



Alliance of Liberals and Democrats for **Europe**  
Alliance des Démocrates et des Libéraux pour l'**Europe**

## **ADLE seminar**

### **"Cross-border cooperation: improving regional development and cohesion in Bulgaria, Romania and Hungary"**

**Hosted by MEPs Ms Raeva, Mrs Manescu and Mr Szent-Iványi**

**11 November 2008**

**European Parliament, room ASP A3G-3, Brussels**

## **CONCLUSIONS**

The seminar was a great success and was attended by over 140 delegates. In addition to the presence of MEPs from various parliamentary committees as well as representatives from the European Commission, Member States, Council of Europe, local and regional representations, media, over 60 local representatives and mayors of the cities located at the borders of the three countries participated to the meeting.

The aim of the seminar was to bring attention to the cross-border social, economic and cultural cooperation between the cities located across the border of the three countries. The first panel of the seminar focused on cross-border projects related to agriculture, environment, economy, transport and infrastructure. The second panel discussed socio-cultural cooperation and the future of cross-border projects between the three countries.

A number of conclusions can be drawn from the discussions:

⇒ With the support of joint strategies and development programmes, the cross-border cooperation process can contribute to a better regional development and cohesion;

⇒ Cross-border cooperation provides an opportunity for regions across the borders work well. There are common problems across both sides of the border. However, common solution can be found to common problems: "Together we can do more!"

⇒ Best practices need better promotion. Commitment of political leaders is needed as is the involvement of the economic and social actors. In addition, cross-border cooperation provides small companies with the possibility of clustering;

⇒ Cross-border cooperation between the three countries and the Balkan countries (e.g. Serbia) is also an important peace and confidence building mechanism. Small investments (stabilising peace through cross-border cooperation) can therefore bring great results.

⇒ According to the European Commission, the South-Central Eastern European countries (Bulgaria, Romania, Hungary and neighbouring countries outside the EU) are front-runners in the area of cross-border cooperation. The cooperation has brought good results (more than in the EU15-countries). The reasons for this are: a keen interest in cross-border cooperation; involvement of leading politicians; plenty media attention). Furthermore, the Black Sea and Danube strategies are moving forward on the cross-border cooperation agenda (post-2013).

⇒ There is still a lot to be done in order to improve communication channels and implementation of cross-border projects.