



## Commission creates forum of experts to overcome cross border obstacles

Brussels, 20 September 2017

**To unlock the full economic potential of EU border regions, home to 150 million citizens, the Commission launches today the "Border Focal Point". It provides tailored support to regions to help them break down barriers to jobs and investments.**

For businesses, workers and students, navigating between different administrative and legal systems remains complex and costly. In line with President Juncker's call to ensure fairness in our [single market](#) in his [2017 State of the Union](#) speech, the Border Focal Point will help border regions cooperate better with a set of concrete actions.

It will contribute to (1) improving access to jobs, (2) to services such as health care and public transport systems and (3) to facilitating business across the border.

This initiative is part of a wider [Communication](#) on "Boosting growth and cohesion in EU border regions", with a set of new actions and a list of ongoing initiatives, to help EU border regions grow faster and ever closer.

Commissioner for Regional Policy Corina **Crețu** said: «Over a quarter of Europe's wealth is produced in its border regions but their full economic potential remains untapped. We are looking at a gold mine of opportunities, just waiting to be explored. The Commission will provide tailored support to these regions, for the direct benefit of their inhabitants.»

The Border Focal Point will consist of Commission experts in cross border issues, who will offer advice to national and regional authorities, by gathering and sharing good practices through **the creation of a new EU-wide online network.**

### **Better access to jobs**

2 million workers and students already commute daily or weekly across the border. To help people find a job across the border, the Border Focal Point will support regions looking to deepen their cooperation. They can get advice on mutual recognition of qualifications, joint study programmes or coaching services for entrepreneurs.

The Border Focal Point will centralise information on good practices in the field of cross border employment services, such as the [joint network](#) created by Spain's Galicia and the Northern region of Portugal and supported by the EU's job mobility portal [EURES](#).

In doing so, the Border Focal Point can contribute to the setting-up of the future [European Labour Authority](#) announced by President Juncker in the [2017 State of the Union](#) address, in order to strengthen cooperation between labour market authorities at all levels better manage cross-border situations.

### **Better access to public services**

To make border regions more attractive and more inclusive in terms of public services, the Border Focal Point will:

- Map existing **cross border healthcare facilities**, such as the [cross border health care zones](#) on the Franco-Belgian border.
- Study **missing rail links** along internal borders, for more efficient cross border public transport services.

### **Doing business across the border**

The Border Focal Point will stimulate dialogue on cross border issues via the online network.

Upon request, Border Focal Point experts will provide support for a greater alignment of rules for setting up businesses, share good practices from other border regions and promote an increased use of online procedures.

In addition to the creation of the Border Focal Point, the Commission will select up to **20 projects showcasing innovative solutions** to deal with cross border obstacles. A call for projects will be launched before the end of 2017.

## Next steps

The Border Focal Point will be operational as of January 2018.

In the ongoing reflection on [the future of EU finances](#), good practices gathered via the Border Focal Point will feed into the discussion on the next generation of cross border cooperation ("[interreg](#)") programmes, so they better address legal and administrative obstacles and help develop efficient cross border public services.

## More information

[Communication "Boosting Growth and Cohesion in EU border regions"](#)

[Memo: Overcoming cross border obstacles to boost growth in EU border regions](#)

[Factsheet – France and Germany: affordable tickets for local travel across the border](#)

[Factsheet – Denmark and Sweden: over the border for work, back in time for supper](#)

[Factsheet – Hungary and Slovakia: responding to emergency across the border](#)

[Factsheet – Spain and Portugal: train and qualify in your country, work in another](#)

[Factsheet – Latvia and Estonia: when the nearest hospital happens to be abroad](#)

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