



EUROBAROMETER SYNTHESIS

December 2016

*Regional and
Urban Policy*

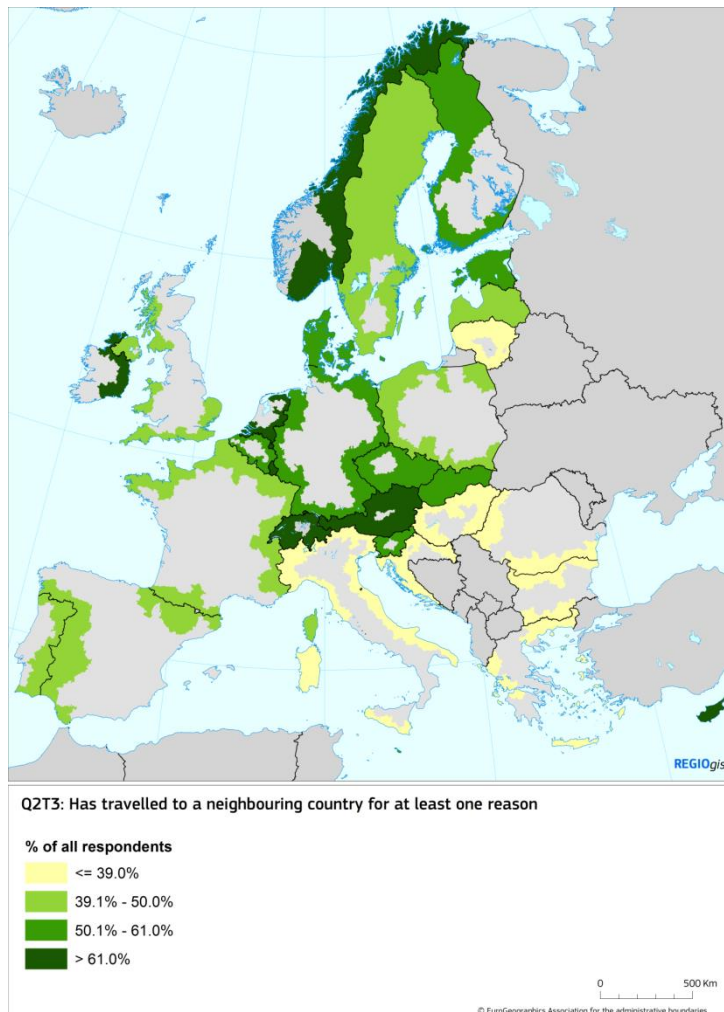
CONTEXT OF THE EUROBAROMETER

- Fieldwork carried out in June 2015
- More than 40 000 people interviewed by telephone in their mother tongue on behalf of the European Commission, DG REGIO
- Interviewees = a representative sample of the population living in cross-border regions in the EU, Switzerland and Norway
- Short questionnaire including three main groups of questions
 - o frequency and reason of travel to neighbouring regions
 - o social trust regarding people living in neighbouring regions
 - o obstacles to cross-border cooperation

TRAVELS TO A NEIGHBOURING REGION / MOBILITY

The survey asked respondents about their travels to neighbouring countries, and the reasons for these travels.

Overall result: a majority of respondents (53%) have travelled to a neighbouring country covered by an Interreg CBC programme in their region, but there are huge discrepancies. The South-East of Europe stands out, with a lower rate of people travelling to a neighbouring country.



Here are some factors which characterise border regions with the lowest rates of travels to neighbouring countries:

- The presence of natural borders, in particular sea/river borders: EL/IT, IT/HR, FR/UK, IT/MT, EL/CY, RO/BG...
- The lower purchasing power of the populations in South-Eastern Europe (travelling is costly)
- The limits of the Schengen Area: HU/RO, BG/EL, HU/HR...

Respondents who have crossed the border are most likely to have done so for tourist visits (44%). Next on the list: 26% to shop goods or services, 17% to visit friends, 11% to visit family, 11% for business purposes, and 7% to use public services.

Analysis by reason for traveling:

- **Personal motives** (visits to family + visits to friends - They are more or less the same cross-border regions at the top of both lists). These flows reflect the existence of family/personal links in the CB regions concerned, which can be explained through historical reasons (recent borders, migrations) and/or language proximity.
UK/IE, SK/CZ, EL/CY, DE/AT, FR/BE, DE/PL...
- **Consumption motives** (leisure activities including tourist visits + shopping for goods and services - Rough correspondence between the top of the list in the two categories): They are the most often cited reasons for travelling to a neighbouring country. The CB regions which stand out are located in the "European Megalopolis" (DE/NL, AT/DE, BE/NL, IT/AT, BE/DE/NL) and they are also regions where the purchasing power of the population is highest.
- **Business motives**: same categories as above + Scandinavian countries
- **Public services**: very low rates overall – people do not cross the border to benefit from public services. But here the language element is most determinant: IE/UK, AT/DE, BE/NL at the top of the list

Main points/ attempt at characterizing types:

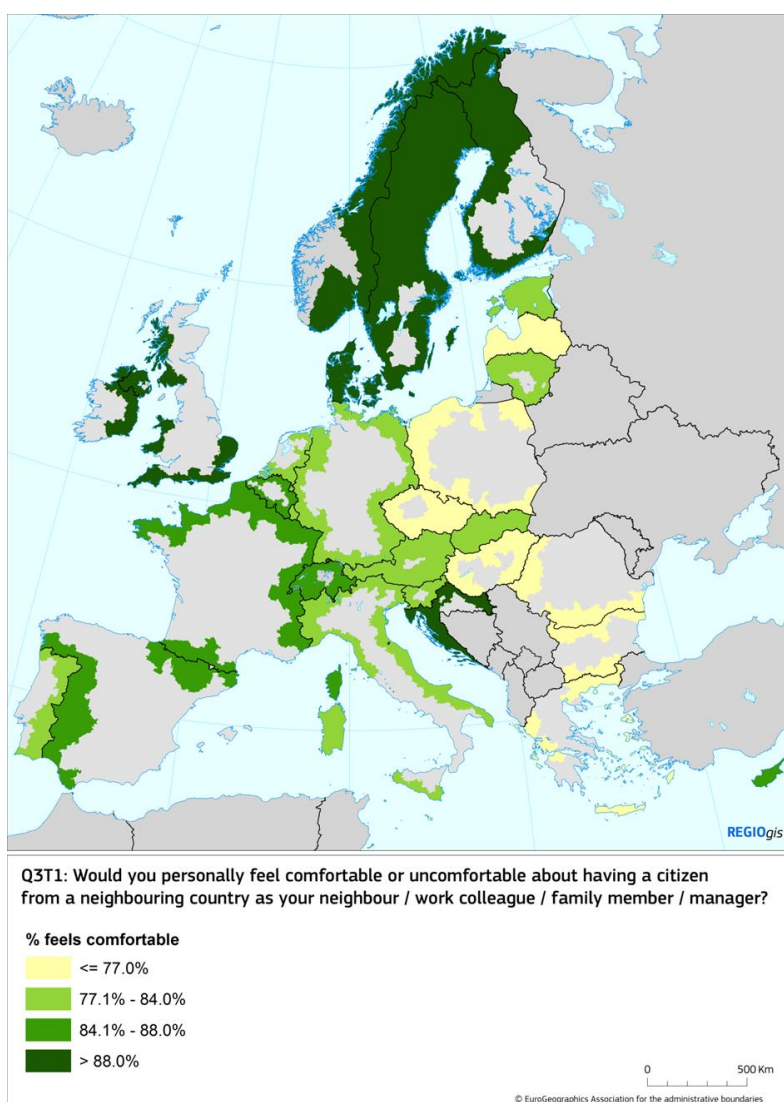
- The centre of the "European Megalopolis" (BE, NL, Northern FR, DE, Western AT, CH and Northern IT) has higher rates of travels to neighbouring countries. Multidimensional population flows (personal, business, consumption)
- South-Eastern Europe, on the contrary, has very few population flows (e.g. HR/HU, HU/RO, RO/BG, BG/EL). Possible reasons: lower purchasing power, Schengen Area.
- Regions separated by natural borders, in particular sea borders, have very little interaction in terms of population flows (IT/EL, EL/CY, IT/MT, FR/UK...)
- CB regions with historical/migration ties: relatively more travels for family/friends visits, but not always correlated with other types of travels (CZ/SK, EL/CY, DE/PL)
- Linguistic ties: very important, they are usually a very strong determinant of travels to neighbouring regions, for all types of motives

It is also necessary to stress the importance of national differences: along the same border, there are a lot of asymmetries between countries. E.g. Italy/Austria is among the borders which are most crossed (64%), but it is a lot more Austrians going to Italy (78%) than the other way around (50%).

TRUST IN PEOPLE FROM A NEIGHBOURING REGION

The survey intended to measure mutual trust across borders by asking interviewees whether they would feel comfortable having a citizen from a neighbouring country as a neighbour, a work colleague, a family member or a manager.

Overall result: 82% of respondents would feel comfortable ("somewhat" or "totally") with all situations involving a citizen from a neighbouring country. In the details, more people are reluctant to have a citizen from a neighbouring countries as a manager (11%, vs 4-6% for other categories). There is very little differences in the responses to the other 3 questions (neighbour/work colleague/family member).



The ranking of most/least "trusting" cross-border regions is approximately the same for this whole group of questions. The EL/BG border stands out with the lowest overall "mutual social trust" rate, which is almost 10 points lower than the second lowest. More generally, there is a sharp divide between borders in Western Europe and Eastern Europe (following the lines of the former Iron Curtain). The general trust is significantly lower in:

- Border regions between countries of Eastern Europe: CZ/PL, RO/BG, PL/SK, LT/PL, HU/RO, SK/HU...

- Borders between Germany and its Eastern neighbours: DE(Bavaria)/CZ, DE(Saxony)/CZ, DE(Brandenburg)/PL, DE(Saxony)/PL, DE(Mechlenburg)/PL
- Borders between Austria and its Eastern neighbours: AT/CZ, AT/SK, AT/HU
- Additional to these broad tendencies, the presence of natural borders, especially maritime borders, seems to play a role in lowering the level of mutual trust: e.g. FR/UK borders have the lowest rates of mutual trusts for Western Europe.

On the other hand, several groups of border regions score very high in all categories of social trust:

- Borders between Western European countries in general.
- Particularly among those, cultural and linguistic proximity appears to facilitate trust.
- Borders involving Scandinavian countries have particularly high levels of mutual trust, although they aren't necessarily the ones where the population travels most often to neighbouring regions (see previous section).

Again, there is also a national element to take into account: answers vary on different sides of the border, and these differences may reflect general national tendencies to trust people or not, as captured by the question on general trust ("Do you think most people can be trusted?").

→ Trust-building being a fundamental basis of CBC, one can expect that the types of CBC activities will differ according to this variable.

OBSTACLES TO CROSS-BORDER COOPERATION

Obstacles to CBC are understood as challenges for cooperation created by the presence of a border. 5 challenges were identified through the survey: 1. legal or administrative differences, 2. accessibility, 3. language differences, 4. social and economic differences, and 5. cultural differences.

Overall result: 81% of respondents identified at least one of these as a relevant obstacle in their cross-border region.

Language differences were most likely to be cited as an obstacle (57%).

- Not surprisingly, people living in borders regions sharing the same language (UK/IE, AT/DE, DE/AT/CH, EL/CY, BE/NL, FR/CH...) are least likely to mention this obstacle. Next in the list come borders where the languages pertain to the same language group.
- On the contrary, the biggest language obstacles seem to appear between Germany and its Eastern neighbours, and Austria and its Eastern neighbours, as well as in the Baltic borders.

Social and economic differences are the second most important obstacle (46%).

- This obstacle is least often mentioned in Scandinavian countries and in borders between DE and its Western neighbours.
- It is most often mentioned in borders between DE and its Eastern neighbours, AT and its Eastern neighbours, CH and its neighbours, Greece and its neighbours.

Legal and administrative differences are the third most important obstacle (45%).

- This obstacle is least often mentioned in Scandinavian and Baltic border regions.
- The borders where this obstacle is most cited often involve France, Switzerland and Italy (IT/CH, FR/UK, FR/CH, IT/AT, EL/IT, FR/DE/CH, IT/FR). This obstacle is also quite present in Eastern borders of Germany and Austria (DE/PL, AT/CZ, AT/HU, DE/CZ).

Cultural differences are significantly less mentioned as an obstacle to CBC (32%).

- This obstacle is more often mentioned in the Eastern borders of Germany and in the border regions between Poland and its neighbours (LT/PL, DE/PL, CZ/PL...). It is interesting to note that, in the latter cases, the Polish respondents cite this obstacle more often than their counterparts in the corresponding border regions.
- This obstacle is also often cited in border regions between UK and France and between UK and IE.

The accessibility obstacle is the one which comes last overall (30%).

- As could be expected, it is more strongly felt in border regions with natural obstacles, both sea (EL/IT, EL/CY, IT/FR Maritime, South Baltic, FR/UK) and mountains (IT/CH, IT/AT, FR/IT Alcotra, FR/CH).
- Next on the list are the border regions of Poland (PL/SK, CZ/PL, DE/PL) and of Scandinavian countries (SE/FI/NO).

→ Remaining obstacles for CBC are explored in further depth with the Cross-Border Review, which includes a public consultation that ran from 21 September to 21 December 2015. This consultation collected experiences and opinions from citizens living in border regions, who expressed their views on how to help overcoming obstacles for cross-border cooperation.

Legal and administrative barriers are seen as the most relevant border obstacle (53% of respondents), just before language barriers (38%) and difficult physical access (32%). Legal and administrative obstacles cover issues such as the lack of recognition of education and qualifications, differences in social security, pension and taxation systems, roaming charges or geo-blocking.

Solutions suggested by the respondents to overcome this main obstacle include, among other:

- Harmonize the implementation of EU regulatory arrangements and offer more flexibility regarding the implementation of regional legislation in border regions.
- Develop cross-border cooperation structures such as Euroregions and ECTCs.
- Promote the exchange of information and documents between local administrations to shorten administrative procedures.
- Communicate better on the opportunities on the other side of the border, through awareness-raising campaigns, dedicated multi-lingual webpages and so on.

Overall the majority of the respondents see the border as an opportunity (66%) and not as an obstacle (14%). Public awareness on cross-border cooperation has been rising these past few years and most of the respondents (66%) consider that cross-border initiatives, and especially Interreg, have been a positive boost for their region.

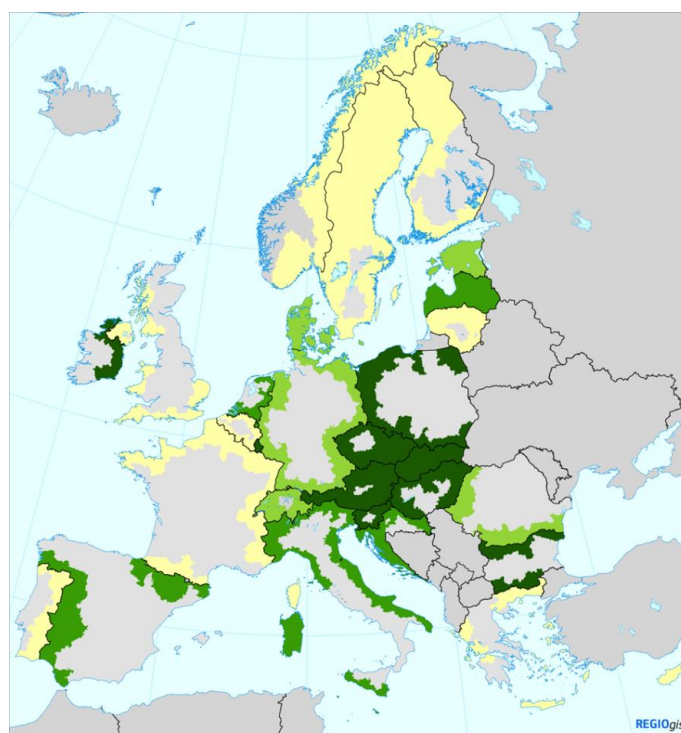
AWARENESS OF EU REGIONAL POLICY-FUNDED CBC ACTIVITIES

The survey required the interviewees to say whether they had heard about the existence of EU funded CBC activities in their regions.

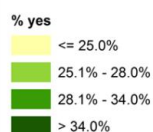
Overall results: Less than one third of respondents are aware of EU-funded CBC activities.

In detail:

- Divides are by countries rather than by cross-border regions only: some countries as a whole are more/less aware of EU-funded activities.
- Overall there seems to be less awareness on maritime borders.
- In countries which joined the EU more recently, or which benefitted massively from EU funding relatively recently, people seem to be more aware of EU-funded CBC activities.
- This map seems to be the opposite of the map representing mutual trust. In other terms, awareness of EU-funded CBC activities is higher in cross-border regions where trust is lower.
→ Higher expectations about EU programmes in regions where the basis for CBC is weaker ?



Q1: Have you heard about any EU funded cross-border cooperation activities in the region where you live?



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