectors than the previous INTERREG programmes including for, example, research and innovation, renewable energy and environmental management, sustainable transport and other sectors;
- It is likely that the eligible area will include Belfast as well as West of Scotland which will increase the competition for funds away from the immediate border region.

The implications for the Border Development Zone are that proposals will have to be well prepared and have a clear focus on results. In view of the Council mergers, particularly in Northern Ireland, Councils may choose to collaborate directly with each other rather than through the cross-border network bodies. There may be merit in considering a more strategic approach to the funding by collaborating on a Border Development Zone basis, similar to the Border Corridor Strategy which was adopted in 1999 for INTERREG III.

**Conclusions on regional development strategy**

The main conclusions from this analysis of current development strategies for the Border region can be summarised as follows:

- Regional development strategy is not particularly strong in either jurisdiction although spatial strategies are in place;
- The joint Framework for Co-operation on spatial strategies between the two governments provides an interesting platform for the potential development of a Border Development Zone;
- Major structural reforms of local government are taking place in both jurisdictions which is absorbing a lot of energy;
- The creation of Local Enterprise Offices in County Councils in the Southern border counties are an important new development;
- Enterprise Zones are under consideration in Northern Ireland but there are no proposals to apply this designation to the border area;
- Re-structured Councils in Northern Ireland will have new powers in a number of areas including local economic development;
- Louth Economic Forum and the One Plan for Derry-Londonderry provide interesting examples of existing economic initiatives within the Border area;
- There are opportunities for the cross-border network bodies to develop a more strategic and co-ordinated approach to the next round of INTERREG funding.

**Options for Border Development Zone**

It is envisaged that the overall objective of a Border Region Development Zone would be:
to promote the economic development of the cross-border zone between Ireland and Northern Ireland on a coordinated basis, maximising the use of national resources and stimulating the use of local resources and expertise.

In light of this, options for the strategy and structure of the Border Development Zone have been considered under the three dimensions proposed by Bradley and Best – spatial, sectoral and institutional.

**Spatial options (see diagrams on next page)**

Three broad spatial options have been considered in the following diagrams:

**Option A:** Single development zone – this would encompass the whole border region in a single zone;

**Option B:** Three development zones – this would recognise the different nature of the North West and Newry Dundalk area which are both more urbanised than the central more rural area;

**Option C:** Two development zones – this reflects an east west split within the area between the eastern area with its strong connections north and south to Belfast and Dublin respectively and the western area which has stronger links to the western corridor of the island.

Having assessed these options, Option B: Three Development Zones is viewed as the best option as it reflects the reality that the two zones at each end of the border corridor, ie the areas around Derry/Donegal and Newry/Dundalk, have different economic characteristics compared with the rural development zone between them.

As well as being urban these two zones have most of the Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) in the area and the labour market includes a stronger representation of public and private services. The rural development zone between them (broadly equivalent to the central border area covered by ICBAN) has a strong small scale manufacturing base with some important clusters and tends to look towards Belfast and Dublin for significant service provision.

This does not mean that the BDZ cannot be developed and promoted as a single entity but it is important to recognise the three sub-zones within it.

**Sectoral options**

Four sectoral research studies were undertaken alongside this study to provide a tangible illustration of how the BDZ concept might be applied in practice. They identified a number of opportunities and ideas for development which can be taken forward as part of the overall development of the Zone.

**Tourism Study**

The tourism study produced a detailed Sector Action Plan with a number of proposals which include the process for delivery, the lead organisation, any partners, financial
Spatial options: Option A

Spatial options: Option B
Spatial options: Option C

[Diagram showing the spatial options for development zones in different areas of Ireland.]
resources, the timeframe and key performance indicators. The actions can be summarised as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Leadership &amp; collaboration</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Develop a Border Development Zone Tourism Forum</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Provide training and development for tourism industry</td>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Marketing &amp; Technology</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Develop BDZ Mobile App</td>
</tr>
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<td>• Maintain BDZ Social Media Profile</td>
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<table>
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<tr>
<th>Product Development</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Invest in establishing/reviving the Eco Tourism Network in the BDZ</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Develop eco tourism products, services and packages</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Provide information/branding and marketing</td>
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<td>• Develop a BDZ Countryside Recreation Strategy</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Improve information on adventure tourism activities</td>
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<td>• Provide innovative support services for activity tourism</td>
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<td>• Provide supports to enhance potential of activity tourism</td>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Review and Update</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Monitor outcomes of Action Plan</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Prepare annual Investment Monitor</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Prepare Marketing Monitor</td>
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**Agri-food Study**

The actions set out in this study seek to exploit the natural advantages of the region such as its natural unspoiled landscape and long history of food production. They also seek to exploit internal synergies and build on the strong base of leading food and fish processing firms located within the Border Development Zone (BDZ). The study focuses on actions that can be implemented within the resources available in the BDZ.

Actions are summarised under six headings as below:

1. Exploit the natural unspoiled landscape and history of food production in the area to **differentiate products in export and domestic markets**
2. Apply the same concept to **develop local markets and food-related tourism** and encourage people to visit the area
3. Leverage **domestic procurement opportunities**
4. **Leverage the base of large food producers** to support SME development
5. **Share resources between SMEs** to overcome scale and peripherality disadvantages
6. **Strengthen linkages between industry and education / research institutes**

### Low Carbon Study
This study suggests a number of themes based on case studies of good practice elsewhere in Ireland, the UK and Europe.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Theme</th>
<th>Action</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Green Networks</strong></td>
<td>Local government needs to actively seek out local community leaders and champions to identify existing local strengths to build meaningful, locally relevant networks for green growth. (Based on REN Net Case study)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| **Green Training**                              | There are two priorities in this area:  
  - **green capacity building** for Local Government, in particular for planners, enterprise development officers and elected representatives  
  - **green training for workers with transferable skills.** SMARTLife Cambridge, the Killybegs Centre for Renewable Technologies and South West College in Tyrone and Fermanagh provide excellent examples of how skilled workers can be re-trained to work on and deliver low carbon projects in the region. |
| **Resource Efficiency and Cost Savings**       | Understand how local government can be supported to realise the cost savings, income opportunities and economic benefits of the transition to a low-carbon economy.                                                                                                                                   |
| **Community Engagement**                        | The goal of community engagement is to achieve behavioural change in individuals and groups to reduce carbon emissions and highlight innovative ways in which the green economy can impact on people’s lives positively.                                                                                                    |
| **Formal Mechanisms of Co-operation**          | The Nottingham Declaration provides a potential model of the next step for the Louth and Newry and Mourne Local Authorities in the context of its goal to work together on renewable energy; or could provide the basis for other parts of the region to come together in a geographically appropriate and cross-border manner. The existing networks of NWRCBG, ICBAN and EBR could provide the support and platform for such an agreement to co-operate. |
SME Export Study
The SME Export Study highlights the strengths of the business base in the BDZ area and summarises some of the challenges that face them. It proposes ten actions to improve the export potential of SMEs:

- Establish a Border Development Zone Trade Forum.
- Celebrate Border Trade Success.
- Establish a bank of Border Development Zone Export Mentors.
- Research and review the significance of logistics as a key trade barrier for border based businesses.
- Highlight potential for high-tech/higher value-added industry in the Border Development Zone.
- Provide greater Southern Border Region business exposure to trade opportunities with Northern Ireland and Scotland.
- Develop Border Development Zone Clusters.
- Pilot a programme of Shared Trade Interventions by Enterprise Ireland/InvestNI for businesses in the Border Development Zone.
- Ensure that indigenous Border Development Zone entrepreneurial talent is nurtured and developed.
- Review demand for/accessibility to trade support programmes for border-based businesses.

The actions proposed by the various sectoral studies provide a starting point for a strategy for the Border Development Zone. Some work would need to be done to bring the various proposals together into a single action plan.

Institutional options
Discussions with representatives of local authorities suggest that on both sides of the border they are engaged in significant internal and external re-structuring processes. There are currently five County Councils and 10 City and District Councils in the area, although following the Review of Public Administration in Northern Ireland the number of local authorities along the border area in Northern Ireland will reduce to 5 – Derry/Strabane, Fermanagh/Ormagh, Armagh/Banbridge/Craigavon, Newry and Mourne/Down and the Mid-Ulster authority which includes Dungannon.

The re-structuring processes are absorbing a lot of energy and this is not the time to propose any radical institutional changes in the area of cross-border work. Once the new structures bed-in in a few years time the local authorities will be in a better position to consider how they can become more active in the promotion and development of a Border Development Zone.

Furthermore, in the light of these developments it would not be helpful to propose some sort of overarching Border Development Zone authority representing all local authorities. The cross border network bodies are well established and can continue to coordinate cross-border activity for their member Councils.
**Recommendations**

Careful consideration of the issues raised through this research has led to a number of recommendations for actions to progress the Border Development Zone concept.

**Promote the concept of the Border Development Zone**

There is an opportunity to develop the awareness of a Border Development Zone by promoting the concept in a very public and visible manner. There are important lessons to learn in this respect from the development of the Belfast-Dublin Economic Corridor during the 1990s. This Corridor was developed in almost a virtual manner without any specific new measures or initiatives and without even defining a precise economic boundary for the Corridor, except that it covered the area between Dublin and Belfast.

**Identify industry champions for the Border Development Zone**

One of the features of the Belfast-Dublin Economic Corridor was that it had two industry champions, one from each side of the border – George Quigley and Liam Connellan – who constantly promoted the importance and potential benefits of the Corridor to the business community and effectively pushed it into the consciousness of both governments. Two or more similar industry champions could be identified for the Border Development Zone, or for each of the three elements of the Zone.

**Create a Border Development Zone Forum**

In order to develop and strengthen the Border Development Zone concept, a Border Development Zone Forum might be established to discuss and debate the opportunities and to share experience and knowledge across the whole cross-border region. The proposed Forum might be modelled on the Louth Economic Forum which has been very effective in providing advice to Louth County Council across a whole range of areas. One project that the Forum might consider lobbying for is the establishment of a non statutory cooperation framework for the Border Development Zone along similar lines to the national Joint Framework.

**Develop an annual ‘State of the Border Development Zone’ report**

In order to highlight the opportunities and potential of the Border Region, there should be a regular report on the economy of the area. This might identify and collate a number of key indicators which are collected on a common basis for the two jurisdictions into a single ‘dashboard’. While there are problems at the moment in assembling data on the same basis, the cross border local authority networks have data capture projects which should facilitate this approach.

**Explore with InterTradeIreland, Enterprise Ireland and Invest NI the opportunity to pilot a cross-border trade support initiative**

The British and Irish Governments commissioned a study on the economic relationship between the UK and Ireland in 2012 and one of the recommendations was that there was an opportunity to undertake more joint initiatives in the area of trade promotion.
This might include an initiative on cross-border trade on an all island basis, building on the existing activity undertaken by InterTradeIreland, before moving outside the UK and Ireland.

**Consider joined up approach to funding bids for INTERREG V from Border Development Zone**

In the past, efforts have been made to make an integrated and more strategic proposal by the three cross-border network bodies. The Stutt Report in 1999, Border Corridor Strategy, which was submitted for funding under INTERREG III, was a good and successful example of how proposals can be presented in an integrated strategic manner.

The inclusion of Belfast and the West of Scotland in the eligible area for INTERREG V funding will result in strong competition for the next round of funding. The relative advantage of the Border Region organisations is that they have been doing this work for much longer and should know what works. The proposals from the Border Development Zone should therefore consider what have been the most effective interventions in previous funding rounds and build on these.

**Increase use of INTERREG and other funding for programmes rather than projects**

Much of the funding drawn in through INTERREG is focused on project funding and the cross-border networks have been particularly successful at this. However there is an opportunity to move into programme support focused on some of the programmes proposed in the sectoral reports accompanying this research. For example, the Border Export Mentor programme proposed in the SME Study or the Food Industry collaboration programme proposed in the Agri-food study are good examples of programmes that could benefit from INTERREG funding.

**Support development of North West Partnership**

The strengthening of the North West Partnership is already under way supported by the ICLRD team. It is important that this is successful as the North West pole of the Zone needs to provide a strong counterbalance to the Newry/Dundalk pole. The North West has particular strengths which it can build on but it also needs to address the issue of accessibility and infrastructure which continues to represent a significant challenge to the economic development of the area.

**Build on ICBAN Regional Strategic Framework**

The ICBAN Regional Strategy Framework was published for public consultation in July 2013 and represents a groundbreaking first step at designing a coordinated development strategy for the central border area. There is a need to build on this Framework and to generate some early project successes and to ensure that any BDZ initiatives or proposals are supportive of this important development pathway.
Continue to develop work of EBRC and realize potential of Memorandum of Understanding

The East Border Region Committee has been very successful in attracting funding to the area for both projects and programmes. Each of the cross-border networks works in a different context and the EBRC benefits from the strong existing economic development links between Newry and Dundalk. There is potential for further development of the Memorandum of Understanding that was signed between the two Councils to explore how this can be turned into more practical development opportunities.

A presentation based on this research was given at the Annual CCBS/ICLRD Conference in the Cavan Crystal Hotel on the 30-31 January 2014.

Draft Solidarity Charter for the Economic Revitalisation of the Irish Border Development Corridor

PART A September 2014

Preamble to the Charter

The Solidarity Charter for the Economic Revitalisation of the Irish Border Development Corridor represents the unified position of many people and organisations proposing action to capitalise on the economic, social and environmental assets of the Irish Border region and to redress the economic disadvantages that have accrued in the area from decades of underinvestment, back-to-back policy development and the legacy of our troubled history. The Border Development Corridor – comprising the local authority areas indicated in the Appendix to the Charter in Part C – consists of a patchwork of communities faced with an array of differentiated challenges. In their close proximity to the border, however, they share a common reality and find common cause in their desire for a better future irrespective of jurisdictional boundaries. The conclusion of this Charter represents a modest, but not inconsiderable, step towards ensuring a better future for all those living and working within the Irish Border region. Its implementation will depend on the continued support and goodwill of many organisations in addition to the citizens of the Border region itself.

The Charter promotes the principle of subsidiarity and is designed to complement and support the work of existing agencies with a local and regional development remit in the Irish Border region. This includes local government, local development partnerships, and the cross-border networks, to name but a few. A fully elaborated introduction to the Charter and its underpinning necessity is provided in Part B, including a range of priority actions outlined in support of the seven high-level aims listed below. The membership of the Border Development Corridor Steering Committee, which was responsible for creating and promoting the draft Charter, is provided in Part C.
The Steering Committee comprises individuals and organisations motivated to act in the interests of the entire Border region who were initially prompted by the findings of the 2012 Bradley and Best report, Cross-Border Economic Renewal: Rethinking Regional Policy in Ireland, published by the Centre for Cross Border Studies. Membership of the Steering Committee can be modified as required.

Charter Purpose
The purpose of this Charter is to articulate the shared position of a wide-range of organisations in the Border Development Corridor who are coalescing around a defined number of high-level themes for the economic revitalisation and sustainable development of their area. The Charter embraces a strategic approach by focusing on seven priority thematic areas and their potential to strengthen the economic and social development of the entire Border region. The themes are generally reflected in the economic objectives and plans of individual County and District Councils and the cross-border networks. It is considered that an approach founded on solidarity between local authorities in the Border region and the cross-border networks, and carrying the backing of the entire region, is more likely to win the support of both Governments, Government Ministers, Government Departments, State agencies and private sector interests.

Charter Aims

- **Critical Infrastructure**
  Achieve a greater priority and urgency in advancing critical infrastructure projects, particularly roads and broadband, to facilitate the economic and social development of the Border Development Corridor

- **Foreign Direct Investment (FDI)**
  Promote expansion by IDA Ireland and Invest NI of the existing FDI base and give more determined priority to locating new FDI in the Border region which has demonstrated its capacity to support internationally trading enterprises, both foreign and indigenous

- **SMEs with Export Potential**
  Support the needs of SMEs with export potential across the Border Development Corridor, encourage knowledge transfer and networking, and capitalise on the research and cross-border businesses supports available from InterTradeIreland

- **Agriculture, Food & Fish Processing**
  Strengthen the local food economy by encouraging greater public and private sector purchasing from local and regional food producers and suppliers, and working closely with local producers to develop their branding and export potential
• **Tourism & Recreation**
  Recognise and work collectively to harness the opportunities presented by the natural, built, cultural and physical environment of the Border Development Corridor so as to maximise the growth and development of tourism and recreation for the greater benefit of the communities in the Border region.

• **Low Carbon, Energy Saving & Renewables**
  Advance the region as a champion of the green economy, sustainable development and renewables agenda on the island of Ireland through the maximisation of the local resource-base and assets.

• **Diaspora**
  Embrace the goodwill of the Diaspora and capitalise on successful initiatives through sharing the learning across the Border Development Corridor and engaging with the proposed National Diaspora Centre.

**Future Evolution of the Charter**
To ensure the maximum desirable impact, a Charter of this kind requires the support of all County and District councils within the Border region. However, the new councils in Northern Ireland do not become operative until April 2015, and the councils in the South are also in the midst of substantial change in responding to their amended mandate, including the development of an Economic and Social plan by end March 2015. Accordingly, the Steering Group is disseminating the draft Charter for consideration and comment with a view to subsequently seeking more formal support from the County and District councils for a finalised version of the Charter in the Second Quarter 2015, taking into account the responses received in the interim.

**September 2014**
**Secretariat: The Centre for Cross Border Studies and the International Centre for Local and Regional Development**

**Part B**
**Introduction: Setting the Scene**

1.1 In recent years, the Irish Border region has benefitted from a number of significant developments that have been driven by both local government and the cross-border networks; with many of these initiatives being cross-border in nature and in receipt of EU funding. Such initiatives have focused on broadband development (Project Kelvin), environmental protection and management (Tellus Border Project), and renewable energy opportunities (ISLES and BioMara Projects). But the region still faces many challenges and has a distance to go in order to realise its potential in contributing to the sustainable growth and development of the island as a whole.
1.2 As noted in the 2012 Bradley and Best report, the renewal of the Border region following the Troubles was largely left to the local authorities, North and South, who were in many ways ill-equipped to undertake the task. This can be attributed to a number of factors ranging from limited strategic responsibilities, dependence on central government funding, and currency fluctuations and tax differentials which impact on spending patterns and ‘what you can get for your money’. While EU investment through funding programmes such as PEACE and INTERREG have gone some way to address these deficiencies, the Border region continues to lag behind in developmental terms. The current economic crisis has further heightened the risk of the region being further ‘stranded economically’.

1.3 Central government in both jurisdictions on the island are grappling with European economic stagnation and national revival. Public budget cut-backs have meant that there has been no discretionary spending power available for border areas for the past six or so years. In many ways, this has been to the detriment of cross-border cooperation – with regional policies and priorities falling further down the list of concerns of both governments. In this context, the national development agencies have proven to be insufficiently geared to respond to the particular challenges facing the Border region and much greater attention is needed at central government level to redress this disadvantage.

1.4 Counties on both sides of the Irish border are characterised by having a weak economic base, few large urban centres, high unemployment and deprivation within their respective jurisdictions, and a high dependency on social welfare transfers. The settlement structure of the region is diverse – ranging from very rural towns and villages to urban settlements with populations over 20,000, the largest urban population centre being Derry-Londonderry with 107,877 (in the Derry City Council area at the 2011 census). The challenges facing the region tend to be amplified by the presence of the border and its peripherality in terms of infrastructure links and connectivity.

1.5 Yet, the region itself is not insignificant – the wider Border region comprises a population of approximately one million people. This represents 16% of the population of the island of Ireland, and an increase of 25% over twenty years. Building on this significant asset, Bradley and Best argued in their 2012 report that the region must build on and strengthen its existing productive base – whether that be good, bad or indifferent! To this end, they proposed that local government, the cross-border networks and other development agencies – whether with a regional, national or cross-border remit – must use their discretionary powers and leadership roles to advance economic development opportunities. The most effective way of doing this is through cooperation and the sharing of ideas and resources around common economic threats – and a common interest in maximising joint strengths and shared assets.
1.6 The 2014 report by the Commission for the Economic Development of Rural Areas (CEDRA) recognises the diversity of rural Ireland’s landscape and its people; noting that this is also the backbone of its potential. The report further acknowledges that there is an abundance of natural, physical, human and capital resources and high quality assets across rural Ireland that must be leveraged to support the development of these communities as well as national economic growth. The report goes on to argue that the interrelated nature of the challenges facing rural Ireland – irrespective of borders – can only be addressed through an integrated strategic and operational approach that aligns the goals of national level economic plans with regional, county and local (bottom-up) strategies. Of particular interest to the Border Development Corridor concept is the recommendation by CEDRA that a number of Rural Economic Development Zones (REDZs) be piloted. This would involve creating local strategic economic development plans that contribute to and align with local, regional and national economic development plans and which will identify and specify the needs and opportunities with a REDZ, and identify those supports that both enterprise and labour require in order to realise the dormant potential of the area (CEDRA, 2014, pp.8-9).

A Window of Opportunity

2.1 Initial evidence is emerging of an economic recovery being underway. This is being largely driven by exports and ‘on the ground’ is being translated as increases in GDP and falling unemployment rates. It is critical that the Border Development Corridor is not left behind at these initial stages – but rather portrays itself as an (potential) active contributor to this recovery.

2.2 The strong entrepreneurial tradition of the region can play an important role in ensuring that the Border Corridor is an active player in the recovery process. Any policy in this regard, however, must be backed-up by strong regional development policies at central government level. In recognition of this, Minister Bruton recently acknowledged the negative impact resulting from the lack of coherent regional policies – especially as they relate to the regional development function of industry.1

2.3 Significant agencies such as IDA Ireland are undergoing policy reviews; and the potential exists for new members / chairs of the boards of such agencies to place a greater emphasis on regional development. A Charter for the Border Development Corridor, which advocates for stronger regional policy, will be an important resource.

1 In a written answer, on 23 January 2014, to a Parliamentary Question, the Minister for Jobs, Enterprise and Innovation stated that he was “concerned at the lack of investment in certain regional locations” and had “accordingly requested IDA Ireland and Enterprise Ireland to work with” his Department so that “we can explore what further initiatives we can take to ensure we have a better approach to enterprise development in regional locations”.
2.4  The development of this Charter coincides with the reform of local government across both jurisdictions – and in particular the increased emphasis being placed on local government in supporting and driving economic development. With the buy-in of local and regional government, the Charter has the potential to be a key support document to the economic development strategy of the Irish Border Development Corridor.

2.5  The 2013 policy document jointly issued by the Department for Regional Development and the Department of Environment, Community and Local Government, Framework for Cooperation: Spatial Strategies of Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland, needs to be implemented at the earliest opportunity. The Framework encourages decision-makers to take account of the wider impact of their work and to recognise and exploit opportunities – including on a cross-border basis – as, and when, they arise. The Framework places a particular emphasis on cross-border cooperation in the areas of enhancing competitiveness, competitive places, environmental quality and spatial analysis, with cooperation encouraged at the level of government departments and regional and local authorities.

The Charter: High-Level Themes

3.1  This Charter focuses on those key areas where it is felt that the Irish Border Development Corridor can make a difference to the coherent and integrated development of the region – and the island as a whole. There is a growing political awareness and acceptance of the need to have more specific development policies in place across government, North and South, to support cross-border working and ensure greater coherency and integration between and across development policies. This is despite – or in spite of – the shift in national politics away from cross-border development (joint investment) and the promotion of cooperation.

3.2  The institutional reforms of local government across both jurisdictions on the island of Ireland – including the new mandates of local government and the associated local and European elections – create many opportunities for more coherent working on a crossborder basis. This is greatly supported by the stronger alignment of functions across local government in both jurisdictions from April 2015 onwards – including in the field of economic development.

3.3  The realignment of functions across local government will inevitably lead to enhanced opportunities for local authorities, community and business interests to come together to support the emerging key themes of the Border Development Corridor (see below).

3.4  This Charter presents a unique opportunity for a wide-range of agencies and bodies with an interest and strong commitment to regional development
to come together around a defined number of high level themes with a united vision and single voice for the future advancement of the Irish Border Development Corridor. The Charter takes a broad approach, concentrating on seven thematic areas and their potential role in strengthening the economic development of the region. These themes are generally reflected in the economic objectives and plans of County and District Councils and the cross-border networks.

3.5 **Critical Infrastructure**  
**Charter Aim:** Achieve a greater priority and urgency in advancing critical infrastructure projects, particularly roads and broadband, to facilitate the economic and social development of the Border Development Corridor.  
**Priority Actions:**  
1. Given the absence of a strong rail network in the Border region, there is a necessity to redress the ‘three speed’ economy that is emerging across the island; led by the cityregions of Belfast and Dublin, followed by the regions well connected to these cityregions through high quality transportation and other infrastructure, and, lastly, the Border region. To redress this imbalance, key stakeholders within the region, from local government, the community and private sectors must jointly advocate for the progression of strategic road projects, particularly the N2/A5 (Dublin-Derry/Londonderry), N16/A4 (Sligo-Ballygawley), and the East-West Link.  
2. Increase the broadband capacity of the region to facilitate the growth of all business, including tourism across the entire Border Development Corridor. The Border region and its enterprises suffer in many locations from low speed broadband capacity through fixed telecom lines with a resultant lack of Wi-Fi. Smartphones and ‘tablets’ now form part of everyday business life yet 3G is lacking in many areas and numerous ‘black spots’ exist with no or poor service. This impedes:  
   a) The normal functioning of firms and business;  
   b) The start-up of micro-business or SMEs;  
   c) The development and location of FDI in the region;  
   d) Tourists who expect to have access to modern communications.

3.6 **Foreign Direct Investment (FDI)**  
**Charter Aim:** Promote expansion by IDA Ireland and Invest NI of the existing FDI base and give more determined priority to locating new FDI in the Border region which has demonstrated its capacity to support internationally trading enterprises, both foreign and indigenous  
**Priority Actions:**  
1. Ensure a commitment to locate more FDI in the Border Development Corridor where existing and proposed facilities and the skills-base of the local

population (and the growing emphasis on R&D by third level institutes) can support it.

2. Increase the number of site visits organised by IDA Ireland and Invest NI for potential investors to the Border region. This will require local government and private sector interests to come together to demonstrate critical mass and the existence of the relevant services / skills-set required for particular types of investment.

3. IDA Ireland and Invest NI should consider co-operating following consultation with local authorities in the identification of investment opportunities and suitable locations in the Border region where success in attracting new FDI would benefit adjacent areas on both sides of the border.

3.7 SMEs with Export Potential

Charter Aim:
Support the needs of SMEs with export potential across the Border Development Corridor, encourage knowledge transfer and networking, and capitalise on the research and crossborder businesses supports available from InterTradeIreland.

Priority Actions:
1. Encourage high potential start-ups along the Border Development Corridor, capitalising on the emphasis being placed by central government policy and EU funding programmes on the development of the knowledge economy, the greater role of local government in driving and supporting economic development, the greater emphasis being placed on R&D in Third Level institutions, and the successes and intellectual capital of existing enterprises

2. Undertake an audit of the different types of training available to SMEs across the Border region – including those courses and training events provided by local government, enterprise agencies, colleges and other training providers – with an emphasis being placed on identifying the type of training for which there is most demand and opportunities for providing such programmes on a cross-border basis. Roll-out a communications plan aimed at making businesses aware of the types of training / courses which are available to them supporting innovation and exporting. Local councils can also be brought together to share their resources and expertise and engage in a programme of peer-to-peer learning.

3. Support the fostering of new SMEs across the Border Development Corridor with export potential – especially in higher value-added sectors – and where possible, to do this in association with the diaspora.

4. Where appropriate, contribute to the implementation of the recommendations outlined in the InterTradeIreland Mapping the potential for all-island clusters and clustering report. This research identifies a number of clusters with potential for cross-border or allisland clustering and suggests some lines of action on how best develop them.

5. Local councils in the Border region should be supported in the seconding of staff across clusters of councils to improve the transfer of knowledge and
encourage export and innovation among SMEs. Such Export / Innovation Officers could play a key role in harnessing the concept of clustering, bringing businesses together on a cross-border basis, and encouraging the development of technologies – such as Apps – to support local businesses.

3.8 Agriculture, Food & Fish Processing

Charter Aim:
Strengthen the local food economy by encouraging greater public and private sector purchasing from local and regional food producers and suppliers, and working closely with local producers to develop their branding and export potential.

Priority Actions:
1. Identify existing local food procurement policies and practices across both jurisdictions with respect to local food sourcing;
2. Develop a consumer awareness campaign to highlight the benefits of sourcing local food through a variety of media;
3. Promote increased local food procurement in local government, education, and healthcare bodies;
4. Enhance linkages between the agri-food sector and tourism and recreation initiatives, placing an emphasis on food-based tourism - including local festivals, cookery schools, farmers markets, artisan food producers, and gourmet restaurants.

3.9 Tourism & Recreation

Charter Aim:
Recognise and work collectively to harness the opportunities presented by the natural, built, cultural and physical environment of the Border Development Corridor so as to maximise the growth and development of tourism and recreation for the greater benefit of the communities in the Border region

Priority Actions:
1. Recognising that tourism has the potential to bring increased spending and resultant jobs across the entire Border region and that the traveller is more interest in following their following their recreation interests irrespective of administrative or political boundaries – we support enhancing the tourist offering by encouraging connectivity between tourist assets on both sides of the border – cycle ways, walking routes, greenways, blueways on the water amenities, heritage and cultural tours, accommodation packages – in the interests of attracting greater tourist impact and the resultant enhanced prosperity of the Border region
2. Recognising that Fáilte Ireland, the Northern Ireland Tourist Board and Tourism Ireland are seeking to capture greater international interest by promoting strategic attractions of scale and signature tourist attractions such as the Wild Atlantic Way, the Titanic Quarter, we seek the co-operation of these agencies in:
   a) Imaginatively assisting the Border region to connect with or capitalise on
these strategic attractions;
b) Taking a fresh look at the development and promotion of the east-west axis of outdoor recreation attractions and cultural inheritance in the Border region.

3.10 **Low Carbon, Energy Saving & Renewables**

**Charter Aim:**
Advance the region as a champion of the green economy, sustainable development and renewables agenda on the island of Ireland through the maximisation of the local resource base and assets

**Priority Actions:**
1. Local government to become a leader in motivating and progressing energy management and wider Green Economy initiatives at a local and regional level. This will involve local councils making a commitment to monitor their own energy usage, reduce their energy usage and look seriously at the use of alternatives;
2. Councils - and where possible other public sector bodies – be encouraged to undertake energy audits which will, in turn, lead to the roll-out of energy-saving measures. At the heart of such a policy is the promotion of a use of an energy mix;
3. Identify exemplars from both the business, private and farming communities to demonstrate what is possible;
4. Develop an ‘Advice Pack’ on renewable energies for community groups, businesses, the farming community, the education and healthcare sectors and others across the Border Development Corridor.

3.11 **Diaspora**

**Charter Aim:**
Embrace the goodwill of the Diaspora and capitalise on successful initiatives through sharing the learning across the Border Development Corridor and engaging with the proposed National Diaspora Centre.

**Priority Actions:**
1. Engage with the diaspora to identify how they might wish to contribute to the sustainable development of the Border Development corridor. For example, such a campaign could use many different mediums to seek their advice on different areas of development where they have expertise and their willingness to make connections on behalf of the Border region.
Table: Membership of the Irish Border Development Corridor
Steering Committee

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Organisation</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mr. Padraic White (Chair)</td>
<td>Chairman, Louth Economic Forum</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Chairman, Leitrim Recreation Strategy Forum</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ms. Pamela Arthurs</td>
<td>East Border Region Ltd</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ms. Carol Margey</td>
<td>North West Region Cross Border Group</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mr. Shane Campbell</td>
<td>Irish Central Border Area Network</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mr. Eoin Magennis (with support from Ms. Jani Lopez)</td>
<td>InterTradeIreland</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mr. Reg McCabe</td>
<td>IBEC</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mr. Colin Stutt</td>
<td>Independent Consultant</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mr. Seamus Neely</td>
<td>Donegal County Council</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mr. Thomas McCall (with support from Mr. Jonathan McGilly)</td>
<td>Newry &amp; Mourne District Council</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mr. Michael Curran</td>
<td>Independent Consultant (formerly Louth Local Authorities)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ms. Caroline Brady</td>
<td>Cavan County Council (formerly Border Regional Authority)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mr. Andy Pollak</td>
<td>Independent Consultant (formerly Centre for Cross Border Studies)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Ms. Ruth Taillon</td>
<td>Centre for Cross Border Studies</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dr. Anthony Soares</td>
<td>Centre for Cross Border Studies</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ms. Caroline Creamer (with support from Dr. Andrew McClelland)</td>
<td>International Centre for Local and Regional Development</td>
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Appendix: Geographical limits of the Irish Border Development Corridor
The Border Development Corridor comprises the following County and District councils contiguous to the Irish border: Donegal County Council; Leitrim County Council; Monaghan County Council; Cavan County Council; Louth County Council; Derry and Strabane District Council; Fermanagh and Omagh District Council; Mid Ulster District Council; Armagh, Banbridge and Craigavon District Council; and, Newry, Mourne and Down District Council.
A Comparison of Governance Forms for Cross-Border Cooperation Within the EU

Hynek Böhm
Vice-Chairman, Institut EuroSchola

Although it is the subject of an advanced integration process, the territory of the European Union does not yet represent a fully functional unit. The existence of differing administrative systems creates barriers to the balanced development of different European regions. Cross-Border Cooperation (CBC) has an important role to play in eliminating these barriers.

Border areas constitute approximately 40% of the EU’s territory and are home to one third of its 500 million citizens. These areas are often economically weak, with relatively underdeveloped infrastructure and significantly higher unemployment in comparison to more central regions within their parent states.

The first cross-border cooperation network, ‘Euregio’, was established in 1960 across the French-German and German-Dutch borders (Dokoupil 1999, p. 159). Euregio did not have any direct institutional link to the European Communities, but it heralded the later formation of other cooperation units which used the title ‘Euroregion’. The euroregion concept has become one of the principal platforms for cross-border cooperation.

The existence of differing legal systems, administrative structures and competences of relevant partners, together with a prevailing modus operandi which is insensitive to cross-border issues, makes the search for an optimal form for cross-border cooperation governance structures difficult. Yet the existence of the European single market, based on the four freedoms of movement, reinforces the imperative to design suitable governance forms for cross-border cooperation.

The INTERREG programmes, launched in 1988, are intended to support the completion of the single market through cross-border cooperation. These programmes have had a substantial impact, helping to increase the number of cross-border cooperation initiatives substantially (O’Dowd 2002) and engaging a wide range of actors. Analyses of CBC generally agree that Member States tend not to engage in cross-border cooperation directly (e.g. Perkmann, 2003 or Schmitt-Eggner, 1998).

Cross-border cooperation is not a panacea for the problems experienced by border territories, however structures established to coordinate CBC can be effective in
The focus of this paper is the analysis of the creation of CBC governance structures in three different cross-border regions:

- The **Greater Region of Luxembourg**, more commonly known as simply the **Greater Region** (composed of territories from France, Luxembourg, Germany and Belgium).
- The **Upper-Rhine** region (comprising territories from France, Germany and Switzerland).
- The **European Grouping of Territorial Co-Operation (EGTC) TRITIA** (encompassing territories from the Czech Republic, Poland and Slovakia).

We argue here that the decisive actors in CBC governance are public administration authorities below national level, and also that EU funding has a substantial influence on the shape of CBC governance.

**Frameworks for Cross-border Cooperation**

For the purposes of this paper, CBC is understood as ‘an interaction between neighbouring regions within the EU (including Switzerland)’. Specifically, the interactions which will be considered are those which are initiated by public or civil society actors.

After sixty years of European integration, European borders have become psychological rather than physical barriers. Van Houtum (2004) notes that this psychological barrier is the product of the interface between various administrative, legal and cultural systems. The newer EU Member States – those which joined after 2004 – have a shorter experience with CBC and employ different approaches to the creation of frameworks for CBC governance than do the countries of ‘old Europe’.

The single market, supported by the existence of the Schengen area, has European integration as its goal; that is, to ensure the freedom of movement of people, goods, capital and services. The coming into existence of these four principal freedoms in turn encouraged the process which Boesler (1997) describes as ‘Entgrenzung’ (dissolution of borders). ‘Entgrenzung’ corresponds to a decreasing role for national states and the increasing importance of regions, which enter into CBC more actively.

In the context of the increased importance of regions the concepts of paradiplomacy and new regionalism take on increased relevance. These concepts acknowledge the autonomy of local political actors and examine CBC from a bottom-up perspective; underlining local actors’ use of CBC as a tool to achieve their goals in cross-border regions. Some authors (e.g. Scott, 2000) refer to transborder regionalism, of which the emergence of new political communities is symptomatic. These new political communities cross borders and traditional mechanisms of international cooperation, developing new transfrontier models for advanced regional interaction which are...
capable of efficiently solving problems. According to Schmitt-Eggner (1998), a cross-border region is not only a territory, but is also its engine. This foresees the existence of a specialized body responsible for CBC management.

Knippenberg (2004, 618) and Perkmann (2003, p. 163) analysed the behaviour of politicians from border regions and identified a desire to avoid the limitations imposed by policies made at the national level. Perkmann nevertheless does not consider this cross-borderisation to represent any kind of threat to the sovereignty of national states.

The regions are one of the key recipients of EU funds. When CBC was connected with EU funds via the INTERREG programme at the end of 1980s, the number of cross-border initiatives dramatically increased. Some authors (i.e. O’Dowd 2002) contend that EU money is the only motivation for many cross-border initiatives; others (Scott 2000) consider working with INTERREG as a primary purpose of Euroregions. The role of EU funds in the creation of CBC governance structures will therefore be analysed here.

Some authors (i.e. Anderson 2002) have mentioned the existence of a certain democratic deficit within CBC governance structures, a result of the fact that their creation is independent of the democratic electoral process. People living within a cross-border region are often unaware of their existence, and lack a sense of affinity with them. Often, the structures of CBC governance can be perceived as the exclusive preserve of a small circle of individuals.

Public administrations – municipalities and regions – are the principal CBC actors which are responsible for creating and shaping CBC governance structures. The role of national states and international organisations lies mainly in creating normative frameworks and providing financial incentives supporting cooperation (Anderson 1997). Actors outside of public administration tend to have a significantly smaller role than public actors.

**Case study:**

**The Upper-Rhine Cross-border region**

The Upper Rhine region contains 5,800,000 inhabitants within an area of 21 500 km². The river Rhine is a substantial element characterising the whole territory, which can be divided into four sub-regions as illustrated on the map on page 37: Alsace, part of France (F), north-west Switzerland (CH), Baden-Württemberg (D) and southern Rhineland-Palatinate (D) in Germany. Approximately one fifth of the inhabitants live in cities with a population greater than 100,000: Karlsruhe (D), Strasbourg (F), Freiburg (D), Basel, (CH) and Mulhouse (F).
The Upper-Rhine Cross-border region

source: http://www.region-suedlicher-oberrhein.de
There are four smaller areas – Eurodistricts – where CBC is conducted at a geographically lower scale in the Upper Rhine:

- Trinational Eurodistrict Basel
- Freiburg region – Central and Southern Alsace Eurodistrict
- Strasbourg – Ortenau Eurodistrict
- Regio PAMINA Eurodistrict (around Karlsruhe)

Upper-Rhine is a trinational cross-border region which is based on the balanced polycentricism created by the two core cross-border areas, Basel and Strasbourg, with an important role also played by Karlsruhe (Beck and Wassenberg 2011, p. 128). Functional cross-border integration has been achieved most effectively in the area of Basel as this area is one of the Europe's three most important areas for cross-border commuting (Metroborder¹ 2010, p. 144).

**Case Study:**
**The Greater Region Cross-border region**

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¹ Metroborder was an ESPON funded project addressing cross-border metropolitan regions in Europe – mainly the Upper Rhine Valley and the Greater Region - in relation to the policy aim of polycentric development.
The Greater Region contains 11.33 million inhabitants and covers an area of 65,401 km², comparable in size to the Benelux, Bavaria or the Czech Republic. There is no major city in the region; the role of the centre is shared by a network of cities and is based on the link between Luxembourg and Saarbrücken; it is within this network, the so called quattropole of Luxembourg, Trier, Saarbrücken and Metz that most cooperation takes place. At a larger scale, this network also includes Nancy, Kaiserslautern and Liege. There are strongly developed cross-border links between some of these agglomerations.

The Greater Region is a relatively heterogeneous area with a significantly polycentric structure. Comparatively small Luxembourg (with merely 85,000 inhabitants) enjoys a special significance within the region due to its position as a seat of European institutions and its status as a banking centre, which results in a large number of attractive job vacancies.

CBC within the Greater Region is complicated by issues deriving from the differing legal and administrative systems of each of the four countries – Belgium, Germany, France and Luxembourg – whose territories form the region. These territories are:

- The Grand Duchy of Luxembourg;
- The German federal states of Saarland and Rhineland-Palatinate;
- The French Region of Lorraine and Departments of Moselle, Meurthe-et-Moselle and Meuse;
- The Belgian region of Wallonia.

Available attractive job vacancies mainly in Luxembourg have resulted in a high level of cross-border commuting. The shape of the CBC has been heavily influenced by this activity. Most commuters come from Lorraine (France), with a significantly smaller number from Germany (Metroborder 2010, p 65).

**Contextual conditions and the development of cross-border cooperation in both regions**

As well as being situated on the Franco-German border, these two regions share a number of other common features. In both cases, the framework conditions for CBC were set by national states, with France and Germany playing an important role. Additionally, both regions have involved more vertical levels of public administration, with a dominant role for self-administrative units at regional level.

Cooperation initiatives in the Upper-Rhine have covered the same territory since the beginning of the 1970s. Perhaps as a result of this, we can observe the first signs of an emerging transfrontier identity together with transfrontier regionalism in this region. The Upper Rhine conference, which provides the institutional framework for CBC in the region, thus acts as an animating unit for CBC. In contrast, the current extent of cooperation in the Greater Region is the result of a ‘snow-ball effect’,
Luxembourg and Wallonia having joined the original French-German cooperation later on.

Common to both regions is a phase of construction and diversification of political institutions in the 1990s, with attempts to create transfrontier inter-parliamentary bodies. In both regions EU money assisted in adapting CBC governance structure in accordance with INTERREG programme specifications. In the Greater Region a substantial number of cooperation initiatives are currently supported with EU funds. The most recent phase of CBC involved ‘vertical differentiation’ of the cooperation structures in both regions – the creation of cooperation structures at lower regional levels, as well as the transfer of vertical agendas ‘downwards’. This process is more advanced in the Upper Rhine, where the Eurodistricts have been launched; however a similar transfer is expected in the Greater Region, where the city networks will cooperate at a lower level.

CBC is markedly multi-levelled in both of these cross-border regions, for which the framework conditions were set by intergovernmental agreements and where relations between France and Germany play an important role. Most of the cooperation levels are represented in the highest level CBC governance bodies; with the exception that in the Greater Region the municipal level is formally absent, although cities co-operate through the city networks. Nevertheless, the results of the METROBORDER project show that there is still a major unexploited potential for cooperation in both regions. In the case of the Upper Rhine region, experts have identified the need to simplify cooperation structures, whereas the Grand Region needs to strengthen its cooperation governance bodies. It is important to increase involvement from the business sector and civic society in both cross-border regions.

Civic society involvement in CBC structures is an important element in the creation of a cross-border region, as it makes the cooperation process more legitimate and generally acceptable. However the realisation of this ambition is a complicated long-term task. There are already some examples of good practice, such as the civic society cooperation pillar in the Upper Rhine region or the Economic and Social Committee in the Greater Region.

Joint economic success is a key political objective of CBC. According to METROBORDER findings, in order to exploit the potential of a cross-border region fully, business actors should be involved to a considerably greater extent than is currently the case. In both cross-border regions the business sector played an important role in some cooperation phases: heavy industry representatives helped to initiate cooperation processes in the Greater Region, while existing biochemical cross-border clusters have been playing an important role in the economy of the Upper Rhine valley. However, public actors still dominate in CBC structures in both regions. CBC is a process based on multi-level governance in both cross-border regions without direct EU involvement. Nevertheless EU policies, whether in the form of a methodical
and legislative framework or through funding programmes (particularly INTERREG and Horizon 2020) have defined the institutionalisation of CBC. In both regions, EGTCs\(^2\) have been established\(^3\) and the level of CBC institutionalisation is quite high. Institution building has been linked with the need to adapt structures to the INTERREG programme requirements. Nevertheless the legal form of cooperation does not itself represent a key success factor or cooperation pre-condition. The Karlsruhe agreements\(^4\) constitute a sufficient legal basis for cooperation. Founding the EGTC was mostly motivated by desire to exhibit the ‘European’ label, and possibly to ensure a better position for the 2014-2020 generation programmes.

### Barriers to Cooperation

METROBORDER (2010) research examined the barriers to cooperation. It is apparent that the existence of differing administrative structures within all of the regions involved in CBC is the source of the most significant barriers to cooperation.

### Barriers to Cross-Border Cooperation

Barriers to Cross-Border Cooperation

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**Source:** Metroborder (2010)

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2 The European Grouping of Territorial Cooperation (EGTC) is a cooperation instrument at the Community level established for the creation of cooperative groups in Community territory, invested with legal personality, in order to overcome the obstacles hindering territorial cooperation. Recourse to an EGTC is optional.

3 In both regions, the legal governance frameworks are bi- and multilateral agreements between individual Member States as well as the Karlsruhe Agreements. In the Upper Rhine the Eurodistricts exploited the EGTC legal form, whereas the Grand Region actors applied this instrument for the managing authority of the INTERREG A programme covering its whole territory; another EGTC was established for the functioning of the Grand Region summit.

4 The Agreement of Karlsruhe empowers the Länder Baden-Württemberg, Rheinland-Pfalz, Saarland and the Swiss Cantons to sign agreements other than those binding under terms of international law with each other and with the communal territorial entities referred to in the Treaty.
Case Study: European Grouping of Territorial Co-operation TRITIA and comparison with the Upper Rhine and Greater Regions

The EGTC TRITIA cross-border region

EGTC TRITIA is composed of the Moravian-Silesian Region in the Czech Republic (CZ), Silesian and Opole Voivodship in Poland (PL) and Žilina region in Slovakia (SK). With an area of 34,069 km², largest cities of Katowice in Poland (PL) (300,000) and Ostrava (CZ, 300,000) and 7,855,000 inhabitants, the EGTC belongs to the biggest cross-border region in Europe. There is a major concentration of heavy industry – coal mining and steel production – mainly in Silesian Voivodship and the Moravian-Silesian Region. All of the regions involved have been undergoing economic reconstruction,
not yet complete. In all of the regions manufacturing industry, mainly automotive, has newly emerged. Seven public universities and numerous private tertiary education institutions reinforce regional innovation potential. Similarly to the Eurodistricts in the Upper Rhine, there are smaller cooperation units – Euroregions - within the TRITIA territory.

- Tešínské
- Slezsko/Slesk
- Cięszynski/Teschinensis
- Silesia
- Praded/Pradziad
- Beskydy

Only the Beskydy Euroregion covers the territory of all three countries involved in the cooperation process; the other three are Czech-Polish initiatives.

All of the regional centres of EGTC TRITIA are geographically substantially remote from the national capitals, most noticeably Ostrava (377 km from Prague) and Opole (313 km from Warsaw). The core area of the EGTC is an agglomeration around Katowice and Ostrava with 5.3 million. Whereas the Silesian Voivodship and Moravian-Silesian Region represent the urban and densely populated part of the EGTC, the Opole Voivodship and the Žilina Region are its rural part.

The regions constituting EGTC TRITIA are significantly poorer than the regions constituting the Upper Rhine or Greater Regions. Moreover, there is no major economic engine or metropolis in the EGTC TRITIA territory. This is why there is no substantial cross-border labour market or cross-border flow of commuters in the TRITIA regions. This leads to the absence of specialised structures to deal with the cross-border labour market (such as INFOBEST structures in the Upper Rhine). Except for Ostrava all of the bigger cities are geographically at least one hour’s journey by car from the borders.

The first cross-border initiatives between Poland, Slovakia and the Czech Republic appeared in the second half of 1990s, mainly involving municipalities of middle and smaller size. Almost immediately these euroregional initiatives were afforded the opportunity to co-operate on the administration of European funds with national ministries. This share of competences is still in place today.

The formation of EGTC TRITIA encountered a very hesitant welcome from national authorities and a direct refusal from the euroregions. The flat EGTC structure requires the involvement of the other vertical public administration levels (including the level of the national state), as well as economic actors and civic society organisations. In comparison with the Upper Rhine and Greater Regions there is a significantly lower level of ‘institutional thickness’ in the EGTC TRITIA. Public administration structures
in this region cannot create functional institutions that are able to forge suitable framework conditions for the balanced development of the cross-border region.

The primary motivation for selecting the legal form of EGTC was the possibility that EGTC TRITIA might have a significant role in administration or at least use of EU funds. However because experience with this legal form was minimal in Slovakia and non-existent in Poland and the Czech Republic the process of EGTC adoption with national authorities was slow.

Research on TRITIA cross-border governance among experts from this territory
A survey of experts in the TRITIA territory\textsuperscript{5} carried out in 2012, focused on attitudes to cross-border cooperation. The responses of experts from all three countries were quite similar, with the exception of the significantly lower level of sensitivity towards environmental issues displayed by Polish experts.

Most Czech and Slovak respondents (72\%) agreed that EU funds represent a substantial cooperation incentive for both CBC conducted by euroregions or EGTC TRITIA; however the majority (60\%) of Polish respondents did not think that this was a decisive motivation for the EGTC TRITIA.

The biggest barrier to cooperation identified is the non-existence of a joint cooperation strategy and a lack of political will to co-operate; unlike the Upper Rhine and Greater Regions, where CBC has traditionally enjoyed a high level of political support.

Whereas on the whole Czech and Slovak respondents consider that the current flat EGTC TRITIA structure is a problem, this view is not shared by Polish experts. Similarly, Czechs and Slovaks perceive the absence of business actors in the cooperation structures as a problem, at odds with the general feeling among Polish respondents.

Actors from almost all public administration levels have entered into CBC and its governance structures in the Upper Rhine and Greater Region, whereas the current EGTC TRITIA governance structures are created entirely by the regions. When asked who they thought should enter into the TRITIA CBC governance structures, most respondents emphasised the importance of engaging more business actors, large cities and universities. The need to engage non-governmental organisations and administration at the national level was comparatively de-emphasised.

The TRITIA region is currently lacking clear economic engines, such as Basel in the Upper Rhine or Luxembourg in the Greater Region, which could stimulate a cross-

\textsuperscript{5} Using Metroborder (2010) methodology, the author conducted questionnaire-based research with the aim of checking whether practice from the Upper Rhine and Greater regions could also be applied in TRITIA territory. Czech, Polish and Slovak respondents from central, regional, local and euroregional levels of public administration and representatives of universities, NGOs, development agencies and business sectors took part in this study.
border labour market. Nevertheless, most of the experts believe that a cross-border labour market could be created.

All three cross-border initiatives are realised in different context conditions. It is possible to say that the relatively small size of the Upper Rhine territory makes CBC governance easier, as it provides more opportunities for effective interaction of vertical and horizontal cooperation structures. The EGTC TRITIA has, in addition to possessing too large an area for effective CBC, another disadvantage in the absence of the largest cities within cooperation structures and the large distance of these cities (with the exception of Ostrava) from national borders.

The geographical scale of CBC co-determines the concrete design of CBC governance (Beck, Wassenberg 2011). Based on the previous research results (Beck, Wasenberg, Metroborder, and the author’s own) it is likely that geographically smaller cross-border regions have better ‘default’ conditions in which to set functional structures of CBC governance. Bigger cross-border regions face the need to match the expectations of actors from all vertical cooperation levels, which is complicated.

France and Germany developed a substantial effort to create favourable conditions for CBC, particularly with regard to the two nations’ complicated history. Although the Upper Rhine and Greater region governance structures were modified in the project specialisation and professionalization phases, they existed before the linking of CBC to EU funding. The newly created EGTC TRITIA was established as a means to channel INTERREG and other European funding. The formation of EGTC TRITIA as tool to use European funding resulted in a substantial level of resistance from the other vertical CBC actors including the national states, concerned with the loss of their competencies in the administration of EU funding.

The current flat EGTC TRITIA structure based on the cooperation of four founding regions contrasts most markedly with the Upper Rhine, where the CBC governance is shared among all vertical public administration levels, with attempts to involve universities, the private sector and civil society. Based on this experience EGTC TRITIA should seek to open its cooperation structures to the other levels of public administration.

The legal basis used for CBC does not necessarily influence the quality and intensity of the cooperation. CBC governance structures in and of themselves are not capable of guaranteeing the smooth implementation of cooperation. This can only be achieved through the engagement at a high level of true leaders, political or other, in the CBC structures (Beck, Wassenberg 2011). A simple systemic engagement of leaders can lead to greater cross-borderization and the formation of political cross-border communities; this is at the moment more likely in the ‘old EU’. The conduct of CBC should be based to a much greater extent on the professionalization of its actors, who will then engage with CBC as their only agenda. Also, strategies which offer other
ways of involving potential CBC actors from non-public administration backgrounds can be a next step leading towards improvement of the conduct of CBC.

The main goal of this paper was a critical assessment of CBC governance in three selected cross-border regions.

Building on previous research, the central conclusion to this paper is thus: that the best conditions for the conduct of CBC exist in regions where there is a broad engagement of the vertical levels of public administration, of civic society, the business sector, of universities and of R&D actors. Despite initial expectations, it was found that national states play an important role as the creator of framework conditions or as direct CBC actors. Out of all three of the studied regions the Upper Rhine Valley exhibits the most suitable structures for the efficient performance of CBC.

The need to overcome the limitations arising from national policy and the existence of national borders does not present any challenge to the authority of national states. On the contrary, national states are formative actors of CBC. In the countries whose regions create EGTC TRITIA there is still visible competition between central ministries and the regions over the power to act as the decisive distributors of European funds. The possibility of working with European funds is for many CBC actors from both old and new Europe a decisive stimulus to engage in CBC. CBC governance in EGTC TRITIA and the Greater Region was significantly influenced by the existence of the European funds, which confirms that EU funds do substantially influence CBC governance design.
Bibliography


http://www.oberrheinkonferenz.de


The All Island Local Authority Forum: Strategic Leadership

Dr Anthony Soares
Research and Policy Manager, the Centre for Cross Border Studies

Introduction

This article considers the work and context of the All Island Local Authority Forum, and how it should be seen as representative of the potential value of cross-border cooperation, although it will also consider in its conclusion whether that potential has been fully realised. The All Island Local Authority Forum was established in 2002 as a strategic partnership involving five Chief Executives nominated by the Society of Local Authority Chief Executives Northern Ireland (SOLACE NI), and five County Managers selected by the County and City Managers Association (CCMA) of the Republic of Ireland. Due in part to its strategic outlook, which would not be facilitated by a ‘localised’ focus, membership of the Forum is not restricted to those representing authorities located on the border between North and South, and where possible a wider geographical spread is sought.

The Forum’s overarching mission is to provide leadership to local authorities in both jurisdictions on the island of Ireland in their approach to cross-border activities; thereby ensuring the sustainability of cross-border relationships between local authorities and community groups in the Republic of Ireland and Northern Ireland involved in work related to spatial, economic and social development. In order to provide that leadership, the Forum meets regularly to allow its members to share best practice and to identify areas where cross-border cooperation would be beneficial in resolving issues that affect the whole island and its populations, such as those related to planning, community development, social inclusion and waste management, among others.

1 This article would not have been possible without the generous cooperation of members of the All Island Local Authority Forum and of Cooperation Ireland. Their opinions and insights, gathered during a number of semi-structured interviews and observation of Forum and Forum sub-group meetings inform what follows although the conclusions reached are entirely the responsibility of the author. The identities of the interviewees quoted in this article have been withheld in order to preserve anonymity.

2 For the makeup and objectives of the All Island Local Authority Forum, visit http://www.cooperationireland.org/whatwedo/localauthority. While SOLACE is ‘the representative body for Chief Executives and senior managers working in the public sector in the UK’ (http://www.solace.org.uk/), SOLACE Northern Ireland ‘is the Irish Branch of the Society of Local Authority Chief Executives and Senior Managers (UK)’ and ‘the Branch operates largely independently’ of SOLACE UK (http://www.solace.org.uk/branches/branch_northern_ireland/). Meanwhile, the County and City Managers Association ‘is the “representative voice” of the local government management network’ and works to ‘ensure that the influence of Managers is brought to bear on the development and implementation of relevant policy’ (http://www.lgcsb.ie/en/CCMA). On SOLACE NI and CCMA see also O’Riordáin (2010), Creamer et al (2011).
While the Forum provides a strategic vision to cross-border cooperation between local authorities, much of the work it does on specific areas of relevance to cross border activity is undertaken by individual sub-groups. Each of these is usually co-chaired by a SOLACE NI and CCMA representative, and brings together individuals and organisations with expertise and/or a stake in the issue being addressed by their sub-group. As far as the work of the sub-groups is concerned, the All Island Local Authority Forum “seeks to ensure that all projects and initiatives are viable, sustainable and provide mutual benefit both in Northern Ireland and in the Republic of Ireland and have a positive impact on local authorities and community groups” (Cooperation Ireland).

In 2013, for example, the sub-groups working under the direction of the Forum were the Planning Sub-Group, the Social Inclusion Sub-Group, the Waste Management Sub-Group, and the Joint SOLACE/CCMA Sub-Group. Other sub-groups whose work had already been completed included the Community Empowerment and Participation Sub-Group, the Recreational Facilities Sub-Group, and the Community Safety Sub-Group. Where further work in a particular area is deemed necessary by the Forum, a sub-group may be reconstituted, as is the case with the Waste Management Sub-Group which, having previously been operational from 2002 to 2005, was re-established again recently to examine the problems caused by cross-border diesel laundering.

Although an independent non-statutory body, the All Island Local Authority Forum works with a range of organisations, including the Institute of Public Administration (Dublin) and the International Centre for Local and Regional Development (Armagh), as well as with governmental departments, principally the Department of the Environment (Northern Ireland) and the Department of the Environment, Community and Local Government (Republic of Ireland). Cooperation Ireland acts as the Forum’s Secretariat, administering its finances and providing the relevant funding bodies with the required budgetary documentation and information on the Forum’s outputs, as well as offering technical support for meetings and the ongoing work of the Forum and its sub-groups. In effect, Cooperation Ireland provides project management of the Forum in operational terms, although strategic direction and the resulting actions are provided by the members of the Forum and its sub-groups.

Building on the Past
The All Island Local Authority Forum as it is presently constituted is the result of a pre-existing context of interaction across the border between representatives

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3 The Institute of Public Administration/An Foras Riaracháin describes itself as ‘Ireland’s only public service development agency focused exclusively on public sector development’ (http://www.ipa.ie/en/about/). The International Centre for Local and Regional Development, meanwhile, ‘is focused on building the capacity of regional and local authorities, development agencies, border networks and community and voluntary organisations to manage spatial planning on the island of Ireland as a whole’ (http://iclrd.org/mission/).

4 Cooperation Ireland’s mission is ‘to underpin political agreement on the island of Ireland by building positive relationships at community level, both within Northern Ireland and between Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland, through the promotion of mutual understanding and co-operation’ (http://www.cooperationireland.org/).
of local authorities. However, cross-border activity involving actors responsible for
the administration of local government had generally consisted of engagement
in individual projects or the temporary exchange of staff between a selection of
local authorities, or participation in events promoting the exchange of knowledge
and best practice that would bring together a number of individuals from several
local authorities representing both jurisdictions. The creation of the All Island Local
Authority Forum has not sought to replace these types of activities which continue to
be undertaken, but rather to provide an additional platform capable of providing more
overarching visions of cross-border cooperation between local authorities.

In terms of the involvement of local authorities in individual projects, these usually
seek to address a specific concern or opportunity that is common to local authorities
along the border regions, and where a cross-border approach may increase the
likelihood of securing European Union funding. An example of this type of project is
the East Border Region Tourism Partnership, created in 2003, in receipt of funding
from the INTERREG IIA programme, and which brings together eight local authorities:
six from Northern Ireland and two from the Republic of Ireland.5 “The primary aim
of the East Border Region Tourism Partnership”, according to Banbridge District
Council, “is to identify cross-border tourism priorities that will enhance the economic
potential of tourism throughout the entire region”, thereby remedying what is seen
as the region’s underperformance in this area, “with the border being recognised
as the main barrier”.6 In this type of activity, then, there is a ‘local’ context (the East
Border region) that shapes the cross-border project’s contents, and for which its
intended outcomes are designed, whilst the actors and stakeholders are largely drawn
from that same context.7 Additionally, local authorities on both sides of the Irish
border have participated in wider projects or networks that have included partners
from other European countries, such as the BRAKS project, which involved the local
authorities from Kilkenny and Armagh, as well as those from Razgrad in Bulgaria, and
Szombathely in Hungary.8

In his study of the involvement of local authorities in cross-border projects, Derek
Birrell states:

“There are relatively few large-scale cross border projects or enterprises involving
local authorities and consequently management activity is on a small scale. Major
projects are limited in number and many links are limited in their development so

5 They are: Ards Borough Council, Armagh City and District Council, Banbridge District Council, Craigavon Borough
Council, Down District Council, Louth Local Authorities, Monaghan County Council, and Newry and Mourne District
Council. For an introduction to cross-border cooperation in the tourism sector on the island of Ireland, see for
example Greer (2002) or Teague and Henderson (2006). For an introduction to the involvement of local authorities
in cross-border projects in general, see Birrell (2006), Birrell and Hayes (2001), and Greer (2000).
12/09/2013].
7 The European Commission’s third edition of its Practical Guide to Cross-border Cooperation specifically highlights
this type of activity involving local authorities in the Republic of Ireland and Northern Ireland as an example of the
8 Details of this project, which began in 1998 and ended in 2001, can be accessed from the European Commission
that most local authorities have not experienced major cross-border engagement” (2006: 253).

Historically the levels of local authority participation in cross-border activities have also differed between those in the Republic of Ireland and those in Northern Ireland, with Birrell noting that whereas “25 out of the 26 district councils in Northern Ireland reported participation in cross-border collaborative ventures” (2006: 253), there was less involvement in this type of activity on the part of local authorities in the Republic, especially (and perhaps unsurprisingly) in the South and West of the country. Nevertheless, and informed by research undertaken subsequent to that from which Birrell draws his conclusions, Mark Callanan is more optimistic in his assessment of how “local authorities in Northern Ireland and the Republic have increasingly sought contacts with each other across the border, have engaged in greater co-operation, and have begun to work on common projects”, and how “in some cases this has been encouraged by EU programmes” (2004: 73).

It is due in large part to cross-border activities based on exchanges, however, that the All Island Local Authority Forum was developed. Its direct forerunner was the Local Authority Linkages Programme, managed – as is the case with the All Island Local Authority Forum – by Cooperation Ireland (formerly Cooperation North). Callanan’s study praises the programme, whose overall aim was to ‘assist local authorities to make contacts with their counterparts on the other side of the border’, which in turn meant:

“As the level of contact between local authorities North and South increase[d], so too ha[d] opportunities for exchanging experience on developments that ha[d] occurred in both jurisdictions. Despite the fact that they possess a different range of functions and a different lineage, these local authorities […] found that they have much in common, and much to learn from each other” (Callanan 2004: 74).

Taking part in these learning opportunities were elected representatives from local authorities from both sides of the border, as well as council officials, including county managers from the Republic of Ireland and chief executives from Northern Ireland. Commenting on the results of his research into the Local Authority Linkages Programme, however, Birrell notes that “it also emerged that, despite individual network achievements, the overall main achievement reported ha[d] been the establishment of effective working relations, or as one councillor succinctly put it ‘co-operation!’” (2001: 56). Indeed, the importance of these exchanges in enabling councillors and officials from both jurisdictions to simply meet and socialise was emphasised to me on several occasions, with one respondent, for example, stating: “We must remember the political context of the 90s – socialising may have had important benefits then”. However, the same respondent also noted that “lots of councillors were meeting, but a lot of the additional work wasn’t happening, and if it was happening, it was being done by council staff”.
The gradually improving political situation following the 1998 Good Friday/Belfast Agreement combined with other factors to bring about the next step. When financial support from the Bank of Ireland came to an end, the need to identify new funding sources coincided with the opportunity for local authorities to access new funds from the European Union, which meant that by 2002 it was thought that a new cross-border structure for local authorities was necessary: the All Island Local Authority Forum. It was hoped that the Forum would take local authority cross-border cooperation to the stages beyond familiarisation. Until then, according to Greer, “partnerships in Northern Ireland had tended to focus on facilitating processes – ‘thinking small and acting small’” (2001: 765); something else was needed now.

**Local Authorities ‘Thinking Big’**

Cross-border linkages between local authorities on the island of Ireland were, then, generally characterised by either a limited focus, or their frequent inability to progress beyond reciprocal visits and familiarisation, and to formulate and action sustainable projects of benefit to the populations of both jurisdictions. This is a case of where cross-border local authority “partnerships [...] placed too much emphasis on developing a ‘process’ to the detriment of products or outcomes” (Greer 2001: 765). Moreover, the participation in a single project of a specific number of local authorities – based on the geographical location of the particular issue being addressed – also meant that there was a lack of opportunities for gaining a more overarching and strategic vision of local administration and governance from a cross-border and all-island perspective.

These factors tended to impact negatively on the sustainability of cross-border partnerships between local authorities, which usually came to an end or became dormant once a project addressing a specific problem had reached its conclusion or funding (often EU) had ceased. According to Greer, therefore, “more consideration should [...] be given to developing integrated strategies and to coordinating strategic actions: ‘thinking big and acting small’” (2001: 765). Such a shift in approach to cross-border cooperation between local authorities would allow, through a more strategic perspective, what one interviewee described to me as “not only the more streamlined delivery of public services, but also the ability to deal with larger issues as the cross-border partnership fosters good leadership and good administration”.

An illustrative example that several informants referred to was the issue of waste management. It had usually been addressed in the context of illegal dumping along the border region – and thus seen as a ‘border problem’ – but such a perspective failed to address more fundamental questions affecting local authorities across the island of Ireland. These included the interpretations and resulting applications by the jurisdictions on both sides of the border of European directives on waste management, as well as the different ways in which waste is classified and measured, and how the relevant data are collected. A more global and coordinated approach to waste management was needed by local authorities across the Republic of Ireland and
Northern Ireland. What was missing, then, was a body capable of bringing together local authority actors from both jurisdictions that would have a strategic vision of cross-border cooperation, and would initiate projects that would not only result in shared learning related to specific issues relevant to authorities across the island of Ireland, but would also ensure the sustainability and relevance of the cross-border body itself.

The effects of the lack of such a body were visible in the Centre for Cross Border Studies’ 2001 report, Cross-Border Cooperation in Local Government: Development, Management and Reconciliation, authored by Birrell and Hayes, which brought together information from participants in the Linkages Programme (the forerunner to the All Island Local Authority Forum), as well as from those involved in a number of other relevant local authority cross-border projects. Having referred in their conclusions to a number of barriers to effective and sustainable cross-border cooperation between local authorities they had identified in the course of their research, Birrell and Hayes note that “a further obstacle identified was the general lack of communication between councils across the border even at the level of chief executive and county manager” (2001: 70). This finding corresponds to a central concern expressed by participants in the Linkages Programme in their responses to a Cooperation Ireland questionnaire, which pointed to the need for a cross-border local authority linkage centred on local authority staff – and particularly county managers from the Republic of Ireland and chief executives from Northern Ireland – rather than on elected representatives. More specifically, as Anne Anderson-Porter – Operations Manager at Cooperation Ireland – explained in an interview, “Responses came back saying very strongly that work should be done between council staff – not elected representatives”. In other words, the lead actors in the undertaking of cross border local authority projects should be local government staff, which does not necessarily entail the exclusion of local councillors from the initial establishment and maintenance of cross-border linkages, or from the setting of overall policy. Nevertheless, the creation of a platform for county managers and chief executives would potentially reduce the frequency of the situation outlined by Birrell and Hayes, where “Councils and staff generally do not have detailed knowledge of how local government works in the other jurisdiction. This means there is a learning process to be undertaken in many cross-border projects” (2001: 70-71).

‘Chalk and Cheese?’ Bringing the Partners Together
The creation of a body such as the All Island Local Authority Forum would not only potentially impact on a number of stakeholders, but it would also imply coordination between what could be seen as significantly different local authority structures. The work of local administration in the Republic of Ireland and Northern Ireland has a wide range of actual and potential actors and beneficiaries, and involves a number of decision-makers at various levels. Indeed, Greer (2001) comments on how in the local government arena “partnership arrangements are difficult to manage as they involve a range of different stakeholders from different backgrounds” (760), which
include elected councillors and their respective political parties, local authority staff, central governments and government departments (most notably the Department of Environment in Northern Ireland, and the Department of Environment, Community and Local Government in the Republic of Ireland), European Union bodies, regional bodies, civic and business organisations, and individual citizens, among others. Additionally, the creation of an all-island local authority network with a membership based on the highest echelons of local government staff would directly involve the County and City Managers’ Association (Republic of Ireland) and the Society of Local Authority Chief Executives (Northern Ireland), as well as seeking to work with related bodies.

In the Republic of Ireland, local community representatives have been statutorily guaranteed a place in helping to shape local government administration and policy since the adoption in 1996 of the White Paper Better Local Government – A Programme for Change, “which proposed to enhance local democracy by ensuring that local communities and their representatives ha[d] a say in the provision of local services” (IPA 2004: 7). This led to the establishment by city and county councils of Strategic Policy Committees (SPCs) “with a view to ensuring a community input into the delivery of local authority policies, functions and services” (Callanan 2004: 64). Councils normally established four or five SPCs dealing with policy related to specific council services. Dublin City Council, for example, currently has six SPCs: Arts, Leisure, Culture and Community; Environment and Engineering; Transport and Traffic; Housing; Economic Development, Planning and International Relations; and Finance.9 Two thirds of the membership of each SPC is made up by elected councillors, whilst the other third is reserved for ‘sectoral interests’, understood as “representatives of social partners, community and voluntary groups and other relevant interests at local level” (IPA 2004: 8). As a result, those who make up these sectoral interests and are accorded a place within the formulation of local government policy in the Republic of Ireland may be affected by (or may have an impact on) a body such as the All Island Local Authority Forum.

Moreover, with the creation of eight Regional Authorities following the passing of the 1991 Local Government Act, individual local authorities in the Republic of Ireland contributed to a wider network of local government representative bodies.10 These Regional Authorities were formed in order to “monitor the implementation of EU structural fund spending in their area, and to co-ordinate public service policies

9 See http://www.dublincity.ie/YOURCOUNCIL/STRATEGICPOLICYCOMMITTEEANDCORPORATEPOLICYGROUP/PAGES/STRATEGICPOLICYCOMMITTEEANDCORPORATEPOLICYGROUP.aspx [last accessed 17/10/2013].
10 The eight Regional Authorities created were: the Border Regional Authority (made up of counties Cavan, Donegal, Leitrim, Louth, Monaghan, and Sligo); the West Regional Authority (which includes the county councils of Galway, Mayo and Roscommon, as well as Galway City Council); the Midlands Regional Authority (consisting of counties Laois, Longford, Offaly and Westmeath); the Mid-East Regional Authority (formed by the county councils of Kildare, Meath, and Wicklow); the Dublin Regional Authority (represented by the county councils of Dún-Laoghaire-Rathdown, Fingal, and South Dublin, and by Dublin City Council); the South-East Regional Authority (which is made up by the counties of Carlow, Kilkenny, South Tipperary, Waterford, and Wexford, as well as Waterford City Council); the South-West Regional Authority (including Cork and Kerry county councils, and Cork City Council); and the Mid-West Regional Authority (consisting of the counties of Clare, North Tipperary, and Limerick, as well as Limerick City Council).
at regional level” (Callanan 2004: 65). Additionally, a “second super-regional tier consisting of two assemblies was established in 1999” (Callanan 2004: 65): the Border, Midland and Western Regional Assembly, and the Southern and Eastern Regional Assembly. The former “comprises 29 elected members nominated by the 14 constituent local authorities”, whereas “forty one councillors are appointed to the Assembly in the S&E region […] nominated by their respective local and regional authorities”, of which there are twenty-two. Both these levels of regional and super-regional networks in the Republic of Ireland represented additional bodies that would have to be taken into account to a greater or lesser extent in the development of an all-island local authorities forum.

However, more recent and major central government restructuring of local and regional authorities as a result of the ongoing implementation of the Putting People First – Action Programme for Effective Local Government (2012) is leading to the replacement of 114 local authorities with 31 integrated authorities, whereas the eight regional authorities and two assemblies are being replaced by three new regional assemblies. These changes to the landscape of local government in the Republic of Ireland will potentially have a significant impact on the outlook and workings of the All Island Local Authority Forum, particularly in terms of the reduction in the number of local authorities and the consequent reduction in the numbers of councillors by around 500, as well as in the recasting of local government functions. According to Putting People First, these “are being strengthened” by giving local authorities “an enhanced and clearer role in economic development and enterprise support”, and requiring its “close involvement in community and local development”, among other areas (Department of the Environment, Community and Local Government 2012: 10).

Within Northern Ireland, on the other hand, there has been “no intermediate tier between district councils and the Northern Ireland Assembly and Executive” (Callanan 2004: 67). However, aside from the involvement of some local authorities in Northern Ireland with counterparts from the neighbouring jurisdiction in cross-border bodies such as the Irish Central Border Area Network (ICBAN), they can also be involved in projects such as the Down Rural Area Partnership, which bring together councils from Northern Ireland to address a specific strategic concern. Thus, the Down Rural Area Partnership, formed by the local authorities of Ards, Banbridge, Down and North Down, “agreed to form a cluster to deliver the new Northern Ireland Rural Development Programme across the four council areas to 2013”, and comprises “individuals and organisations with experience and expertise in diverse aspects of rural development”. Additionally, Local Strategy Partnerships (LSPs) exist within council areas in Northern Ireland whose membership, reminiscent of the Strategic

13 See http://www.icban.com/Home; see also the East Border Region (http://www.eastborderregion.com/) and the North West Region Cross Border Group (http://www.nwrcbg.org/).
Policy Committees in the Republic, is constituted by one third of elected councillors, one third of representatives from the community and voluntary sector, and the other third by “business people, trade union nominees and other appropriate local interests” (Callanan 2004: 71). Whilst such partnerships do not equate with the formal regional and super-regional structures that have existed in the Republic of Ireland, they nevertheless represent the possibility of bodies existing in Northern Ireland whose functions need to be taken into account by an organisation of the nature of the All Island Local Authority Forum.

At the level of individual councils in the Republic of Ireland and Northern Ireland, and in relation to the powers accorded to local authorities by legislation in each of the two jurisdictions, elected councillors have been largely responsible for deciding on the overall policies to be pursued within their council areas. However, and to differing extents, county managers in the Republic of Ireland and chief executives in Northern Ireland have possessed a significant degree of authority in how those policies are put into practice, and how to employ council services and other actors in the delivery of the intended policy outcomes. The general similarities between the overall parameters of responsibility within local authorities North and South (council policy set by elected representatives, enactment of policies led by county managers and chief executives) were in fact highlighted on several occasions by interviewees for this study, as when a Chief Executive from Northern Ireland responded to a description of his position as subordinate to that of his councillors:

“But a county manager in the Republic also has to have a good working relationship with his councillors. If he doesn’t have that good relationship with the elected representatives, his position will become very difficult. We’re both in our jobs to follow the policy direction set by councillors.”

Nevertheless, whilst there are important points of comparison between the limits of responsibility of county managers and chief executives, the creation of an all island local authority forum would have to occur in a context where there have also been significant asymmetries of power and competencies in relation to local governance itself. As a direct result of its specific political context and following the review of local government led by Patrick Macrory, since the early 1970s local authorities in Northern Ireland have been significantly limited in terms of the powers accorded to them, and they have had a reduced number of responsibilities in comparison with their counterparts in the Republic of Ireland. According to Mark Callanan:

“The […] Local Government Act (Northern Ireland), 1972, abolished all pre-existing local authorities and replaced them with twenty-six district councils. An important but often underrated influence on the deliberations of the Macrory

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Committee was the argument that in view of the contentious record of local authorities down through the years, they should have only a bare minimum of responsibilities under any new structure. As a result the 1972 reform left local authorities with a very limited range of functions, despite the fact that during the period of direct rule from Westminster after 1972, local authorities constituted the only elected representative bodies within Northern Ireland” (2004: 60).16

In the Republic of Ireland, on the other hand, local authorities appear to have had a wide and important range of functions encompassing housing and building, water supply and sewerage, incentivising development as well as controlling it through planning powers, and environmental protection, among other areas.17 Most of these functions in Northern Ireland have been the direct responsibility of central government and its departments, with local authorities either limited to representing their views on bodies such as the Education and Library Boards, or to being consulted by regional bodies responsible for the delivery of services such as roads and water.18

These apparent disparities between the functions of local authorities North and South of the border could represent potential obstacles in the operation of an all-island local authority network, since the power to directly act upon a particular issue may be very different in each jurisdiction. Importantly, however, the Northern Ireland Assembly not only passed legislation in 2012 to reduce the number of local councils from 26 to 11 by April 2015, in 2013 the Executive also approved a package of reforms that would devolve certain powers to local authorities.19 Consequently, these reforms may bring local authorities in Northern Ireland more into line with their counterparts in the Republic of Ireland. This is particularly the case in how local government on both sides of the border is being required to engage in ‘community planning’ and “for councils, the private sector and the third sectors to work together to improve the local economy.”20 Given that in the Republic local authorities are also in the process of significant restructuring, it is perhaps not surprising then that both the All Island Local Authority Forum’s Joint Solace/CCMA Sub-Group and its Planning Sub-Group should be considering the impacts of these reforms, particularly in terms of how they may affect cross-border activities at local authority level.

“Who’s in?” Membership of the All Island Local Authority Forum

To a significant extent, the membership of the All Island Local Authority Forum was determined by responses to a review undertaken by Cooperation Ireland of the Forum’s predecessor – the Local Authority Linkages Programme – which called for

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16 Indeed, Callanan goes on to point out that ‘The wisdom of keeping local authority powers to a minimum was arguably confirmed by the blatantly partisan conduct of many councils subsequently’ (2004: 61).
18 See Knox (2003).
representation to focus on local authority staff rather than councillors. The decision to create the Forum then led to the identification by Cooperation Ireland of the County and City Managers Association (CCMA) in the Republic of Ireland, and the Society of Local Authority Chief Executives Northern Ireland (SOLACE NI), as the two key organisations from which to draw the membership of an all-island local authority network. By drawing its members from the highest ranks of local authority staff in both jurisdictions, the Forum hoped to ensure the highest degree of effectiveness by securing the participation of those with the ability and knowledge to contribute to the fulfilment of the Forum’s strategic objectives.

Although, as Anne Anderson-Porter from Cooperation Ireland noted in an interview for this study, “the border execs recognised the need for the Forum, particularly with Peace funding opportunities”, membership of the Forum has not been drawn exclusively from county managers and chief executives of border counties. To date, those nominated by the CCMA and SOLACE to membership of the Forum have represented a geographical spread that goes beyond the border regions, and has succeeded in bringing an all-island dimension to the Forum’s outlook that, whilst still well placed to address problems particular to the border regions, is able to consider common issues affecting citizens across the island of Ireland.

The fact that the Forum’s members are nominated by the CCMA and SOLACE has generally meant that those who have come forward did so because of a pre-existing interest in cross-border activity. Liam Hannaway, Chief Executive of Banbridge District Council, for example, explained:

“I was involved before in cross-border projects, such as one on economic development with Louth, or interesting cross-border work on museums. […] I was nominated by SOLACE to be on the Forum… I think because I was personally interested in cross-border work”.

Similarly, Jack Keyes, County Manager of Cavan County Council, said:

“Before my joining the Forum I was previously involved in two major cross-border projects. One of them was to create a geo-park with County Fermanagh, which then gained UNESCO recognition. I had also been involved in other cross-border work, mainly on waste management and social enterprise development”.

Roger Wilson, Chief Executive of Coleraine Borough Council, reflecting on his own involvement in the Forum also remarked on how “if you’re involved in something that you have an interest in or a knowledge about it is always easier”.

These comments are representative of the body of knowledge and experience of cross-border work that the majority of members nominated by the CCMA and SOLACE bring to the Forum. They also indicate members’ previous participation in cross-border networks, even if that participation is normally characterised as localised
and time-limited or, as Liam Hannaway described his own previous involvement in such activities, they were “much more project-type rather than policy-oriented”. Indeed, another interviewee noted how this type of cross-border work does not necessarily lead to an overarching body of knowledge: “Some of us [county managers] had no idea of how local government really functioned in Northern Ireland, even though quite a few of us had been involved in projects with councils across the border”.

Nevertheless, their intimate knowledge of local government in their respective jurisdictions, and of the skills and resources within their own councils, means that the county managers and chief executives on the Forum are well equipped to identify individuals within their own staff (frequently their directors of services) who can become members of the Forum’s sub-groups. Since these sub-groups are responsible for undertaking pieces of work relating to specific issues, they normally require specialised knowledge (as in the area of waste management), which means that Forum members also identify individuals not directly involved in local governance, but who may have expertise in the area being addressed. Additionally, the Cooperation Ireland team may also recommend to the Forum others who may have a contribution to make to the work of a sub-group.

Notably, there is a significant reliance on the knowledge and pre-existing contacts that Forum members possess in the constitution of the sub-groups, which can give rise to some challenges. As was frequently made clear in interviews, a certain degree of judgement is required on the part of Forum members as they approach individuals to take part in sub-groups whose success depends on their ability to work in partnership with those from the other jurisdiction. Moreover, none of this work is remunerated, and therefore requires the goodwill and voluntarism of those contributing to the sub-groups or those nominated for membership of the Forum.

**Who can Make Decisions?**

The amount of autonomy given to county managers and chief executives respectively may appear to differ significantly, which could impact on the ability of Forum members from Northern Ireland to act as decision-makers and, consequently, to make an effective contribution to the Forum’s work. Callanan, for example, explains how the county manager in the Republic of Ireland “has important decision-making powers that make this role in Ireland distinctly different to that of her or his counterparts in other systems of local government” (2004: 63). He adds:

> “Although the manager cannot vote on council business, she or he has a right to attend all council meetings; and the fact that the manager also has a role in advising council members in the exercise of their functions clearly makes her or him potentially a very powerful figure” (64).
“This means”, according to Birrell and Hayes, “that they are in a more powerful position than chief executives of district councils in Northern Ireland” (2001:15). In an interview for this study, John Dempsey, Chief Executive of Banbridge District Council described the situation in the following terms:

“The jobs are slightly different – the chief executive and county manager… The degree of power that a council has in the Republic is much greater than in Northern Ireland; the degree of autonomy that a county manager has when compared with a chief executive is much greater as well”.

Additionally, the particular committee (and sub-committee) structure prevalent in local authorities in Northern Ireland, where elected representatives (and in the case of SPCs, for example, representatives of civil society) take ultimate responsibility for the delivery of council services, means that Forum members from Northern Ireland may be bound to seek authority from individual committees to implement Forum recommendations that would impinge on the committee’s area of responsibilities. This can be a protracted process that county managers in the Republic of Ireland have not necessarily been obliged to follow since they have nominally held a greater number of powers than their counterparts in Northern Ireland.

However, the opinions voiced by Forum members appear to minimise the potential effects of the disparities in decision-making powers between county managers and chief executives. Like other Forum members interviewed, Hubert Kearns, County Manager of Sligo County Council, expressed his view that although he may have a greater degree of autonomy than his colleagues from the North, this does not really impinge on the work of the Forum. Furthermore, although he – like other colleagues from the Republic of Ireland – may have initially felt a certain degree of frustration at times due to the fact that chief executives had to refer back to committees in their councils for some decisions, they saw this as part of the learning process afforded by membership of the Forum:

“It was hard to understand sometimes at first, but as we got to know from our colleagues in the North how things were structured in Northern Ireland, we realised what they had to deal with. It’s just something you have to accept”.

It could be argued that democratic accountability necessitates that all Forum members should always seek authorisation for their activities from their respective councils; county managers and chief executives do not hold their positions as a direct result of electoral support offered by residents, whereas councillors derive their authority from the democratic mandate gained at the polls. Therefore, a body such as the All Island Local Authority Forum could be said to represent a democratic deficit due to the nature of its membership, and that it risks undermining the position of local councillors. Indeed, these sorts of tensions were evident in the creation of the District Partnerships in Northern Ireland, for example, which were designed to advise and
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oversee the use of European Union funds, principally PEACE I monies. Later replaced by the Local Strategy Partnerships, a “third of the members of the partnerships are local councillors, a further third are drawn from the community and voluntary sector, and the final third is made up of business people, trade union nominees and other appropriate local interests” (Callanan 2004: 71). “Tensions were raised”, however, “with councillors claiming they had greater democratic legitimacy and therefore warranted a more prominent position on the partnerships than the voluntary and community members” (Greer 2001: 759).

However, no such tensions were reported to me by members of the Forum. All those interviewed referred repeatedly to the fact that in both jurisdictions policy was entirely the responsibility of elected councillors, and that the Forum was not intended in any way as an alternative vehicle to policy formation. Therefore, although the Forum might provide valuable opportunities for its members to be alerted to the policy priorities to be pursued or relevant legislation to be passed in the other jurisdiction, its primary function is to act as a space that enables members to share best practice in terms of delivery of services, and to identify opportunities where cross-border cooperation may further this objective.

Smooth Operators?
Considering that those who are nominated as members of the All Island Local Authority Forum, as well as those invited to contribute to its sub-groups, do so on an unpaid basis and taking time from extremely demanding schedules, it is somewhat remarkable to realise the work that has been undertaken by the Forum in its relatively short existence. Although many of the benefits – such as the sharing of knowledge and experience of working in each of the jurisdictions, as well as the very experience of participating and cooperating in the cross-border platform that the Forum provides – may not be immediately tangible, others are more so. These include, for example, the comparative knowledge of approaches to waste management on the island of Ireland that has been garnered through the work of the Waste Management Sub-Group, and which will potentially lead to recommendations regarding common methodologies for data gathering. The Recreational Facilities Sub-Group, meanwhile, produced a panoramic vision of the strategies employed by local authorities across the island in the provision of leisure facilities and the promotion of sport, and enabled stakeholders to share best practice in these areas. Significant work of importance to the effective delivery of service following the restructuring of local government in both jurisdictions has also been taking place in the Joint SOLACE/CCMA Sub-Group, and the Planning Sub-Group.

However, it is unlikely that all of this work would have been possible without the significant practical support offered by Cooperation Ireland, or the financial support provided by the Department of the Environment (Northern Ireland) and the Department of the Environment, Community and Local Government (Republic of Ireland). Cooperation Ireland effectively provides project management, not only
coordinating and organising the Forum’s quarterly meetings, as well as those of its sub-groups and any of their associated events, but also identifying individuals and organisations whose expertise would further the work of the sub-groups.

Cooperation Ireland also frequently acts as a conduit between the two funding departments and the Forum, making it responsible for ensuring that proper cognisance is taken by the Forum’s members of relevant advice and recommendations issued by the Republic of Ireland’s Department of the Environment, Community and Local Government, and the Department of the Environment in Northern Ireland. Moreover, Cooperation Ireland administers the Forum’s funds and is responsible for compliance with all the relevant accounting procedures.

It is in these areas, however, that tensions arise that have the potential to disrupt the operation of the All Island Local Authority Forum. Firstly, there are occasions where seemingly competing or somewhat contradictory requirements are issued by government departments in each jurisdiction, and which Cooperation Ireland and Forum members need to find ways of reconciling. In this regard, the desire voiced by officials within the Department of the Environment in Northern Ireland to become more closely involved in the oversight of the Forum by attending its quarterly general meetings, for example, could be seen simultaneously as challenging and positive. Challenging in the sense that a greater departmental presence from one jurisdiction could result in an imbalance in terms of work-plans adopted by the Forum whose impacts could be targeted more to Northern Ireland; and positive in the sense that such an involvement could be seen as representing an endorsement of the Forum’s work to date.

Practical issues relating to financial controls can also be challenging. There are some significant differences in the financial mechanisms employed by the Department of the Environment in Northern Ireland, and the Department of the Environment, Community and Local Government in the Republic of Ireland. Consequently, Cooperation Ireland and members of the Forum are constantly mindful not only of the different means employed in terms of financial accountability, but also of the different restrictions that may be imposed on areas of spending by both government departments. For example, the Department of the Environment in Northern Ireland has required that its financial support for the Forum be directed exclusively for activities taking place in Northern Ireland. Its funding of the Forum is also made on a ‘cost recovery’ basis, which means that it only refunds eligible monies outlaid by Cooperation Ireland on the Forum’s behalf. These restrictions place a considerable amount of (unnecessary) financial strain on an organisation of the nature of Cooperation Ireland, and result in a certain amount of practical obstacles in terms of where planned activities have to take place and whose travel costs can be recovered, for example.

Whilst gratefully acknowledging the support provided by the two government departments, particularly during times of severe budgetary constraints, one
The interviewee voiced the frustration that is created as a result of the issues identified above. Remarkng on the sharing of knowledge and formulation of common policy approaches that the Forum has enabled on a cross-border and all-island basis, and which has been made possible by departmental funding, the interviewee exclaimed: “Sometimes I can’t believe the extent to which people in these departments don’t seem to speak to each other. Here we are, showing how learning from each other and working together can bring benefits to those to whom we are delivering services, and you get two departments who are supposed to be doing the same and they don’t know what the other is doing!”

Nevertheless, and despite what may seem to be unnecessary obstacles, the members of the All Island Local Authority Forum and the Cooperation Ireland team have managed to satisfy the requirements placed upon them by the two governments’ departments, and to produce a significant body of work.

Conclusion: In Cross-Border work can anybody hear you scream?

Having been privileged enough to follow some of the work of the All Island Local Authority Forum, and to familiarise myself with some of the reports and recommendations it has produced, as well as to recognise the level of shared learning that the Forum has enabled, I do not doubt its value. Moreover, given the significant pressures on the budgets of both governments on the island of Ireland, the fact that the Forum has continued to receive funding from the Republic of Ireland’s Department of the Environment, Community and Local Government, and the Department of the Environment in Northern Ireland, should be seen as official recognition of the Forum’s worth.

However, whilst those involved in the Forum whom I interviewed all shared the same positive assessment of its value and recognised that it was meeting a need, there were some who pointed to what they saw as shortcomings. These were all connected to what was perceived as a lack of proper dissemination of the Forum’s work, or even proper recognition of its existence. Although this was usually seen as the consequence of a certain degree of reticence on the part of the chief executives and county managers to engage in what could be regarded as ‘self-publicity’, and that therefore the work that was being done by the Forum was not being promoted to a wider constituency, I would propose two additional factors as contributing to this state of affairs.

The first is a direct result of the Forum’s membership structure. Given that membership of the Forum is restricted to county managers and chief executives, and then only to a total of ten nominated by CCMA and SOLACE NI, there is little real opportunity for other council staff to be directly involved. Although Forum members regularly ask individuals within their respective councils to contribute to the work of sub-groups, there is a lack of sustained exposure to the Forum amongst all levels of council staff. This places a significant (and possibly unrealistic) burden on Forum members to disseminate its work.
However, the fact that such a problem exists should not lead to any radical modification of the Forum’s make-up. It should be remembered that the need for an overarching strategic vision to the operation of local government, and one that would benefit from an all-island perspective, could only be properly met by the creation of a body whose members would be of the most senior levels, and could therefore provide the required level of strategic leadership and knowledge. Dilution through the recruitment of members from other levels of council staff would not necessarily contribute to the Forum’s original objectives, although there may be a case for increasing the numbers of chief executives and county managers represented on the Forum. This should go some way to addressing any lack of dissemination of the Forum’s work to a wider constituency.

The second factor that may be contributing to a lack of knowledge of the Forum derives from what I consider to be an inhibitory effect particular to the context in Northern Ireland, and which reflects a history of indifference or hostility to cross-border cooperation within some political currents. However, as Derek Birrell and Amanda Hayes noted in their 2001 study of the Local Authority Linkages Programme, ‘There was quite a widespread view that while ten years ago some unionist councillors faced difficulties from their constituency parties and others in relation to cross-border activity, this was no longer an issue’ (Birrell and Hayes 2001: 49). This view was shared by those chief executives I interviewed for this study, and none spoke of councillors objecting to their membership of the Forum; indeed, many of those councillors had been or were involved themselves in cross-border projects. Nevertheless, what I am suggesting here is that, whilst no one reported any instance of a councillor objecting to a chief executive’s participation in the All Island Local Authority Forum, this does not automatically encourage chief executives to openly promote and advertise the Forum within their councils. There may be an implicit understanding that the continuation of the Forum depends to some extent on a lack of publicity in some quarters.

The All Island Local Authority Forum merits recognition for what it is setting out to achieve in terms of improved delivery of services to populations on both sides of the border. Undoubtedly a more robust and confident dissemination strategy would help to do this, and members of the Forum should address this. However, there are others outside the Forum such as their funding departments who possibly could support them in this goal, and perhaps this article will contribute in some small way to bringing the Forum and its valuable work to people’s attention.
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Europe on the Threshold of a New Dimension in Cross-Border Cooperation

Andreas Kiefer
Secretary General, Congress of Local and Regional Authorities of the Council of Europe

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European integration and the disappearance of national political borders have unleashed an enormous potential for direct co-operation between states, regions and municipalities belonging to different countries but sharing, for most part, a common border – although today, even non-bordering territorial authorities can enter into special co-operation agreements. The fall of Communist regimes and the enlargement of both the Council of Europe and the European Union to the central and eastern parts of the continent gave a tremendous boost to this process of transfrontier, or cross-border, co-operation, with over 120 cross-border co-operation groupings established within the EU alone.

Many of these permanent sub-state cross-border structures call themselves Euroregions. The level of their integration varies considerably – some of them are quite consolidated and integrated, while others exist only formally with no significant substance. Some co-operation areas are quite large, such as the Macro regions Baltic Sea and Danube or the Carpathian Euroregion, which involves regions of Hungary, Poland, Romania, Slovakia and Ukraine, and is, in terms of geographical size, even larger than Hungary and Slovakia. Others can be medium-sized (such as the Working Community of the Pyrenees, the Adriatic Euroregion or the Black Sea Euroregion) or even smaller, involving local and regional authorities from only two different states – for example municipal Eurodistricts.

Modalities for cross-border co-operation also differ in complexity, from simple – involving countries speaking the same language and sharing the same cultural affinity and often history – to complex, marked by differences in political and administrative systems and in competencies allocated to local and regional authorities, and aimed at overcoming problems related to political and administrative cultures, economic development, standard of living, languages, and sometimes historic tensions.

In the Council of Europe the term ‘transfrontier’ is used while in the EU context ‘cross-border’ co-operation is the common term.
However, despite this variety of models, their common feature is co-operation of actors at different levels and the ownership a large part of the co-operation activities by local and regional actors. This is indispensable because hierarchical steering in this case is simply not possible or at least not effective. As a result, cross-border co-operation necessarily involves a multitude of actors – not only local and regional authorities but also the private sector, civil society, national agencies, universities, etc. It also entails decisions that are taken voluntarily in decentralised systems of discussions and negotiations, as well as agreements that sometimes need to be approved or validated by other levels.

On a threshold of a new dimension

Indeed, the perception of country borders in Europe is changing and today they are increasingly seen not as barriers but as a source of potential for co-operation between authorities and citizens, with all the economic and social benefits that such co-operation brings – benefits not only in terms of exchanges between people but also as regards improved governance through common economic management and the economies of scale from the sharing of services, joint procurement, the mobility of labour and capital, cross-investments, business networking, and so on. There are huge potential savings to be made from rationalisation of resources by sharing infrastructures between local and regional actors, which is of paramount importance especially in this time of economic crisis. It comes as no surprise that Europe's current financial crisis and economic downturn is also generating a renewed interest in transfrontier co-operation.

However, such co-operation represents first and foremost a crucial factor for integration and better territorial cohesion, as it involves targeted collaboration between individual and institutional actors from different jurisdictions but located in the same transfrontier territory to solve common problems and develop synergies based on the social, economic and natural characteristics of this territory. Due to this investment in territorial cohesion and a new generation of actors, who are more geared towards concrete results from such co-operation, Europe today – the territory of the 47 member states of the Council of Europe - is on the threshold of a transfrontier co-operation of a completely new dimension. The devolution of competences and financial resources to the grassroots through decentralisation and regionalisation processes has also led to a substantial increase in the authorities’ capacity to tackle transfrontier issues resulting from the growing cross-border socio-economic dynamics. There is a new spirit of pragmatism when it comes to a practical search for joint solutions to common local problems, in areas such as transportation and mobility, water supply and waste treatment, spatial planning, environmental protection, public safety and risk prevention, citizens’ advice and co-operation in public health services.

Cross-border co-operation often is the first step to interregional and/or trans-national cooperation or for thematic co-operation in networks or associations of cities and
regions. There the experiences made in working together with their immediate neighbours can be capitalized on at a wider and multilateral level.

Frontier regions play a crucial role in the process of also breaking some of the institutional barriers while these borders have been opened for citizens by decisions of EU bodies many years ago. While only 7% of the EU population is mobile within the EU, 80% of this mobility is taking place in border regions. In these regions, the mobility of goods, people and services, as well as the obstacles to their mobility, can be easily seen and monitored, which is why they have been referred to as laboratories of European integration. It is indeed the Association of European Border Regions (AEBR) that called, in the 1970s, for a European-level legal framework on transfrontier co-operation, as local and regional authorities found that the proximity of an international border considerably hampered them in their efforts to deal with practical local issues.

However, the first seeds for such legal framework were sown already in 1966, when the Council of Europe’s Parliamentary (then known as Consultative) Assembly, in its Recommendation 470 on European co-operation between local authorities, proposed that the Committee of Ministers prepare a legal treaty dealing with modalities of cross-border cooperation.

**Instruments and mechanisms for territorial cooperation**

In response to these calls, the Committee of Ministers adopted in February 1974 Resolution (74) 8 on co-operation between local communities in frontier areas. It recommended that Council of Europe member states:

- promote European co-operation between local authorities in a number of specifically local fields recognised as such in national law;
- introduce into national legislation such changes as were necessary to remove any obstacles to transfrontier co-operation between local authorities;
- make administrative rules more flexible with a view to speeding up and simplifying protective procedures in regard to transfrontier co-operation between local authorities;
- supervise the establishment of regional transfrontier committees, and;
- provide local authorities with appropriate instruments for transfrontier co-operation.

Acting on this Resolution, the European Ministers responsible for Local Government proposed the drafting of a European Outline Convention on Trans-frontier
Cooperation between Territorial Communities or Authorities at their first conference in 1975. The Convention was opened for signature on 21 May 1980 during the Ministers’ 4th conference in Madrid, and became known as the Madrid Convention. It entered into force in 1981, and remains the cornerstone treaty for cross-border co-operation in Europe. Currently, 38 of the 47 Council of Europe member states have signed and ratified it, while two others have signed it but not yet ratified.

The purpose of the Madrid Convention is to “outline the general, legal and common bases on which bilateral co-operation could be founded, in the framework of the national sovereignty of each country.” It aims to “to facilitate and foster” transfrontier co-operation and contribute to the economic and social progress of frontier regions, since the smooth functioning of such co-operation between municipalities and regions helps them to carry out their tasks more effectively and, as a result, to ensure more harmonious development. The Convention provides a general legal framework for cross-border co-operation through its 12 articles that define the main principles and minimum common standards, and comprises a series of model outline agreements, statutes and contracts designed to meet the various needs of territorial communities.

The Madrid Convention was supplemented in 1995 by a first Additional Protocol, recognising the right of territorial communities to conclude transfrontier co-operation agreements, the validity in domestic law of the acts and decisions made under such agreements, and the legal personality of any co-operation body set up as a result. In 1998, a second Protocol was drawn up to set out a legal framework for twinning agreements between territorial authorities, thus boosting co-operation between non-bordering communities.

In 2009, a third Protocol to the Madrid Convention was opened for signature in Utrecht, to provide a uniform set of regulations for various Euroregional co-operation groupings and other transfrontier bodies in all Council of Europe member states. Its purpose was to overcome the incompatibility of cross-border co-operation provisions with national legislation in some member states, and to harmonise them with the European Parliament/Council Regulation (EC) No. 1082/2006 of 5 July 2006.

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concerning European Groupings of Territorial Co-operation (EGTC)\(^9\). The 3rd Protocol entered into force on 1 March 2013, laying down a legal basis for cross-border co-operation between local and regional authorities from both EU and non-EU countries, through structures now known as Euroregional Co-operation Groupings (ECGs). An appendix to the Protocol is currently being prepared to put forward practical solutions facilitating the ECGs’ creation or functioning.

The Council of Europe has reaffirmed on many occasions the crucial importance of cross-border co-operation for European democratic development, as a key aspect of promoting stability and mutual understanding between States and populations, practical expression of a true solidarity between people and communities, and a major contribution to the process of European unification. In 1993, the Vienna Summit of Council of Europe Heads of State or Government declared that “the creation of a tolerant and prosperous Europe does not depend only on co-operation between States. It also requires transfrontier co-operation between local and regional authorities, without prejudice to the constitution and the territorial integrity of each State”. The importance of strengthening this cooperation was also emphasised in the Action Plan\(^{10}\) adopted by the Council of Europe Heads of State and Government at their 3rd summit, held in Warsaw in 2005.

**European Union**

While the Council of Europe, with its 47 countries to date, has been developing the legal framework, the European Union of today’s 28 member states has put into place funding mechanisms and carried out significant territorial co-operation programmes such as *Interreg*, *Phare*, *Tacis* and *Cards*. Their objective has been to establish common administrative and institutional structures in different areas, such as the environment, economy, culture, education, and urban development. They also focused on assisting candidate countries in strengthening their public administration and fostering economic and social cohesion by initiating cross-border activities between them and regions of EU member states. Furthermore, the programmes were also aimed at fostering cross-border cooperation among third countries, especially in Eastern Europe and the Western Balkans.

However, the EU cannot directly intervene in regional matters, because member states dispose of the exclusive competence on their internal organisation. In addition, Article 4 of the EU Treaty states clearly that the Union shall respect the national identities of member states, inherent in their fundamental structures, political and constitutional, inclusive of regional and local self-government. This is why, following regional policy initiatives of the European Communities and the establishment of the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) in 1975, EU member states took a major step in

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formally involving local and regional authorities in the Union’s institutional framework, by setting up the Committee of the Regions under the 1992 Treaty of Maastricht.

The subnational authorities were thus recognized as key actors in policy development and implementation within the EU, and territorial co-operation has increasingly become a European priority. It was included among the three objectives of the EU structural funds for the period 2007-2013, funded by ERDF and aimed at promoting co-operation between European regions, as well as the development of common solutions for issues such as urban, rural and coastal development, economic development and environment management. The other two objectives were convergence, which covers regions with per capita GDP below 75% of the EU average, and aims to accelerate their economic development; and regional competitiveness and employment, which concerns all other EU regions and aims to boost their competitiveness, attractiveness and employment rates.

As territorial co-operation can take various forms and involve structures that differ in terms of size, regulatory span, fields of action and level of institutionalization, the territorial co-operation objective was furthermore divided into three axes: cross-border co-operation, transnational co-operation and interregional co-operation. The distinction between the three concerns essentially the difference of their geographical scope: cross-border co-operation refers to bilateral or multilateral co-operation between neighbouring local and regional entities in different countries, transnational co-operation covers a larger geographical area and involves regional, local and national authorities, while interregional co-operation is defined as the collaboration between non-adjacent local and regional authorities.

With the introduction of the European Grouping for Territorial Co-operation (EGTC) the European Union offered a legal framework for cross-border activities of local, regional and national actors respecting the constitutional arrangements of its member states.

The Congress and transfrontier co-operation
As an assembly of local and regional elected representatives within the Council of Europe, the Congress of Local and Regional Authorities has trans-frontier co-operation at the heart of its activities for strengthening grassroots democracy and improving territorial governance. As early as 1972, the then Conference of Local Authorities of Europe organised, jointly with the Council of Europe Parliamentary Assembly, a first conference of border regions in Strasbourg. Since then, seven further conferences on the subject have been organised by the Council of Europe: in 1975 in Austria, in 1984 in Germany, in 1987 in Spain, in 1991 in Finland, in 1994 in Slovenia, in 1999 in Romania, and the last one in 2005 in Ukraine, on the occasion of the 25th anniversary of the Madrid Convention.

In 2006, the Congress helped to set up the Adriatic Euroregion, with the headquarters in Pula, Croatia, bringing together national, regional and local authorities of both EU and non-EU member states around the Adriatic and aimed at protecting natural
resources, providing a platform for cultural co-operation and exchange, and reinforcing social cohesion through joint projects in agriculture, fisheries, tourism and transport. This initiative was followed by the establishment of the Black Sea Euroregion in 2008, with its headquarters in Constanta, Romania, to ensure co-operation in environmental protection, renewable energy production, maritime transport and tourism, among others.

In 2009, Karl-Heinz Lambertz, Minister-President of the German-speaking Community of Belgium, presented a report\textsuperscript{11} that assessed the state of transfrontier co-operation in Europe and examined the conditions necessary for removing obstacles which hinder or prevent its success\textsuperscript{12}. This work was followed in 2013 by another report\textsuperscript{13}, on prospects for effective transfrontier co-operation in Europe, prepared by Breda Pecan, Vice-Mayor of the Slovenian municipality of Izola, who was appointed Thematic Spokesperson of the Congress on Transfrontier Co-operation. Her report followed a stock-taking conference on ‘Multi-level Governance in Transfrontier Co-operation’, organised by the Congress in May 2012 in Innsbruck, Austria.

Acting on the report, the Congress resolved to establish a pool of expertise on transfrontier co-operation issues, co-ordinate research in this area – including data collection and the development of indicators – and develop capacity-building and training programmes. The Congress asked national associations of local and regional authorities to examine how to further develop transfrontier co-operation in their own border territories, and to encourage their authorities to sign and ratify the 3rd Protocol to the Madrid Convention.

In its priorities for 2013-2016\textsuperscript{14}, the Congress has reaffirmed its commitment to promoting the implementation of the Madrid Convention and in particular its 3rd Protocol, pursuing the development of various forms of inter-territorial co-operation, and continuing its collaboration in this matter with the EU Committee of the Regions.

**Looking into the future**

European integration is paving the way for a vibrant future of cross-border co-operation in Europe which, nevertheless, continues to face significant difficulties. The

\textsuperscript{11} CG(17)5, 16 September 2009, Transfrontier co-operation in Europe - Rapporteur Karl-Heinz LAMBERTZ, Belgium (R, SOC). See: https://wcd.coe.int/ViewDoc.jsp?Ref=CG(17)5&Language=lanEnglish&Ver=original&Site=COE&BackColorInternet=C3C3C3&BackColorIntranet=CACC9A&BackColorLogged=EFEA9C


\textsuperscript{13} CG(25)9FINAL, 31 October 2013, Prospects for effective transfrontier co-operation in Europe - Rapporteur: Breda PE-AN, Slovenia (R, SOC), and Resolution 363 (2013). See: https://wcd.coe.int/ViewDoc.jsp?id=2106575&Site=COE&BackColorInternet=C3C3C3&BackColorIntranet=CACC9A&BackColorLogged=EFEA9C

\textsuperscript{14} Resolution 341 (2012), Priorities of the Congress 2013-2016. See: https://wcd.coe.int/ViewDoc.jsp?id=1991879&Site=COE
different traditions in European countries and the variety of responsibilities of local and regional authorities have led to different forms of such co-operation; paradoxically, this diversity also represents a challenge to its effective functioning.

Many of the obstacles to effective transfrontier co-operation lie indeed in the differences of the politico-administrative systems concerned, the technical nature of the work and the fragmentation of knowledge in this sector. Developing horizontal co-operation between partners from very different institutional and administrative cultures often entails a considerable change in traditional and deep-rooted working methods.

If we take a look at factors hindering cross-border co-operation, we could list among them:

- a lack of inclusion of the necessary actors and stakeholders (public, private, civil society);
- insufficient support by national politicians and administrations and shortcomings of national legislation;
- legal constraints for cross-border activities on local and regional authorities;
- incompatible responsibilities and administrative structures of different levels along the borders;
- a lack of coordination between different EU instruments for support of cross-border cooperation along external borders; and, finally,
- language barriers.

At the same time, we can also speak about supporting factors that are becoming increasingly widespread and include

- practical experiences in cross-border co-operation;
- mutual trust and co-operation developed through partnerships and subsidiarity;
- geographical proximity;
- existing common structures for project implementation at local and regional level;
- a growing number of common cross-border development strategies or programmes; finally,
- improved access to financial resources.

From this stock-taking, it is clear that not all obstacles to transfrontier co-operation can be overcome through legal instruments. Besides legal frameworks, cross-border, interregional and transnational co-operation also requires vision, objectives, strategies and concrete actions, which are defined in long, medium or short term. It requires structures with responsibilities and factual capacities of setting up a secretariat, recruiting staff and managing a budget. Structures, statutes and rules of procedures are as necessary as access to funds or legal personality in order to develop and implement projects. Indeed, many successful Euroregions have been developed sometimes without a formal legal basis or legal personality, in informal networks with or without joint projects.
Unlocking the huge potential of effective transfrontier co-operation will require sustained capacity-building and training programmes specifically tailored to specific characteristics of the participating communities. It will also require pooling the existing expertise in order to coordinate and make the best use of research resources and to develop indicators to measure the impact of co-operation activities, as well as developing model legal clauses for thematic bilateral agreements.

Anna Bryson
Research Fellow in the School of Law, Queen’s University, Belfast

“Only Connect“.

E.M. Forster’s view of the human mission – our fundamental obligation – is thus captured in the epigraph to Howards End.

This is in many ways what we set out to do in the Peace Process: Layers of Meaning project - to use the interview as a tool with which to connect people to their past and to one another. This three year initiative was funded by the European Regional Development Fund (Peace III Programme) and involved collaboration between Queen Mary, University of London, Dundalk Institute of Technology and Trinity College Dublin. In this short article I reflect on some of the connections that were made across three jurisdictions and on the ways in which these relate to the cause of peacebuilding.

The project had a number of distinct elements but our efforts cohered quite powerfully around the interview. We conducted more than one hundred lengthy interviews ourselves; we trained people in how to interview and in how to train others to do it; we used interviews to create lasting resources – booklets, films and online tools; and we reflected on our methods – what works, difficulties and dangers, and key questions which must be answered before you even think of setting out.

Heritage Archive

Our primary objective was to create an oral archive of the Peace Process. We used the word ‘heritage’ because we considered it a matter of national and international importance to preserve the accounts of witnesses to some of the most traumatic and significant events in Anglo-Irish history. That a vacuum and keen sense of loss arises from deaths of eye-witnesses was underlined in recent years with the passing away of the last veterans of World War One. There was indeed a sense of urgency about this

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1 The Project Director, Professor Seán McConville, worked from a base in London and I – as Project Co-Director – was based at Trinity College Dublin. Our main project office was located at Dundalk Institute of Technology. Here Margaret Andrews worked as Project Manager and Sarah Lorimer fulfilled the role of Research Officer. Dr Darragh Gannon took charge of the LOMOND directory. Colleagues at Queen Mary, University of London and other part-time staff assisted with the administration of the project.
work: a number of key witnesses passed away as we developed the proposal. Other obituaries followed by the week.

**Defining the Peace Process**

The Peace Process is often understood in terms of the few short years leading up to the Good Friday Agreement, the accord itself, and a succession of postscripts. But there was nothing inevitable about this transition. Recording the complex, contested and frequently elusive nature of its roots demanded that we go right back to the O’Neill-Lemass exchanges of the mid-60s and consider those initiatives that ended unsatisfactorily or inconclusively. Behind the scenes, each offers some insight into process and the commitment of individuals and groups, as well as underlying hopes for change. We aimed to go as far back as living memory allowed, including the views and perspectives of those who were once household names but now long since forgotten.

With a clutch of about thirty interviews under our belt we stopped to take stock. The review was instructive. Our sample – mainly senior politicians and policy makers in Dublin, Belfast and London – was inevitably male-dominated and more or less confined to the corridors of power. To further interrogate and question our understanding of the Peace Process we took to the streets of Dundalk and Belfast and asked passers-by what they understood by peace. Their views were condensed into a short film (What Does Peace Mean to You - www.peaceprocesshistory.org) and served as a timely reminder that the final stages in any peace process must be about community and personal transformation.

From that point on we began to prioritise the accounts of a much wider range of citizens. We asked them to explain from their unique perspective what it was like to want peace, to be denied peace, to experience peace and yet to crave for peace. This was not to gainsay the courage and leadership shown by politicians and senior officials but simply to acknowledge that peace-making cannot be confined to the political sphere. Our new categories included the bereaved and the damaged, clergy, those who came early and late to peace, Jeremiahs and enthusiasts, irreconcilables, former paramilitaries, and members of frontline services. To this we added categories such as sport, the arts, health, and trades unions. Of particular interest were the accounts of those who had a bird’s-eye view of divided communities – the midwife, the street sweeper, the GP, the publican and the undertaker.

It is in many ways an impertinence to invite someone to give up several hours of their time and to let you into their life. And it is not always easy to engage in a frank discussion about one’s past. Many were speaking for the first time about the impact of peace and conflict on their lives. It can take considerable bravery to do so and it takes more skill than you might imagine truly to listen and to help draw out recollections and reflections.
And yet we were struck again and again by the significance of providing such opportunities for measured reflection. Not all interviewees played an active or remarkable role in their field – some were mere onlookers or bystanders – and yet their lives had been shaped and deeply affected by the conflict. I spoke to a fireman who pulled human remains from the scene of a bomb, transported a dying woman to hospital, and then returned home to pick up the milk bottles and lay the table for breakfast. There was no counselling, no debriefing, just the memory of a cold and dark February morning. We interviewed a small businessman about his struggle to survive in spite of racketeering and threats to the lives of his workmen; a mother talked about the challenge of raising five children whilst her husband served out a lengthy sentence; a little known nun recounted tireless and anonymous work behind the scenes: creating space, listening, breaking down barriers, and praying for peace. We are all well aware of the dangers of overlooking or silencing people. All too often in the past chronic pinpricks of frustration and resentment have festered and fast-simmered into violent conflict. But the less extreme social ills borne of social withdrawal and isolation should not be overlooked.

The border poet, Patrick Kavanagh observed that, ‘On the stem / Of memory imaginations blossom’. Conflict and peace can be seen as aspects of imagination – cultural, social and political. As this archive took shape the significance of our subtitle – Layers of Meaning – began to unfold. This is socially productive, aspirational, and, potentially, transformative, work. Speaking, listening and preserving are in themselves profoundly humane activities, productive of reflection and the broadening of perspectives and empathy. They break and soften lines. By its very nature we believe that this work helped to build trust, consign the conflict to history and to heal wounds of division within communities and across borders of many kinds.

Developing trust and rapport across conflicted communities is incredibly time-consuming. In this regard we were fortunate to be able to build on the contacts and trust developed in the course of an earlier project on imprisonment. We were fortunate too to have as a resource a very experienced Advisory Committee. This non-executive body assembled twice a year and provided the opportunity to review our work and to receive informed questions. It was a high-powered group, including senior academics, officials, politicians and voluntary and private sector figures. Their comments, deliberations and challenges helped enormously to focus our energies and steer us away from errors. Each representing a particular range of communities and interest groups, they opened doors and stilled scepticism.2

And there can be no doubt that the offer of an embargo enabled reluctant witnesses to come forward and persuaded those already on record to speak again – frankly and

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2 We would like to record our grateful appreciation to the following individuals: Baroness May Blood, Mr Bob Collins, Mr Jim Fitzpatrick, Sir Nigel Hamilton, Senator Maurice Hayes, Lady Brenda McLaughlin, Mr Liam Maskey, Mr Daithi O’Ceallaigh, Professor Eunan O’Halpin, Sir Joseph Pilling, Mr Trevor Ringland, and Mr Peter Sheridan. The distinguished novelist and short-story writer, Mr William Trevor, served as an honorary member.
Rt Hon Jeffrey Donaldson, MP and MLA, stated:

“I believe this project is very important because it has afforded many people involved in the Peace Process the opportunity for the first time to tell their stories about their personal experiences of the conflict in Northern Ireland. I believe that the anonymity of the project has been important in encouraging people to come forward and to share their personal experiences. Whilst undoubtedly politicians play an important role in the Peace Process, we would not have made the progress that has been achieved in recent years had it not been for the invaluable work that was undertaken in local communities by many courageous people who stepped out of their comfort zone to promote and encourage reconciliation. I believe it is vital for the perspectives to be captured for future generations so that they can learn of the challenges faced by many people across Northern Ireland and beyond as a result of the conflict. We may not agree on our past history but it is important that we come together to create a shared future. Indeed, for reconciliation to occur it is not necessary to agree a shared version of history, but it is vital that we find a way of sharing the present and the future. This project can also play an important part in sharing the lessons of the Peace Process with many others across the world who are emerging from conflict. The stories shared in this project offer hope to those who are still struggling to find peace in their troubled land.”

Lord Alderdice added:

“I am very strongly supportive of the idea of capturing these memories while people are still around. What I suppose is important is not just to capture how people lived through the trauma of the Troubles but also what made a peace process possible and how that progressed. There are many people throughout the world who can tell us how they managed to live through conflict, but very few places that have the same experience of finding their way to a resolution through a peace process, so that would be a critical part of the work of this project. We still have issues around about parades and we still have many other things that need to be worked through. This is not a process that is just a matter of the past – this is something that still has to continue on.”

Although it was undoubtedly necessary, we were conscious that the restriction of access to the heritage archive was a sacrifice to other researchers and to the current cause of peace and reconciliation. And so we began to ponder how best our skills and expertise might benefit the communities of this island today and in the future.

Out of Adversity

When we came to the category of education we decided to depart from our usual format and to produce open audio-visual interviews. Twelve interviews with teachers,
past-pupils and educationalists from Belfast, Derry, Dublin, Enniskillen and South Armagh provided the basis for a short film on experiences of conflict within schools (*Out Of Adversity*). This was launched jointly by the Northern and Southern Ministers for Education at Trinity College Dublin in May 2013. Encouraged by them and their officials in Belfast and Dublin we went on to develop a resource pack for use in teacher education (including a supporting text on conflict transformation).

**LOMOND**

Recognising that we had entered a well-trodden field we created an online directory of extant interviews on the Peace Process. These were identified across a range of media – radio, television and print. LOMOND (Layers of Meaning Online Directory) ([www.peaceprocesshistory.org/lomond](http://www.peaceprocesshistory.org/lomond)) was launched at Stormont Castle in June 2011 by the First and Deputy First Ministers of Northern Ireland.

This select but authoritative directory of more than 1300 interviews on the Peace Process was drawn together from a swathe of national and international archives. Many of the interviews are with well-known public figures but these are interspersed with hitherto obscure local voices. The directory is fully searchable by key terms and – in the manner of a decades-long time-lapse camera – allows users to access an instructive and suggestive record of the Peace Process – in public styles and statements, sets of possibilities, pressures experienced and insights gained or rejected. To this directory we added the Peace Portal ([www.peaceprocesshistory.org/portal/resources](http://www.peaceprocesshistory.org/portal/resources)), a guided gateway to other relevant online resources on the Peace Process.

**Blending Academic Work with Community Engagement**

The resources outlined above were largely shaped by academic standards and conventions. The enthusiastic support of Queen Mary, University of London, Trinity College Dublin and Dundalk Institute of Technology was vitally important in assuring interviewees that the enterprise was not tied to the parish pump and that rather it drew on resources that aspire towards historical accuracy, the highest professional standards and an international standing. But working in the shadow of Slieve Gullion we were acutely conscious that we had as much to learn as we had to impart. The border areas in which we developed our local programmes are steeped in lore and learning and there can be no doubt that people here are immensely interested in their local and family history, their neighbourhoods and their immediate historical circumstances. From the outset we knew that to bridge gaps in our perception and knowledge we had to ensure that the project was rooted in real and meaningful community engagement.³ We were conscious too of our ethical obligations. We wanted to be as far removed as possible from the researcher who parachutes in and moves on regardless. Thus developed the second major component of this project – a programme designed to spawn a carefully selected cohort of interview trainers in the border area.

³ In exploring the potential of wedding academic research to participatory social action we benefited greatly from links with Toynbee Hall, the font of much twentieth century social policy.
Training Programme
A three-part training programme was delivered between April and September 2012. It rotated between London, Newry and Dundalk. Participants included nationalist and unionist councillors, members of the Orange Institution, former British soldiers, a former republican prisoner, retired teachers, carers, members of frontline services, youth leaders, victims, local historians and archivists from across the border region, together with students of history, law and sociology from Dundalk Institute of Technology and Trinity College Dublin.

As illustrated below, sixty per cent of the group came from south of the border; thirty-four percent were from the North; and more than half of the total number lived within ten miles of the border.

An anonymous survey revealed that twelve per cent of those from the South had never before visited Northern Ireland and a further thirty-eight per cent had only visited “a few times”.

The age range was broad. Approximately one third (mainly students) were aged 19-25 years old; twenty-seven per cent were aged 26-45; twenty-seven per cent were aged 45-65 and eleven per cent were aged 66-75. The religious background of those from Northern Ireland was mixed but the overall sample was weighted in favour of those from a Catholic background.

It was a risk. At different points we feared that the strong sense of group endeavour might hit a bump and come apart. But it didn’t. These people had come to prepare for
a surprisingly delicate endeavour– a ballet on eggshells. They wanted their story and that of their family, townland and fraternity to be preserved. More – they had come to pick up tools and skills to take home for neighbours and colleagues.

Our approach was to focus on the job in hand – providing training in the ethical and legal requirements as well as the necessary conceptual, practical and technical skills to conduct interviews. It goes without saying that one must tread with the utmost care and sensitivity in close-knit and delicately balanced communities. We all know that thoughtlessness – and even a momentary failure to think ahead – can mean that this type of work does more harm than good. This undoubted fact was fundamental to the oral history training programme. Ill-conducted work is not just a waste: it is retrograde, distresses, (could even endanger) and breeds cynicism and resentment. In addition to training these individuals we wanted to ensure that this programme would find its own momentum – that this cohort would have a self-generating impact in border towns and villages – in places of worship and employment, in fraternal and cultural associations, and within community, voluntary and historical organisations.

Desmond Tutu famously noted that: “Reconciliation is not about being cosy, it is not about pretending that things were other than they were. Reconciliation based on falsehood, on not facing up to reality, is not reconciliation at all.” This is undoubtedly true but our experience is that the stout walls that divide us cannot be breached from the front. We thus deliberately avoided ‘truth-kick’ encounters. The main complaint from participants was exhaustion: when not engaged in workshops they were tramping the backstreets of London, witnessing how a variety of communities have engaged with the past. In addition to practical training this deliberately diverse group lodged together, ate together, and got to know one another – away from the tensions and divisions of their home communities and places of worship and work.

One participant observed:

“It quickly became apparent that we were drawn from a deliberately diverse range of backgrounds […] A major highlight for me was the opportunity to see parts of London that are not on the ‘tourist trail’. We explored problems of conflict and integration in the East End; youth culture; gender discrimination; ethnic divisions; gang activities; and housing and employment concerns in migrant and minority communities. This really opened my eyes to the fact that many communities in London are dealing with similar social problems to ourselves such as bigotry and poverty. It also demonstrated the potential that sensitive interview-based research has for reaching out to others and breaking down communal barriers and stereotypes.”

Her colleague added:

“On the training programme there is a varied range of backgrounds and religions which, through meeting and chatting informally, can open great discussions to
explore and explain about differing situations/views. This programme will help to provide my community with the opportunity to tell its story and to possibly tackle negative perceptions.”

The declared motivation of participants was interesting:

- Improve or acquire interview skills – 92%;
- Improve ability to undertake cross-community research – 91%;
- Improve ability to undertake cross-border research – 86%.
- Access information on a cross-border basis (91%)
- Access information on a cross-community basis (90%)
- Help to reduce prejudice in others (90%)
- Learn more about own community (90%)
- Help to reduce prejudice in oneself (79%).

The table below demonstrates that most participants felt that these expectations had been met.

The table on the following page charts the increase in the numbers of participants who stated that they ‘often’ applied the skills and attributes necessary to conduct cross-community or cross-border interview-based research.

These results were encouraging but the real test lay in the deployment of the skills acquired. Upon completion of the training programme, twenty-eight per cent of participants had already started a local project and a further forty per cent had a project in mind but had not yet commenced. Almost half of these projects had a ‘very strong cross-community and / or cross-border element’. Developments in the ensuing
months have been gratifying. Several participants set up training workshops for their host organisations or communities. A retired border resident established a cross-community history programme with a strong story-telling element. He stated: “The training that I received has been invaluable in giving me the confidence and skills to initiate new oral history networks and projects.” Two mature students from Dundalk Institute of Technology applied jointly for funding to run a programme entitled ‘A New Meaning for Memory’. This project focused on individuals from ethnic minorities and those from deprived socio-economic backgrounds in the border area. Sharon stated:

“Had it not been for the oral history training programme run by the Peace Process: Layers of Meaning project I would never have realised how historical texts often neglect people on the margins of society […] Equally we would never have had the confidence to apply for funding – the skills and techniques we learned gave us great scope in conceiving a project that could be of great benefit to the community. Also the training in how to research and organise a potential project was an invaluable aid, not just for our current endeavours but in the sphere of community development and organisational profiling as a whole.”

![Graph showing skill development]

Finally, a member of a religious congregation significantly expanded her oral history collection with the assistance of volunteers from within the programme.
Local Projects
Participants on the training programme were invited to submit proposals for exemplary cross-border and / or cross-community oral history projects. In September 2012 three proposals were selected for immediate development: an oral history of cross-border and cross-community co-operation in farming; an intergenerational study of interfaith marriage; and a cross-border exploration of youth identity.

• **Interview-based Exploration of Youth Identity**
  Dara Larkin brought together in a series of exploratory meetings and workshops youth groups from Ballynafeigh Community Development Association in Belfast and CraobhRua House Youth Project in Muirhevna Mór in Dundalk. With due regard for the age and particular sensitivities of participants — he broached issues of identity and diversity. In the course of the workshops the young people put together biographical cameos and portrait photographs. They also interviewed each other and used the material gathered to create a poster publication.

• **Cross-border / Cross-Community Study of the Balmoral Show, Winter Fair and Kings Hall**
  Olive Mercer set out to provide an overview of the various shows and exhibitions associated with the Royal Ulster Agricultural Society (RUAS). Picking up themes of cross-community and cross-border co-operation in farming, her booklet ‘Capturing Memories’ painted a striking picture of camaraderie and inter-dependency.

• **Intergenerational Study of Interfaith Marriages**
  Marie Hamilton meanwhile embarked on an intergenerational study of the impact that mixed marriages have had on both individual and family life since the 1970s. She set out to document changes in attitudes in the course of the last thirty years and thus to contribute to a deeper understanding of the relevant issues.

  Marie initially intended to publish the stories exactly as they were narrated to her – warts and all – but this presented numerous methodological and ethical challenges. In the end we found a way to adapt her presentation to enable reflection on what she learned in the course of this highly sensitive project whilst at the same time offering some interim findings.

**The Oral History Training Manual**
There is an enormous appetite for interview-based research, stimulated by the astonishing growth in local, family and community history. But as we assembled training materials and reflected upon and sought to use our varied experiences, the need for a plain-speaking training manual presented itself again and again. Some participants on our training programme were seasoned interviewers, but they too required a systematic overview of the methodology and an up-to-date practical guide.
in order to continue their work with confidence. We were also regularly approached by other oral history and story-telling groups who wanted to share dilemmas and experiences.\(^4\) We thus put together *Oral History: A Training Manual for Beginners* (www.peaceprocesshistory.org/resources). This was designed to help others to develop training sessions to suit their community's needs and aspirations - with signposts to opportunities for further research and training.

**Peacebuilding**

And so to peace. In what ways do these voices and this programme help us more deeply and more generously to understand the past? And in what ways can we claim to have furthered the cause of reconciliation?

In conducting this work we did not see ourselves as peacemakers – but we do believe that our style and methods of work can facilitate the process of peace-making. Dealing with the past is a major issue with political, legal and ethical ramifications. We tried insofar as possible to steer clear of contemporary politics: we operated outside the political realm, not from disdain, but in order to be effective. While laying no claim to complete originality, we hope to have brought a fresh approach to this work – linking our own experience of academic endeavour to social action. The one hundred interviews and the exemplary projects thus together formed an arch. They supported each other and thus defined the project. One gave the work heritage status, historical context, meaning, durability and momentum; the other bestowed authenticity and provided what we hope might be the starting point for a lasting grassroots process.

There was in our interview training programme an implicit test: are memory and legacy issues primarily the concern of a core of enthusiasts and activists, or can they address wider needs? The opportunity was offered, was practical, well-resourced, welcoming and supportive, and the response was reassuringly enthusiastic. People at every level of our society have a story to tell and want to be heard – some want instant exposure, others want to address posterity – to ensure that their grandchildren and great grandchildren understand the lives they lived, their hopes, errors and omissions.

Last year Ambassador Haass invited submissions on ways of dealing with the past. And so we asked how might we gather voices that want and need to be heard, and do so safely – within strong bounds of ethics, law and good practice? Drawing on the lessons of this project we proposed a low-cost franchise-based model. Our aim was to involve as many ‘ordinary’ people as possible in this work, to operate with as much flexibility as possible, and with minimal organisational structure and constraint.

\(^4\) In the course of this project I learned much from my involvement (in an advisory capacity) with a number of interview-based projects. These include: Accounts of the Conflict (INCORE’s digital archive of personal accounts of the conflict in and about Northern Ireland); Across the Green & Blue Line (former members of the RUC and An Garda Siochana); Aftermath (assisting victims and their families and those displaced by conflict); Crows on the Wire (documenting the transition from the Royal Ulster Constabulary to the Police Service of Northern Ireland); and the Maze-Long Kesh Story-Capture Committee.
This had to be balanced by considerations of legal and ethical probity and conservative and prudential operation. We proposed a small central operation delivering a well-established, tested, and practical approach, providing training, support, guidance, quality-control and workable methods and task-appropriate equipment. In our experience much work and significant results can be accomplished by a cohesive and uniform mode of operation; by training trainers; by spotting and taking advantage of gaps and opportunities; by encouraging local and organisational participation; by excluding activities that offer insufficient return; by reducing ‘capital’ and operational costs; and by ensuring that activity, productivity and zeal are given the necessary direction and quality control and are prudently channelled. Our franchise model was designed to draw up and work to targets; solicit, digest and develop feedback; modify the product to meet changing needs; and offer a corporate identity – a brand.

Working through designated agencies and groups across Northern Ireland and the border areas we proposed to provide training in the skills necessary to conduct interviews on topics relating to the history of living through and with conflict (practical, technical, ethical and legal issues). All participants would ultimately become certified trainers.

We know that such a programme can spawn worthwhile cross-community and cross-border projects. This is a toolkit for dealing with aspects of the past. It is of course not a panacea. Hundreds of families have suffered the ultimate loss. They cry out for accountability and their stories must not be diminished. But exploring the dark recesses of our past calls for Anglo-Irish dynamism, astutely balanced legislation, and considerably more political consensus than we have seen to date. In the meantime other tales can be told – of the democracy of a labour ward, the needs must of a silage shortage, and the odd bolt of lightning that welded and sealed. At times we are restricted to half-truths – to the reality of everyday life. This is both a rational compromise to gather imperfect knowledge and an effective means of assisting the cause of cross-community and cross-border peace building.
Cross-Border Cooperation and Peacebuilding in Ireland

Ruth Taillon  
Director, The Centre for Cross Border Studies

This article written for the publication “Castle-talks on Cross-border cooperation” of the FARE Review by the Centre Raymond Poidevin (University of Strasbourg), is based on a presentation made at the Borders and Governance Conference in Strasbourg on 3 December 2013. It is reprinted here with the kind permission of Professor Birte Wassenberg.

The purpose here is to consider how cross-border cooperation has contributed to peacebuilding in Ireland. 2014 marks forty-five years since the start of the Irish “Troubles” – that is, the most recent and protracted episode of armed political conflict on the island. During the Troubles, over 3,600 people have been killed and more than 45,000 people injured. An estimated 88,000 households have been affected by the loss of a close relative and 50,000 households contain someone injured in the conflict. Over half the population of Northern Ireland knows someone who has been killed in the conflict. It has been estimated that approximately 11,000 persons were displaced from Northern Ireland to the south, as a result of the conflict. All of this on an island with a total population of approximately 6.6 million; that is, similar in size to the city of Manchester.

It is now twenty years since the 1994 ceasefires and sixteen years since the 1998 Agreement that brought this phase of armed conflict to an end. Over the past two decades, cross-border cooperation, peacebuilding and governance have been intrinsically linked. Attempting to define the cross-border dimension of the conflict and the significance and role of the border in the conflict is critical to cross-border peacebuilding.

1 The Irish Border has divided the island of Ireland since 1921. Since then, there have been recurring episodes of political violence related to the sovereignty of what is now Northern Ireland, a devolved region of the UK. The Agreement of 1998 resulted in the Irish Government relinquishing its territorial claim on that part of the island.
3 Ralaheen Ltd., All Over the Place: people displaced to and from the Southern Border Counties as a result of the conflict 1969-1994, Area Development Management and Combat Poverty, Monaghan, 2005.
4 The term “Ireland” will be used as a geographical term to apply to the island of Ireland. Although the term “Republic of Ireland” has no constitutional standing, it is widely used and understood and shall be applied to the southern 26 counties that comprise the Irish state. Approximately 1.8m people live in Northern Ireland (UK) and 4.8m live in the Republic of Ireland.
Since partition of the island in 1921, the majority of the Catholic population in Northern Ireland (and also in the south) has seen the border as an artificial divide and had a nationalist (or republican) political identity. In contrast, most of the Protestant population (which constituted the majority in Northern Ireland) viewed the border as necessary for maintaining Northern Ireland’s distinction from the Republic and its embedded place in the United Kingdom, hence their unionist (or loyalist) political stance. As Hayward points out, the IRA campaign of 1956-62 was the last paramilitary operation to approach the problem as a straightforward ‘border conflict’. Nevertheless,

[T]he Border can be seen both as a major contributory factor in the conflict and as a manifestation of the conflict itself. The border permeates the conflict and the relationship with Ireland is the ingredient which largely determines how the two communities in Northern Ireland relate to each other.6

The Border and the Conflict
To understand the relevance of cross-border cooperation to peacebuilding, therefore, it is necessary to understand the relevance of the Irish Border to the conflict; and the impact of the conflict on social, economic and cultural life – not only in Northern Ireland where most of the conflict-related violence occurred, but on the island as a whole.

While the significance of the border has changed over time, it has nevertheless been a core issue in the conflict and will have a central role to play in any sustainable peace process. The border has divided people for decades; it reflects and reinforces a network of internal territorial borders, dividing communities within Northern Ireland and it crystallises the issues of identity and allegiances that go to the heart of the conflict.7

For most of the conflict, the Irish Border was the most militarised area of the European Union and the most militarised part of Europe west of the Berlin Wall and the Iron Curtain. In the early 1970s, the British Army began to install watchtowers, bases and fortified checkpoints all along the northern side of the border. More than 200 border crossings were closed, cratered, blocked or check-pointed between 1971 and 1994 – along a border approximately 340 km long.8

The road closures, the violence and militarisation had a deeply disincentivising effect on cross-border contact.9 The closures, which lasted twenty-five years, inflicted long-

7 Ibid., p. 2.
8 http://borderroadmemories.com/info.html
term damage, breaking traditional social linkages. “An entire generation of contact and social intercourse was broken which can never now be fully restored.”

During the years of conflict the border became the focal point for securitisation between the British and Irish states. Crossing the border consequently became more of a challenge and entering the other jurisdiction less appealing for all travellers. Security in the region remained tight until the Peace Process was well established. The last British Army observation post on the border was removed in 2006.

The conflict had a deep impact on social connections among the border communities. Such impacts were immediately visible whenever there was a high-profile act of violence near to the border: cross-border visiting, shopping and travel was extremely sensitive to violence, dropping sharply after such incidents, gradually rebuilding thereafter. The years of conflict led to mutual distrust and suspicion, not only between communities within Northern Ireland, but between communities separated by the border. This effectively limited the development of cross-border networks and linkages in areas where mutual benefits would otherwise have occurred naturally.

Before the conflict, people travelled across the border a lot and people took holidays on either side of the border. After 1969, all that stopped. There was a sense of decline in the county. Young people left and the county became ever more elderly. Shops closed. People didn’t want to come here anymore.

The border has constrained economic activity. It has exacerbated fundamental problems of economic disadvantage and rurality; distorted and disrupted transport networks, adversely affecting the area’s competitiveness as a business location and held back the growth of new firms. The border has made the region peripheral to the national education and training system, leaving it with a lack of high level skills. The INTERREG IVA Operational Programme also notes that the economic isolationist policies after Partition have had continuing impacts including poor economic performance; planning and infrastructure gaps; distortion of labour markets and lack of mobility.

… the creation of the Irish border cut off towns and markets from their natural hinterlands and the promotion of subsequent economic isolationist policies in the decades after partition, contributed towards the economic decline of border areas. … While recognising that the ending of systematic large-scale paramilitary violence has removed most of the perception of danger associated with crossing the border … much sensitivity to crossing the border still remains, particularly for the Protestant Community in Northern Ireland and the Border Region.

10 Harvey et al., op. cit., p.64.
11 Hayward, “The EU and the transformation of the Irish border”, op. cit., p. 33
12 Harvey, op. cit., p.59.
13 INTERREG IIIA Operational Programme, p 26.
14 INTERREG IVA Operational Programme, pp. 33-34.
The economic consequences of the conflict have been enormous, not only in Northern Ireland, but for the island as a whole. In particular business between the regions suffered as entrepreneurs were forced to “play it safe” and avoid the risks associated with cross-border collaboration. Also, ongoing politically motivated violence and instability resulted in a lack of inward investment in the region, lack of employment, social unrest and anything but normality.\(^{15}\) By the mid-1980s, the island was characterised by:

...a deeply divided society in the north and economic catastrophe in both parts of Ireland. Large-scale private sector employment in Northern Ireland had almost disappeared, whereas the south after a flourish in the 1960s had returned to mass emigration and high unemployment.\(^{16}\)

Of course, many of the characteristics of the Irish Border region are shared with other borders in the peripheral regions of Europe. It has a disadvantaged labour market, unemployment, a high dependence on traditional economic sectors, higher rates of deprivation, restraints on trade, a widespread informal economy and fractured social relations. Social marginalisation and spatial marginalisation compound one another. However, as the Operational Programme for the INTERREG IVA Programme makes clear, the conflict has exacerbated the region’s social, economic and environmental problems.\(^{17}\)

If ever there was a demonstration that violence and poverty are linked, it is the Irish border. And the causality flows in two directions. Not only does poverty promote violence, but violence embeds poverty, by driving away people, investment and hope in a vicious cycle which is very difficult to break. In effect, the geographic centre of a small island became the economic outer edge as the rest of Ireland tried to insulate itself from the infection of violence which was dominating Northern Ireland. What may look like a simple line on the map has left serious scars on the heart and a large hole in the pocket.\(^{18}\)

While considerable progress has been made in the last decade, much of the characterisation of the border’s impact contained in a 2003 analysis by the Special EU Programmes Body continues to hold true. “It remains a social and psychological barrier which is an impediment to the exchange of ideas and information and a barrier to effective cooperation and the development of effective local policies and strategies.”\(^{19}\)


\(^{16}\) Duncan Morrow, “Building Bridges: Supporting Peacebuilding through Funding Reconciliation – the example of the IFI Community Bridges Programme” in Shared Space, Issue 13, March 2012, p. 46.

\(^{17}\) www.seupb.eu


\(^{19}\) INTERREG IIIA Operational Programme.
Liam O’Dowd, a Belfast academic with much expertise in border issues notes that the benefit of cross-border cooperation is that it,

challenges the ‘zero-sum’ calculations which have bedevilled politics within Northern Ireland. It holds out the prospect of a ‘positive-sum’ politics which is outward-looking and capable of revealing existing and new areas of common interest which cross the internal and external borders of Northern Ireland. ……20

The International Fund for Ireland (IFI) – the first major funding programme to support cross-border cooperation and peacebuilding on the island – was established in 1986 as an independent organisation under an international agreement between the British and Irish governments. By the end of 2010, this Fund – supported by contributions from the EU and the governments of the USA, Canada, New Zealand and Australia – had contributed £628m (approximately €800m) to projects across Ireland, but with a strong emphasis on Northern Ireland and the Irish Border Counties. By 2009, the EU was the largest contributor to the Fund; and by 2010 the USA and EU were the only funders.21 From the beginning, the IFI’s approach closely linked reconciliation and economic progress and was always cross-border in nature. Until 2006, the emphasis was strongly on economic development and regeneration of marginalised areas. In 2006, the Fund changed its profile and priorities towards reconciliation and community-based regeneration.

It is however, the EU Peace and INTERREG programmes (both of which are now European Territorial Cooperation Programmes or ETCs) that have made the largest financial contribution to normalising cross-border cooperation networks among local authorities, public agencies and community and voluntary organisations.

The INTERREG I (1991-93) and INTERREG II (1994-99) Programmes between Ireland and Northern Ireland were, as INTERREG Programmes elsewhere, intended to provide support for economic development in less developed border regions. The aims were to assist internal border areas of the Community and to promote the creation and development of networks of cooperation across borders. These aims were seen as “particularly relevant to the eligible border areas in the island of Ireland where violence (had) exacerbated existing problems of peripherality, low incomes, high unemployment, a high dependency on agriculture and a lack of any strong industrial tradition.”22 Similarly, the Operational Programme for INTERREG IIIA noted that in addition to the problems common to the more underdeveloped border areas throughout the European Union, the border areas of Ireland/Northern Ireland have been negatively impacted upon by the effects of the Troubles.23

22 INTERREG IIIA Operational Programme, p. 2.
23 Ibid., p.2
Although the border is, in a formal sense, scarcely any barrier to the free movement of goods and capital and workers, it remains a social and psychological barrier which is an impediment to exchange of ideas and information and a barrier to effective cooperation and the development of effective local policies/strategies.24

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Year to Year</th>
<th>Programme</th>
<th>Amount (ECU)</th>
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<tr>
<td>Peace I (1994-99)</td>
<td>500m ECU</td>
<td>INTERREG IA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Peace II (2000-2006)</td>
<td>€995m</td>
<td>INTERREG IIA</td>
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<tr>
<td>Peace III (2007-2013)</td>
<td>€225m</td>
<td>INTERREG IIIA</td>
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<tr>
<td>Peace IV (2014-2020)</td>
<td>€229m</td>
<td>INTERREG IVA</td>
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The transformation of the Irish border as a physical and symbolic divide has been integrally connected to the role of the European Union (EU). At one level, the EU has indirectly helped to nullify the border’s impact as a line of dispute between two states. At another, the EU has attempted to directly address the division caused by the border between two communities.25

Cross-border cooperation provides opportunities for dialogue and building cross-border and cross-community relationships. The Peace Programme, in particular, helped to sustain the Peace Process at times when formal structures were stalled or suspended.26 The programme validated work between former combatants and promoted their social and political integration. Channels of communication have been opened on community, business and economic levels. Cross-border work became more normalised and less threatening to Loyalists and Unionists. Indeed, cross-border cooperation has sometimes provided a ‘stepping stone’ for individuals from Loyalist backgrounds to engagement in cross-community initiatives with people closer to home. The availability of EU funding has in the past facilitated people and organisations to take risks in cross-border cooperation that they would not otherwise have taken.

26 Channel Research, op. cit., p98.
Cross-border working brings added value to peacebuilding. Cross-border cooperation addresses a number of core conflict issues and problems that are a direct legacy of the conflict: the breakdown in cross-border relationships, and the isolation and the social and economic decline of border communities. Cross-border cooperation has the potential to develop better understanding across communities. Cooperation in work, education, youth, cultural activities or business leads to social, cultural and economic regeneration. Cross-border cooperation provides a mechanism whereby some of the most difficult core conflict issues and legacies of the conflict can be addressed in an holistic way, leading to peace and reconciliation.

Individuals have been taken out of their comfort zones – whether through an economic agenda or one directly focused on reconciliation. The programmes have provided both a structure and the incentives for people to engage with difference. Some programme participants reported that the benefit of cross-border cooperation was not so much the cultural exchange or projects based on identity, but in cooperation on practical issues such as access to essential services for people in isolated border areas. Often, through such projects relationships of trust have been established that provided a safe and structured environment in which it has been possible to have meaningful discussions about the conflict and its legacies – discussions that while painful, have contributed to both individual and collective healing.

An evaluation of cross-border projects in the PEACE II Programme concluded that cross-border projects were able to engage in a deeper level of reconciliation through building in process and structures to facilitate learning; developing different cultural relationships including a shared history of the conflict that would not otherwise have been articulated or heard; developing a shared language that acknowledges different cultural values and understandings; and developing a shared vision that is more inclusive and challenging of traditionally held beliefs than would otherwise have been possible.

Perhaps one of the most valuable outcomes of the EU cross-border programmes has been the facilitation of multi-level cross border networks. The requirement built into the programmes for partnership working has effected a real change in culture for civil society organisations, giving them a new access to decision-making. At the same time, it has been a challenge and a steep learning curve for Local Authorities, public agencies and government departments who have responded to the needs of new ways of working.

A study commissioned to draw the lessons from the first two Peace Programmes and inform the Peace III Programme stressed the important impact that the programmes

27 Ibid, p. 2.
28 Ibid, p. 141.
29 Channel Research, op. cit., p. 141.
had had on local governance and putting cross-border cooperation at the heart of the policy debate; and importantly also made a major contribution to encouraging and supporting active citizenship.

The PEACE Programmes created new structures for local governance in the shape of its delivery mechanisms and thus contributed to the overall debate about the appropriate governance mechanisms for Northern Ireland … While undoubtedly important, this dimension should be complemented by another about the contribution of active citizenship to effective local governance. The PEACE Programmes established institutions that realised partnership, brought civil society organisations into the delivery process and catalysed a much higher level of participation by ordinary citizens. These are important ingredients in the overall debate about how the region should be governed … 30

The Programmes introduced a requirement for partnership working. This was a change in culture for civil society organisations, giving them unprecedented access to decision-making. For local authorities, public agencies and government departments it was likewise a steep learning curve as they were challenged by community representatives to be transparent, democratic and accountable. Networks and relationships among politicians, public officials and NGOs – within jurisdictions and across the border – exist now that would have been unthinkable twenty years ago. The PEACE Programme, in particular, has given direct support to community action and engagement by citizens who would not otherwise have had opportunities to engage with the formal political process.

The most significant input of the EU to building peace in Ireland will have centred on the steady, functional work of normalising cooperation for mutual benefit across state borders.31 The PEACE and INTERREG Programmes have put cross-border cooperation at the heart of the policy debate. They have focused on practical ways to achieve greater cooperation through a multiplicity of projects – many of which have been initiated by local authorities or non-governmental, community-based organisations.

Challenges
Cross-border cooperation has particular challenges and difficulties. It requires new skills and additional resources. Most importantly, it needs a supportive policy framework. The EU Programmes have compensated, at least at times, for a lack of political leadership. Instead of supporting fragile but shared political development towards cooperation and peace in Ireland, the PEACE Programme in particular has been “leading and sustaining that vision against a more polarised political landscape.” 32

30 Ibid., p. 15.
31 Katy Hayward, “The EU and the Transformation of the Irish Border,” op.cit., p. 34.
... Peace needs to be about changing the way we do business not only in the particular circumstances but in the institutions of governance. Sustainable peace in Ireland will require public servants on both sides of the border to think beyond their traditional jurisdictions about markets, social and economic benefit and partnership.\textsuperscript{33} The PEACE Programmes will have invested more than €2 billion to address legacies of the conflict in Northern Ireland and the Border Region. However, the fact remains that cross-border cooperation in Ireland has been highly dependent upon the EU Peace and INTERREG Programmes. The only other significant sources of public funding for cross-border cooperation have been the Irish Government’s Reconciliation Fund, (with a budget of €2.7m in 2014) and the International Fund for Ireland. While the two governments have together provided ‘match’ funding of 25% for the EU programmes, cross-border cooperation has not yet been mainstreamed in the budgets of either jurisdiction.

Political leadership is key. In 2006, the two governments and the political parties agreed on a review of the North South bodies and areas of cooperation established under the 1998 Agreement. Yet, despite a positive ‘efficiency and value-for-money’ review, there has been virtually no progress yet on the agreed review of the case for additional North South bodies and areas of cooperation.

It is essential that cross-border cooperation be mainstreamed within public policy – and budget lines – on both sides of the border. As we consider how far we have travelled in the past two decades, it is timely that we remember also that,

\textit{“Only a minority of peace agreements survive more than a decade. In the absence of comprehensive efforts to transcend social divisions, armed conflicts frequently reoccur.”}\textsuperscript{34}

\textsuperscript{33} Ibid. p. 7.
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Women and Peace: 15 years on....

Lynn Carvill
Chief Executive Officer, Women’s TEC

Introduction

In 2011 the Community Foundation for Northern Ireland (CFNI), Women’s Resource and Development Agency (WRDA) and The National Women’s Council of Ireland (NWCI) began to jointly develop a project which would involve bringing women together from across Northern Ireland and the border counties to discuss how they perceive their lives have changed over the last 15 years, since the beginning of the Peace process and the signing of the Good Friday Agreement in 1998.

The project entitled, ‘Women and Peacebuilding: Developing Shared Learning’ was funded under Measure 2.2 of the European Union PEACE III Programme, awarded through the Special EU Programmes Body. The contextual framework for this project was the United Nations Security Council Resolution 1325.1 Over the last two years 16 workshops have been organised across Northern Ireland and along the Southern border counties. A special event to allow further examination of the Haass / O’Sullivan process and a final conference were also organised as part of the project.

To date the views of over 1,000 women have been gathered during facilitated discussions addressing the following areas:

- Violence, personal safety and security
- Decision making and representation
- Women’s rights are human rights – women and social justice
- Women and institutional change
- Women and the legacies of the past

The process involved bringing women together on a cross-community and cross-border basis. Each of the five themes was addressed in the following way: a workshop was held in the North and another in the southern border counties where similar facilitated discussions occurred after hearing from a keynote speaker tasked

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1 The resolution reaffirms the important role of women in the prevention and resolution of conflicts, peace negotiations, peace-building, peacekeeping, humanitarian response and in post-conflict reconstruction and stresses the importance of their equal participation and full involvement in all efforts for the maintenance and promotion of peace and security. Resolution 1325 urges all actors to increase the participation of women and incorporate gender perspectives in all United Nations peace and security efforts. It also calls on all parties to conflict to take special measures to protect women and girls from gender-based violence, particularly rape and other forms of sexual abuse, in situations of armed conflict. The resolution provides a number of important operational mandates, with implications for Member States and the entities of the United Nations system.
with providing their own informed perspective on the theme. (Comprehensive reports of all of these discussions are available on both the CFNI and WRDA websites²).

Further to attending the North and South thematic workshops, some of the women were invited to attend a subsequent cross-border workshop where they had the opportunity to hear of the experiences of international speakers, most of whom lived and/or worked in countries experiencing conflict. These international insights brought a broader perspective to the discussion.

The final part of the project has involved developing a toolkit on ‘Women and Peacebuilding’.³ The toolkit focuses on effecting institutional change in Northern Ireland using a UN 1325 framework. It is aimed at key statutory stakeholders in both Northern Ireland and in the Republic of Ireland.

A series of policy papers have also been produced focusing on the learning arising from the local discussions to date and the key themes identified. These again will be used to advocate women’s needs in a domestic setting but also on a wider basis.⁴

The aim was to capture the experiences of women living through conflict and the subsequent period of conflict resolution and peace building. To date a number of interesting outcomes and findings have arisen out of this project. However, a notable observation is that regardless of the topic discussed by women from across Northern Ireland and the border counties, similar themes emerged. A further significant discovery (for me at least), and to which I will come back later, was the women’s engagement on and response to issues in relation to ‘Dealing with the Past’.

**Recurring Themes**

The persistence of domestic violence and sexual abuse remains a major problem. Raised in every discussion, there was a real perception that although there has been positive attitudinal change in relation to ‘state actors’ (e.g. the police, judiciary and government departments), the same has not occurred in the public realm. Domestic and sexual violence and the acknowledged accompanying abusive traits (financial control and emotional abuse) remain prevalent and need to be challenged. The implications of the Welfare Reform Bill and the proposals around the single payment of the new super benefit – ‘Universal Credit’ – to ‘a nominated person in the household’ was of deep concern in the context of domestic abuse and violence.

In other discussions there was consensus that, over the last 15 years, *inter*-community violence has transposed to ‘*intra*-community violence’. Women fear the violence (blatant and latent) within their own communities. They also feel that their personal safety is threatened, and they talked about a marked increase in anti-social behaviour.
in many communities. In some areas it is not uncommon for women to fear leaving their home.

Trauma, as one would expect in a society emerging from conflict, is endemic. Women are traumatized, families are traumatized – trauma pervades communities. Consequently, women experience exceptionally high levels of mental ill-health and prescription drug misuse and abuse is widespread.

A strong message emerging from all of the discussions was that women feel excluded from decision-making roles. There was a deep understanding of the consequences of this exclusion: i.e. that their experiences were not used to inform decision-making processes and therefore their particular priorities were not recognised. At community level where women predominate, many work in voluntary (unpaid) roles while men retain paid positions and officer positions at board/management committee levels.

It is however, at the political decision-making level that the dearth of women is most noticeable. There are many problematic consequences of the lack of women in political decision-making roles in Northern Ireland.

Firstly, it ensures that women’s voices, experiences and opinions are silenced – effectively drowned out by the voices, experiences and opinions of men (at a ratio of 1:5 in Stormont).

Secondly, it places a disproportionate amount of pressure on our current female politicians.

Finally, it leads to flawed decision-making and perpetuates a male-dominated political culture with too few role models for young girls aspiring to political decision-making roles.

The introduction of a 30% quota for male/female candidates standing for national elections in the Republic of Ireland was perceived by women as a significant and positive move to challenge and deal with the unacceptable gender imbalances in political decision-making.

The importance of education as a tool to empower girls and tackle sexist and inappropriate stereotypical attitudes amongst boys was raised at every event. Evidence across the world demonstrates that to educate a woman is to educate a family. Education for girls and women leads to better opportunities in the labour market and enhances women’s economic security and independence.

**Women: Dealing with the Past**

The final theme discussed during the series of workshops could potentially be the most controversial: dealing with the past and the legacies of the conflict. The main
workshops addressing this particular issue took place in Autumn 2013. They were held in Belfast and Clones, while the cross-border event was held in Belfast.

Although it was usual for 50 or 60 women to attend I had assumed that women would shy away from this particular workshop, perhaps being reticent to speak openly about such controversial issues as parades, emblems, victims and related matters. I was wrong. Over 200 women registered to attend the first workshop in Belfast. It was clear that the significant interest shown in discussing this topic demonstrated that women in the border counties and across Northern Ireland have had insufficient opportunity for reflection and discussion on this most pertinent issue.

When this project was being developed, the architects did not foresee the development of the Haass / O'Sullivan Panel of Parties initiative that would provide a framework for the political parties and civil society to address how we could effectively deal with the past. The timeliness of these events was entirely fortuitous. What is undeniable is that the discussion workshops on dealing with the past provided a much needed platform from which women could speak of their experiences and views, their exclusion and silence.

(Male) Control of Communities
A very clear message emerging from the discussions was that for some women living in Protestant/Unionist/Loyalist (PUL) areas, ‘organisations’ were viewed as the main problem/threat in their communities. These ‘organisations’ are paramilitary and their prevalence in local communities results in the following:

- high levels of control (through fear and intimidation)
- women (and men) and their families living in fear and silence due to the threat of reprisals
- high levels of criminality (some of it drug related). Criminality and money emanating from criminal activity has resulted in divided and mistrustful communities.
- women do not have ‘safe spaces’ to discuss issues

Paramilitary organisations (men) control these communities ravished by the spoils of criminality. Families on low incomes are living ‘cheek by jowl’ with prosperous neighbours involved in illegal activities. It was notable that the women did not think of the threats in relation to their own personal security but to that of their sons and grandsons. If the women speak up, their families are in danger.

Paramilitary organisations continue to recruit and it is very difficult for women in these communities to keep young men away from paramilitary involvement. In many disadvantaged PUL areas, the absence of jobs and any aspiration for the future for young men adds to the allure and perceived ‘glitz’ of paramilitary activity – of ‘money and women’.
For some women living in nationalist/republican areas ‘male control’ manifests itself in other ways. It can be similar to that mentioned above, for example in areas where dissident republicans wield power in the community. Other women spoke of how their lives are blighted by high levels of anti-social behaviour and low level but persistent criminality. It is suggested that the prevalence of anti-social behaviour has happened as a result of a vacuum created when paramilitary vigilantism halted and has not been yet been filled by the Police Service. Some women living in these areas say they felt ‘safer’ during the period of the conflict.

There is also another aspect to control in these communities. It is not unusual for men, who were actively involved in the conflict, to now have prominent roles in community organisations. This in itself is not a problem but there is a sense of ‘inflexibility’ in relation to the style of leadership used in some communities. This can result in:

- high levels of control and exclusion
- an epidemic of ‘low level’ criminality and anti-social behaviour.
- major problems with drug abuse/misuse, particularly legal highs
- women struggling to find support.
- In these communities there is a vortex where young boys/men spiral into anti-social behaviour, drug abuse and total community disconnection. Their families (their mothers) are left to pick up the pieces.

‘Male control’ as exercised in both these settings excludes and disempowers women.

**Domestic and Sexual Violence**

While domestic and sexual violence do not only affect girls and women, it persists as a highly gendered problem across the globe and is a particular and often hidden problem in societies emerging from conflict. Issues discussed at the ‘Women: Dealing with the Past’ conference supports this evidence. Domestic and sexual abuse was prevalent during the conflict and much of this is only coming to light now. For women and girls living in Nationalist/Republican areas, reporting a crime or contacting the police was not an option during the conflict. Therefore many victims of these crimes had no recourse to support and safety and justice. Since the Peace Process women from these areas have been encouraged to contact the police to report such crimes. The opposite is true for women living in Protestant/Unionist/Loyalist areas where relationships with and trust in the Police Service have waned significantly. For women who are victims of domestic and sexual violence, avenues to seek support, safety and justice are often closed.

In both these contexts women and girls have been and are very vulnerable. Criminality (involving drugs and prostitution) has led to a huge and very worrying increase in the sexual exploitation of girls and young women in some communities. Some of the women believed that some men have had difficulty adjusting to ‘Peace’
and normal living. For some men leaving prison it has been difficult returning to normal life and many have turned to drugs and alcohol to deal with the pressure. Women believe this has exacerbated the problem of domestic and sexual violence.

There was a high level of consensus on the following:

- Domestic and sexual violence is increasing.
- Sexual abuse is a major (and often hidden) issue across communities.
- Sexual exploitation of young girls (often in paramilitary settings) is prevalent.
- As support for the Police Service NI has increased on the Nationalist/Republican side, there is a corresponding decrease in support in some PUL communities. This adds to the vulnerability of women and girls in these areas.
- We have only touched the ‘tip of the iceberg’ in relation to these issues.

**Mental Ill-Health**

Mental ill-health is endemic across communities that experienced the brunt of the conflict. Women, families and communities are traumatised. A further clear message coming from the women at this conference was that there is a generation of people who lived through the trauma of the conflict who have become addicted to alcohol or prescription drugs. Mental ill-health and legal drug misuse manifest themselves as ways of many people living and coping from day-to-day and is a huge and often hidden legacy of the conflict.

**Flags, Parades and Culture**

For some of the women living in Protestant/Unionist/Loyalist (PUL) areas, they saw the Belfast City Hall flag issue as a direct attack on their culture. In some areas the street protests were organised by the community and women said they were at the forefront of this. The women said their ‘cultural identity’ was continually under threat and while nationalist culture was becoming more mainstream, Protestant/Unionist culture was being pushed to the sidelines. Some women spoke of how it was necessary that they controlled/were part of the protests to keep an eye on the children.

Participation in the ‘marching bands’ in some PUL areas was viewed as a positive alternative to paramilitary involvement for young boys. Paramilitarism and drugs were forbidden in the bands and for the women in these communities they provided ‘safe spaces’ for young boys in the communities. They saw this ‘safe space’ for the boys threatened when the bands paraded during marching season and came under attack from people living in Nationalist/Republican areas.

For other women (in PUL, Nationalist/Republican and mixed areas) the protests pose a serious and unwelcome disruption to everyday life. The protests disrupt normal routines such as bringing children to school, attending hospital appointments etc. This is a particular problem in interface areas.
Some women spoke of how ‘flags and bunting’ of all kinds were perceived as intimidating. For others (living in mixed areas) they were embarrassing. There is a palpable rise in anxiety levels in areas where protests have taken place and in many ‘mixed’ areas reasonably good community relations have been damaged. There is a real fear that tensions will escalate. In some communities women are withdrawing from cross-community activity due to rising tensions and fear.

Overall there is a consensus that the crux of the flag protest is ‘fear of losing identity’. Some women believed that that the protests were orchestrated by people holding power in paramilitary organisations. The women were being sucked into the protests by male partners and had little choice but to take part. Intimidation within communities persists.

**Contested Spaces**

While communities may seem to be at peace, this is often superficial. Women spoke of how the underlying sectarianism in some areas has been exposed since the ‘Flag Protests’ began. For some it is more difficult to move through the city of Belfast than during the period of the Troubles.

Peace Walls persist and while for some people they enhance safety, for others the existence of the Peace Walls consolidates a culture of ‘them and us’. What are categorised as ‘neutral areas’ to some, are ‘no-go areas’ for others. There is still an apprehension of walking in ‘other’ areas for fear of being identified as Catholic/Protestant.

In rural areas interfaces are less visible but still loom large in the lives of residents. Essentially segregation permeates much of life in Northern Ireland and the unsolved legacy issues have exacerbated segregation and destabilised mixed communities.

So it would seem that over the last while there has been a reassertion of male control in some communities (mostly PUL but also some Nationalist/Republican) and in these circumstances women are effectively silenced and live in fear which is maintained through intimidation and threat.

While the Haass / O’Sullivan talks were welcomed there was a perception that women were generally excluded from these. Peacebuilding in Northern Ireland is perceived as male territory. A clear message from the ‘Women: Dealing with the Past’ conference was that women have been and continue to be affected by these issues and they want to speak and have an opportunity to share their views. Such opportunities have decreased over the years of the Peace Process in Northern Ireland.

Our aim was to capture the views of women on how the Peace Process has impacted on their lives. It is clear that is has provided a much needed platform to enable women to speak and for their voices to be heard. We know that along the journey
from conflict to peace, women have become silenced and excluded. This is not uncommon in societies emerging from conflict but in Northern Ireland it is often more subtle and hidden. The question now is – how do we reverse this situation? How do we include women in building our peace, provide the safe space to speak and the platform to hear what they have to say?

Implementing United Nations Security Council Resolution 1325 in Northern Ireland is clearly one way this could happen. However, the British Government has been reluctant to meet this obligation in Northern Ireland. What we need to know now is – what is Plan B?

Women, Peace and Security: Women’s Rights and Gender Equality

Developing and Applying Women, Peace and Security Practice in Northern Ireland/Ireland – Strategic Guide and Toolkit

Bronagh Hinds/Debbie Donnelly
Belfast: Community Foundation for Northern Ireland (2014) pp. 93
http://www.wrda.net/Documents/Toolkit_Booklet.pdf

This Strategic Guide and Toolkit was developed as a cross-border and multi-dimensional initiative by the Community Foundation for Northern Ireland in partnership with the Women’s Resource and Development Agency (WRDA), the National Women’s Council for Ireland (NWCI) and the Foundations for Peace Network. (See page 101 for details of the ‘Women and Peacebuilding: Developing Shared Learning’ project.)

The purpose of this Guide is to assist those working in the public sectors in Northern Ireland and Ireland to enhance the protection of women’s rights and advance gender equality. It aims to help women’s realisation of the peace commitments and benefits of the Belfast/Good Friday Agreement through the effective application of the principles of the United Nations Security Council Resolution (UNSCR) 1325 and the domestic incorporation of obligations such as the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW).

The key objective of this Guide is “to seek to influence policy, institutional thinking and change concerning women in the context of peace and security” (p.9). While it is directed at public policy makers in Northern Ireland and Ireland, it is applicable to and can be adopted and adapted by the full range of public sector actors, such as government departments, local government, non-departmental public bodies, policing and security bodies and publicly appointed local or neighbourhood committees. It is also useful to political parties, trade unions, the women’s sector, the youth sector and the community and voluntary sector for self-application and for holding public policy to account; and to the many victims and survivors, as well as citizens generally (p.9).

The Guide is unique in that it is the first such work to translate the international women, peace and security framework into a wholly domestic application aimed solely at domestic rather than international actors.

The Guide provides information on the international context and the relevance to Northern Ireland/Ireland of the women, peace and security obligations and principles and defines and explains key concepts, terms and approaches important to the achievement of gender equality: including gender, gender equality, gender analysis, gender perspective, gender mainstreaming and gender responsive budgeting; with
appendices providing guiding tools in support of these concepts. A number of ‘illustrative indicators’ based on the UN indicators are presented to correspond with the five goals identified for the five key themes.

In addition to explaining UNSCR 1325 and CEDAW, the toolkit outlines the EU’s Comprehensive Approach to EU Implementation on women peace and security. It discusses also the implementation of UNSCR 1325 through National Action Plans and the CEDAW Committee’s critique of the UK Government’s implementation of CEDAW. Likewise, it outlines domestic gender strategies in the two jurisdictions and relates them also to the statutory equality duties and monitoring arrangements.

Drawing on consultations undertaken as part of the project, women’s and public sector perspectives on the five themes central to UNSCR 1325 are presented in an appendix. The final appendix provides ‘illustrative practice examples’ – all of which are based on practice of Northern Ireland Departments and Non-Departmental Public Bodies on gendering policies and programmes.

A key element of the toolkit is the Strategic Thematic Framework for Women, Peace and Security for Northern Ireland/Ireland based on the principles and themes in the UN resolutions and UN and EU monitoring frameworks. It identifies outcomes to be achieved and offers supporting recommendations under each of the five themes. These are as follows: Prevention, Framework of Security and Rights; Participation and Representation; Protection, Realisation of Rights, Economic and Social Justice; Relief, Recovery, Reconstruction, Legacy; and Promotion and Advocacy.

While many of the 43 recommendations refer to either Ireland or Northern Ireland specifically, or apply to both equally, there are a number of recommendations that require cross-border cooperation:

The North South Ministerial Council should progress the commitments and spirit of the Belfast/Good Friday Agreement on women’s participation and gender perspectives. Where appropriate, the Northern Ireland Executive and the Irish Government should seek to develop a synergy between the respective women/gender equality strategies so that both governments can clearly demonstrate delivery of peace benefits for women. There should be greater North/South lesson-sharing and collaboration on tackling the underrepresentation of women, such as on quotas and affirmative action measures in Ireland, the Women in Local Councils initiative in Northern Ireland and strategies for the participation of women and women’s organisations in community planning in both jurisdictions.

- The North South Consultative Forum should be established with similar aims in relation to increased women’s participation in public life.
- The Northern Ireland Executive and the Irish Government of Ireland should work with civil society organisations to ensure that the
appropriate policies and resources are in place to better protect and provide for female asylum seekers, refugees, women immigrants and those with insecure visa status who are victims of domestic and sexual violence, abuse and trafficking. Greater cross-border collaboration by government representatives and officials on this issue should be made a priority.

• Undertake conflict mapping to demonstrate the experiences of women affected by the conflict in Northern Ireland and Ireland and address direct and indirect gender harms and abuses that resulted from the conflict.

• Incorporate a focus on women, peace and security (UNSCR 1325) into the current work of institutions and bodies set up through the Belfast/Good Friday Agreement such as the North South Ministerial Council, the British-Irish Council and the British-Ireland Parliamentary Assembly. Such a focus should also be incorporated into the work of the Joint Committee on the Implementation of the Good Friday Agreement.

• Develop a trilateral approach between the British and Irish Governments and the Northern Ireland Executive to build cooperation in implementing the spirit and principles of UNSCR 1325, addressing the impact of the conflict on women in both jurisdictions and demonstrating delivery of peace commitments and benefits for women.

• Share the lessons on Change Champions in the Women in Local Councils initiative across government and agencies North and South.

• Central and local government and public bodies in Northern Ireland and Ireland should encourage and support advocacy by the women’s sector North and South on governmental strategy, policy and programme development.

• Strategic women’s organisations (such as, but not exclusively, National Women’s Council of Ireland, Northern Ireland Women’s European Platform, Women’s Resource and Development Agency and Women’s Information Northern Ireland) should work to increase their individual and collective capacity for advocacy and to build influence through sharing their skills and expertise on women’s rights and gender equality with the public sector. They should enhance their strategic collaboration by identifying a number of specific opportunities annually for clear and consistent advocacy on a cross-border basis on behalf of women.

• Deploy women’s experience, skills and expertise in conflict and peacebuilding gained in Northern Ireland/Ireland within the international arena. Include skilled women in commissions, missions and delegations and promote their expertise where appropriate to international organisations.
The toolkit is a valuable aid to all those who are interested in ensuring that women’s interests are represented and their voices heard in shaping public policies and in making decisions about how public resources are distributed. In progressing the protection of women’s rights and gender equality in either jurisdiction, we will be moving towards a more inclusive, peaceful and prosperous society for everyone on the island.

RUTH TAILLON
Transforming Conflict Through Social and Economic Development: Practice and Policy Lessons from Northern Ireland and the Border Counties

Sandra Buchanan
£66.50

Cross-border cooperation on the island of Ireland has in modern times been intimately connected with the process of conflict transformation within Northern Ireland and the Border Counties. These two processes each play a role in the other’s foundational rationale, and they share many strategic and thematic goals. All practitioners of cross-border cooperation will thus be quick to note the value to their field represented by the recently published work of Sandra Buchanan. Long a practitioner of conflict transformation in Ireland through her work with grassroots organisations, Transforming Conflict Through Social and Economic Development: Practice and Policy Lessons from Northern Ireland and the Border Counties represents an invaluable analysis of the economic and social processes contributing to conflict transformation on this island.

Many of the processes and tools which are prominent in this domain will be familiar also to the cross-border practitioner. A particular focus in this book is placed on the three mechanisms which have had arguably the greatest impact on social and economic development in Northern Ireland and the Border Counties; these are the EU’s PEACE and INTERREG programmes, as well as the work of the International Fund for Ireland.

As the author acknowledges, previous literature on the conflict transformation process in Ireland (and indeed, within the field in general) has suffered from a lack of theoretical clarity, particularly in respect of the construction of practical models which may be of use to the grassroots practitioner. It is the author’s focus on this gap, and particularly her concern with actors at the grassroots level, that makes this publication such a valuable contribution to the field. Indeed, a central thread of the work is the development of a framework through which practical lessons on practice and policy gained through the author’s long experience in the field may be transmitted to practitioners both in Ireland and further afield.

Divided into three parts, the work begins with the construction of a theoretical framework through which the capabilities of the three funds may be evaluated. To this end, particular prominence is given to the theoretical work of J. P. Lederach; the resulting framework calls upon his model of ‘gaps’ between transformation expectations and the underlying effect of applied processes, together with concepts from citizen empowerment, to construct an evaluation methodology expressly well suited to the analysis of social and economic processes.
The work proceeds to provide an analysis of the background of conflict in Northern Ireland and the Border Counties and of its effects from an economic and social perspective, providing a useful contextualisation which is too often ignored in treatments of the Troubles. The value of grassroots social and economic intervention in conflict transformation is eloquently emphasised as a vital and inseparable partner to high-level political intervention, and the important case for the centrality to the process of the amelioration of structural violence is put forth explicitly in a manner often overlooked in discussions on the conflict.

In the second section, the book takes a closer look at the three funds themselves. An exposition of the origins, scope and administrative structures of the three funds is followed by an analysis of the impact which each of the funds has had on the practice of conflict transformation. The latter provides a picture which will be familiar to many practitioners who have worked within the context of these programmes in terms of their beneficial effects, issues around bureaucracy and over-centralisation, and the changing nature of the funds as they develop through time; Buchanan’s analysis of these factors in connection with their effects in practice within a conflict transformation context is poignant and relevant. The book’s third section is concerned with an overall evaluation of the conflict transformation process enabled by the three funds. A range of lessons from the Irish case are examined, and are accompanied by a series of recommendations on policy and practice which will be of great value to practitioners and policymakers both in Ireland and in other regions undergoing conflict transformation processes, and which also represent an important contribution to ongoing academic discussion. Finally, the three funds are evaluated in the context of the conceptual framework constructed at the beginning of the work, marrying the theoretical and the practical in an innovative and comprehensive manner.

All in all, Buchanan’s book serves as a thorough and well-written treatment of a subject area that has suffered from a lack of conceptual clarity as well as something of a disconnection between theory and practice. By carefully and concisely placing the conduct of conflict transformation in Northern Ireland and the Border Counties within a sound conceptual framework, and then linking this to experience gained over years of practice, Buchanan has addressed these issues impressively and in a manner which will be of interest to conflict transformations practitioners and academics the world over. Cross-border actors in Ireland, the experience of whom shares so much with that of practitioners in the author’s field, may find in this publication an invaluable new perspective in which to view their own activities.

THOMAS HAVERTY
European Border Regions in Comparison: Overcoming Nationalistic Aspects or Re-Nationalization?

Katarzyna Stokłosa and Gerhard Besier (eds)
£80.00

The question posed by the subtitle of this book indicates the preoccupation that remains within border studies in the twenty-first century: whither the nation-state? This book reflects the particular complexity of this question in Europe, incorporating no fewer than nineteen chapters from a wide variety of disciplinary, historical and country perspectives. And yet the answer to the question posed remains elusive. The detailed evidence presented from the array of (largely historical) case studies indicates that border regions are as likely to display the dogged persistence of nationalism as they are to show its limitations and contestation. After all, any redefinition of the power of a modern nation-state tends not to be decided at its territorial borders.

A quick skim through of the list of figures is a good indication of the range of this book: from ‘The Klagenfurter lindworm as symbol for Carinthia’, through ‘Western Sahara map’, to ‘Battlefield tourists are looking at the Düppel-Denkmal [a German memorial in southern Denmark, destroyed in 1945]’. The editors’ intention for this volume was clearly one of information and illumination, rather than argumentation or hypothesis, and readers with a genuine curiosity about the lasting legacy of power clashes and population movements across the continent will delight in the fascinating insights and rare knowledge presented, all of which further prove the complexity of the subject of European borders.

The contributing authors to this book range from PhD candidates to professors, including along the way a museum curator and an agricultural engineer; they represent disciplines as divergent as psychology and theology and as well as the more typical contributions of European studies, history and political science. Such diversity offers a unique combination of perspectives on the subject, and one which illuminates aspects that are of vital importance to residents of such border regions but which are otherwise overlooked by academic studies. The relative absence of anthropology, economics and geography among the contributing disciplines is notable and is perhaps another reason why the book is different from most other border studies texts published today.

The book begins with a brief introduction written by the editors that includes a fairly generalist summary of the course of border studies, emphasising the surprising pervasiveness of the notion of the national border given its relatively recent emergence.
in Europe. One of the most interesting aspects of this chapter is a discussion of the etymology of the term ‘border’ in Western Europe and its Slavic origins. The editors quickly proceed to summarise the contents of the contributing chapters. These summaries are placed under subheadings that reflect the four sections into which the volume is divided. It is at this point that a flaw in the volume as a whole becomes apparent: the rationale for these particular headings, and the allocation of chapters to them, is not properly justified by the editors; similarly, and equally disappointing, they do not provide a framework to explain the selection of the chapters and their connections to each other (I will return later to the effects of this absence).

The first part of the volume is titled ‘territorial disputes and question of identity’, indicating an assumption that border regions often act as interfaces (rather than melting pots). It is the longest of the four parts of the volume, with seven chapters in all. It is notable that three of these chapters are on Spanish borders (with France, Portugal and Morocco), with Schleswig also being the subject of two chapters here (albeit with one being an historical study). The connection between past and present dominates this section, including in the chapter on Ireland, which is also placed in this section on territorial disputes despite the fact that much of its contents would indicate that it would sit just as well within the second part of the volume, i.e. that on ‘cross-border cooperation’. This second volume part also contains two chapters on Spanish border regions, one of which (by Xabier Itçaina and Jean-Jacques Manterola) has some potential cross-over for the Irish case in its study of cross-border network governance at various levels of cooperation.

The third part of the volume is headed ‘perceptions of borders and border regions’; of the five chapters in this section, two are on the German-Polish border region and two are on Romanian borders. The socio-cultural material (including collective memories and public discourses) covered in these chapters make for fascinating reading, and all point to the importance of the construction of national borders in shaping collective consciousness and deep, lasting lines of distinction and division. There is a lot of overlap between this section and the final part of the book, titled ‘prejudice, stereotypes, and nationalism’. This section contains the one chapter that purports to offer more than a case study focus (Besier’s chapter on ‘boundaries between ourselves and others’) but in actual fact concentrates on prejudice and stereotypes within Germany (particularly in the lead up to the Second World War) towards its neighbours. The other two chapters in this section (on South Tyrol in 1945 and on war memorials in the Danish-German border region) also focus on the Second World War. And thus the book ends with an indication of the lasting legacy of the war in the ‘renationalisation’ of border landscapes but it misses opportunities to consider the current role of prejudice and stereotypes in contemporary cross-border relations in Europe (the pertinence of
which is suggested by the contents of 2014 European Parliament election campaigns across the EU).

It is a pity that the editors did not make the connection between these interesting historical case studies and the contemporary challenges faced by the EU. As a result, this book is clearly suitable for its place in the series Routledge Studies in Modern European History, but more could have been made of the evidence presented to speak to such topics as the role of European border regions at a time of critical decision for the European Union, contemporary relations across its internal borders and, indeed, European relations with neighbouring Russia.

I turn now to a discussion of the chapter most readers of this Journal would take particular interest in, i.e. that on the case of Ireland, written by Cathal McCall of Queen's University, Belfast. Titled ‘The building and erosion of the “post-conflict” Irish borderscape’, this chapter, uniquely amongst the collection, frames progress in cross-border cooperation in terms of conflict transformation; in so doing, McCall demonstrates the useful applicability of concepts from peace-building literature to explore processes of change in border relations (something Sandra Buchanan and Sean Byrne among others have also shown in the case of Ireland, but which is less prevalent in border scholarship on the European continent). A summary of progress made at the various levels of cooperation around the Irish border is placed in the context of change within the EU. That said, the chapter ends on a somewhat gloomy note, with an indication that economic recession and cutbacks (including in EU funding) is not only likely to have detrimental effects on cross-border cooperation but is also serving to erode the Irish borderscape itself. However, such an Irish borderscape is constituted not by projects but by men and women across various sectors of society in the Irish border region – SMEs, youth work, healthcare etc. – whose needs remain integrally tied to improving cross-border relations. Their interests in cross-border relations were not merely (and temporarily) piqued by top-down political pressure and external funding incentives, but their daily lives and work centre upon border crossing. McCall’s chapter shows that the conditions for their communication and cooperation across the border have improved significantly since the Agreement, aided in no small part by EU membership. This is another thread that it would have been good to have seen the editors draw out for cross-case comparison.

As it is, the book does not fulfil on its titular promise to compare Europe’s border regions. Whilst being truly European in its scope and historical exploration, it does not take us much further in understanding what it is to be European or, indeed, what the European identity and nature of the regions discussed may be. The reader is left with the impression that the EU is more bureaucratic respondent than a suprapolitical agent, and that collective identities within it are still more affected by the Second World War than by any other ‘European’ experience.

Some of the most illuminating studies of nationalism in the late twentieth century
(by such as Benedict Anderson, Rogers Brubaker, Walker Connor, Ernest Gellner, Tom Nairn) taught us that its endurance lies in its capacity to adapt to changing global and local environments, even to such an extent as to be able to explain these changes within its own logic. The political wiles behind the power of nationalism ensure that it remains a grand narrative for collective identity and action today. And so, although modern European history is one of the slashing of lines across maps and the frequent redefinition of national identities, this volume indicates that border regions are not the places at which nations are challenged or nationalisms ameliorated. As such, the volume as a whole is a welcome testament to the vibrancy of border studies in Europe today; but, not incongruously, the case studies it details are testament to the unique resilience of nationalism.

**KATY HAYWARD**
(Queen's University Belfast)
Border Encounters: Asymmetry and Proximity at Europe’s Frontiers


The eleven essays in Border Encounters provide a rich and thought provoking perspective on encounters and connectivity at the borders of Europe – both internal and external. At a time when the European Union has concerns over the apparent deficit in citizens’ identification with the European ‘project’ whilst simultaneously exploring the possibility of enlargement to the East, the anthropological studies contained in this volume remind us of how people in the borderlands live the opportunities and the challenges brought about from the reconfiguration of existing borders and the creation of new ones, seeking ways to (re)connect with those who are on the other side of the frontier. As its editors explain in the introduction, the methodological approach taken in Border Encounters is ‘to investigate the “face-to-face” experience of these border encounters, which in many cases […] are experiences of conflict and confrontation at Europe’s frontiers’ (p.21). In doing so, the themes of asymmetry and proximity are examined in a range of geographical contexts that successfully negotiate the tension between the relative influence on border living and identities of wider socio-political structural developments (the macro-level) and the more local negotiations with and through the frontier (the micro-level).

The volume is structured into three sections. The first (and the most extensive, with five chapters) – Opening Borders – deals with the effects on cross-border contact of the relaxation of internal border controls in the European Union following the signing of the Schengen Agreement. Predominance is given to the analysis of borderlands involving post-Soviet states (four out of the five chapters), although the opening chapter actually deals with the disappearance of a border that confined the limits of the EU to Western Europe. In what would be her last scholarly piece before her untimely death in 2007, Daphne Berdhal’s sensitive analysis of consumption practices in ‘Consumer Rites: The Politics of Consumption in Re-unified Germany’, particularly in relation to women, shows how a border mentality may endure and militate against greater proximity, even after the disappearance of the border itself. “Mental borders” that have outlasted the disappearance of political ones give rise to conflict and misunderstandings in the contributions by Robert Parkin (‘Cross-Border Relations and Regional Identity on the Polish-German Border’) and Birgit Müller (‘The Skeleton versus the Little Grey Men: Conflicting Cultures of Anti-nuclear Protest at the Czech-Austrian Border’). Parkin’s chapter describes attempts at developing a Euroregion identity to mitigate asymmetries at the Polish-German border as ‘wishful thinking’, and notes that these are concurrent with
Poland’s ‘contributing to an alternative idea, that of Fortress Europe’ (p.65). In Müller’s chapter, meanwhile, cross-border asymmetries become evident as Austrian and Czech anti-nuclear groups attempt to coordinate efforts in opposition to the development and activation of the Temelin nuclear power station fifty kilometres on the Czech side from the Czech-Austrian border. In this section’s penultimate chapter (‘Powerful Documents: Passports, Passages and Dilemmas of Identification on the Georgian-Turkish Border’), Mathijs Pelkmans strikes a note of caution in terms of the weight given to individual cross-border contacts in their ability to overcome asymmetries and result in greater proximity, highlighting ‘the need for anthropologists to attend to how state policies and legislation anchor and mould “identities”, rather than just repeating the mantra about the contingency of identity’ (p.99). The concluding chapter in this section points to the possibility that the relaxation of border controls within the EU may not necessarily result in greater cross-border sociability. Having described the cross-border social networks that had evolved as a result of smuggling between northern Portugal and the Spanish region of Galicia before these countries’ entry into the European Union, William Kavanagh (‘Proximity and Asymmetry on the Portuguese-Spanish Border’) notes how younger generations of Spaniards and Portuguese may now cross the border freely but without forming cross-border friendships. Kavanagh concludes: ‘Living in ‘Schengenland’ has redefined the relationship to the Other. Before, the Other was different, but no longer very useful’ (p.133).

The three chapters that form the second part of the volume – Strengthening Borders – focus on recent developments at the borders of central and eastern Europe and paint a vivid portrait of the increasing difficulties of cross-border mobility in the region, often with painful consequences. Laura Assmuth’s Asymmetries of Gender and Generation in a Post-Soviet Borderland’, for example, notes how ‘the new borders [between Estonia and Russia] have functioned to make many borderland women’s lives more local, insular and static’ (p.157). Similarly, in “We Are All Tourists”: Enduring Social Relations at the Romanian-Serbian Border in Different Mobility Regimes’, Cosmin Radu describes how ‘changes in the visa regime created discontent in border villages and towns’ (p.188), although suggesting that Romanian cross-border workers and their Serbian employers have adapted their social relations to surmount new regulatory obstacles. Tatiana Zhurzhenko closes this section with ‘“We Used to Be One Country”: Rural Transformations, Economic Asymmetries and National Identities in the Ukrainian-Russian Borderlands’. Crucially, given the current situation at the Ukrainian-Russian border, the author employs the concept of ‘cultural proximity’ to ‘characterize the culturally homogeneous, still non-differentiated post-Soviet space of the Ukrainian-Russian borderlands’ (p.194).

The book’s last section – Crossing Forbidden Borders – deals with movement across frontiers deemed
illegitimate. In the opening chapter
(‘Under One Roof: The Changing Social
Geography of the Border in Cyprus’)
that illegitimacy comes into play in
the movement of Greek and Turkish
Cypriots across the Green Line that
divides their island. Lisa Dikomitis shows
how Greek Cypriots see themselves as
pilgrims visiting their former villages
and religious sites when they cross a
border they regard as illegitimate, while
their Turkish counterparts can behave
more as tourists, anxious to explore
southern Cyprus, but regarding the
border as the guarantee of security.
Maurizio Albahari and Jutta Lauth Bacas
complete the volume with their chapters
on the reception of undocumented
migrants to Italy and Greece respectively.
In ‘The Birth of a Border: Policing by
Charity on the Italian Maritime Edge’,
Albahari offers an excellent analysis of
the involvement of NGOs and Catholic
charities in the regulation of the
European Union’s external borders, while
in ‘Managing Proximity and Asymmetry
in Border Encounters: The Reception of
 Undocumented Migrants on a Greek
Border Island’ Bacas follows the process
endured by illegal migrants on their
arrival to Lesbos. This is a process in
which ‘the Greek authorities reinvent or
literally “construct” people’s identities
in the paperwork they produce on their
cases’ (p.264), and which to some extent
summarises some of the tensions raised
throughout Border Encounters.

ANTHONY SOARES
Notes on Contributors

**Hynek Böhm** works as a researcher and lecturer of human geography at the geography department of the Technical University in Liberec and as a vice-chairman and project manager of Institut EuroSchola, an NGO supporting cross-border co-operation (both in the Czech Republic). He has been working for the European Commission and the national ministries, coordinating use of the EU Structural Funds. For most of the past eight years he has been working mainly on territorial co-operation projects and successfully completed Doctoral research on multilateral territorial co-operation and governance structures for cross-border cooperation. He has led several INTERREG funded projects focused on promoting cross-border training of teachers and public servants, where he also acted as a trainer, lecturer and course-tutor. He has also been involved in moderating and facilitating works leading towards establishment the EGTC TRITIA and in formulating and drafting territorial co-operation strategies of regions, municipalities, universities (Conference of Rectors of Silesian Universities) and non-governmental organizations.

**Anna Bryson** is a Research Fellow at the School of Law, Queen’s University Belfast. She is currently working on an international research project led by Professor Kieran McEvoy (www.lawyersconflictandtransition.org). She was previously co-Director of the *Peace Process: Layers of Meaning* project (www.peaceprocesshistory.org), a three-year initiative supported by £864,000 from the European Union’s Peace III Programme, managed by the Special EU Programmes Body. Anna’s research has developed along three closely related lines: modern Irish history, socio-legal studies and conflict transformation and her publications encompass biography, criminology and research methodology. Her most recent book (with Seán McConville) is *The Routledge Guide to Interviewing: Oral History, Social Enquiry & Investigation* (2014).

**Lynn Carvill** is the CEO of Women’sTEC, which is the largest quality provider of training for women in non-traditional skills in Northern Ireland. She leads the organisation in its mission to enable women to return to employment in non-traditional sectors and contribute to reducing the chronic skills shortage in the Construction and ICT industries. Previously, she was a Women’s Sector Lobbyist with the Women’s Resource and Development Agency, where she was responsible for forging relationships with
local politicians and ensuring that a gender perspective is brought to bear on their discussions and policy decision-making. Lynn’s work there focused on two key policy areas – women and the economy and enhancing women’s political representation. She is keenly interested in tackling the structural inequalities women face in terms of accessing flexible and decently paid work and advocates passionately on the need for women’s economic autonomy.

Thomas Haverty joined the Centre for Cross Border Studies as an intern in September 2013. Now working in the capacity of Research Assistant, Thomas undertakes research for a number of the Centre’s programmes; he is in addition actively involved in engagement with policy-makers and external bodies. Since September 2014, Thomas has also been pursuing graduate study at Queen’s University Belfast.

Katy Hayward is a Senior Lecturer in Sociology in Queen’s University Belfast. Her teaching, research and publications use political sociology to explore key issues of conflict and change on the island of Ireland. Her recent publications include the co-edited works Nationalism, Territory, and Organized Violence (with Niall Ó Dochartaigh, 2013), Political Discourse and Conflict Resolution: Debating Peace in Northern Ireland (with Catherine O’Donnell, 2011), and The Europeanization of Party Politics in Ireland (with Mary C. Murphy, 2010). She has been a Board member of the Centre for Cross Border Studies since 2012.

Andreas Kiefer is Secretary General of the Congress of Local and Regional Authorities of the Council of Europe. He studied Law and Economics at the Universities of Salzburg and Linz and holds a doctorate of Law. After his studies he worked as Chef de Cabinet of Land Salzburg’s Vice-president and later President Hans Katschthaler (1984 – 1995). Andreas Kiefer was Director of the European Affairs Service of Land Salzburg regional government from 1996 until 2010, and was the first national co-ordinator of the Austrian delegation to the Committee of the Regions (1995 -1996). In terms of concrete cross-border co-operation, he played a key role in establishing the EuRegio Salzburg - Berchtesgadener Land - Traunstein in 1995 with nearly 100 municipalities. In 2009, he was elected vice-president of the Council of Europe’s Committee of Experts on local and regional government institutions and co-operation.
Philip McDonagh is an economist with 40 years’ of experience of researching the Northern Ireland economy. For most of his career he worked for PricewaterhouseCoopers where he led teams carrying out studies on a range of projects and programmes, including the Dublin Belfast Economic Corridor Feasibility Study for the two governments, the Study of Obstacles to Cross Border Mobility for the North South Ministerial Council and on evaluations of the Ireland-Northern Ireland INTERREG Programmes. He has also worked on cross-border programmes and projects within the EU, including a study for the Commission on ‘Managing Mobility’. Since retiring from PwC he has continued to work as an economic adviser, most recently with Maureen O’Reilly on the CCBS ‘Towards a Border Development Zone’ project. He holds public appointments as Chair of the NI Statistics Advisory Committee and as a Charity Commissioner for Northern Ireland and is an Associate Adviser with the Strategic Investment Board.

Maureen O’Reilly is an independent economist with more than 20 years’ experience in economic research, briefing, policy evaluation and statistical analysis. She has spent a large part of her career in academic research and has lectured in economics with the Open University. She is currently acting in an advisory role to the Strategic Investment Board. Maureen has worked extensively across a range of research areas including trade, enterprise, inward investment and business finance. A cross-border dimension has been built into all aspects of this research. Maureen worked with Philip McDonagh on the CCBS ‘Towards a Border Development Zone’ project, specifically on the ‘Overall Strategy and Structure’ scoping study along with a study into ‘SMEs with Export Potential’. Maureen was asked to present the findings of the SME research at the MOT European Conference on ‘Integrated Economic Development of Cross Border Territories’ which took place in Paris in April 2014.

Anthony Soares is the Research and Policy Manager at the Centre for Cross Border Studies. His role includes the development and advocacy of policies at regional, national and European levels that support sustainable cross-border and transnational cooperation. He has also been leading CCBS’s contribution to a European collaborative effort (through the Transfrontier Euro-Institut Network) to produce a Toolkit for Intercultural/Cross-Border Project Management, as well as the development of two further toolkits: one on cross-border budget management, and the other on cross-border evaluation. Previously, Anthony was the Director

and founder of the Postcolonial Research Forum at Queen’s University Belfast, where he was also the coordinator of the BA in Spanish and Portuguese Studies. During his time there, he authored a range of publications focusing on the development of national identities and the process of nation-building in the context of the Portuguese-speaking world.

**Ruth Taillon** has been Director of the Centre for Cross Border Studies since June 2013. Prior to her appointment as Director, she held the post of Deputy Director (Research) from 2009 to 2013. Ruth Taillon has many years’ experience as a researcher and evaluator working with a range of public and community-based organisations in both jurisdictions. Prior to joining CCBS, Ruth was Research Coordinator for Border Action, working on European funding programmes Peace and INTERREG. She has extensive experience with the voluntary and community sector and was Director of the West Belfast Economic Forum and involved with the management of a number of community-based initiatives throughout the 1990s. She has also worked as an independent research and evaluation consultant, specialising in gender, equality, and peace and conflict issues. Ruth has also written and lectured extensively on Irish women’s history, about which she has a strong personal interest.