Trnava Self-Governing Region
Federal Province of Burgenland
City of Bratislava
co-operation focus Human Capital
Summit Győr I A Region Without Limits I May 2011
Summit Brno I Knowledge Region
60 universities & colleges
of higher education
centrope Future Vision 2015
Kittsee Declaration 2003
2 national capitals
City of Győr
City of Eisenstadt
6.5 million inhabitants
Federal Province of Lower Austria
St. Pölten Memorandum 2005
3 international airports
co-operation focus Spatial Integration
informed
Summit
Infrastruclure Needs Assessment
Infrastructure Needs Assessment
Summit
strategy
2013
+

Introduction

centrope has gone a long way since its inception in 2003. Where there once were countries within and outside the EU, foregone business opportunities and closed labour markets, congested roads and passport controls, now we find a common economic space with a level playing field for all sides, full labour mobility, less currency confusion, new highways and dense public transport services. In the everyday life of citizens, easy and hassle-free access to culture, leisure and shopping across the border comes as a matter of course. Politicians and public officials from the centrope partner regions and cities meet regularly to discuss and decide on concrete activities that will further deepen multilateral collaboration in the quadrangle.

The centrope Strategy 2013+ is the result of this co-operation at eye level, of a year-long development and consultation process that took place in the context of the centrope capacity project made possible with EU support. The Strategy’s main value lies in a common understanding of the overarching and long-term aims of our co-operation, embodied in its various parts – what centrope stands for and what we want to achieve in the years to come.

With this strategy, we emphasise our commitment to a broad collaboration that extends from research and innovation to human capital development, spatial integration as well as culture and tourism. In all these areas, we agree on a set of shared goals and support a range of suggestions of how to concretise these ambitions through projects or initiatives.

More than anything else, however, the Strategy underlines the vision for our common region which has inspired centrope ever since its launch – the vision of a co-operation that equally generates benefits for our citizens and the world at large. For the inhabitants of centrope, this means gains through greater prosperity, sustainability and convenience; for Europe and beyond, it stands for benefits in the guise of an integrated, highly developed and dynamic gateway region at the very heart of the continent. We are convinced that this is an ambition well worth to be continued and deepened.

The Governors, Presidents and Mayors of the centrope partner regions and cities
centrope vision: a common region that is...

... the key promoter of co-operation and integration among our four countries, a forum of regions and cities that take responsibility for balanced development irrespective of borders, and a bridge between our citizens.

... a hub for Central Europe that connects the Middle Danube with the continent’s economic and population centres and brings Europe closer together by acting as a swift and efficient corridor region.

... a source of additional growth, employment and prosperity through a truly common cross-border market, a key to unlock the potentials of the knowledge economy, and an opportunity to tackle major societal challenges together.

... a laboratory for the future of Europe at the crossroads of four EU Member States, a model for a Europe that is confident and growing together, and a spearhead for deeper co-operation in the Danube Basin.
... an access point for the world into Central Europe, from where markets, people and destinations are within easy reach, and where a wealth of skills and inter-cultural knowledge on the wider region are available.

... an international and open-minded region with high quality of life, where people from around the globe are welcome and find opportunities to live, work, learn invent and investigate.

... a mosaic of cultures and languages, where a common heritage feeds into a vibrant, cross-fertilising cultural life that combines achievements of worldwide renown with vital contemporary artistic production.

... a meeting-place for people, businesses and organisations as well as a market place for ideas and innovations, well-prepared to host international conventions, fairs, negotiations and major events.

... a constellation of diverse landscapes, whose rich and varied natural endowment is transformed into a resource for sustainable development and growth based on green technologies and carbon-free forms of energy.
Knowledge Region
The challenges posed by the knowledge society are the same for all centrope partners: knowledge and its efficient utilisation have become key to competitiveness and economic dynamism. Thus policies for growth and employment must increasingly be geared towards research and innovation.

Co-operation ventures in the fields of science and higher education, improved ways of know-how transfer between research and industry as well as the promotion of entrepreneurial innovation contribute directly to the emergence of new technology and research clusters.

As cross-border co-operation can pool existing potentials and become a catalyst for the influx of scientists, students, R&D-oriented enterprises and capital, the centrope partners strive to shape the transition towards a knowledge-based economy together.
centrope objectives 2013+

A knowledge location of global visibility

centrope – a region where research and development strengths are pooled and furthered in co-ordinated fashion to create a stable knowledge location of global visibility and significance as an engine of smart, innovation-driven and technology-oriented economic growth.

A shared strategic approach towards the knowledge region centrope

centrope – a region where partners discuss their respective regional research and innovation strategies and find common ground on priorities, complementary development and co-ordinated allocation of means in order to achieve competitive science and technology specialisations.

A knowledge region buttressed by its own financial means

centrope – a region where cross-border science and innovation co-operation may draw on autonomous means to initiate, nurture and enhance key projects for the common knowledge region through a dedicated funding facility.
centrope strategies & measures 2013+

centrope research, technology and innovation foresight

A transregional innovation foresight process will kick-start a structured collaboration of RTI actors in centrope, including regional authorities, R&D intermediate bodies, universities, research institutions, national government departments as well as national research-funding bodies. The foresight will identify cross-border areas of strength and provide an institutional anchor for goal-oriented interaction between participants. It will not only look into existing research sectors of transregional significance but specifically into interdisciplinary topics that are the potential drivers of future economic growth. In addition to its substantial output, the process also is to initiate efficient RTI governance for centrope.

Strategic funding facility

Public and private actors committed to the centrope research and innovation agenda are to endow a new transregional foundation that will instigate and further projects for the centrope knowledge region. Contributors are to include centrope partners, national government agencies or departments as well as businesses – from big transnational companies to resident SMEs – with a stake in the region. The foundation would represent a permanent structure providing for much-needed continuity and the indispensable link with the private sector. Last but not least, it could attract additional EU funding to the region by acting as the carrier organisation of RTI-related projects under various European programmes.

Life science initiative

Life sciences and biotechnologies are an area with very high transregional potential. Mutual access to infrastructure and facility sharing will be at the core of the initiative. Specifically, it is life science locations in Vienna, Brno/South Moravia and Lower Austria that will tap synergies through this sort of co-operation. Other efforts will strengthen networking, information sharing and matchmaking as well as databases on available research facilities and scientific competencies. Researcher mobility activities will range from summer schools to the establishment of joint degrees and graduate programmes. A dedicated management body is to further co-operation at all levels, from mobilising actors to disseminating relevant calls and coordinating applications for research projects.
Energy cluster initiative

A wide range of energy generation resources together with a diverse and innovative energy research and entrepreneurship sector are important assets for centrope. The entire region has registered a striking rise of investments in the energy sector and an inflow of companies on a high technological level. The centrope energy cluster initiative is to attain critical mass and significant cluster effects through cross-border strategic partnerships, dissemination of know-how and information, technology transfer as well as advanced training, with renewable resources and energy efficiency as crucial points of collaboration in the years to come.

Smart mobility initiative

centrope strives to emerge as a competence region for post-carbon car traffic and smart mobility, where new propulsion technologies are developed and applied, where industry and research institutions enter into partnerships that add value to production in centrope, where public authorities facilitate new fuel infrastructure and IT-based traffic management, where technology transfer and supply chains function on a cross-border basis, and where multilingual specialists and engineers are trained to work in an integrated labour market of the automotive sector. To meet this opportunity, the automotive cluster centrope will focus on e-mobility technologies, cost-effective design and innovative equipment, the broadening of the Automotive Academy model, and the introduction of additional (e-mobility) curricula and joint degree programmes, all bolstered by ongoing marketing activities.

Location marketing for the knowledge region

Regions have to compete for a maximum share of investments and consumer markets. To continue its success story as a booming FDI location, centrope is well-advised to showcase its multifaceted features as complementary strengths of a common transnational business location. The common presentation and branding of the various national/regional business and promotion agencies makes sense especially in global markets, where partner regions struggle to acquire visibility on their own. The joint promotion of centrope as a knowledge-driven business location will provide an important contribution to the sustained growth of the centrope markets and economies.
Human Capital
Education, qualification and creativity are crucial ingredients for future prosperity in a globalised world. It is a declared goal of the Central European Region to strengthen this “human capital” together through co-operation in training and skill-building measures and among educational institutions.

Moreover, the provision of full employment mobility paves the way for a truly integrated labour market in centrope. Employees can now choose among workplaces that best fit their aspirations and qualifications, and employers can freely recruit talent across the entire region. However, this calls for co-ordinated action to make the most of the potential advantages resulting from the common labour market.

As a region of opportunities that facilitates access to transregional careers and employment and adds to the human capital available to all partners, centrope helps to retain talent and attract people to live and work in and across the common region.
centrope **objectives 2013+**

**An integrated labour market**

centrope – a region where cross-border labour mobility is made easy, where an optimised balance between qualification demand and supply is struck, and where services render cross-border employment and careers more accessible, promising and attractive for the individual citizen.

**A skills base in line with the needs of a competitive region**

centrope – a region where vocational training and educational programmes geared towards shared qualification needs are available, where proficiency in the neighbours’ languages is on the rise, and where systems are in place to monitor labour demand and identify shortage skills.

**A workplace according to educational and qualification attainments**

centrope – a region where all qualifications and competencies embodied by employees from the partner countries or elsewhere can be put to use, as degrees, certificates and diplomas are mutually accepted in the labour market, and add-on qualification programmes are available.

**A common agenda for human capital development**

centrope – a region where demographic change and labour market demands are understood as common challenges and where strategies and good practices for the strengthening of the human capital base are jointly discussed to ensure their mutual compatibility and reinforcement.
centrope strategies & measures 2013+

Co-ordinated human capital strategies

centrope strives for an integrated labour market in which skills and talent can move freely to where they are most needed, and where a high level of employment is assured. To keep up with the changing demands on the individual employee in the knowledge economy, regional strategies to support skill building, further education and lifelong learning in the context of active labour market policies should be developed in a mutually beneficial way. A Human Capital Development Dialogue will establish a common framework for public administrations and other key stakeholders to share their experience and co-ordinate human capital development strategies in the region. Emphasis will be given to the consequences of demographic change and “active ageing” as a challenge both for companies and public policy.

Institutions fit for the cross-border labour market

A common labour market calls for employment services and administrations that are adept and experienced in cross-border job placement. In line with the specific needs of workers across the entire spectrum of qualification and education, information services addressing vacancies in all partner regions should be available. A well-informed and multilingual staff that is knowledgeable about the specifics of the four countries is essential. An initiative will strengthen the capability of labour market institutions both to serve citizens interested in employment across the border and to interact smoothly, thus safeguarding a frictionless transnational labour market.

Language initiative

Proficiency in the language of a neighbouring country is decisive for entering the cross-border labour market. Even more importantly, it is the key to true intercultural knowledge and mutual understanding. A broad initiative will promote learning of the neighbours’ languages and create new opportunities to do so. Specifically, the educational institutions associated with the partner regions are to enlarge their offers and to increase their cross-border exchange and partnerships. Proficiency in foreign languages – be it a neighbouring country’s language or English – is a top issue for lifelong learning; thus not only schools but also vocational education institutions should be involved in the initiative.
Virtual cross-border job fair

Promoting career opportunities in centrope and raising the attractiveness of the cross-border region as a place to work and live for young professionals is a crucial step for achieving a more integrated labour market. The increased presence of centrope at job fairs seems especially promising with regard to recruiting more highly skilled persons. A virtual cross-border job fair will represent an innovative way of matching labour demand and supply at lower cost by providing interactive, online access to potential employers in a virtual environment.

Network of international mobility centres

For scientists and other highly skilled persons, international mobility centres open the doors to a career abroad. They also attract human capital to come and settle in centrope through a range of services designed to render professional stays effortless and attractive. The existing mobility centres in centrope are to become actively involved in the development of cross-border strategies for research and innovation. As a result of co-operation and know-how exchange, they will be better able to improve the image of centrope as a region to live and work in and attract not only talent from abroad but also motivate former centrope citizens currently studying or working abroad to return to the region.
Spatial Integration
centrope is growing together, which invariably entails cross-border interdependencies. Throughout the region, efforts are being made to meet the demand for modern, efficient transport links as a basis for improved mutual accessibility. These investments are also decisive for establishing centrope as a premier traffic and logistics hub at the crossroads of important European transport corridors.

Low-impact, sustainable urban and spatial development likewise constitutes a core task in the coalescing Central European Region. However, effective cross-border regional development is impossible without mutual knowledge of planning systems and continued multilateral co-ordination.

centrope supports a planning and investment approach where all parties involved act in concert and, based on a shared understanding of needs and priorities, complementary objectives are simultaneously pursued on both sides of borders.
centrope objectives 2013+

A seamless and fast internal transport infrastructure

centrope – a region where all major centres will be interconnected by 2020 via an efficient, gapless high ranking rail, motorway and road infrastructure, where all cities are interlinked with a maximum travel time of 90 minutes and citizens enjoy efficient, up-to-date airports and rail terminals.

An accessible crossroads of powerful and developed European corridors

centrope – a region of excellent external accessibility that acts as a nodal point of well-developed Trans-European Transport Corridors connecting core markets in Western Europe with Eastern Europe, North Sea with Black Sea regions and the Baltic with the Adriatic.

A dense and efficient range of cross-border public transport services

centrope – a region in which commuters and citizens enjoy smooth, well-integrated and high-quality cross-border public transport services that are fit to absorb the bulk of expected growth in intraregional traffic and form the core of multimodal mobility chains.

A co-ordinated approach to regional and spatial planning

centrope – a region where regional development is not only regarded as a task of the individual regions but considered a common, transregional agenda that engages the partners in a continuous information and exchange process to co-ordinate regional and spatial development.
centrope strategies & measures 2013+

**centrope mobility management initiative**

To come to terms with the cross-border challenges in the fields of transport, mobility and infrastructure development, centrope will be given a resilient, permanent and politically supported co-ordination structure that unites expertise and continuity at an operative management level and regularly involves stakeholders and the responsible public bodies. Its activities will entail the monitoring of traffic development, agenda-setting, the initiation of new implementation partnerships, multilateral knowledge management, political co-ordination and other cross-border mobility centre functions. Thus it will play a key role in most 2013+ strategies and measures relating to co-operative spatial integration.

**Public transport initiative**

Insufficient co-ordination and harmonisation among transport service providers and authorities creates a cross-border public transport situation that is not always convenient for the users of trains or buses. The centrope Public Transport Initiative will establish a routine co-operation model that will lead to the introduction of new or improved services, additional cross-border multimodal tickets and cards, multimodal and multilingual public transport information services as well as intensified co-ordination and know-how transfer among the public transport associations of the region.
**centrope traffic infrastructure 2030 – from vision to reality**

Politically agreed by the partner regions and cities in 2012, the *centrope* Strategic Framework for Transport and Infrastructure Development in *centrope* depicts a comprehensive picture of the envisaged transport infrastructure development. Its step-by-step implementation in the coming years will provide *centrope* with the decisive boost towards a tightly integrated region of short transit, commuting and transport times. Pushing for a timely realisation of the construction and extension measures listed in the vision will be a core strategy of *centrope* involving unequivocal support for the agreed priorities as well as common – bilateral or transnational – lobbying vis-à-vis the national and EU levels.

**Joint planning instruments**

A range of joint planning instruments will be developed and implemented in order to facilitate harmonised spatial development. They are to include a *centrope* traffic model, periodical mobility surveys and surveys on the development of cross-border traffic, market analyses for cross-border public transport demand, an advanced *centrope* statistical observatory, GIS-based monitoring of territorial development trends and an urban audit indicator system.
Culture & Tourism
Cultural exchange and co-operation in the arts are particularly effective ways for bringing citizens closer together. Drawing on historical ties and a shared heritage in centrope, they reinforce cross-border integration by building concrete bridges between people and creating identity.

Moreover, the rich cultural life of the Central European Region can become the foundation for a form of tourism that looks at the region as a whole and represents a significant economic and employment factor.

centrope renders attractions and services mutually better accessible, makes the cultural heritage of the neighbours more visible, co-ordinates the development of tourism infrastructure and markets centrope as a region for cultural and leisure tourism.
centrope objectives 2013+

A flourishing cross-border tourism sector

A region where citizens discover their neighbours’ cultural life and heritage, indulge in leisure opportunities across the border and enjoy the region’s numerous nature retreats, and where cross-border short-trip tourism thrives due to both higher awareness of the attractions of the region and improved services.

An additional drawing card for international visitors

centrope – a region that is acquiring an international reputation as the attractive surroundings of major destinations in centrope, well worth a visit of discovery “on the side” during a stay and easily accessible by means of specially dedicated services for international tourists.

A high-quality special-interest destination

centrope – a region where promising tourism growth sectors are pursued in co-ordinated fashion to gain from a deeper market and more attractive products, and which is quickly building a reputation as a high-quality special-interest destination in a number of thematic areas with cross-border appeal.
centrope strategies & measures 2013+

centrope card

A centrope card valid throughout the region will entitle holders to reduced admission fees, e.g. to museums, historical monuments and national parks as well as a variety of events and leisure activities. Supplementary information tools (website, booklet, etc.) will contain additional information on sights, such as opening hours, special exhibitions or a calendar of events. In this way, the card will raise awareness for centrope as a short-trip destination among the population at large, boost increased co-operation within the tourism industry and tourist boards across the region, and kick-start joint marketing activities. The card will be developed as a follow-up to the Family Cards currently in use in a number of partner regions.

Thematic clusters: wine, spas, Baroque or fin-de-siècle

Thematic clusters around specific themes hold the biggest potential for increased cross-border tourism. Comprehensive tourism offers – e.g. for wellness and spas, wine and cuisine or recreation and sports – are to be developed under the centrope brand. There exist particularly good preconditions for combined holiday packages and recreation offers in the cross-border national park areas. With regard to joint development and marketing, centrope tourism clusters will be based on the sector-specific, institutionalised co-operation of private, public and semi-public actors.

centrope tourism online tool & services

Launched in 2012, the internet portal www.tourcentrope.eu represents a starting-point for the intensified marketing of centrope as a joint destination. With its focus on bike tourism and cycling routes, it is a model of how to combine a service for specific target groups with the marketing of cultural events, heritage sights, nature landscapes, museums, galleries, etc. Modular extensions of the tool might include thematic offers – e.g. addressing wellness and spa tourism, regional gastronomic specialities or winegrowing – as well as access to accommodation and other services.
Ride & bike, etc. – combined tourism offers

centrope can emerge as a model region for sustainable ecotourism due to a wide range of packages combining travel by rail, boat, bike or e-bike if it is safeguarded that these ways of discovering the region are organised seamlessly and hassle-free and provide discounts as special incentives. Such offers will be possible through intensified co-operation among public transport and other specialised service providers in the region and must be buttressed by the support of local tourist boards and tourism enterprises aiming to capitalise on this growing type of tourism.

centrope seal of quality

A centrope seal of quality will be developed and assigned to those tourism enterprises (hotels, restaurants,...) that meet a certain set of quality criteria regarding service delivery and product standards. The seal will emphasise that visitors from neighbouring countries are particularly welcome – with their language being spoken as well – and that certain defined standards can be expected. For tourists, the seal will make it easier to find appropriate services and accommodation for a fulfilling and enjoyable stay. For tourism enterprises, it will provide a benchmark for quality development and a tool to strengthen competitiveness, efficiency and employment.
Our future co-operation

The centrope partnership may look back on almost a decade of history culminating in the centrope capacity project, which for the first time established co-operation structures that allow for the continuous collaboration of all partner cities and regions at eye-level. The experience of the past ten years clearly shows the positive effects of continuity in the joint development and implementation of co-operation agendas, stable long-term partner networks and smart multi-level co-ordination.

The successful conclusion of the centrope capacity project calls for renewed efforts to ensure the sustainability of the centrope governance model. Thus the partners will use this opportunity to re-sharpen strategic perspectives and readjust the structures, instruments and modes of co-operation. Previous achievements shall be used as a basis from which to launch a broad growth process that involves both public and private stakeholders.
Notwithstanding the challenging environment until the start of the next EU programme period from 2014 to 2020, the centrope partners have agreed to focus on three core agendas in the immediate future:

- **Co-ordination, political lobbying & communication.** The established political framework will be continued with regular summit meetings of the centrope Board of governors, presidents and mayors. These gatherings will ensure regular co-ordination at the top political level and take place under an annually rotating presidency. An administrative centrope steering structure and a comprehensive management structure comprising transnational co-ordination and decentralised tasks within the partner countries will underscore the co-operation routine attained among the partners. A stakeholder platform is to initiate and mobilise new public-private partnerships for the development of the common region. This overall co-operation framework will also provide for public visibility, networking at EU level and the marketing of centrope as an attractive business location.

- **centrope Mobility Management.** With their high relevance for the entire region, improved mutual accessibility, public transport and infrastructure development represent top issues for co-operation in the quadrangle. Building on the high dynamics of current efforts in this field, the partners will forge ahead with the centrope Mobility Management flagship initiative. New co-ordination structures will include a High-level Administrative Board linked to the political centrope process plus the necessary operative capacities to further the cross-border mobility agenda.

- **Thematic co-operation.** Specific commitments of the partners according to individual priorities may cover the full co-operation spectrum from research and development, technology transfer and innovation to cross-border cluster initiatives, labour market monitoring and qualification initiatives, transnational spatial planning or tourism destination development and marketing. In each case, the centrope partners will decide on the co-ordinating lead role and the means to be earmarked for the co-operation initiative at hand.

With the launch of a new period of EU cohesion policy in 2014 and the associated co-funding opportunities, the road will be clear for the structured implementation of the full centrope Strategy 2013+ as outlined in this brochure. It is the declared goal of the partner regions and cities to follow the Strategy’s ambitions throughout the upcoming programming process and to pursue the projects and initiatives of the centrope Strategy 2013+ until the end of the decade.
centrope partners

Austria
- Federal Province of Burgenland
- Federal Province of Lower Austria
- Federal Province and City of Vienna
- City of Eisenstadt
- City of St. Pölten

Czech Republic
- South Moravian Region
- City of Brno
- Vysočina Region (observer)

Hungary
- Győr-Moson-Sopron County
- Vas County
- City of Győr
- City of Sopron
- City of Szombathely

Slovakia
- Bratislava Self-Governing Region
- Trnava Self-Governing Region
- City of Bratislava
- City of Trnava

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City of St. Pölten
Federal Province and City of Vienna
centrope I
8 regional capital cities
May 2012
City of Szombathely
Tourism Portal www.tourcentrope.com
4 countries
City of Sopron
Bratislava Self-Governing Region
co-operation focus Culture & Tourism
Vienna Memorandum 2006
16 partner regions and cities
Vysočina Region (observer)
Pamhagen
Pamhagen centrope day
Connected & Inspired I October 2012
City of Trnava
Győr-Moson-Sopron County
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