**18/02/2023**

**Sofia, Bulgaria**

**Greetings Mr. Vassilis Xenos – Gavrielis, Director of "EGTC AMPHICTYONY" at the conference on "*Territorial cross-border cooperation in southeast Europe, institutionalization and the role of financial incentives*"**

Ladies and gentlemen,

In my short greeting on behalf of the President of " EGTC AMPHICTYONY " Mr. Dimitris Argianas and the members of the Board of Directors I will start with a statement, continue with some questions and end with four suggestions. A greeting - contribution to the joint effort of matter and material development of the wider geopolitical space of the Balkans in the context of a continuous and fruitful dialogue.

**Finding:** it concerns the fact that today from Sofia the EGTC based in the Balkans, specifically Greece, are broadening their horizons with a trip to the neighborhoods of SE Europe. We are all fellow travelers on this journey; Mayors, members of ECTCs and non-members, representatives of Social Agencies, Chambers, Legal Entities and Universities. A beautiful and long journey with an EGTC vehicle. But what is this vehicle called EGTC? The EGTCs were an emblematic opinion – a proposal of the Committee of the Regions to the European Parliament and the Council which with their positive decision "turned on" the green light for the launch of a new institution (the European institution closest to the citizen) in the endless avenue of European becoming. The founding Regulation is 1082/2006 under whose mandate approximately eighty-five (85) EGTCs operate in the European Union. They came to the fore to contribute as a tool of sustainable, intangible and material development, extroversion, contributing to economic and social cohesion to the consolidation of the fact that we are all Europeans and Europe is our common home. A small stone in the new European Patriotism. The house that is built by gradually leaving time-honored prejudices to the sidelines while it rises with persistence, patience but also with a lack of Democracy and delays. With us on this Inter-regional, Cross-Border and Inter-State journey are the long-forgotten, border neighborhoods of the Member States and Europe today. An intervention in the areas where the local national authorities did not act for decades. In the neighborhoods that are still more endemic than in urban centers, phenomena such as nationalist, ethnic, political, social, economic, cultural and religious. Therefore our reason role and work must primarily be accepted by the local communities and agencies to whom we address. With the main point of reference the HUMAN. In this direction prior knowledge of the generally man-made inclusive environment in which we choose to act (Balkans - Mediterranean), respect for the natural and built environment, acceptance of the different, consistency of reasons and projects is required.

**Questions:** We must respond to this local, national and European situation with the reason, position, role and work of the EGTC. But what role do we reserve for the European citizen? How does he move into the role of active citizen, participant and co-shaper from his current role as a private individual? Its logic is decided by us for you, but without you, it must pass to the sidelines and to the mood of history.

**Suggestions:**

• The investigation – establishment of a European Interreg program exclusively for the Balkans with exclusive managers of the EGTCs

• The establishment and operation of Cross-Border Centers of permanent Intercultural dialogue under the responsibility of the EGTC

• The establishment and operation of Cross-Border Health Observatories (relevant resolution 2021/C02 of the Committee) under the responsibility of EGTC

• The joint organization of a day or conference of EGTC, Chambers and bodies of Civil Society, etc. on the subject: EGTC and the Balkans (possible location Thessaloniki)