

Arbeitsberichte der ARL 33

# BORDER FUTURES – ZUKUNFT GRENZE – AVENIR FRONTIÈRE

The future viability of cross-border cooperation

Karina Pallagst, Andrea Hartz, Beate Caesar (Eds.)



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Stefan Köhler

## PREFACE

The convergence of Europe significantly depends on whether borders can be dismantled and purposeful cooperation beyond national borders can be achieved. The special role that border regions play in this regard is currently demonstrated by the large-scale migrant flows from the Middle East and Northern Africa. Border regions are not merely the ‘periphery’ of the nations concerned and thus perhaps a particularly ‘fragile’ economic and living environment. They are also a transit area under certain circumstances, although this is ‘merely’ temporary in most cases, and generally a space of constant intercultural encounters and interactions between nations and people.

With the establishment of the European Union, policymakers have recognised the ‘hinge’ function of border areas and have thus developed successive programmes to implement cross-border cooperation in practical terms. The INTERREG programme, which is currently in its fifth generation, is a shining example for the support and focused advancement of cross-border cooperation.

As far as the tiers responsible for spatial planning and spatial development are concerned, cross-border cooperation is primarily the responsibility of the regions. The regional associations or regional planning agencies in charge of regional planning can play an essential role in this regard. They are responsible for spatial planning issues, and they design and launch cross-border regional development strategies in consultation with their contacts in the neighbouring regions. The experience gained thus far has shown that an intensification of this type of cooperation leads to specific organisational forms, which are then responsible for cross-border cooperation. Examples of this include the ‘Euroregions’ established at the western and eastern borders of Germany, the International Lake Constance Conference (*Internationale Bodensee Konferenz, IBK*) in the Lake Constance four-nation region, or the ‘Eurodistricts’. In many cases, these organisational units, like the planning associations, consciously assume the role of moderator and gather diverse stakeholders around a table; frequently, if not always, they are able to persuade them to head in the same direction.

The spatial planning policy at the federal level in the early 1990s initially attached particular importance to the metropolitan regions in regard to economic and regional development. Perhaps unintentionally, and to some extent unconsciously, the metropolitan region model reflected a rather ‘domestic’ notion of national spatial development, which initially did not include border regions or only to a marginal extent. At first, there were only a few, then later 11 metropolitan regions in Germany, which were to drive growth and innovation and ensure networking; while this approach pursued an international – and thus a cross-border – orientation, its focus was more on the metropolitan areas of other countries, and efforts were undertaken to establish links



with them. These spaces were highlighted with slogans such as ‘Metropolis – the Laboratory of Modernity’ or ‘Metropolis – the Driver of Growth’.

With the ‘Concepts and Strategies for Spatial Development in Germany’ adopted by the Conference of Ministers for Spatial Planning (*Ministerkonferenz für Raumordnung, MKRO*) in 2006, the discussions about metropolises and growth, which had merged by that time, reached their peak and also their premature end. The introduction of this ‘new’ spatial planning policy with its different and – from our current perspective – more specifically focused orientation as well as its strategy gave rise to an in-depth discussion at all tiers, from the federal spatial planning level to federal state spatial planning and regional planning. This debate was not limited to planning practice: beyond practical approaches, it also spanned policymaking and theory, and drove the discussion right into society itself. Three strands of discussion can be discerned.

The first level of debate addressed the role and tasks of spatial planning (in the sense of *Raumordnung* and of *Raumplanung*) and here in particular the issue of the (remaining) relevance of the mandate of the ‘convergence of living standards in all regions of the country’. A second level of debate concerned whether sustainable spatial development, hence also that of metropolitan regions, would have to be subject to the mandate of growth in the first place. A third level of debate finally addressed the question of where and how the border regions are reflected in the guiding principles, and which role these areas should play or which role should be allocated to them in future.

In the context of this last discussion and the consideration of the significance of border regions, it was possible to work towards the adoption of a ‘concretisation and further development of the guiding principles for spatial development in Germany’ by the Conference of Ministers for Spatial Planning in 2010. This was achieved through various activities and initiatives, in particular on the part of the Advisory Board at the then Federal Ministry of Transport, Construction and Urban Development (*BMVBS*). The Conference of Ministers for Spatial Planning thus recognised the significance of border regions – they are referred to in this regard as cross-border metropolitan zones of influence – and accorded them a key role in the concept of the European metropolitan regions in Germany. They list the SaarLorLux Greater Region, the MeuseRhine Euroregion, the Upper Rhine and the Lake Constance region as specific examples of such zones of influence.

The ARL, too, has addressed the matter of border regions in numerous ways in past years and decades. A broad range of publications in the various publication series as well as in-depth considerations at conferences and events are a clear testimony to this interest. Most recently, the plenary session in Karlsruhe in 2014 hosted a two-day, in-depth discussion of European Territorial Cooperation.

Within the ARL, the Academy’s seven Regional Working Groups play a particular role in this regard, as each one of them is ‘located’ at at least one or several of Germany’s external borders. The Regional Working Groups have examined and continue to examine at comparatively short intervals the issues, problems and tasks of cross-border cooperation either in the form of:

- > a general spatial planning or planning approach or from the viewpoint of sectoral planning or individual sectoral topics,
- > comprehensive perspectives on different approaches or on the basis of individual examples,
- > practice-oriented or scientific/theoretical observation and analysis.

The Hesse/Rhineland-Palatinate/Saarland Regional Working Group decided in 2013 to set up a Subsection on ‘Border Futures – the future viability of cross-border cooperation’. This Subsection is headed by Prof. Dr.-Ing. Karina Pallagst of the Department International Planning Systems at the TU Kaiserslautern. Under her capable and knowledgeable leadership, the Subsection has prepared a well-received, broad and comprehensive volume on cross-border cooperation based on the example of the SaarLorLux Greater Region and on neighbouring metropolitan zones of influence (e.g. Upper Rhine/PAMINA).

The papers in this publication examine the status quo of issues ranging from federal spatial planning (*Bundesraumordnung*) to the SaarLorLux Greater Region – from a theoretical perspective as well as in the context of the various fields of action and specific sectoral remits – and take a close look at the problems and pending issues requiring resolution in cross-border cooperation. In its present format, this collection of individual papers, which are both scientific and practical in nature, reflects the current ‘state of the art’ on the subject of cross-border cooperation. The individual papers reveal the current standing of cross-border cooperation in political and specific planning terms, the role it currently plays, the contribution it can make to the dismantling of borders and barriers and the issues or problems that still have to be addressed in the near or more distant future.

The Hesse/Rhineland-Palatinate/Saarland Regional Working Group has thus made an important contribution towards demonstrating the need for territorial cooperation and has certainly provided useful stimuli for the work of the various groups of local stakeholders. The work of the Academy in general as well as the work of other Regional Working Groups will surely benefit significantly from the results.

Dr.-Ing. **Stefan Köhler**, Vice President of the ARL

Karina Pallagst, Andrea Hartz, Beate Caesar

## **BORDER FUTURES – CROSS-BORDER COOPERATION IN THE TERRITORY OF THE HESSE/RHINELAND-PALATINATE/ SAARLAND REGIONAL WORKING GROUP**

### **Contents**

- 1 Why Border Futures?
  - 2 Research objectives and research questions
  - 3 Methodology, focus and terminology
  - 4 Brief outline of the individual papers
- References

### **Abstract**

The aim of the Border Futures Subsection was to shed light on the development of cross-border cooperation in the territory of the Hesse/Rhineland-Palatinate/Saarland Regional Working Group and to indicate future development paths. This paper introduces the focal points of the research and the approach taken, clarifies the terminology and provides an overview of the papers in this volume.

### **Keywords**

Cross-border cooperation – spatial planning – spatial development – border area – border region

## 1 Why Border Futures?

Cross-border cooperation is by no means a new subject for the ARL Regional Working Group – quite the contrary: there is a long tradition of exploring cross-border issues of spatial development, which is enriched by a broad range of diverse experience (Spehl 1983; Kistenmacher/Maier 1992). The federal states of Rhineland-Palatinate and Saarland border directly on France, Luxembourg and Belgium; cross-border cooperation has been part of everyday political life for decades. Administrative border regions like the Greater Region<sup>1</sup> or the Upper Rhine region extend far beyond the immediate border areas. While the institutional structures for cooperation were established through multilateral treaties and organisational forms, the general context of cross-border cooperation has changed in line with changing social challenges.

New needs resulting from a new energy policy and demographic change supplement established fields of action, such as mobility and commuter flows or economic and structural transformation processes. Likewise, increasing spatial polarisation trends are apparent (ESPON/University of Luxembourg 2010), which influence issues of metropolisation as well as the provision of public services in rural districts, thus affecting the further development and future viability of such border areas.

Cross-border cooperation is significantly shaped by European cohesion policy, which embarked on a new programme period in 2014. This means a new orientation for cross-border cooperation and its projects and programmes (BBSR [Federal Institute for Research on Building, Urban Affairs and Spatial Development] 2012). In addition, there are more recent options for planning and steering instruments, e.g. through the establishment of European Groupings of Territorial Cooperation (EGTC) (Caesar 2015), the specific design of which is, however, still unclear in many respects.

The European metropolisation trends, and the guiding principles for spatial development in Germany adopted in 2006, which established the notion of metropolitan regions as a new level within the urban system in Germany, provided an impetus for a revision of the spatial development policy in the border regions. This gave rise, with the support of the Federation in the context of two Model Projects for Spatial Planning, to the Metropolitan Border Regions Initiative Group (2016): The *IMeG* (Metropolitan Border Regions Initiative Group) strives to better position border regions with intense interaction across national borders and with a high potential for growth and innovation on the national and European level.

In addition to the practical instruments of cross-border cooperation, greater importance is attached to the stakeholder level.

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1 The 'Greater Region' abbreviation refers to the 'Großregion Saarland – Lorraine – Luxembourg – Rheinland-Pfalz – Région Wallonne – Communauté Française de Belgique und Deutschsprachige Gemeinschaft Belgiens' (official designation) [translated as Greater Region Saarland – Lorraine – Luxembourg – Rhineland-Palatinate – the Walloon Region – the French Community of Belgium and the German-speaking Community of Belgium].

## **2 Research objectives and research questions**

The aim of the Border Futures Subsection was to shed light on cross-border cooperation in practice with recent research relevant to planning in border regions in the European context. The intention was to make the results of the research usable for the border areas within the territorial remit of the Regional Working Group and to make the practical experience gained in cross-border cooperation within the territory of the Regional Working Group available for a broader discussion on the further development of cross-border cooperation. The orientation of sustainable cross-border governance, new spatial functions and new planning instruments play a role here, as do the opportunities provided by the current EU structural policy programming period for border areas. The focus is on the following issues:

- 1 Which theoretical discourses current in border area research are relevant for border areas, and what are their implications for border areas within the territorial remit of the Regional Working Group?
- 2 Which concepts and strategies are being elaborated for the territorial development of border areas and regions, and are they consistent with current planning (e.g. metropolitan border regions, habits of cross-border workers)? Which insights can be gleaned from them for the border areas within the territorial remit of the Regional Working Group?
- 3 Which fields of action are relevant for the border areas given the tensions between individual problem areas (e.g. providing public services, labour markets, transport) as well as new challenges (e.g. the energy transition, cultural heritage)?
- 4 Which opportunities for and obstacles to inclusive territorial development arise from the specific situation in border regions, and how can they be exploited or overcome?
- 5 Which recommendations for action can be formulated for viable cross-border cooperation and territorial development in border areas in the future with specific consideration of the situation in the territorial remit of the Regional Working Group?

## **3 Methodology, focus and terminology**

In line with the objective of the Academy, the detailed discussions between academics and practitioners in this field played a decisive role in formulating common issues, in the collaborative approach to the subjects and the in-depth analysis of select fields of action.

The Subsection was composed of members of the Hesse/Rhineland-Palatinate/Saarland Regional Working Group at the ARL and included additional representatives from academe and practice (from the relevant border areas). The members of the Subsection examined how cross-border cooperation works in practice, the current

challenges it faces and the insights gained from this in an intensive expert discussion spanning a period of two years. In addition to the regular meetings, a Planners' Forum initiated by the Regional Working Group presented significant interim results and discussed them with a broader body of experts.

At the very outset, there was a consensus that the Subsection could not comprehensively cover all issues relating to cross-border cooperation due to the complexity of the topic; to attempt to do so would have been beyond the group's scope and capacity. Hence, the topics to be treated were defined and delineated in a kick-off meeting at the start of the work process, meaning this publication does not claim to be exhaustive.

In addition, it was agreed that the border areas to be studied should fall within the territorial remit of the Regional Working Group to the greatest extent possible. The Greater Region and the Upper Rhine region were thus identified as the principal research areas, which further focused the approach. However, it should also be noted that border areas have different characteristics and are thus not readily comparable in their (projected future) development. This means that the results of this study must be viewed in the light of the specific starting points and general conditions of the border areas investigated here (see the paper by Andrea Hartz and Beate Caesar in this volume).

It also became apparent that the heterogeneity of cross-border cooperation – if it is to be described and examined as a common field of research – would require some terminological clarifications and the determination of shared anchor points, which are briefly outlined below.

### **Cross-border cooperation**

The German terms *grenzüberschreitende Zusammenarbeit* and *grenzüberschreitende Kooperation* are considered to be synonymous and are both translated as 'cross-border cooperation'. Transnational or interregional cooperation are not explicitly included in the scope of this research, but in some cases they touch on important fields of actions, e.g. mobility (see e.g. Jörg Saalbach's paper in this volume).

### **Territorial dimension**

Given the subject-specific context of the study, the focus is on the territorial dimension of cross-border cooperation. This brings spatial development and spatial planning (e.g. spatially relevant strategies and planning) to the fore. These areas extend to aspects that are clearly spatially relevant, such as energy, transport and the labour market. Aspects which are the subject of cross-border cooperation but which are not closely related to spatial planning are not covered (taxation, criminal activities, etc.). For the purposes of this study, cross-border cooperation is limited to cooperation in a functional border area or a formally defined border region.

### **Opportunities, obstacles and future viability of cross-border cooperation**

To ensure coherence between the individual papers, the members of the Subsection have agreed to limit their focus to the opportunities and obstacles associated with cross-border cooperation, which have a decisive impact on the future viability of the

aspects and fields of action considered here, and to analyse them with a view to formulating recommendations. This ensures that each treatment of the topic concerned does not only present the status quo but also that the work is elaborated in a focused manner that offers perspectives for the future.

### **Language**

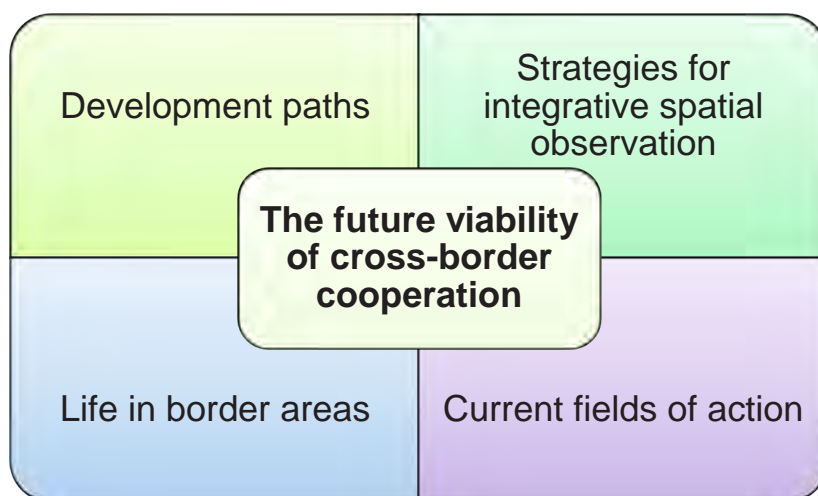
Cross-border cooperation generally means having to navigate in a multilingual context; at the same time, a strict, consistent framework must be established with a view to the publication of the resulting papers. Given the context of the ARL and of the Regional Working Group, the working language of the working group and of the publication is German. In the light of the Academy's aims to internationalise its work, the volume has now been translated into English. Where references are made to laws, planning processes, organs, places, etc. in France, Belgium, and Luxembourg, the original language is used.

Further clarifications relating to the sub-regions and their demarcations are provided in Part 1.

The various topics treated by the Border Futures Subsection in this publication are briefly outlined below.

## **4 Brief outline of the individual papers**

The publication examines the future viability of cross-border cooperation in four key areas (see Figure 1).



*Fig. 1: Structure of the volume /Source: The authors*

**Part I** outlines the development paths, theoretical anchor points and challenges of cross-border cooperation.

At the outset, **Beate Caesar** and **Karina Pallagst** provide an overview of the status quo and the development of cross-border cooperation in Europe. They address funding instruments and discuss the general challenges and opportunities for cross-border cooperation and its particular implications for spatial planning.

This is followed by a consideration by **Karina Pallagst**, **Peter Dörrenbächer** and **Thomas Weith** of the impact of European integration, regionalism and governance on the development of cross-border cooperation and their significance for European spatial development.

**Andrea Hartz** and **Beate Caesar** then provide a brief discussion of the Greater Region and the Upper Rhine region, as these areas fall within the territorial remit of the Subsection of the Regional Working Group; they were also the areas on which the research focused.

Part I is rounded out by **Gerd-Rainer Damm's** paper, which provides a more concrete view of the challenges in cross-border cooperation based on surveys conducted among stakeholders in the Greater Region.

The three papers in **Part II** addresses strategies of cross-border cooperation in the context of integrated spatial development.

In the first paper, **Karina Pallagst** and **Andrea Hartz** shed light on the significance of cross-border cooperation in spatial planning and describe the different planning styles of the nation states in the Greater Region and along the Upper Rhine. They also provide an overview of the planning instruments designed specifically for cross-border cooperation in the two border regions.

**Andrea Hartz** then explains the concept of metropolitan border regions, highlighting their spatial and structural characteristics, metropolisation strategies and governance mechanisms. She also discusses the role spatial planning can assume in this context, and concludes by outlining the future opportunities for the development of cross-border metropolitan regions.

In her paper, **Petra Schelkmann** addresses the subject of metropolitan border regions and describes the process by which the Greater Region is endeavouring to develop a cross-border, polycentric metropolitan region (CBPMR).

**Part III** interrogates the border area as a living environment. In the first paper, **Antje Schönwald**, **Annette Spellerberg** and **Florian Weber** introduce theoretical concepts and the correlations between borders, identities and the sense of home, focusing on the Greater Region to illuminate aspects of identity in this border area.



In the second paper, **Annette Spellerberg**, **Antje Schönwald**, **Katharina Engelhardt** and **Florian Weber** explore perceptions of the border and the sense of home in cross-border areas based on a survey carried out in four twin locations at national borders within the Greater Region.

In their paper, **Christian Wille** and **Ursula Roos** provide an overview of the practical implications of daily border crossings at the Luxembourg border. Based on social contacts, the everyday activities of cross-border commuters and residential migrants on both sides of the border, they argue that a unique type of cross-border living environment is evolving along the Luxembourg border.

**Part IV** explores current fields of action in cross-border cooperation.

Energy is a potential cross-border field of action, hence in their paper, **Frank Baur** and **Barbara Dröschel** illuminate the strategies and projects in relation to energy policy within the Greater Region.

Most border regions are still burdened with numerous barriers to cross-border transport that must be overcome. **Beate Caesar** and **Jörg Saalbach** report on EU policy objectives and instruments and examine their impact on selected cross-border transport flows. This is supplemented in the paper by **Michael Heilmann** and **Werner Schreiner** with experience gained in cross-border railway transport between the Palatinate region and Alsace.

In the next paper, **Jörg Saalbach** describes his experience of cross-border, transnational cooperation along the Rhine corridor as part of the CODE24 project. Cooperation in relation to transport and spatial development was launched as an INTERREG project and is now being perpetuated through the establishment of an EGTC.

**Kirsten Mangels** and **Julia Wohland** argue that the provision of public services in rural border regions is a potential field of action for cross-border cooperation. There are certain challenges, however, due to different administrative systems and responsibilities for safeguarding the provision of public services on either side of the border. A close look at the situation in the Greater Region illuminates these issues.

**Peter Dörrenbächer** describes the significance of cross-border vocational education and training in border regions against the backdrop of current trends and the economic disparities between the national subspaces. He examines previous and future endeavours between Saarland and Lorraine in this regard and considers their potential.

**Patrice Harster** and **Frédéric Siebenhaar** present strategies, projects and experience gained in and with the Eurodistrict PAMINA to create a cross-border labour market and to eliminate obstacles to cross-border cooperation.

**Frank Schafranski's** paper discusses cultural heritage and tourism as potential factors for the joint development of border regions. He furthermore describes EU funding programmes and exemplary projects from the Greater Region and the Upper Rhine region.

In their concluding remarks, the editors **Karina Pallagst**, **Beate Caesar** and **Andrea Hartz** discuss the future viability of cross-border cooperation.

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## DEVELOPMENT PATHS FOR CROSS-BORDER COOPERATION AND THE STATUS QUO

### Contents

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### Abstract

This paper is concerned with the development of cross-border cooperation and its current status. It examines the funding instruments and describes the challenges and opportunities of cross-border cooperation. The paper concludes by discussing some distinctive aspects of cross-border cooperation in spatial planning.

### Keywords

Border – cross-border cooperation – spatial planning – challenges – opportunities

## 1 Introduction: The border as a starting point and subject of research

Border regions are areas crucial in terms of spatial structures for a country such as Germany, which shares borders with nine neighbouring countries. Based on new spatially relevant challenges, such as demographic change and the energy transition, and also due to challenges on the part of the EU, such as territorial cohesion, the general conditions as well as the resulting planning requirements and demands for action for border areas are changing constantly. Although EU member states continue to have national borders and emphasise their sovereignty, EU-wide agreements have led to a dismantling of barriers at the border, e.g. the elimination of border checks based on the Schengen Agreement. Another example for the dismantling of borders are the four fundamental freedoms – the free movement of goods, people, services and of capital and payments, which are enshrined in the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union (TFEU). Researchers have described this development as a change of borders from being strict barriers to rather indirect filters, as the member states remain as independent as before but have simplified the crossing of borders. It is presumed that the growing interchanges between the member states and the increasing spectrum of cross-border cooperation, the development of which will be described in more detail in the following section, will lead to a harmonisation of the national systems. Borders can moreover be seen as opportunities for contact between neighbouring countries (O'Dowd 2001; Deppisch 2007; Ratti 1993).

Currently (in mid-2016), however, internal European borders have in many instances become politically explosive again due to the refugee crisis in Europe. In part, new spatial barriers have been erected again (after having been arduously dismantled over a period of many years) and border checks have been introduced, which have also led to a sort of mental border. This development results in considerable uncertainty about cross-border cooperation, as it is feared that this will lead overall to setbacks in cooperation overall.<sup>1</sup>

From a political and administrative perspective, a border is merely a place where administrative units meet. As far as the origins of borders are concerned, they are fundamentally embedded in historical contexts, and often have symbolic significance. It should be noted in this context that this significance can change over time, as was the case, e.g. with the fall of the Iron Curtain. Becker-Marx commented in 1992 that 'Borders are never welcome - they are often destructive, sometimes painful. Whenever they occur, they separate neighbours, and in most cases the differences between these neighbours are smaller than between the systems that separate them' (Becker-Marx 1992).

By way of introduction, this section will first outline the various demands that are nowadays made on borders as fields of action.<sup>2</sup> In this connection, the development of cross-border cooperation in Europe and the status quo are described. Finally, the challenges, barriers and opportunities of cross-border cooperation are pointed out with a particular outlook in regard to the subject-matter of spatial planning.

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1 This was discussed at the ARL Planners' Forum on 15 September 2015 in Mannheim.

2 Border area research currently comprises a broad field of study and covers political, administrative, social and spatial aspects.

## 2 Development paths and the status quo

After the end of the Second World War, initial forms of cross-border cooperation in the current sense developed. The purpose of those forms of cooperation was to reduce the risk of another war (Görmar 2002: 51 et seq.).

One of the first cross-border regions was EUROREGION, which has been located along the German-Dutch border since 1958 (Perkmann 2003: 154). It was an important model for many later cross-border cooperation structures. The shared cultural and geographic characteristics of the nations on both sides of the border area and close cross-border relations were conducive to the early establishment of cooperation (Hoffschulte 1992: 479).

In the 1970s, the first umbrella associations for connecting and representing the interests of border regions or for cross-border cooperation were established, e.g. the Association of European Border Regions (AEBR) (Görmar 2002: 52). The aim of this association was in particular to find solutions for the deprivations of border regions and to offer border regions the opportunity to interact. An additional aim was to advise the national and European level on the expansion of cross-border cooperation (Malchus 1978: 8 et seq.).

The Council of Europe has also been supporting cross-border cooperation between regional and local stakeholders in Europe since the 1970s. The intention was to develop instruments for cross-border cooperation that would resolve problems of cooperation caused by conflicting national legislation through more flexible and simplified cooperation processes. The Madrid Outline Convention was elaborated in 1980 in collaboration with the AEBR. All countries that have acceded thus far to this Convention undertake to support cross-border cooperation. The aim was to establish a cross-border organisation founded in law. In addition, bilateral agreements were still required between the neighbouring countries to create this type of cross-border organisation; hence, the first legally-based forms of cooperation were only established in the early 1990s (Halmes 2002: 19).

The increased awareness of the cross-border impacts of worldwide trends such as climate change, which was advanced through the Europe 2000 study by the European Commission, led to an expansion of the spectrum of cross-border cooperation, especially in the field of spatial planning (European Commission 1991: 3 et seq.).

The INTERREG initiative of the European Commission ran parallel to this development. Initially it was intended to specifically support the creation of the aforementioned cross-border organisations, which were to exercise administrative tasks as legal persons as part of the civil service. This approach was, however, not directly continued (Engl/Woelk 2011: 6). This type of European legal form was created only with the introduction of the instrument of the European Grouping of Territorial Cooperation (EGTC) in 2007 (see Jörg Saalbach's paper in this volume) (Deppisch 2007: 53).

The INTERREG initiative, which was launched in 1990 after a preceding pilot phase, focused on the financial support for cross-border cooperation (Schäfer 2003: 116) to promote and advance European cohesion and economic development in the regions. In addition, other European policies were to be implemented by specifying cooperation themes, on the basis of which cooperation projects then received financial support (Millan 1994: 21). Financial support for cross-border cooperation remains an important backbone of cooperation today (Chilla 2015).

Thanks to the financial support provided by the European Union, the number of cross-border cooperation projects has increased significantly. Previously, many centrally organised states were very slow and cautious about transferring powers to local and regional border areas. For regions and municipalities in federally organised countries, such as Germany, it was generally easier at the time to pursue cross-border cooperation projects (Perkmann 2003: 166 et seq.).

The European promotion of cross-border cooperation has continued to develop over the years and since 1997 has also supported cooperation in larger areas, such as the Baltic Sea area as part of transnational cooperation and since 2000 as part of interregional cooperation between spatially non-neighbouring cities and regions. The biggest share of the funds (€ 5.6 billion) is, however, still earmarked for the cooperation of border areas (European Commission 2014).

In 2007, the INTERREG initiative titled European Territorial Cooperation became a political objective of the European cohesion policy, in addition to the objectives of 'convergence' and 'regional competitiveness and employment' (Ritter/Fürst 2009: 146 et seq.). In the current 2014–2020 funding period, the objective of European Territorial Cooperation continues to apply in addition to the new objective of 'investment for growth and jobs' (European Commission 2015c: 15).

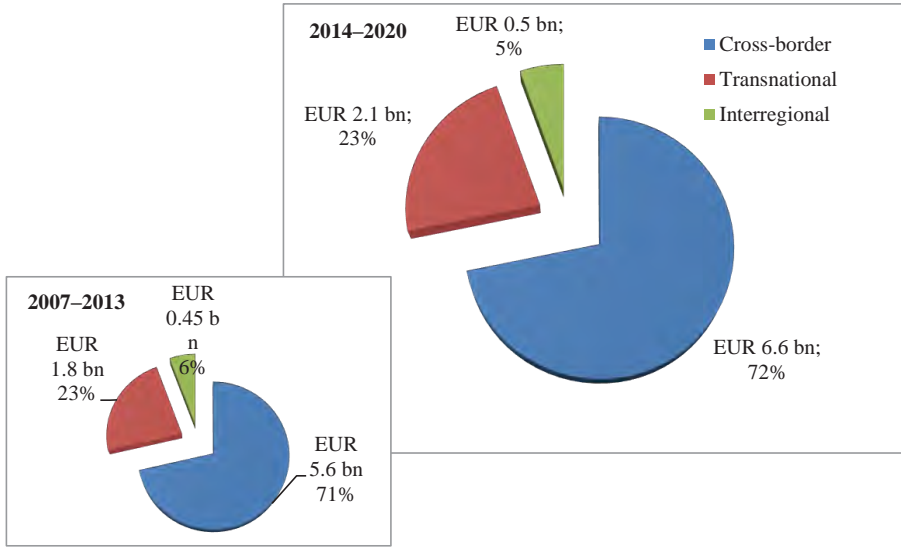


Fig. 1: Breakdown of ETC programme funding in per cent and absolute figures /Source: European Commission (2015a)

Numerous cross-border cooperation projects are supported by EU subsidies under the INTERREG programme. This is true in particular for temporally limited cooperation projects. In the current funding period (2014–2020), the EU has made about € 9.2 billion available as part of European Territorial Cooperation. The largest share is earmarked for cross-border cooperation, i.e. for projects in the INTERREG A cooperation areas, which comprise neighbouring border areas. Significantly less funds are earmarked for transnational cooperation, where cooperation areas are defined on a larger scale (see Fig. 1) (European Commission 2015a).

As is apparent in Figure 1, the shares of the three ETC programmes have remained largely the same in comparison to the previous funding period, with a parallel increase in the available financial resources. The funding is used to finance projects in 60 border regions (European Commission 2015a). Germany is currently involved in 13 cross-border programme regions (see Fig. 2).

The EU Regulation on European Territorial Cooperation requires a thematic concentration. In the current funding period, the programme areas must be limited to a maximum of four focal points, which can be compiled from 11 different objectives (European Commission 2015b):



- 1 Strengthening research, technological development and innovation
- 2 Enhancing access to, and use and quality of, information and communication technologies (ICT)
- 3 Enhancing the competitiveness of SMEs
- 4 Supporting the shift towards a low-carbon economy
- 5 Promoting climate change adaptation, risk prevention and management
- 6 Preserving and protecting the environment and promoting resource efficiency
- 7 Promoting sustainable transport and improving network infrastructures
- 8 Promoting sustainable and quality employment and supporting labour mobility
- 9 Promoting social inclusion, combating poverty and any discrimination
- 10 Investing in education, training and lifelong learning
- 11 Improving the efficiency of public administration

In the Greater Region cross-border cooperation area (see the paper by Hartz/Caesar in this volume), there is a focus on innovative competitiveness (Priority 1), environmental protection (Priority 6), the labour market (Priority 8), and social issues (Priority 9) (INTERREG Greater Region 2015).



Fig. 2: INTERREG V A (cross-border cooperation) – German participation<sup>3</sup> /Source: Federal Institute for Research on Building, Urban Affairs and Spatial Development (Bundesinstitut für Bau, Stadt- und Raumforschung, BBSR) (2014)

3 The spatially correlated INTERREG A programmes are depicted in different colours. Hatched areas are simultaneously part of several programme areas.

The Upper Rhine region (see the paper by Hartz/Caesar in this volume) also specifies innovative competitiveness as a priority. In addition, it combines the priorities of transport and environmental protection (Priorities 6 and 7) into a single objective, as well as the priorities on the labour market and SMEs<sup>4</sup> (3 and 8). In addition, support is to be provided for administrative cooperation as a fourth focus (Priority 11) (INTERREG Upper Rhine 2014).

The different focal points of the two cooperation areas illustrate the diversity of cooperation options despite the intended thematic concentration.

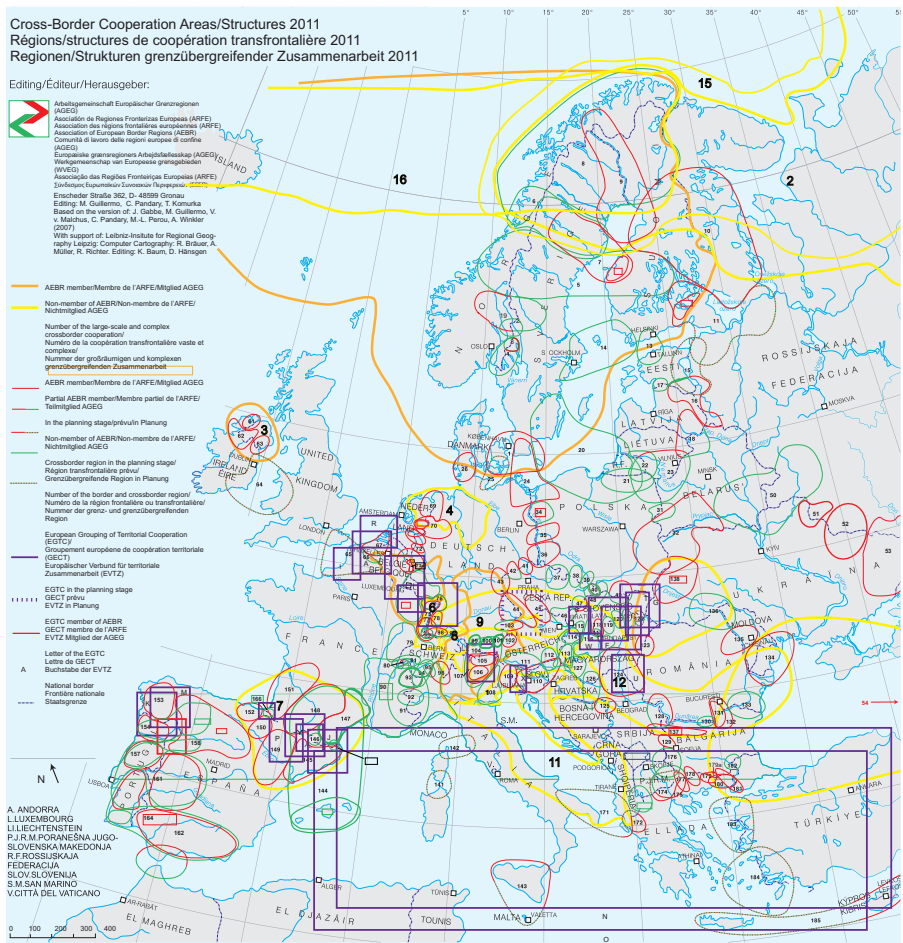


Fig. 3: Status quo in cross-border cooperation in Europe in 2011 /Source: AEBR (2011)

4 SME = Small and medium-sized enterprises.

There are currently 185 cooperating border regions (see Fig. 3) and more than 55 EGTCs (Committee of the Regions 2017). As Jens Kurnol of the *BBSR* explained on the occasion of the ARL Planners' Forum, the characteristics of border regions vary greatly within the EU. The sole distinctive feature, in his view, is the transection of a region by a national border. The reason for the differences in border regions is, among other things, a highly varying tradition of cooperation. In some border regions, the EU funding was a crucial incentive for establishing the region. Other regions, such as the EUROREGION, share many years of experience. Stable cooperation structures, often supported at the municipal level, and a relationship of trust were able to develop between the parties involved during this period (Perkmann 2007a: 259, 2007b; O'Dowd 2002: 111 et seq.).

Cross-border cooperation is organised in various cooperation structures. These include EGTCs as a new legal form (see Jörg Saalbach's paper in this volume), but also cross-border local special-purpose associations (Karlsruhe Accord), Working Groups, Eurodistricts, Euroregions, European Economic Interest Groupings (EEIG), Euro-regional Cooperation Associations (Madrid Outline Convention) and European Research Infrastructure Consortia (ERIC) (Caesar 2015: 177 et seq.). However, the EGTC has thus far remained the only European legal instrument to support and secure cross-border cooperation (Chilla 2015).

Despite the development over many years of cross-border cooperation and the experience thus acquired, as well as diverse financial support and a wide selection of cooperation forms, there still remain challenges and barriers, which will be described in the next section. In addition, the opportunities provided by cross-border interchanges are examined.

### **3 Challenges and opportunities of cross-border cooperation**

For people who live in border regions and cross borders, borders represent to some extent a space of opportunities. Thus the 'border society' benefits from the differences and spatial disparities that exist in border areas and can exploit the resulting opportunities (Martinez 1994). The Cohesion Policy promotes the convergence of member states and aims to reduce the disparities between countries. Yet, at the same time, it is precisely these disparities which provide an incentive to cross national borders and benefit from the opportunities available on the other side. The special nature of border areas should therefore be strengthened as well. Yet, the differences between border regions should not be too great, as this might otherwise be seen as a deterrent (Spierings/van der Velde 2013: 1 et seq.).

On the other hand, the opening of borders may also trigger anxieties: substantial economic disparities between two neighbouring countries might fan fears of surges in migration and increased economic competition on the labour market once the borders are open (Medve-Bálint 2013: 154) and thus adversely affect the general attitude towards cooperation.

To eliminate the divisive impact of borders, more is needed than simply opening the physical borders. Spatial relationships which were interrupted by the drawing of the borders must be rebuilt. This requires a coordination of interests and perceptions. A border creates not merely a physical division of space but also, and in particular in the case of long-term separations, a different cultural, mental and social development of the population in the border region. This difference cannot simply be eliminated after reopening the border; a long and cumbersome process may be required, which can make cross-border cooperation harder (Haselsberger 2014: 522).

The opportunities, possibilities and challenges of overcoming borders require a set of rules to steer, control and discuss the movement of people and goods. In the EU context, borders have become more and more penetrable since the creation of the European single market in 1993 and permit not only an increased flow of people and goods, but also the restoration of neighbourly structures (Pallagst 1995).

Cross-border cooperation aims to incentivise regional interaction and thus to strengthen multinational border regions (Schönweitz 2013: 127).

A further opportunity for cooperation is the bundling of resources to address cross-border problems, e.g. securing local services. In addition, stakeholders can benefit from the experience and solutions offered by their partners (Medve-Bálint 2013: 150 et seq.). Spatial challenges generally do not adhere to national borders, such as environmental pollution of a cross-border body of water or inadequate infrastructure. Through cross-border cooperation, the problems can be addressed jointly and resolved in the long term through co-financed action (Pallagst 1995: 37 et seq.). Especially investments that affect the border area, such as in transport infrastructure, should be coordinated to prevent conflicting projects being pursued on the other side of the border. To secure the functionality of the local services infrastructure, it should be also linked to the system on the other side of the border (Dick 1991: 452). Through coordinating such services, residents of a border region may benefit from a mutually complementary range of services. This may help prevent depopulation due to a lack of services in peripheral rural areas in particular (Dick 1991: 457).

Strategies as well as a shared image can be developed for border areas as part of cross-border cooperation. When different stakeholders join forces, they can increase their visibility in the competitive European environment and contribute to a stronger 'we' feeling of border area residents when they are actively involved (Pallagst 1995: 39).

Hence, the reasons for the development of cross-border cooperation may also be based on socio-cultural considerations. After the end of the Soviet Union, the opening of the Eastern European borders made it possible to cross national borders that had been strictly closed for many years and to revive social and economic contacts with former neighbours. Shared historical and ethnic roots can be a decisive reason for cooperation (Medve-Bálint 2013: 152).

In addition, European and transnational institutions, such as the European Commission, the Committee of the Regions, the Council of Europe and the Association of

European Border Regions (AEBR), have an impact on the European debate on cross-border cooperation and advocate for its expansion. Cooperation also greatly depends on the support for the regions and municipalities provided from within the states concerned (Medve-Bálint 2013: 152).

Cooperation initiatives across national borders as a rule do not (only) involve actors at the national level, they are also open to a large number of regional and local actors and are a symbol of governance processes. Peripheral regions, in particular, can benefit from cross-border cooperation and the associated interactions (Medve-Bálint 2013: 145).

The institutionalisation of cross-border cooperation is beneficial in the sense that shared interests can be better represented at the European or national level and that the cooperation is more visible. This can lead to an easier implementation of the objectives and interests due to a higher level of tolerance (Pallagst 1995: 39).

At the outset of any cooperation, however, the joint objectives that are to be achieved must be defined. This is not easy when a large number of parties with different backgrounds are involved. In addition, some priorities may be fundamentally mutually exclusive. The cooperation of some participants may be primarily motivated by purely economic interests in obtaining funding for their own municipality or by a desire to enhance their personal political profile, and less by the desire to jointly develop the border region. A lack of external financial support for cooperation measures makes it more difficult to implement and achieve the defined objectives. Especially in the case of peripheral, sparsely populated border regions, this may make cooperation substantially more cumbersome. Medve-Bálint (2013) also mentions a lack of experience and decision-making powers as a particular problem of these regions. Such conflicts and disagreements have an impact on any intended, potentially long-term institutionalisation of the cooperation (Medve-Bálint 2013: 145 et seq.).

Difficulties may also occur in connection with the disparate powers of the actors at the national level due to differences in public administrative and legal structures. For example, the stakeholders in a particular border region may not be able to take decisions directly; they may have to be confirmed by an authority at a higher national level, which is not directly involved (Medve-Bálint 2013: 152). As a result, cross-border cooperation projects, even though they are conceived mostly at the local level, are often dependent on favourable support from higher national levels. If those higher levels do not consent, the cooperation may be significantly obstructed (Pallagst 1995: 40). In addition, language barriers and the resulting communication problems are frequently discussed obstacles to cooperation (Medve-Bálint 2013: 152).

As already indicated at the outset, the refugee crisis and terrorist attacks<sup>5</sup> have given rise to temporary closures of internal European borders and to a reintroduction of border checks between some member states. In addition, the erection of fences (which had been purposely removed in the past) visually reinforced the border demarcations, making people more aware of them again. The erection of the first inner-

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5 November 2015 in Paris; March 2016 in Brussels; July 2016 in Nice.

European fences between Hungary and Croatia was completed in October 2015. Further border fences and closures followed. It remains to be seen what the actual impact of these current trends will be on cross-border cooperation.

The simple, self-evident fact of crossing a border was called into question in these cases and became more complicated. This means interrupted flows of traffic and expected economic losses due to delayed deliveries of goods caused by border checks. Commuters also face longer waiting periods or checks on public transport services at the borders. Particular mention in this regard must be made of the border checks imposed in 2016 between Denmark and Sweden – every cross-border worker was checked. Border closures also adversely affect cross-border tourism. There are numerous cross-border hiking trails, for example between Slovenia and Austria, which are now interrupted by border fencing. Unrestricted mobility across internal European borders as guaranteed by Schengen<sup>6</sup> has been temporarily suspended due to these developments.

#### 4 Distinctive aspects of cross-border spatial planning

In spatial planning, challenges and obstacles occur time and again, generally irrespective of any cross-border context, such as:

- > Constant change in the challenges for spatial development and the complexity of planning situations<sup>7</sup>: the provision of public services may serve as an example, where due to increasingly evident demographic change new standards must be defined and implemented. This change may lead to uncertainties in planning practice, as familiar standards no longer apply, and future, long-term planning is uncertain.
- > A plethora of different formal and informal instruments at the various planning levels: this gives rise to increasing complexity in the field of spatial planning. In many cases, the instruments are not aligned with each other, which causes fragmentation (Healey 1997; Mandelbaum 1996).<sup>8</sup>
- > An increase in the diversity of methods in spatial planning: as with the diversity of instruments, this may lead to a drawn-out decision-making process about the method that is best used in different situations, e.g. a quantitative/technical reference versus the interests of the stakeholders.<sup>9</sup>

6 This mobility applies only between the member states of the Schengen Agreement, which does not include all EU member states.

7 Innes and Booher (1997, 2000a, 2000b) have pointed to the need to examine planning situations as complex constructs that must be adapted to the changed needs in society.

8 Healey (1997) and Mandelbaum (1996) observe a growing number of planning instruments from which planners must choose in line with the specific local situation.

9 The different approaches in the field of planning have been examined, for example by Pallagst (2007) in the context of steering land use in the US. In so doing, she observed a broad range of approaches, i.e. incentive-oriented, design-oriented, regulation, etc. which are employed in planning practice.



- > Theoretical planning discourses often take place in ‘elite’ circles (*epistemic communities*), which leads in many cases to a loss of a direct connection with and benefit for practical planning (see i.a. Alexander 2001; Yiftachel 1989; Fainstein 1999).
- > The changed perception of the role of spatial planners: the responsibilities of planners change with the challenges of spatial development and with current demands. Thus, there is currently a shift and specialisation in the field of spatial planning towards sectoral planning; this means that planners increasingly take on the role of mediators in various planning processes.

The specific spatial constellation of border areas results in challenges and barriers in spatial planning, which result from the particular border situation and which can be generally outlined as follows:

- > In border areas, different planning cultures and planning traditions frequently collide. As a rule, it is presumed that planning cultures correspond to the territory of the nation states in question, but different planning cultures may exist even within a nation state. Accordingly, border areas are the site of several planning cultures, which have brought forth different planning styles and instruments.
- > The adjacent border area is often not reflected at all or taken into account in plans and strategies. Instead, national strategies dominate spatial development.
- > There is frequently an acute lack of knowledge about planning processes and instruments in a cross-border context, as planning practitioners act predominantly within their specific administrative framework, either within a given territorial unit at the municipal level (planning office of a local authority or a district) or in a regional unit. Due to the fact that planning is established in a cross-border context or according to different conditions on both sides of the border, and that statutory or organisational changes take place at irregular intervals, the informational basis for planning developments presents a special type of challenge, which is not necessarily part of the everyday practice of planning.
- > At the European and national level, border areas are in part catered for through so-called ‘persuasive’ instruments of spatial planning. These may comprise spatial monitoring – which is part of ESPON projects – and the setting of political agendas through pilot programmes, such as the model projects for spatial planning (*Modellvorhaben der Raumordnung, MORO*), etc. Thus, the instruments reflect the public discourse but have no legally binding effects and do not offer any financial incentives (Chilla 2015).
- > In addition, a comprehensive statistical database for border areas is lacking. While border regions are taken into account at the European level through monitoring (e.g. in the context of ESPON projects), the representations are often very superficial due to the unsatisfactory data situation (e.g. in the EUROSTAT atlas) (Chilla 2015).



- > Cross-border spatial planning is further complicated by different types of governance, as planning is executed and implemented as part of national steering and organisational styles. At the formal level, planning is strongly interlinked with the legal framework in question, which allocates planning powers to various administrative units. As a result, there is often no corresponding structure for certain planning tasks on the other side of the border.
- > In the case of border regions that are not organised through municipal associations but instead at the regional or federal state level (e.g. the Greater Region), cross-regional strategies are often characterised by the fact that the municipal level is underrepresented and not involved.
- > Insufficient language skills, in particular concerning specialist terminology, create an additional obstacle to cooperation.
- > Differences in legal powers and extensive participation procedures create a highly diverse group of stakeholders, which may complicate and prolong the planning and implementation process (Haselsberger 2014: 515).
- > German national spatial development policy is well aware of the significance of border regions. It supports the development of these areas through further expansion of spatial observation in the border areas and through promoting a mutual exchange of experience. The current draft of the guiding principles for spatial planning also includes cross-border interactional areas. However, spatial planning lacks the legal power to act in many relevant thematic areas of cross-border cooperation (Kurnol 2015).

Even if there is a large spectrum of challenges, there is typically a corresponding measure of opportunities for cross-border cooperation in spatial planning:

- > The development of planning can help to overcome cultural differences by promoting an understanding of the various planning cultures.
- > It offers the opportunity to create shared spatial visions for subregions or even for the entire border region and thus to embark on the conceptualisation of planning.
- > Cross-border cooperation makes it possible to build strong partnerships and governance networks, which in turn contribute to promoting the exchange of knowledge beyond the boundaries of the respective planning culture.
- > New instruments that are specifically designed for the situation of border regions can be created, tested and applied in dialogue with the neighbouring region in the other country. This helps to make a contribution to the implementation of planning.
- > There are also potentials at the supranational (EU) level. Border regions can enhance their profile as testing grounds for the grand European objective of territorial cohesion.

## 5 Conclusions

The development of cross-border cooperation demonstrates that the diversity of cooperation issues and structures has further grown over time. However, current developments, such as the ‘refugee crisis’, also show that the divisive impact of internal European borders can temporarily become stronger and may pose new challenges for cross-border cooperation – at least in some areas. In general, it is to be presumed, however, that cross-border cooperation will continue to develop in future in line with current trends and become further institutionalised. Despite the difficult situation at the outset caused by continued discrepancies in national systems and regulations as well as socio-cultural differences, cross-border cooperation offers powerful incentives and many opportunities which border regions can exploit. The field of planning, in particular, offers many starting points for strengthening border areas.

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## THEORIES OF CROSS-BORDER COOPERATION: EXPLANATORY APPROACHES FROM EUROPEAN INTEGRATION, REGIONALISM AND GOVERNANCE

### Contents

- 1 Introduction
  - 2 Cross-border cooperation as a field of application of European spatial development
  - 3 European integration
  - 4 New regionalism and cross-border regions
  - 5 Governance
  - 6 Conclusions
- References

### Abstract

This paper describes an initial theoretical and conceptual approach relating cross-border cooperation to European spatial development and the associated theories, based on approaches from political science. This is discussed as a field of application for European spatial development, which is influenced by a number of factors. Of these, European integration, new regionalism and governance are discussed in detail.

### Keywords

European spatial development – European integration – new regionalism – governance – cross-border cooperation

## 1 Introduction

The analysis and assessment of cross-border cooperation can be supported and characterised through the use of various theoretical anchor points. Cross-border cooperation is firstly examined in the context of European spatial development and related theories based on approaches from political science. This offers an initial theoretical and conceptual approach. Such cooperation is subsequently identified as a field of application of European spatial development, which is influenced by a number of factors. Of these, European integration, governance and new regionalism will be discussed in more detail. They are considered to be essential for the discussion of the key theme of ‘Border Futures’ for three reasons:

- 1 They address different policy areas related to European spatial development, which have an impact on the situation of border regions.
- 2 They raise questions about the capacity for action and steering in a regional and multi-level context, as manifested in all relevant fields of cooperation between border regions (mobility and transport, culture and tourism, etc.).
- 3 They define regions and borders not merely as processes but as social constructs. Particularly for large-scale structural and administrative border constructs, such as the Greater Region which is frequently used as an example in this volume, this phenomenon raises the question of the identity of border regions.

## 2 Cross-border cooperation as a field of application of European spatial development

When one considers cross-border cooperation in the context of spatial development, the former can be associated with European spatial development, where a comprehensive theoretical discourse has been ongoing since the 1990s. Based on studies by Sykes (2005), cross-border cooperation in spatial development can be defined as a field of application of European spatial development (see Fig. 1), which is characterised by four different lines of discourse: spatial planning (*Raumplanung*) and spatial development, political science, European integration and governance, and new regionalism and spatial steering.

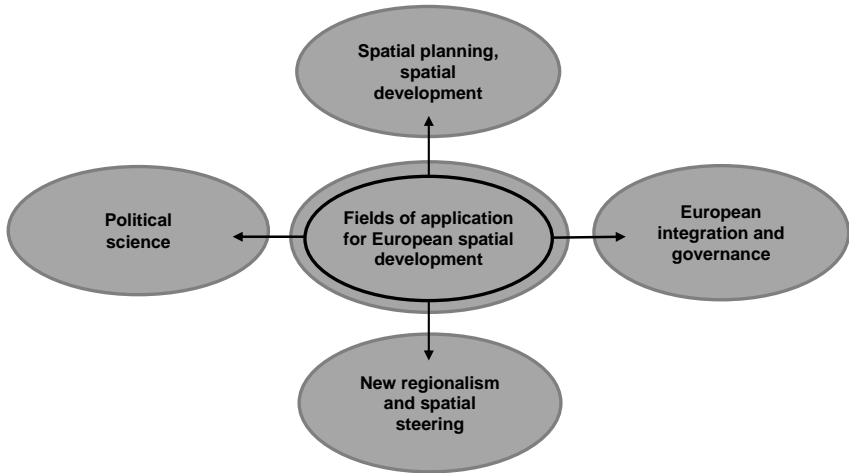


Fig. 1: Conceptualisation of European spatial development /Source: Pallagst, based on Sykes (2005)

### 3 European integration

For an approach from the perspective of European integration,<sup>1</sup> political science-based theories of international relations are of particular interest.<sup>2</sup> Two theoretical vantage points are particularly significant: the rationalist and constructivist approaches (Pollack 2001; Winn 1998; Jachtenfuchs 2002). At the same time, it must be taken into account that there is no single theory for European correlations; rather, there are a number of competing theories (Jachtenfuchs 2002; Pollack 2005).

The rationalist approach, which was long the dominant model among the theories of international relations, proclaims that integration and cooperation are decisively driven by a cost-benefit analysis (Schimmelfennig/Sedelmayer 2002). This approach is generally based on methodological standards and empirical studies. As far as European integration and cooperation is concerned, rationalist approaches are limited in the sense that nation states are understood as 'unitary actors' (Hix 1998: 328) with a hierarchical system of values.

Constructivist approaches are based on post-modern theoretical notions. As they are almost never based on empirical findings, they are difficult to operationalise. In addition, constructivism is still on a quest to determine how this approach might

1 According to Zandonella (2005), European integration means 'increasingly closer cooperation between European countries, the development of the Community from the European Coal and Steel Community (1952) all the way to the EU of today and the process of European unification, which is in principle not yet complete. European integration is characterised by a series of enlargements (accession of new member states) and intensifications (intensification of cooperation). It is based on supra-national and intergovernmental cooperation.'

2 This correlation becomes clear when taking the theoretical discourses on integration and EU expansion (see Schimmelfennig/Sedelmayer 2002) and reflections on European spatial development (Faludi 2002; Faludi/Waterhout 2002) into account.

deliver practically relevant results (Jachtenfuchs 2002: 652; Pollack 2005). One useful constructivist notion is, however, that institutions are understood within a broader framework and that an informal range of norms and regulations should be used to supplement the formal (rationalist) sets of rules. In the field of European spatial development, these issues all deal with conceptualisations, which accordingly allow for a stronger interpretable framework and which are not binding.

Although constructivist and rationalist approaches cannot always be clearly distinguished from each other, they both give rise to diverse spheres of influence for cross-border cooperation. EU structural policy, for example, which can be characterised as being rationalist in its approach, has the direct means to influence development in border areas. This occurs through the transfer of subsidies as part of a highly regulated process, which initially requires negotiation processes about legislative powers and regulations. This method is, however, highly incrementalist as it is operationalised through individual projects. Looking at cross-border cooperation, EU funding programmes, such as INTERREG, are a manifestation of rationalist approaches, the interactional spaces of which are at the same time constructed.

In the discussion on European integration in the context of border areas, it should not be overlooked that from an integration-theoretical perspective there are factors that can be viewed as countervailing forces to European integration (Niemann/Bergmann 2013). This is particularly important given the obstacles to cross-border cooperation, which this volume seeks to explore in the context of 'Border Futures'. Niemann and Bergmann (2013) refer in this regard to diverging domestic policy preferences and diversity between EU member states and each nation's understanding of sovereignty. In the context of European spatial development, this is examined in studies by Faludi (2010), who addressed the question of the legislative powers of nation states in regard to spatial planning, i.e. as an obstacle to integrative European spatial development endeavours.

In European spatial development and cross-border cooperation, the policy dimension, i.e. the process component that occurs in certain policy areas, must also be taken into account in each case. This includes also spatially effective or spatially relevant policies. Of significance in this regard is also the question of which legislative powers, objectives and normative regulations should apply. Ultimately, the regional dimension must not be neglected; its significance for border regions will be demonstrated below.

#### **4 New regionalism and cross-border regions**

As visualised in Figure 1, new regionalism offers one way of conceptualising European spatial development. What does this mean for cross-border cooperation? The notion of new regionalism has led to cross-border regions in Europe growing in significance in recent times. These regions are inseparably linked to the process of European integration: they are both the result of European institutionalisation and a constitutive element of the European integration process in the sense of territorial Europeanisation (cf. Chilla 2013). The significance of cross-border regions as an integral part of the European integration process is manifested to a not inconsider-



able extent by the fact that the INTERREG Community Initiative is not only the most significant of all EU Community Initiatives, but has even been identified as an independent objective of European regional policy since the seventh EU research framework programme.

As a special type of region, cross-border regions are best analysed by reference to the notion of the 'region' spatial category as developed in New Regional Geography (as part of the border studies developed, for example, by Paasi 2005 and 2011). In this regard, regions create a bridge between the superordinate national and international level, and the subordinate local scale level. They also play a key role in transnationalisation and transregionalisation processes in the tension between globalisation and localisation (e.g. Faist 2000; Bauböck/Faist 2010), which have been accurately and pointedly described by Swyngedouw (2004) as processes of glocalisation (on the charged relationship between space and place, see Tuan 1977).

Regions – and thus also border regions – in the sense of glocalisation processes are therefore not established facts and circumstances but always in a process of becoming. According to Pred (1984; cf. also Gilbert 1988), they are dependent processes that act top-down and bottom-up in the context of social structuration.

Thus regions do not merely have an intermediary/spatial dimension but also a temporal and social connotation (Howitt 1993, 2003; Dörrenbächer 2003, 2009, 2010; cf. Pudup 1988). Regions are not merely the arenas and stages of social structuration – e.g. as part of Europeanisation processes in the case of cross-border regions – but they also find their constitutive bases in everyday regionalisation (Werlen 2007) in the context of social structuration (Giddens 1985, 1988). In so doing, they connect

- > the spatial scale levels of 'space' and 'place' (Pred 1984; Tuan 1977),
- > the temporal scale levels of 'long duration' (*longue durée*) (Braudel 1977) and event, or according to Storper (1988) 'big structure' and 'small events', and
- > the social levels of 'structure' and 'agency' (Giddens 1985, 1988).

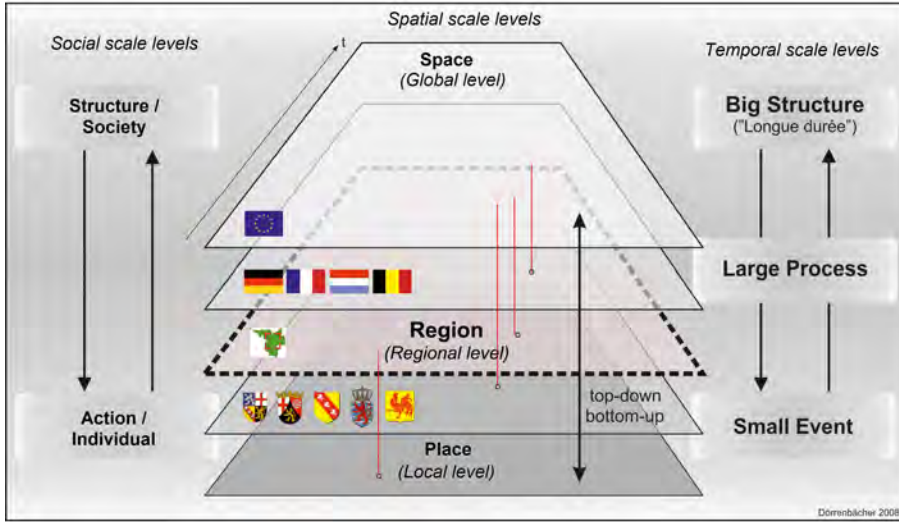


Fig. 2: Spatial, temporal and social scale levels of the institutionalisation of border regions, illustrated by the example of the Greater Region / Source: Dörrenbächer

Moreover, regions are manifestations of spatial institutionalisation processes (Paasi 1986; Dörrenbächer 2003; 2010), which are stabilising and identity-forming, but also incidental, and which are of special significance as part of transformation and Europeanisation processes.

## 5 Governance

Parallel to the discussion on 'European integration' and 'new regionalism', a debate on governance as a starting point for European and cross-border spatial development has emerged in recent years (see Fig. 1). Here, too, 'governance' is presumed to have a 'space-forming impact' (Kilper 2010b: 16). The complexity of governance results from various constellations of stakeholders, who act in a multi-layered structure, the multi-level system (Benz 2009). Cross-border governance is in this regard a specific form of 'steering', as it serves to supplement the interstate (horizontal) level in addition to the vertical structure (Leibenath/Korcelli-Olejniczak/Knippsschild 2008).

In an EU context, governance also has substantial normative significance, as EU regulatory measures and the application of EU policies should show a clear measure of efficiency and quality (Commission of the European Communities 2001).

According to Benz (2001), the term 'governance' was already extensively used in the 1980s by institutional economics and later in comparative social research. The term found its way into political science and practical policymaking by the end of the 1990s at the latest (Benz 2001). It replaced the previously predominantly used term 'control'. While Mayntz (2005) was still concerned with the question of whether it was in fact merely a 'fashionable anglicism' (Mayntz 2005: 11), it has now become associated with a changed perception of steering in both theory and practice.

The use of the term reflects a changed perspective on public actions and, moreover, on the context and nature of consultation processes in democratically legitimised societies. If the (nation) state had been perceived in the past as the (presumptive) key player and the primary actor capable of exercising control, the focus of interest is now on a diverse range of different actors and their interactions. Hence, it amounts to a redefinition of the state function and can at the same time be understood as an institutional response to changing relations (cf. Willke 1983; Rhodes 1997).

In particular in Central Europe and specifically in Germany, a changed perception of the state has emerged over the course of several decades, evolving ‘from a police state, via the constitutional and social state, to a modern “steering” state’; this process can be described ‘as a path of successive expansion of the competences of the state’ (Heidbrink/Hirsch 2007: 12, translation of the original German quote). Heidbrink/Hirsch elaborate that in this changed perception of the state, ‘the unilateral responsibility for performance is replaced by a multi-dimensional responsibility to guarantee and regulate, which aims to involve non-public powers in public decision-making processes, regulates the transfer of tasks and costs in social sectors and guarantees the protection of individual fundamental rights and the provision of essential public services’ (Heidbrink/Hirsch 2007: 15, translation of the original German quote). The key task of state action in this regard is the ‘political advancement and support for collective problem-resolving resources’ (Heidbrink/Hirsch 2007: 19, translation of the original German quote) to absorb un-certainties about regulatory structures. Some authors describe this development less positively as the erosion of the nation state for the benefit of neo-liberal glob-alisation (cf. Larner 2011).

The literature now offers a variety of definitions of the term. According to Benz/Lütz/Schmiank et al. (2007: 13, translation of the original German quote), ‘governance is the umbrella term for all existing patterns for managing interdependencies between states and between public and social stakeholders, and hierarchy in the sense of government must be understood as one such pattern alongside others.’ According to Fürst (2001: 371), it means that ‘stakeholders/organisations should be linked to each other and their actions should be coordinated in such a way that shared or even jointly developed objectives can be effectively pursued.’ Accordingly, the entire organisational and regulatory system, which coordinates the interactions between state and non-state stakeholders of all kinds, is considered. ‘It is ... about how we establish goals, how we define rules for reaching the defined goals, and finally how we control outcomes following from the use of these rules’ (Vatn 2010). In so doing, conflicts are to be minimised and shared objectives achieved.

What is therefore essential are (cf. Fürst 2007: 357; Benz/Dose 2010: 25 et seq.):

- > existing institutionalised regulatory systems that steer the actions of stakeholders,
- > patterns of interaction and coordination as well as modes of collective action,
- > practical orientations (action logic of institutions/stakeholders),

- > processes that as a rule extend across the boundaries of organisations (with public and non-public stakeholders acting collaboratively),
- > orientation toward results (evidence, output).

Since the mid-2000s at the latest, this discussion, which is associated with a stronger theoretical orientation in the spatial sciences, has also been adapted to German spatial planning (cf. e.g. Pütz 2004; Fürst 2007; Kilper 2010a). In this context, the term ‘governance’ is used time and again by some authors as a normative setting in the sense of the development of effective, democratic structures and processes and the application of multi-stakeholder perspectives. This is in contrast to the concept which describes new dimensions of analysis.

The term ‘governance’ is now used in multiple ways and in multifaceted contexts. Examples include regional governance, multi-level governance, territorial governance, functional governance, place governance, metropolitan governance, urban governance or neighbourhood governance. Like the term ‘cross-border governance’, which is described in more detail below, they focus on specific, section-like aspects, yet convey at the same time, as an ‘add-on’ so to speak, the outlined changed perception of the notion of control or steering and the analytical approach.

In the earlier analyses of cross-border cooperation in the field of spatial planning in the 1970s, there was still a primary focus on the administrative and organisational structures in Europe (Malchus 1975) or on specific subspaces, such as the German-French border area (Kistenmacher/Gust 1983). Only from the 1990s was the spotlight increasingly on specific steering aspects (Blatter 2001). These include constellations of stakeholders, their interests, resources and institutional frameworks and forms of cooperation. Case studies often serve as an investigative approach with a focus on Europe and North America (Blatter 1997, 2001, 2003, 2004; Perkmann 1999, 2003, 2007). At the same time, the term ‘cross-border cooperation’ has gradually expanded in the international literature since the 1990s through the term ‘cross-border governance’. In the German-language discussion, however, the terms ‘*grenzüberschreitende Zusammenarbeit*’ (cross-border collaboration) or ‘*grenzüberschreitende Kooperation*’ (cross-border cooperation) are still in use (cf. e.g. Scherhag 2008).

The change in terminology visible in the international literature explicitly reflects the outlined change in the notion of steering, as also comes into play in the international discourse on spatial research (cf. Healy/Cars/Madanipour et al. 2002; Salet/Thornley/Kreukels 2003; Kramsch/Hooper 2004). This means that new stakeholders emerge and come into view in border areas (e.g. civil society), that the specific problems of multi-level policies are addressed and disparities between functional and territorial activities are illuminated. This is beneficial for the analysis of different spatial constellations, e.g. in the region of Basel and Strasbourg (Reitel 2006), Helsinki and Tallinn (Pikner 2008) or the German-Austrian border area (Deppisch 2007). This stronger regional focus also reflects in particular the greater political significance of regions (cf. Swyngedouw 1997; Gualini 2003, 2006) and thus simultaneously ad-

dresses the regionalisation debate outlined above. In this context, the term ‘regional governance’ serves to place a greater spotlight on the stakeholders and their spatial interactions at this level (Blatter 2001; Gualini 2003; Fürst 2007).

The specific analytical dimensions that are used in this connection differ from one author to the next. Paasi, for example, differentiated between four stages of cross-border institutionalisation: *territorial shape*, *conceptual and symbolic shape*, *development of institutions*, and *development of a regional unit with its own identity (establishment)* in 1986 and 1991 (Paasi 1986 and 1991; cf. also Fig. 2), with the term stage possibly having a temporal, spatial as well as hierarchical dimension (Dörrenbächer 2003, 2010). Gualini took up the discussion and developed three analytical dimensions: the ‘*political-economic dimension*’, ‘*institutional dimension*’ and ‘*symbolic-cognitive dimension*’ (Gualini 2003: 44). The political-economic dimension focuses on developing paradigms for political legitimation and political action as well as on the process of strategically selecting approaches to action to steer the results. The institutional dimension emphasises the significance of organisational structures and supra-organisational institutional settings in their mutual interactions. This also includes the development of the institutional framework. The symbolic-cognitive dimension encompasses the development of territorial identities and the projection of shared development spaces.

Spatial planning and regional development play a particularly decisive role in the institutional dimension (cf. also Gualini 2003). This is also repeatedly emphasised in the institutional analyses of ‘cross-border governance’ by Blatter (Blatter 2003, 2004). Key influential factors are, accordingly, in particular the stakeholders and their objectives, the levels of interaction, multi-level policies, the practical shaping of policies, the relationship between territorial and functional governance, the strategies and instruments as well as the available resources (cf. Blatter 2003, 2004; see also Gualini 2003).

From the perspective of the spatial sciences, what is just as important are the current issues to be addressed (e.g. demographic change, climate change), the problems that are to be resolved on a sectoral or supra-sectoral level, and whether they are applicable or transferable only to a locally limited extent. Hence, new planning philosophies (post-growth, new prosperity models) as well as changed guiding principles (the perforated city, post-industrial landscape) and superordinate strategies (multi-functionality) or even only individual instruments can thus be specifically examined. Approaches that connect processes of change and innovation, such as the transition management approach, can be of particular interest in this regard (IASS 2011; cf. also Minsch/Feindt/Meister et al. 1998; Schwarz/Birke/Beerheide 2010; Kristof 2010). They can be combined with more recent discussions on forms of governance, such as elements of an ‘adaptive governance’ (Pisano 2012).

## 6 Conclusions

From the ideal or typical approaches outlined here, which are, however, in fact frequently interlinked in planning practice, key aspects can be derived for the following discussions of 'Border Futures', which are reflected in the subsequent articles in this volume:

- > Border areas have been shown to be embedded in European spatial development, and can thus be viewed as fields of application for European spatial development.
- > With reference to European integration theories, it becomes clear that both the opportunities and barriers to integration should be addressed and discussed. These are elaborated in more detail in connection with cross-border cooperation in several papers in this volume.
- > An analysis of different fields of action that are relevant for cross-border cooperation, regardless of whether they are INTERREG programmes and projects or informal instruments of spatial development, is important. Here, too, it appears opportune to examine some of these policies by way of an example.
- > The use of governance concepts for border areas is becoming increasingly relevant both for the analysis and the shaping of future policies and planning. This provides new opportunities for understanding and shaping cross-border interaction, from the local to the European level.

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Andrea Hartz, Beate Caesar

## A SHORT PROFILE OF THE GREATER REGION AND THE UPPER RHINE REGION

### Contents

- 1 Introduction
  - 2 A short profile of the Greater Region
  - 3 A short profile of the Upper Rhine region
  - 4 Outlook
- References

### Abstract

The institutionalisation of border regions has a long history. Initial forms of cooperation usually emerged in relation to a specific event. The 1970s were decisive for the emergence of cross-border organisations in both the Greater Region and the Upper Rhine region. Over the decades the structures were consolidated, although regionally specific adaptations and developments continue both on a conceptual and practical level. The European INTERREG A programme has played a significant role in improving cross-border cooperation, and INTERREG continues to be an important factor in the implementation of cross-border projects. Efforts to further develop the institutional framework and cooperation structures in recent years demonstrate that there are still many challenges but also unexploited potential in the Greater Region and the Upper Rhine region.

### Keywords

Greater Region – Upper Rhine region – cross-border cooperation – institutionalisation – INTERREG

## 1 Introduction

This volume of papers focuses on cross-border cooperation within the territorial remit of the Hesse/Rhineland-Palatinate/Saarland Regional Working Group at the Academy for Territorial Development. Two border regions with a long tradition of cross-border institutional cooperation, which are funded in the framework of the territorial cooperation of the EU, form part of the Regional Working Group's territory: the Greater Region<sup>1</sup> and the Upper Rhine region<sup>2</sup> (see Fig. 1). The two regions are briefly described below.

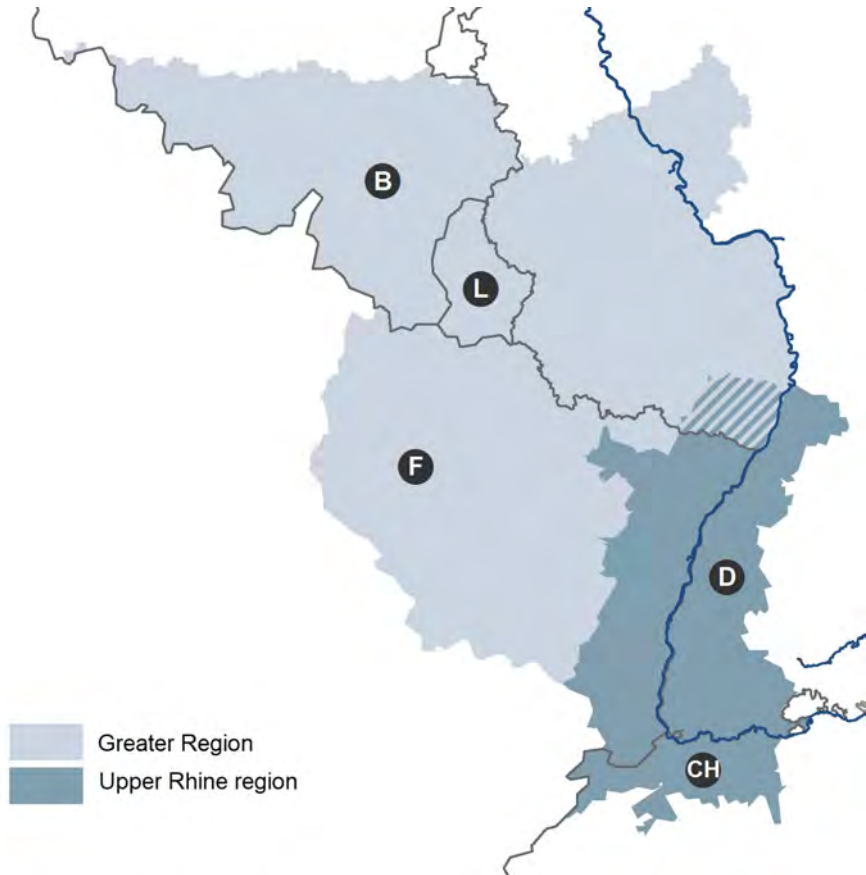


Fig. 1: The Greater Region and the Upper Rhine region within their territorial boundaries /Source: The authors

1 The 'Greater Region' is an abbreviation which stands for 'Großregion Saarland – Lorraine – Luxemburg – Rheinland-Pfalz – Région Wallonne – Communauté Française de Belgique und Deutschsprachige Gemeinschaft Belgiens' (official designation) [translated as Greater Region Saarland – Lorraine – Luxembourg – Rhineland-Palatinate – Walloon Region – the French Community of Belgium and the German-speaking Community of Belgium].

2 In addition, the southern sub-regions of the Meuse-Rhine Euroregion overlap with the northern area of the Greater Region within the boundaries of the Regional Working Group.

## 2 A short profile of the Greater Region

The Greater Region (French: *la Grande Région*, German: *Großregion*) is the further development of the SaarLorLux+ cooperation area and is located in the four-nations border area formed by Germany, France, Luxembourg and Belgium, embedded in an economically thriving European area between the European metropolitan regions and metropolitan areas of Brussels, Rhine-Ruhr, Rhine-Main, Rhine-Neckar, Basel/Mulhouse and Paris (see Fig. 2). It is a region with a turbulent history. Over the past two centuries, the military conflicts alone often gave rise to shifting national borders in the region. The Lorraine territories, for example, were annexed by Germany post-1871, while the Saarland fell under French control several times, including after the Second World War.

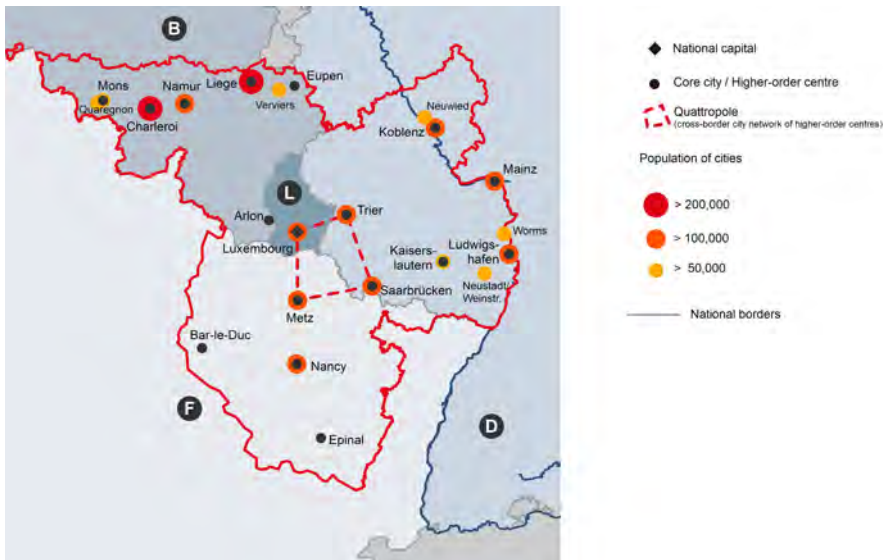


Fig. 2: The Greater Region and its urban system / Source: BMVBS (Federal Ministry of Transport, Construction and Urban Development) (2011), the authors' own illustration (modified)

### Basic information about the Greater Region

The Greater Region consists of the German federal states of Rhineland-Palatinate and Saarland, the French region of Lorraine (which is now, after the French territorial reform, a sub-region of the new French Grand Est region), the Grand Duchy of Luxembourg, the Walloon Region in Belgium and the German-speaking Community of Belgium. It spans a total area of 65,401 km<sup>2</sup>, making it one of the largest border regions in the EU. In 2013, the region had a population of 11.4 million; the average population density was 175 inhabitants/km<sup>2</sup>. The population is, however, spread very unevenly across the territory: the population density varies from 2,000 inhabitants/km<sup>2</sup> in the densely populated metropolitan areas, e.g. along the Rhine corridor in Rhineland-Palatinate or in the northern part of Wallonia, to around 400 inhabitants/km<sup>2</sup> in Saarland or even below 30 inhabitants/km<sup>2</sup> in sparsely populated regions in

Lorraine (GeoPortal of the Greater Region 2013). The outlook for the future development of the population is similar (Saarland Ministry for Finance and Europe 2014: 8 et seq.): According to the current population forecasts, the population of the Greater Region will continue to show an overall positive trend until 2030. Different development dynamics are, however, to be expected for the respective sub-regions. While a continued declining trend in population is expected for Saarland, Wallonia and the German-speaking Community of Belgium show signs of slight growth. For Luxembourg, an increase of 23% is projected. Rhineland-Palatinate expects a slight decline or stagnation in population, while a slight growth or stagnation is forecast for Lorraine. At the same time, the shift in the age structure will continue with a smaller cohort of young people (under 20) and an increasingly older population (over 60) in the Greater Region and in all its sub-regions. The same is also true of the working age population: It is expected that by 2030, only 48% of the population in the Greater Region will be in this cohort of 20 to 59 year-olds. Luxembourg, Lorraine and Wallonia, for which population growth is projected, are above average, while for Rhineland-Palatinate, Saarland, which is experiencing a population decline, and the German-speaking Community of Belgium, the forecast value in 2030 is only 46%.

The region has a distinctively polycentric structure (Interregional Labour Market Observatory 2014: 7): the centres – Luxembourg-Ville, Liège, Charleroi, Namur, Mons, Metz, Nancy, Trier, Saarbrücken, Kaiserslautern, Mainz, Ludwigshafen and Koblenz – characterise the agglomeration areas, which partly extend across national borders and are closely enmeshed. They are surrounded by rural, sparsely populated areas with several nature parks. The City of Luxembourg, as a national capital, has a prominent status in the Greater Region, especially due to its economic significance and its European relevance as the seat of several European institutions. ‘Within the areas of the Greater Region, each partner is solely responsible for the organisation of their spatial and settlement structure. Using the respective spatial planning instruments and plans at the national level and the federal state level, the central-place functions and development areas are defined with due respect for the corresponding political and legislative powers of each partner’ (GeoPortal of the Greater Region 2012).

There is a high level of mobility across the national borders: the economy is tightly interwoven, and the commuter flows are at a peak – with more than 213,400 inter-regional cross-border workers – in a European comparison (Interregional Labour Market Observatory 2014: 10) (see also the paper by Wille and Roos in this volume). 160,000 people alone commute regularly for work purposes to Luxembourg and back (cf. WSAGR [Economic and Social Committee of the Greater Region] 2014: 79). In addition, there are very close functional interactions in the fields of education and research (Summit of the Greater Region 2016). In the field of tourism, the Greater Region is jointly promoted by the sub-regions (Greater Region Tourism 2017).

Since the 1960s, multifaceted cross-border cooperation in regard to the economy, society and politics has evolved, which will continue to be expanded.

### ***Cross-border cooperation and institutionalisation***

An initial trigger for cooperation was the common economic upswing in mining and in the iron and steel industry, but especially the subsequent economic decline of the coal and steel industry in the border region. These common challenges necessitated a collective effort. This set decisive impulses for the establishment of cross-border institutions.

Cooperation in the Greater Region goes back to the early 1970s and has been shaped through various institutions. In 1970, a German-French intergovernmental commission was established, to which Luxembourg acceded in 1971. The objective of this commission is to create formal prerequisites for cooperation across national borders. The commission today comprises regional representatives of the four nations; the Belgian representation only joined in 1981. The ‘regional commission’ was created to serve as the regional executive organ of the commission (see Groß/Wille/Gengler et al. 2006: 59).

The Summit of the Greater Region has been the political representation of the cooperation area since 1995 and provides the strategic framework for common projects and issues (steering level). It is composed of the highest political representatives of the participating regions, who meet at regular intervals. Summit resolutions are implemented at the level of the various themed working groups (Greater Region, undated a).

To shape cross-border institutional cooperation more efficiently in the wake of the accession of the Belgian territorial authorities – the Walloon Region, the French and German-speaking Community of Belgium – the ‘New Architecture’ (see Fig. 3) was adopted by a summit resolution (Saarland, undated; Summit of the Greater Region 2005, 2006). The structures of the Summit and Regional Commission were merged. The relevant development guidelines are decided by the Summit of the Executives. The Summit is assisted in its deliberations by an Economic and Social Committee of the Greater Region (*Wirtschafts- und Sozialausschuss der Großregion, WSAGR*) established in 1997. Its task is to ‘address problems in connection with economic, social and cultural development and with spatial planning in the Greater Region in the form of official statements or resolutions’ (Greater Region, undated b). The WSAGR is unique in Europe (Köppen/Horn 2009: 101).

The Interregional Parliamentary Council (IPC), which is composed of members of the parliaments of the participating German federal states and the corresponding committees of the other regions, does not have legislative powers, merely a consultative function (Greater Region, undated c).

In 2014, a further step was taken towards solidifying the institutional cooperation through the establishment of the ‘Summit Secretariat of the Greater Region’ as a European Grouping of Territorial Cooperation (EGTC) in the House of the Greater Region in Luxembourg. The EGTC is the permanent secretariat for the executive bodies of the Summit of the Greater Region. Its key responsibility is to support and coordinate the work of the Summit of the Greater Region and its working groups. It is the first point of contact for stakeholders, citizens and for parties interested in the

Greater Region and ensures continuity between the rotating presidencies of the Summit. In addition, the Secretariat is charged with the communication about the activities of the Summit (Greater Region, undated d).

Other forms of cooperation, apart from the official organs of the Greater Region, were established in the sub-regions. The SaarMoselle European Grouping of Territorial Cooperation, for example, was established in 2010 from an association for cross-border cooperation between Saarbrücken and the French Département Moselle (SaarMoselle Eurodistrict, undated). Another example is the QuattroPole city network comprising the cities of Luxembourg, Metz, Saarbrücken and Trier, which was created in 2014 as 'Verein QuattroPole e.V.' (QuattroPole association, undated). In addition, the University of the Greater Region was established in 2013; it is an association of six universities from the Greater Region cooperation area. The general objective of the cooperation is to increase the mobility of students and lecturers between the partner universities and to expand the range and diversity in teaching and research, e.g. through the establishment of joint study programmes and research projects (University of the Greater Region 2016).

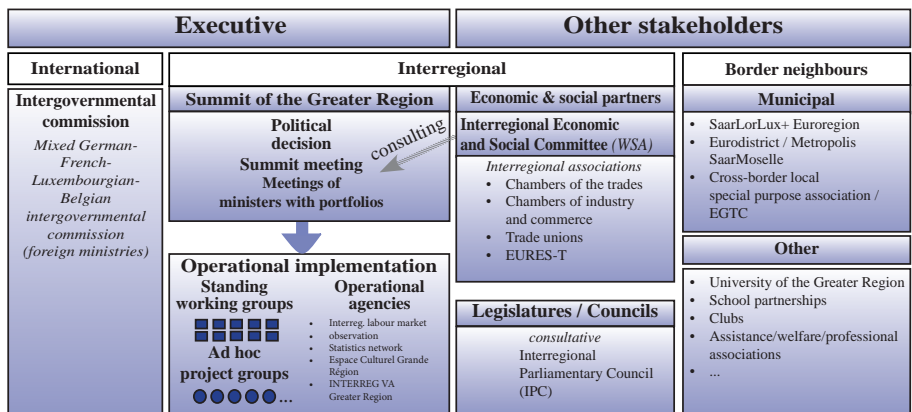


Fig. 3: Overview of the architecture of the institutional cooperation of the Greater Region and its various stakeholders /Source: BMVBS (2011), the authors' own illustration (modified)

### INTERREG in the Greater Region

A clear intensification of cross-border cooperation resulted from the launch of the INTERREG European Community Initiative in 1990 (Beck/Pradier 2011). Since the early 1990s, cross-border projects and measures can be co-financed through European subsidies from the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) as part of the objective of 'European Territorial Cooperation' and the focal point of 'Cross-border cooperation' (INTERREG A). In the Greater Region, numerous project partnerships have made use of the possibilities of EU funding across four programme phases. The financial support provided by INTERREG plays an important role in the implementation of cross-border cooperation activities and projects (Euro-Institute 2010: 8).

The ‘Greater Region’ cross-border cooperation programme for the fifth funding period for 2014 to 2020 is currently running (INTERREG Greater Region 2017). The programme provides funding in four focal areas or ‘priority axes’, which are in turn composed of a total of ten specific objectives:

- > Priority axis 1: Advancing the development of an integrated labour market by subsidising education, training and mobility
- > Priority axis 2: Ensuring environmentally-friendly development of the Greater Region and an improvement of the living environment
- > Priority axis 3: Improvement of living conditions
- > Priority axis 4: Enhancing the competitiveness and attractiveness of the Greater Region

The programme is managed by an EGTC (Greater Region 2017).

#### ***Further development of the institutional structure and cooperation***

In recent years, the Greater Region has developed a strategic approach to expand the existing metropolitan potentials. At the same time, the Greater Region ‘strives to develop its structures in future in the context of a European policy of social and economic cohesion and in line with the “Europe 2020” Strategy for intelligent (employment, research, innovation), sustainable (environment, energy, climate) and inclusive (education, social integration and the fight against poverty) growth’ (*Mission Grande Région* 2016: 9). This is to be achieved by exploiting shared potentials and intensifying cooperation.

The 13th Summit of the Greater Region confirmed in January 2013 that the future objective of the cooperation would be to develop the Greater Region into a ‘cross-border, polycentric metropolitan region’ (CBPMR) (Summit of the Greater Region 2013). The implementation of this objective was actively advanced as part of Rhineland-Palatinate’s presidency of the Summit in 2013/2014 (Summit of the Greater Region 2013, 2014a), and subsequently by Wallonia’s presidency from 1 January 2015 for the next two years. The aim was to make the Greater Region competitive in the long term compared to European metropolitan regions, based on a metropolitan development strategy. The strategy is oriented towards polycentric territorial development to take the different functional conditions of the individual sub-regions and the spatio-structural character of the Greater Region into account appropriately. In principle, this begs the question of to what extent the establishment of a CBPMR is a suitable response to the current challenges and whether the existing governance structures must be adapted to fit with this new strategic orientation. Schelkmann addresses this issue in this volume.

The establishment of a CBPMR was underscored by the resolution as part of the 13th Summit to compile a spatial development strategy for the Greater Region (*Raumentwicklungskonzept der Großregion, REKGR*) ‘in which spatially relevant functions such as the economy, housing, leisure time and the environment are identified and



mutually reconciled from the perspective of mobility and accessibility’ (Summit of the Greater Region 2014a, see also Schelkmann’s paper in this volume). It serves ‘as a framework for action for comprehensive, integrative and coherent spatial development of the Greater Region’ and is to be elaborated as part of an INTERREG project (2018 – 2021) (MDDI [Luxembourgian Ministry of Sustainable Development and Infrastructures] 2017, Summit of the Greater Region 2014b).

Further activities followed in recent years, such as the continuous development of a geographic information system for the Greater Region (*Geographisches Informationssystem der Großregion, GIS-GR*, see also the papers by Hartz and Schelkmann in this volume) as a monitoring instrument or the conclusion of the joint ‘Framework agreement on cross-border vocational education and training in the Greater Region’ on 5 November 2014. They illustrate the aim to establish the metropolitan border region on the broadest possible basis and to act in various areas at the cross-border level (Summit of the Greater Region 2014c; Pallagst 2014).

### 3 A short profile of the Upper Rhine region

Unlike the Greater Region, the name of this cooperation area is to some extent indicative of the composition and location of the cooperation. The Upper Rhine region comprises the German-French-Swiss border area between the metropolitan areas of Karlsruhe and Strasbourg in the north and Basel in the south. The Upper Rhine region is characterised by its cultural diversity as well as by its particular economic strength compared to other European regions (TMO [Trinational Metropolitan Region of the Upper Rhine] 2016a).

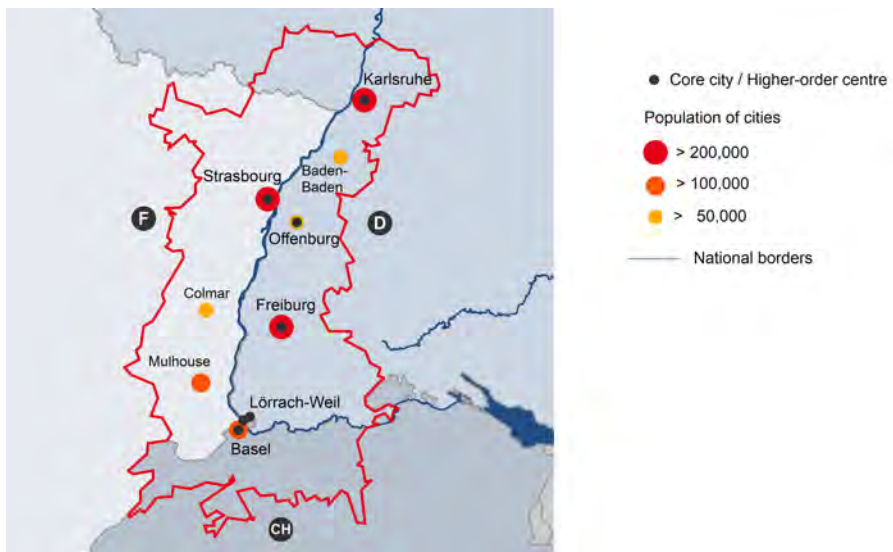


Fig. 4: The Upper Rhine region and its urban system / Source: BMVBS (2011), the authors' own illustration (modified)

### ***Basic information about the Upper Rhine region***

The cooperation area of about 21,500 km<sup>2</sup> extends across three countries: Germany, France and Switzerland. It is located in the Rhine plains, where the Rhine also largely serves as a natural border between the three countries. The participating regions are Alsace (which has been part of the French Grand Est region since January 2016), Northwestern Switzerland, Baden and the southern Palatinate. About one-fifth of the approximately 6 million inhabitants live in the metropolises of Karlsruhe, Strasbourg, Mulhouse, Freiburg and Basel. Despite the high proportion of mountainous areas, the population density in the Upper Rhine area is 278 inhabitants/km<sup>2</sup> on average (Upper Rhine Conference 2015: 44 et seq.). However, the population is not evenly dispersed across the region: The very high population density of Northwestern Switzerland (385 inhabitants/km<sup>2</sup>) stems from the intensive densification within the Basel metropolitan area; the Baden region with 299 inhabitants/km<sup>2</sup> is in second place. Alsace (222 inhabitants/km<sup>2</sup>) and the southern Palatinate region (200 inhabitants/km<sup>2</sup>) are clearly more sparsely populated. Nevertheless, these values are still above the corresponding average values for France, Switzerland or the EU-28 as a whole (TMO 2016a). Hence, the organisation of the Upper Rhine region also has a strong polycentric character.

Compared to western European standards, the region is a highly thriving economic area and boasts numerous universities and other educational establishments at university level (BMVBS 2011: 29 et seq.). Yet the cross-border (labour market-related) interactional flows with 93,000 daily commuters (Upper Rhine Conference 2015: 45) remains clearly below the Greater Region despite Switzerland being an ‘employment magnet’.

### ***Cross-border cooperation and institutionalisation***

As in the case of the Greater Region, the national borders in the Upper Rhine region have shifted repeatedly in the past. The Rhine with its adjacent territories was a bone of contention between France and Germany for nearly two centuries. Germany gained control of Alsace several times, while the French formation of a nation state was based on the notion of the Rhine as a natural border.

Since the end of the 1940s, cross-border cooperation in this area has steadily evolved from an initially informal to an institutionalised form of cooperation. In 1975, an intergovernmental commission and two regional committees were established to jointly meet the then cross-border challenges. In 1991, the regional committees were merged to form the German-French-Swiss Upper Rhine Conference. Ever since, this body has been the central platform for organising and coordinating the cooperation, which takes place mainly in themed working groups and expert committees. Another body is the Upper Rhine Council, which was established in 1997. It provides recommendations and opinions and discusses policy issues (BMVBS 2011: 28 et seq.). In the meantime, a closer cooperation between the Upper Rhine Council and the Upper Rhine Conference is emerging.

In the Upper Rhine region, there are other sub-regional associations, e.g. the Eurodistricts PAMINA (see the paper by Harster and Siebenhaar in this volume), Strasbourg-Ortenau and Freiburg/Centre et Sud Alsace region and the Basel Trinational Eurodistrict (*BMVBS* 2011: 31; see Fig. 5). The establishment of the Eurodistricts represents the phase of ‘level-specific differentiation’ in the border regions, which started in 2000 (Euro-Institute 2010), although the cooperation in the PAMINA area commenced earlier and has been organised in the form of an EGTC since the end of 2016. In an overview based on a comparison with other border regions, ‘the Upper Rhine is currently the only area where a consistent, level-specific differentiation in regard to cross-border cooperation is apparent, where there is not merely an institutional approach, but also an approach that is structured in accordance with the relevant tasks or functions for a vertical division of responsibilities between the (inter) national (intergovernmental commission), pan-regional (Upper Rhine Conference, Upper Rhine Council) and sub-regional level (Eurodistricts)’ (*BMVBS* 2011: 62).

As in the case of the Greater Region, the Upper Rhine region has a cross-border association of universities: the European Confederation of Upper Rhine Universities (‘EUCOR’), which was established in 1989 (EUCOR 2016). This association is the framework for cooperation between the universities of Basel, Freiburg, Karlsruhe, Mulhouse and Strasbourg in academic teaching, research, culture, sports and administration. With initiatives such as ‘Dialog Science’ (cross-border yearly series event on specific topics in the wide-ranging field of science of the Science Pillar) or the Science Offensive (SO) of the Trinational Metropolitan Region of the Upper Rhine (*TMO*), which funds cross-border flagship projects in the region through financial and technical assistance for the elaboration and implementation of INTERREG applications in the field of Research and Innovation, the *TMO* is committed to promoting cross-border research activities (*TMO* 2016 a, b).

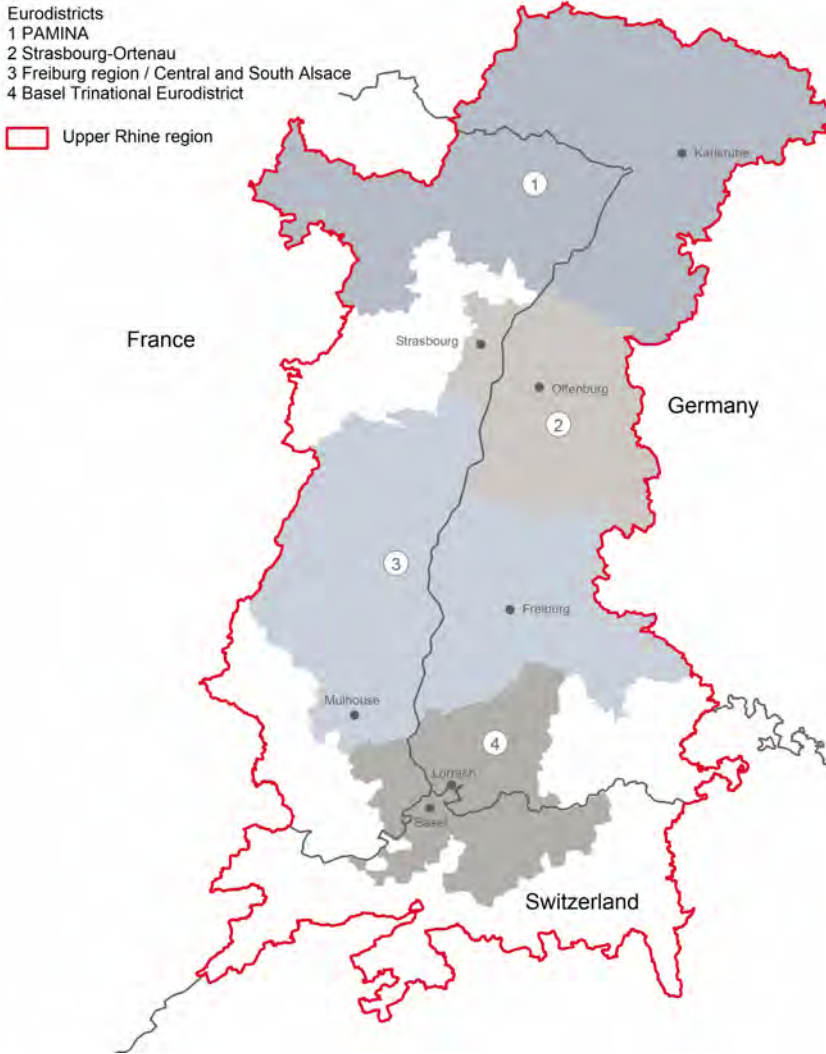


Fig. 5: Eurodistricts along the German-French border / Source: BMVBS (2011), the authors' own illustration (modified)

### **INTERREG in the Upper Rhine region**

INTERREG funding in the preceding programme phases has proven to be a catalyst for numerous projects and activities in the Upper Rhine. In addition to and independent of the above, cross-border cooperation has been professionalised to solidify and further expand this cooperation: in some cases, the institutional cooperation partners 'have even created their own cross-border budgets that can be used to fund smaller projects autonomously and very flexibly' (Euro-Institute 2010: 8). On 16 December 2014, the European Commission approved the operational Upper Rhine INTERREG V (A) programme (France – Germany – Switzerland) for the fifth programming period. The current programme phase envisages mainly the implementation of mea-

asures for intelligent, sustainable and integrative growth along the Upper Rhine and the promotion of territorial cohesion through cross-border cooperation between administrations and citizens (INTERREG Upper Rhine, undated).

### ***Further development of the institutional structure and cooperation***

Since 2010, the cooperation area has been known as the ‘Trinational Metropolitan Region of the Upper Rhine’ (*TMO*). This designation expresses the objective, which was formulated in 2008, to establish a cross-border metropolitan region (*BMVBS* 2011: 31, see also Hartz’s paper in this volume). At the outset, the *TMO* was based on the idea of ‘sustainably promoting the development of the Upper Rhine area into a European region of the utmost competitiveness with an attractive living environment’ (*TMO* 2016a). The objective of the *TMO* is ‘to further advance the resources of the Upper Rhine as an economic space, to develop a joint spatial planning policy for spatially-relevant projects, to shape the region into an attractive living environment and to optimally position it with national and international competition’ (*TMO* 2016a). In this regard, the region’s strategic position within Europe, its high profile in the educational and research sector and its economic power, as well as the advantageous polycentric regional structure, are seen as a good starting point. It is emphasised, however, that the aim is not to create new administrative structures but rather to strengthen the existing forms of cooperation and to launch platforms and networks (*TMO* 2016a).

Characteristic of this is the structure of the *TMO*, which is based on the four pillars of policymaking, the economy, science and civil society. This serves to improve cooperation by connecting different stakeholder arenas and aims consistently at the strategic development of the existing cross-border potentials. This approach also includes aspects of multi-level governance and the linking of the Eurodistricts (intermunicipal) and the entire region (interregional) to allow for the establishment of a useful and efficient division of labour (*BMVBS* 2011: 66). To secure an appropriate external positioning, a focused lobbying strategy at the level of the EU and the national governments of countries involved was established (*BMVBS* 2011: 66).

## **4 Outlook**

A general concern is how cross-border cooperation in the Greater Region and in the Upper Rhine region will be shaped in future, not only from a geographic perspective but also from a political and administrative standpoint. This aspect will be discussed in the following sections from different perspectives.

Last but not least, the territorial reform enacted in 2015 in France took effect on 1 January 2016. It reduced the number of French regions from 22 to 13. The objective of this merger of regions is to strengthen the regions as economic areas by creating larger territorial entities and to provide them with greater political and legislative powers and instruments in regard to economic development. Alsace and Lorraine now form, in conjunction with the Champagne-Ardenne region, the Grand Est region (see Fig. 6). For the Upper Rhine region and the Greater Region, this means that sub-regions on the French side, which were previously administratively separated –

Alsace and Lorraine – have now been merged into a single large region. Grand Est comprises about 57,000 km<sup>2</sup> (Fehlen 2016: 80) and is therefore almost as large as the cross-border Greater Region including all sub-regions (see the paper by Harster and Clev in this volume).

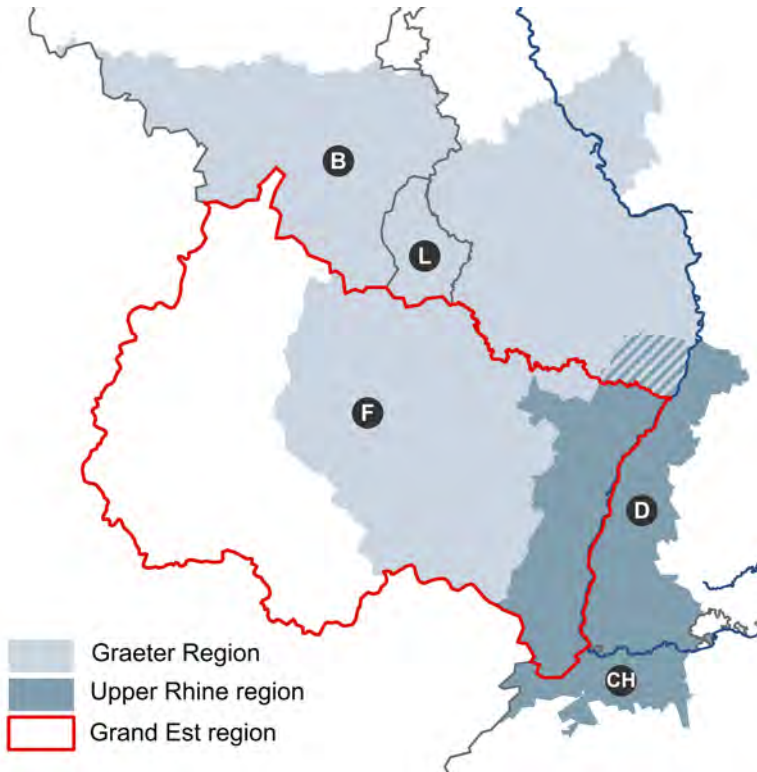


Fig. 6: The new French Grand Est region / Source: The authors

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Gerd-Rainer Damm

## CHALLENGES OF CROSS-BORDER COOPERATION IN THE GREATER REGION – INTERVIEWS WITH RELEVANT ACTORS

### Contents

- 1 Introduction and methodology
- 2 Evaluation of the interviews
  - 2.1 Importance, constraints and difficulties of cross-border cooperation
  - 2.2 Country-specific perspectives
  - 2.3 Differences in perspectives between administrative levels
- 3 Summary and conclusions

### References

### Abstract

This paper presents and analyses interviews held with decision-makers and actors involved in cross-border cooperation in the Greater Region, exploring the difficulties and constraints of the collaboration. In addition to problems caused by the different languages, administrative cultures and variations in the tasks and jurisdictions of the individual partners, the organisation of the Greater Region is also mentioned as a hindrance. Yet many difficulties concerning cooperation are minimised and in some cases overcome by the high level of commitment of the individuals active in cross-border cooperation. The paper concludes with recommendations to improve the working methods of cross-border cooperation.

### Keywords

Importance of cross-border cooperation in the Greater Region – important projects – language skills – administrative cultures – effectiveness of the committees – steps to improve cross-border cooperation

## 1 Introduction and methodology

Cross-border cooperation in the Greater Region is generally, and often accurately, described as a great success story. Yet in practice, cooperation is characterised not only by its successes but also through difficulties and constraints (see the paper by Caesar and Pallagst in this volume).

An outlook on the future viability and further progress of cross-border cooperation would not be complete without determining the obstacles in addition to listing the factors that have contributed to its success. Hence, the following section will shed light not on the familiar legal obstacles but rather on the difficulties of practical, daily cooperation across and beyond the border.

The author has sought out and identified these difficulties with the help of decision-makers and actors in cross-border cooperation at different administrative and action levels based on semi-structured interviews. Unlike standardised questionnaires, semi-structured and topic-focused interviews offer the opportunity to place the motives and experiences of the interviewees within an ideas- and argument-based context. The semi-structured interviews were conducted either in the form of face-to-face, one-to-one conversations or by telephone, and lasted 30 to 40 minutes. The interviews were recorded electronically and subsequently transcribed, and then thematically structured and anonymised. As the interviewees from Lorraine had sufficient knowledge of German, the interviews were held in German.

The choice of interviewees does not claim to be representative of all parties involved in cross-border cooperation activities. However, the author chose interviewees who are currently or were in the past actively engaged in and responsible for cross-border cooperation within the Greater Region. They moreover represent each partner region and administrative level. For reasons of timing or organisation, interviews were ultimately conducted with only 12 people from the nation states of Luxembourg, France (Lorraine) and Germany (Saarland) instead of the 18 that were originally envisaged. The interviewees represent the administrative levels of ministries (for Lorraine, the prefecture of the region and the *Conseil régional de la Moselle* [Regional Council of the Moselle]), the intermunicipal level (urban association, European Grouping of Territorial Cooperation [EGTC]) and municipality as well as an independent consulting firm for intercultural communication and development. Their spread across the countries or regions, as well as across the administrative and hierarchical levels, is shown in Tables 1 and 2.

In addition to the guided interview questions,<sup>1</sup> other insights and information provided by the interviewees were also taken into consideration in the analysis and evaluation of the interviews.

|                                  | Luxembourg | Lorraine | Saarland |
|----------------------------------|------------|----------|----------|
| Ministries and comparable levels | 2          | 2        | 4        |
| Intermunicipal level             |            |          | 2        |
| Municipal level                  |            | 2        | 1        |
| Independent planning firm        |            |          | 1        |

Table 1: Distribution of interviewees according to national affiliation and administrative level /Source: The author

|  | Luxembourg | Lorraine | Saarland |
|--|------------|----------|----------|
| Political leadership   |            | 2        | 2        |
| Management or comparable function                                    |            |          | 2        |
| Employees in executive roles, head of departments or comparable role | 2          | 2        | 2        |

Table 2: Distribution of interviewees according to national affiliation and hierarchical level /Source: The authors

2 Evaluation of the interviews

2.1 Importance, constraints and difficulties of cross-border cooperation

The evaluation is structured analogously to the guided questions posed in the interviews.

**Importance of the cross-border cooperation within the interviewee’s own sphere of responsibility and importance for the border region overall**

As the interviewees without exception are or were actively engaged in cross-border cooperation, it is hardly surprising that almost all of them attach great importance to it. This applies to both their own remit and for the border region as a whole. Merely one interviewee expressed clear frustrations. Even though this person considered the cooperation to be highly necessary for the future development of the Greater Region, he believed that the actual policymakers did not attach great importance to it.

1 The guided questions for the interviews were as follows:

- How important is cross-border cooperation in the field within your remit and how important is it for the border region overall?
- What important projects and measures have been carried out?
- Where do you see difficulties and constraints to successful cross-border cooperation?
- Which committees and organisations exist for cross-border cooperation and how do you rate their effectiveness?
- How has cross-border cooperation changed over time?
- How do you rate the importance of the INTERREG programmes for cross-border cooperation?

Almost all interviewees stated that they were willing to engage in even greater cross-border cooperation within their own remit. However, there were temporal, personal and financial limits to this engagement. Interviewees frequently expressed the opinion that their commitment was not matched by corresponding appreciation from the top tiers of their administration and organisations. Interviewees who were themselves at the helm of an authority often found such appreciation to be lacking at the next higher level within the federal state or comparable tier or in the committees of the Greater Region.

The greatest importance is attached to cross-border cooperation at the local level, where it is also assessed to be generally successful.

All interviewees referred to the high level of cross-border interactions in the Greater Region and the resulting necessities of cooperation. The following aspects were mentioned most frequently: the joint labour market, youth unemployment, cross-border public transport, the educational system, healthcare, joint management, joint spatial planning for cross-border agglomeration areas and the associated coordination.

All interviewees believed that more intensive cross-border cooperation would generate considerable synergy effects. The political significance and economic standing of the Greater Region would be significantly boosted through improved cross-border cooperation, both compared to other regions and at the European level and in relations with the EU.

Some interviewees considered that this insight was in principle also shared by those responsible politically but that the actual policymakers would often attach no or very little importance to it. Interviewees were also critical of the fact that while the political decisionmakers in principle appreciated the opportunities associated with the realisation of a cross-border polycentric metropolitan region, they would not use those opportunities – or made only inadequate use of them – as a basis for specific actions, decisions or projects.

At the local level, concerns were expressed that the municipal activities of cross-border cooperation did not find sufficient attention, support and recognition from the higher-level tiers.

Interviewees occasionally suggested that a sense of competitiveness and egotism between the partners in the Greater Region dominated many individual decision-making processes and that the synergy effects of a holistic approach were therefore ignored or neglected.

### ***Importance of the cross-border cooperation within the interviewee's own***

In their response to this question, the interviewees focused on the most important and current projects and measures in their work environment. Nearly all interviewees stated that the success of cross-border cooperation in the Greater Region depended on specific projects with visible results and noticeable improvements for life in the border region.

The ‘Task Force on Cross-border Workers’ and the associated benefits for cross-border commuters in the Greater Region were the most frequently mentioned examples. The responsibility of the Task Force on Cross-border Workers is to elaborate proposals for legal and administrative solutions to general problems experienced by cross-border workers and the companies that employ them. The task force was initially funded through the INTERREG programme.

The associated University of the Greater Region was another frequently mentioned example of a successful project. It consists of a network of six universities in the Greater Region. This region comprises the Saarland and Rhineland-Palatinate in Germany, the Grand Duchy of Luxembourg, the French region of Lorraine and Wallonia in Belgium, with the Saarland University, the Université de Lorraine, the University of Luxembourg, the Trier University, the TU Kaiserslautern and the University of Liège. In addition to the INTERREG funding in the starting phase, the fact that the vice-chancellors of the universities involved have made this project their top priority was said to be a decisive factor for its success. The cooperation has thus far resulted in joint study programmes and research cooperation, such as the UniGR Center for Border Studies.

The joint Summit Secretariat of the Greater Region, newly created in 2014, is considered an important step towards a better organisation of the collaboration at the Summit level. The Secretariat, based in the House of the Greater Region in Luxembourg, is tasked with preparing for the Summit meetings and further advancing cooperation between the Summits. It is organised in the legal form of an EGTC (European Grouping of Territorial Cooperation) and is jointly supported by the Summit partners.

The framework agreement on cross-border vocational education and training with the associated projects was mentioned as a further significant measure for the future of the Greater Region. At the time of the interviews, this measure was still in preparation. This initiative is intended to counteract youth unemployment in parts of the Greater Region as well as the looming shortage of a skilled workforce. At the same time, interviewees considered the previous cooperation between Saarland and Lorraine in regard to vocational education and further training to have been deficient. The deficits were said to be caused by the significant discrepancies between the different vocational education systems and responsibilities for vocational training.

The improved cooperation between Lorraine and Saarland in regard to healthcare, in particular emergency medical care for heart disease, was also mentioned repeatedly as an important aspect. The sense of relief among the interviewees about the realisation of this project was palpable as the coordination and negotiations had taken more than 20 years.

The organisations of the four partners of the Greater Region (tourist information services of Saarland, Lorraine, Luxembourg, Rhineland-Palatinate and of the Eastern Cantons – *Tourismus Zentrale Saarland*, *Comité Régional du Tourisme de Lorraine*, *Office National de Tourisme du Grand-Duché de Luxembourg*, *Rheinland-Pfalz Tourismus*, *Office du Tourisme des Cantons de l’Est*) – have elaborated the first joint tourist marketing concept for the Greater Region with the help of INTERREG

programmes. This collaboration of the organisations responsible for tourism in the Greater Region is mentioned as a positive but long overdue example of cooperation across the borders.

The German-Luxembourg Schengen Lyceum is described as an extremely successful project. The Lyceum in Perl in Saarland is a school for students from Luxembourg and Saarland, where they are taught in mixed, multilingual classes. The teaching staff, curricula and school certificates of this secondary school are designed to provide transnational, European education and qualifications. The Schengen Lyceum is highly popular and appreciated on both sides of the German-Luxembourg border. Even parents from Lorraine seek to have their children schooled there, although this is officially not possible.

Another exemplary model project in Perl is the shared sewage treatment plant for German and Luxembourg municipalities. However, the establishment of shared water supply services, which would make sense technically and economically and is desired by the affected municipalities in Saarland and Lorraine, failed due to opposition from superordinate institutions in Lorraine.

The measures to improve cross-border public transport systems were considered to be only partially successful by the interviewees. Conflicting economic interests and funding problems on both sides of the border between Saarland and Lorraine prevent the further expansion of the Saarbahn railway service into Lorraine. The measures taken so far to improve public transport systems between Saarland and Luxembourg are likewise not judged to be entirely satisfactory.

Another failure (so far) is the envisaged cross-border nature park in the trilateral border area. In this case, the different philosophies underlying the nature park policies of the partners of the Greater Region could not be harmonised into a joint project.

At the level of planning and strategies, the following projects and measures were deemed successful:

- > The Greater Region has set the objective of establishing a metropolitan development strategy to position itself at the European level as a 'cross-border polycentric metropolitan region' (CBPMR). To strengthen this metropolitan dimension and ensure the coherent, integrative development of the entire Greater Region, the Summit of the Greater Region has decided to elaborate a spatial development strategy for the Greater Region (REKGR).<sup>2</sup> The first step is to identify the correlations and existing and potential synergy effects between the sub-regions in the Greater Region in the fields of the economy, settlements, transport, tourism, culture, leisure time and the environment. The Spatial Development Strategy of the Greater Region will not be a formal binding planning document. However, it is to become the basis and framework for decisions on specific measures of the Summit of the Greater Region and is to have the nature of a recommendation for the individual regional planning documents of the partners. Several interviewees had great

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<sup>2</sup> Resolution of the 12th Summit of the Greater Region of 24 January 2011.

expectations for the stimuli that the elaboration of a metropolitan development strategy and the Spatial Development Strategy of the Greater Region would provide for future cooperation. Nevertheless, due to their experiences of the extremely arduous and time-consuming preparation this project required with four national partners and the three French departments involved, not inconsiderable scepticism was expressed about a successful outcome.

- > To create a shared, comparable database that could be used for both spatial planning requirements as well as for the public relations work and the information provided to residents in the Greater Region, the partners of the Greater Region are busy establishing a common geographic information system for the Greater Region (GIS-GR).<sup>3</sup> The GIS-GR is a harmonised, cross-border database for the entire Greater Region. It strives to create a ‘common language’ and approach to the issues and their cartographic visualisation. The GIS-GR aims to facilitate a comparison of the actual geographic conditions in the regions with each other and to improve the understanding of the spatial dynamics observed in the Greater Region.
- > For joint cross-border spatial development and better planning coordination between Luxembourg, Rhineland-Palatinate and Saarland, these partners have elaborated and jointly financed the “Oberes Moseltal” (Upper Moselle Valley) development strategy. This development strategy should also revisit the subject of the cross-border nature park, which has failed thus far. The project is designed to initially be binational between the partners in Germany and Luxembourg, because the coordination, consultation and organisation of the financial participation of Lorraine has thus far proven to be too difficult. The binational project is intended to play a pilot role. In the mid-term, the Lorraine partners will have to be involved in the project in order for it to be successful in the border region.<sup>4</sup>
- > As part of the *Das Blaue Band der Saar* (The Blue Band of the Saar River) INTERREG project,<sup>5</sup> seven project partners from Sarralbe to Völklingen are elaborating a shared, cross-border vision for the future of the Saar Valley under the lead of the SaarMoselle Eurodistrict. Several measures, from road links along and to the Saar river, the construction of cycling paths and bridges to the creation of recreational spaces along the water, have already been executed.

### ***Difficulties and constraints of successful cross-border cooperation***

Almost all interviewees devoted considerable space to this question in their responses. It offered an opportunity to provide a general assessment on the work of the cross-border cooperation.

All participants addressed the matter of language skills. Successful cooperation across borders requires that the people involved should have at least a passive understanding of the language of the partner region. The use of interpreters makes it

<sup>3</sup> Resolution of the 11th Summit of the Greater Region; the current results of the GIS-GR can be viewed and downloaded at [www.gis-gr.eu](http://www.gis-gr.eu).

<sup>4</sup> The preliminary study for the Upper Moselle Valley development strategy was completed in November 2015. The principal study has been awarded and is currently being elaborated.

<sup>5</sup> Saarland Ministry for Environment, Energy and Transport, Department for Federal State Spatial Planning (Ed.) (2010).



possible to hold formal meetings and discussions as well as work in committees. Many interviewees, however, also attach great importance to communications on the fringes of meetings, to feedback and discussions outside of the formal sessions and to telephone or email communications. For these interactions, generally no interpreting services are provided. Language skills are therefore considered to be an important element for establishing the mutual trust that is necessary for cooperation. One interviewee expressed these sentiments as follows: ‘I believe that language is needed to open the door to establish contact in the first place.’ For their own immediate sphere of work and responsibility, however, most interviewees stated that they themselves generally had these language skills. Yet this is not the case for everyone actively engaged in the cross-border cooperation. The existing high level of language skills is largely attributed to the fact that many inhabitants of Lorraine (still) have a good command of the German language or the Lorraine dialect. In part, oral communications are also conducted in the shared Moselle Franconian dialect. Concerns were expressed, however, that the command of German or of the Lorraine dialect would decline in future. Those responsible for cross-border cooperation in Luxembourg are, like all Luxembourgers, at the very least bilingual (French, German/Luxembourgish). On the German side, (at least passive) command of the French language was and is being ensured through personal commitment and language training on the part of the interviewees.

All interviewees point to cultural differences between the German and French partners in regard to working methods, administrative action and decision-making as a difficulty for cross-border cooperation. The strict working methods of the German partners that focus on arriving at solutions from the outset can easily irritate the French participants. On the other hand, the somewhat more expansive and sometimes more philosophical and creative approach of the French partners at the launch of a joint process may alienate the German side. One interviewee described their experience as follows: ‘In the course of a project, the French will go out for a meal together to express how pleased they are to be working with each other. The project itself is at most a secondary topic of discussion during the meal. Germans, on the other hand, will meet for a working lunch only after the project has been completed to celebrate its success.’

All interviewees explained, however, that after some practical experience of cross-border cooperation and given the shared desire for the collaboration to be successful, such differences in culture and working methods ceased to present a major obstacle. This applied in particular to cooperation at the municipal level, where the parties generally have longstanding experience in cross-border cooperation and have known each other for a long time, often on a personal level as well.

Nevertheless, different administrative structures, at times disparate administrative powers and often significant differences in the decision-making processes do remain impediments to cooperation. When German partners turn questioningly or in frustration to their French colleagues to enquire who on the French side would be responsible for a given aspect of the work, their French colleagues sometimes reply only half in jest that they did not know themselves. In fact, the administrative powers and demarcations between the central state, the regions, prefectures, regional and general councils,

associations of municipalities and municipalities are extremely complex. This complexity and the dominant role of the central state are described by some interviewees as clearly obstructive factors for cooperation and cross-border projects. This applied in particular when individual levels pursue different objectives, sometimes on a politically motivated basis.

Some interviewees also said that decisions on the French side were motivated to a greater extent by political considerations. This meant that even senior employees have to consult more intensively with their elected political representatives than was the case for the German partners, who have more clearly defined and often broader decision-making powers. This discrepancy, it was claimed, would sometimes lead to considerable delays. The German partners at the superordinate levels, on the other hand, engage in legalistic argumentation and have more formal decision-making processes. This would then impede simple, pragmatic solutions, especially at the municipal level. But at this level, the involvement of all parties and of citizens plays a greater role in cross-border cooperation than at the superordinate levels.

Most interviewees commented that the Greater Region and the narrower border region did not yet have a sufficiently strong identity. The cross-border area was not yet perceived and conceived as an entity. This lack of identity was considered to be the cause of the egotistic concerns and competitiveness that still prevailed far beyond the necessary competition between the individual sub-regions. This meant that decisions were often delayed or even entirely obstructed due to individual interests. The added value of cross-border cooperation was said to be insufficiently acknowledged, which in turn severely obstructs the ability to present a unified appearance outside of the region. The border region would thus miss an important development opportunity.

Nearly all interviewees stated that cross-border cooperation could only proceed in a focused manner if there was a high degree of personal commitment in a given field of work or if such commitment was developed. For almost all interviewees, the task of cross-border cooperation competed with other activities they had to carry out. Nearly all interviewees pointed to insufficient staff and financial means for cross-border tasks. One interviewee expressed this as follows: 'There is all the normal work you have to do, so you have to do the work for the Greater Region on the side, simply because you believe in the idea and because you want to make progress at the level of the Greater Region. The cross-border cooperation depends on the people who motivate it and collaborate on it, and when they aren't committed and don't take the time, then nothing will come of it.'

The interviewees considered that the lack of financial support for cross-border cooperation also impeded cooperation across the border. Likewise, the funds needed to make INTERREG applications that were deemed to be useful were often said to be lacking.

It was frequently noted that the political leaders often touted the importance of cross-border cooperation in their 'soapbox speeches'. But this appreciation and due attention to cross-border cooperation was lacking in everyday work. A frequent crit-

ical comment was that the higher up in the political or administrative hierarchy, the more difficult it was to persuade the relevant actors to be enthusiastic about cross-border tasks.

***Committees and organisations for cross-border cooperation in the Greater Region and their effectiveness***

Almost all interviewees were to a greater or lesser extent critical of the committees of the Greater Region, and in particular the Summit of the Greater Region. On a positive note, the existence of the Summit as a political committee and the Greater Region working groups were viewed as a positive development and were seen as establishing a formal and organisational basis for cross-border cooperation. The resolutions and activities of the Summit on cross-border polycentric metropolitan regions were mentioned appreciatively. Many interviewees view this development as a great opportunity for advancing the core area of the Greater Region.

The points of criticism about the Summit of the Greater Region and its working committees were:

- > The work of the Summit is deemed to be inefficient. The Summit should meet more frequently and should not exclude contentious issues. It often proceeds too slowly and its resolutions often come too late. Decisions are taken only on the smallest common denominator. The Summit is often considered to be merely a media spectacle. The need for resolutions to be passed by a consensus of all partners only is considered to be an obstacle. The resolutions of the Summit are often considered to be very abstract or are couched in such general terms that they can scarcely be implemented at the subordinate levels. Resolutions of this nature are then of very little or no significance at the local level anymore.
- > Interviewees were critical of the fact that the Summit of the Greater Region has too many working groups and committees. As a rule, the working groups and committees have no remit or no clear remit assigned to them by the Summit and are not steered by the Summit or any other committee. The working groups and committees generally work alongside each other in an uncoordinated manner. The work they do is inadequately coordinated, and the interchange between them on technical and other topics was said to be lacking. Work results are often not apparent. Interviewees proposed that Summit working groups should be generally set up only for a limited period and with a clear remit. After the completion of their assignments, the working groups should be dissolved.

Cross-border cooperation at the local level through the EGTC and at the level of the municipalities was generally perceived in a more positive light. But interviewees were also critical of the fact that individual local interests sometimes proved to be an impediment to cooperation. Some interviewees pointed to lacking support from the supra-local level, and the lack of communication and coordination with the other committees engaged in cross-border cooperation.

In regard to the Interregional Parliamentary Council of the Greater Region, interviewees commented that it was not linked to nor did it interact with the working committees that work with the Council or implement its resolutions. The Council is said to work more or less ‘in a vacuum’. Accordingly, its impact was considered to be rather insignificant.

### ***Development of cross-border cooperation over the course of time***

All respondents emphasised that in principle the importance of cross-border cooperation had increased in the border region. Cooperation across the border had discernibly improved and had become more diverse at the same time. Interviewees pointed out that in addition to territorial authorities and public bodies, other organisations, institutions and associations on both sides of the border would increasingly cooperate.

Some interviewees also pointed to the risk that after many practical aspects of daily cross-border coexistence have been dealt with, the importance of cross-border cooperation could diminish. This could lead to a situation where fundamental and conflict-prone issues might be neglected or even ignored.

The discussion and work on the cross-border polycentric metropolitan region and the strategic planning tasks have at least provided a clear stimulus for the parties responsible for spatially relevant cross-border cooperation. However, this work should be supported more decisively from an institutional and political standpoint to ensure that the work does not fizzle out like similar projects in the past and thus cause frustration among the participants.

This frustration is already apparent in some opinions voiced by the interviewees, e.g. in comments such as: ‘Progress is simply very slow, and if you feel over time that you’re not making any real headway, and every step that you have to take is very time and energy consuming, you wonder at some point whether it really makes sense to continue with cross-border cooperation.’

The preceding critical comments relate to the cooperation within the committees of the Summit of the Greater Region with a total of five partners (Luxembourg, Lorraine, Wallonia, Rhineland-Palatinate and Saarland). Bilateral cooperation between just two national parties is perceived to be significantly easier and more effective than with three, four or five partners.

### ***Importance of the INTERREG programmes for cross-border cooperation***

Great importance is attached to the INTERREG programmes for cross-border cooperation, particularly the INTERREG A programme (for a brief description of the INTERREG programme, see the paper by Caesar and Pallagst in this volume). The INTERREG programmes are said to have a decisive, stimulating impact on cooperation. Interviewees stated that numerous projects were only realised thanks to the help of INTERREG subsidies. Moreover, the INTERREG projects have had a significantly broader impact and generate more public awareness than was the case for other cooperation projects. Upon further questioning, the interviewees also explained with regret that many projects were shut down once the INTERREG funding expired.

However, interviewees criticised the terms of the INTERREG programmes for being highly complex and bureaucratic, and the funding criteria for often being incomprehensible. They also pointed out that INTERREG funding should be used in future to a greater extent for strategic projects and not only for more or less randomly selected projects.

## **2.2 Country-specific perspectives**

The following section mentions only the aspects that reveal notable differences between the comments of the representatives of the individual nationalities.

If the interviews are analysed according to the interviewees' nationalities, it is apparent that all partners share a more or less equivalent appreciation of the importance of cross-border cooperation. The interviewees from Luxembourg refer more emphatically to the importance of the material requirements for solving the problem of cross-border commuting.

In the analysis of the constraints and difficulties, it is notable that while the partners from Lorraine also mention cultural discrepancies and different languages, they consider them to be less of an impediment than do their German partners. Interviewees point to the concern, however, that they were not sure whether the next generations of parties responsible for cross-border cooperation would still have a sufficient command of either German or the Lorraine dialect.

On the German side, the complexity of the French administrative system with its different allocation of administrative powers, and the experience that decisions were taken primarily based on political considerations, was considered to be a greater impediment to cooperation. For the French partners, the issue of centralism was of greater concern.

The criticism regarding the committees of the Greater Region was expressed somewhat more guardedly by the French partners than by the German or Luxembourgish interviewees.

## **2.3 Differences in perspectives between administrative levels**

When differentiated according to administrative tiers, the comments show very few differences. Different viewpoints on the questions were not discernible between the intermunicipal and the municipal level; they are accordingly jointly referred to as the local level.

At the local level, the cultural and language differences clearly play a less significant role than at the supra-local level. Local representatives generally have longstanding experience in regard to cooperation across the borders and have frequent and close contact with their respective partners, with whom they are as a rule quite familiar. Moreover, it was the interviewees at the local level who mentioned the most success-

ful cross-border cooperation projects. At this level, there are the fewest complaints about obstacles to cooperation with the local partners on the other side of the border. Yet at the same time, different interests and egotistical considerations that impede cooperation are mentioned most frequently at the municipal level. An insufficient flow of information from the superordinate tiers and from the Summit, as well as insufficient coordination of the activities between the different tiers of cross-border cooperation were also criticised.

According to the interviewees, the cultural differences, different languages and disparate administrative systems were considered to be a greater impediment for the cross-border cooperation at the supra-local level.

For the other guided questions on which the interviews were based, no significant differences could be discerned between the different administrative levels in their assessments of the cooperation across the border.

### **3 Summary and conclusions**

The group of interviewees shows that cross-border cooperation is supported at all administrative levels by extremely committed people. They are aware of the constraints and difficulties of cross-border cooperation. They try, however, to minimise them to the best of their abilities and to advance cross-border cooperation despite those difficulties. Successful cooperation across the border is driven to a great extent by the self-motivation of the actors involved. However, this positive aspect should not be overly emphasised.

Cross-border cooperation has made it possible to resolve or initiate solutions for a large number of everyday problems of cooperation and of shared life at and along the border. More complex, multidimensional or large-scale issues of the border region, however, have yet to be addressed or resolved. According to the interviewees, the Greater Region does not appear to be sufficiently well positioned as yet. This concerns in particular the organisation, working methods and thematic focus of the Summit of the Greater Region and its working committees. Fewer but better organised working groups with a clear remit and perhaps also working committees which are convened for a specific time period are thought to be necessary. The coordination of the information flows and communication of the work results must be significantly improved and, if necessary, formalised.

Many interviewees describe the work of the Summit itself as inefficient. Improvements are dependent on a clear political desire to act on the part of the partners of the Greater Region; the Greater Region should not be operated merely as a 'fair-weather' project – the parties responsible have to take up the real, material problems of cross-border cooperation and find solutions for them. Many of the parties responsible for cooperation across the borders consider a joint development strategy pursued by all partners toward the cross-border polycentric metropolitan region and the elaboration of a spatial development perspective to be a stress test for the success and the future of the Greater Region.

Viable future cross-border cooperation in the Greater Region requires a critical analysis of its working methods, an identification of the constraints and difficulties as well of the factors for success.

The constraints and difficulties described here cannot be completely resolved. Nevertheless, measures can be taken to facilitate the cooperation across the border. Steps in this direction are:

- > Staffing continuity, as far as possible, among the people engaged in and responsible for cross-border cooperation at the various institutions as well as forward-looking personnel planning and personnel selection in this field are vital considerations and must be ensured.
- > A solid relationship of trust between the parties working on cooperation on either side of the border is needed. This can be achieved by taking measures and providing opportunities to this end.
- > A cross-border exchange of personnel between institutions and organisations would be useful.
- > Advanced training in the special field of cross-border cooperation must be expanded and intensified.
- > The responsible organisational units must take the higher personnel expenditure associated with these responsibilities into account.
- > A regular exchange of information and experience as well as consultations about relevant topics between the responsible organisations and institutions is needed.
- > Such communication of information and consultation is also needed between the tiers of cooperation (municipality, intermunicipal level, federal state/region) in the individual countries concerned.
- > Recognition and appreciation of the work at all levels of the hierarchy will further support and incentivise the already very committed people working in this field.

The motivation and attitude of the parties engaged in cross-border cooperation is extremely important, in addition to all the formal and organisational improvements and changes. This is exemplified in the comments of one interviewee: ‘Cross-border cooperation requires attentiveness as far as identifying the factual conditions is concerned and the ability to tolerate the idea that there may be several other ways to achieve the overall goal than the ones we have conceived of in our little corner of Saarland or in Germany. We don’t always have to do things the way we’ve done them for the past 100 years, which is – I would say somewhat tongue in cheek – the typical ‘Germanic’ approach. “Avoid change at any cost” – this approach doesn’t work. In cross-border cooperation, I have to accept that I will sometimes work with partners who have quite a different view of the world than I do. And you just have to get together and accept it. If you’re fortunate, you will succeed in creating a third, new perception of the world, which will then function in a cross-border context.’

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Karina Pallagst, Andrea Hartz

## SPATIAL PLANNING IN BORDER REGIONS: A BALANCING ACT BETWEEN NEW GUIDING PRINCIPLES AND OLD PLANNING TRADITIONS?

### Contents

- 1 Guiding principles for spatial development in Germany – in a cross-border context?
  - 2 Spatial structures and planning systems in a cross-border context between Germany, France, Belgium, Luxembourg and Switzerland
  - 3 Conclusions
- References

### Abstract

This chapter presents the foundations of spatial planning in the sub-regions of the Greater Region and the Upper Rhine region. It provides a picture of current developments concerning the guiding principles for spatial development and introduces the existing spatial structures of these border regions. Furthermore, the planning systems in Belgium (Wallonia), Germany, France and Luxembourg are described, and differences are identified that necessitate ongoing discussions between the partners about planning traditions and (new) strategies of spatial development.

### Keywords

Guiding principles for spatial development – planning systems – Greater Region – Upper Rhine region – cross-border cooperation

## 1 Guiding principles for spatial development in Germany – in a cross-border context?

This chapter is devoted to the embedding of cross-border cooperation in (national) spatial development strategies, in the sense of ‘basic principles of spatial planning’ – initially from the perspective of current developments in federal spatial planning, followed by a comparative analysis of the planning systems in the Greater Region and along the Upper Rhine.

As mentioned in the chapter on ‘Development paths of cross-border cooperation’, Germany borders on nine European countries, which accounts for the diversity of the border areas that Germany shares with its neighbours. In this context, the question arises of whether and to which extent cross-border cooperation activities are embedded in current developments in federal spatial planning.

The publication of the Spatial Planning Policy Guidelines for Germany (*BMBau* [German Federal Ministry of Spatial Planning, Construction and Urban Design] 1993) launched the discussion about a strategic orientation of spatial planning in Germany with a more pronounced focus on the coordination of spatial planning policies than on comprehensive, overall control (Aring/Sinz 2006: 44). This discussion did have an impact, e.g. on the recasting of the Federal Spatial Planning Act (*Raumordnungsgesetz*) in 1997, when ‘Guiding principles for spatial development of the federal territory or of conditions spanning across the federal states’ were introduced pursuant to section 18(1). However, the intensive discussion about the (new) guiding principles for spatial development in Germany reached a broader expert and political public only in the first half of the 2000s.

This was in part due to the fact that the guiding principles offensively addressed the particular challenges of spatial development and in so doing purposefully created focal points. According to Aring/Sinz, this meant that the focus was now explicitly on policy tasks instead of spatial categories (Aring/Sinz 2006: 48). The guiding principles were intended to give consideration to key policy issues, such as promoting growth and competitiveness, changes to the social state, the equivalence of living conditions or the integration of the needs and circumstances of the new (Eastern) federal states (*BBR/BMVBS* [Federal Office for Building and Regional Planning/Federal Ministry of Transport, Construction and Urban Development] 2006: 37). In the public discourse, the notion of the ‘European metropolitan region’ in particular, as a response to the European Lisbon Strategy (European Commission 2000) for economic growth and competitiveness led to sustained controversial discussions in Germany.

Three strategic concepts were adopted by the Conference of Ministers for Spatial Planning (*Ministerkonferenz für Raumordnung, MKRO*) on 30 June 2006 (*MKRO* 2006): ‘growth and innovation’, ‘ensuring services of public interest’ and ‘conservation of resources, shaping of cultural landscapes’. From the perspective of the Conference of Ministers for Spatial Planning, these concepts presented for the federation and the federal states ‘a common orientation which satisfies the requirement of sustainability while at the same time being in line with the European concept of territorial

cohesion' (MKRO 2006: 30). The guiding principles were updated in 2016, at which time they were substantively developed further and supplemented with current topics (MKRO 2016). This further development also related to the perception of the border regions and how to address them (see Hartz's paper in this volume).

The process of developing the guiding principles assisted the strategic management of spatially relevant topics and created a new impetus at many levels, even where there had been gaps in the discussion and development process in the past. These gaps unquestionably included the border regions: the guiding principles remained consistent with an internal German perspective. This is particularly reflected in regard to the cross-border interactional areas (Hartz/Damm/Köhler 2010). The resolution of the Conference of Ministers for Spatial Planning on the guiding principle of 2006 already notes that the 'evolution and refinement of the concept of "European metropolitan regions in Germany", also including cross-border metropolitan spheres of influence of European significance' should be pursued (MKRO 2006: 31). This approach is also reflected in the intervention by the Initiative Group of Metropolitan Border Regions (*Initiativkreis Metropolitane Grenzregionen, IMeG*) established in 2010 (see Hartz's paper in this volume): the metropolitan border regions were included in the further developed spatial concept map on competitiveness (MKRO 2016; see Hartz's paper in this volume). Thus Germany caught up with its neighbours, France and Switzerland, which had already included the border regions in their national spatial development strategies early on. Hartz/Damm/Köhler, however, point out that these approaches remained limited to the narrower territorial boundaries of cross-border agglomerations and did not relate to large-scale cross-border interactional areas (Hartz/Damm/Köhler 2010: 505).

In addition, the newly adopted guiding principles clearly reiterate the European dimension of spatial development in Germany: 'The territorial cohesion as an objective of the European Union was laid down in the Treaty of Lisbon together with economic and social cohesion. This means for Germany to make use of the opportunities inherent in the infrastructural advantages due to its location at the centre of Europe. And it also necessitates a more intensive cooperation in functional and cross-border regions, for example in maritime and coastal areas or in the form of urban-rural partnerships with public and private stakeholders' (MKRO 2016: 3).

## **2 Spatial structures and planning systems in a cross-border context between Germany, France, Belgium, Luxembourg and Switzerland**

The regions in question, the Greater Region and the Upper Rhine Transnational Metropolitan region, are border regions which are also discussed in connection with the concept of metropolitan border regions (see Hartz's paper in this volume).

The following section will not provide a detailed structural analysis of these regions; instead the focus will be on spatial planning. In particular, the different planning systems in the countries involved – Belgium, Germany, France, Luxembourg and Switzerland – will be briefly characterised.

### ***Spatial context of the Greater Region***

The Greater Region is the most recent territorial structure in the German-Belgium-French-Luxembourg border area, the precursors of which featured different spatial boundaries and constellations, such as the informal forms of cooperation in the SaarLorLux area (see the paper by Hartz and Caesar in this volume).

The respective national sub-regions vary significantly in their dimensions. This is due to the political and administrative context of the region in question, which ranges from the entire territory of the Rhineland-Palatinate up to Saarland with its much smaller area. Different spatial dimensions are not a problem as such, as the numerous border regions show. However, considering the current challenges that this border region faces, such as demographic change, it is clear that the trends occurring in individual national sub-regions of the Greater Region differ greatly – from strong population growth in Luxembourg to significant population decline in Saarland and Western Palatinate.

A further aspect that illustrates existing disparities in this region is the economic power of the city and state of Luxembourg, which is clearly distinct from the other parts of the region.

The specific challenges of border regions have already been described in the paper by Caesar and Pallagst; they are also characteristic of the Greater Region and have emerged over decades. Key aspects in this respect include but are not limited to the following:

- > Polarised economic, social and demographic development.
- > Polarised settlement structures, which is particularly apparent in the opposite developments in Luxembourg and in rural areas of Lorraine, Saarland and Rhineland-Palatinate.
- > Disparities in the transport infrastructure and traffic flows, which are manifest in the high commuter incidence in Luxembourg City and illustrate bottlenecks in public transport systems in particular.
- > The requirements and needs for social infrastructure, particularly in education and in connection with cross-border schools.

These challenges can impair the economic, social and ecological attractiveness of the Greater Region and can also lead to a reduction in the quality of life. Spatial planning, with its strategies, instruments and processes, can coordinate, steer and guide (sectoral) policies and stakeholders to counteract these risks and at the same time improve the exploitation of the opportunities and potentials of the border region.

### ***Spatial context of the Upper Rhine***

The Upper Rhine region is a cross-border region, which is connected through the natural area of the Upper Rhine valley. It comprises Alsace in France, which has become part of the Grand Est region in the wake of territorial reform, southern and

central Baden and the southern Palatinate region in Germany, as well as the Swiss cantons Basel-City, Basel-Country, Jura, Solothurn and Aargau (see the paper by Hartz and Caesar in this volume).

Overall, the area exhibits a high settlement density and strong economic development, which is shaped by the polycentric metropolitan structure with its centres in Basel, Colmar, Strasbourg, Freiburg and Karlsruhe. Moreover, this area is also home to important transport corridors of European significance, which ensure excellent connections to the European transport network. According to the current Upper Rhine INTERREG programme, the challenges facing the region include the still divisive impact of the border as well as environmental protection (ERDF 2014).

### **Planning systems in the border areas covered by the Regional Working Group**

Due to the differences in their state and administrative structures, the four countries involved in the Greater Region have also developed different planning systems. Planning categories are allocated to the relevant planning levels, e.g. development corridors, strategic documents, informal plans and programmes, binding planning documents, local bye-laws, etc. (Pallagst, currently in peer review).

| Belgium                             |  |  |
|-------------------------------------|--|--|
| Planning level                      | Institution  | Programme, plan  |
| National                            | -  |  |
| Federal state/<br>region (Wallonia) | Directorate-General of Planning, Housing, Heritage and Energy ( <i>Direction générale opérationnelle de l'Aménagement du territoire, du Logement, du Patrimoine et de l'Energie [DGATLP]</i> ) | Regional spatial development perspective (RSDP) ( <i>Schéma de développement de l'espace régional [SDER]</i> )   |
| Local authority                     | Directorate-General of Planning, Housing, Heritage and Energy  | Sector plan  |
| France                              |  |  |
| Planning level                      | Institution  | Programme, plan  |
| National                            | Ministry of Housing and Territorial Equality ( <i>Ministère du logement et de l'égalité des territoires</i> )  | Territorial Development Directives ( <i>Directives Territoriales d'Aménagement [DTA]</i> )   |
| Region                              | Regional Council ( <i>Conseil régional</i> )   | Regional planning and development scheme ( <i>Schéma régional d'aménagement et de développement du territoire [SRADDT]</i> )   |
| Local authority                     | Public entity for intermunicipal cooperation ( <i>Établissement public de coopération intercommunale</i> )   | Territorial Coherence Programme ( <i>Schéma de Cohérence territoriale [SCoT]</i> ); Urban mobility plan ( <i>Plan de déplacements urbain [PDU]</i> ); Local urban development plan ( <i>Plan local d'urbanisme [PLU]</i> ) |

| Germany                    |   |  |
|----------------------------|---|--|
| Planning level             | Institution   | Programme, plan  |
| National                   | Federal Ministry responsible for spatial planning; Conference of Ministers for Spatial Planning | Guiding principles for spatial planning ( <i>Leitbilder der Raumordnung</i> )  |
| Federal state <sup>1</sup> | The highest federal state spatial planning authority (ministries of the federal state)          | Regional plan  |
| Region                     | Regional planning association ( <i>Regionale Planungsgemeinschaft</i> )                         | Regional plan  |
| Local authority            | Planning office ( <i>Planungsamt</i> )  | Urban land-use planning (preparatory land-use plan, binding land-use plan) ( <i>Bauleitplanung</i> )   |
| Luxembourg                 |   |  |
| Planning level             | Institution   | Programme, plan  |
| National                   | Department of Spatial Planning ( <i>Département de l'aménagement du territoire [DATer]</i> )    | Spatial planning framework programme ( <i>Programme directeur d'aménagement du territoire [PDAT]</i> ); Integrated national development programme; integrated transport and spatial development concept for Luxembourg ( <i>Integratives Verkehrs- und Landesentwicklungskonzept für Luxemburg [IVL]</i> ) |
| Local authority            | Planning office ( <i>Planungsamt</i> )  | Land-use plan ( <i>Plan d'occupation du sol [POS]</i> ); general municipal land development plan ( <i>Plan de l'aménagement général (PAG)</i> ); partial municipal land development plan ( <i>Plan de l'aménagement particulier [PAP]</i> )  |
| Switzerland                |   |  |
| Planning level             | Institution   | Programme, plan  |
| National                   | Federal Office for Spatial Planning ( <i>Bundesamt für Raumplanung</i> )                        | Programmes, master plans   |
| Canton                     | Planning office of the canton ( <i>Planungsamt des Kantons</i> )                                | Spatial development strategy through the cantonal development plan ( <i>kantonaler Richtplan</i> ); cantonal land-use plans ( <i>kantonale Nutzungspläne</i> ) for strategic tasks   |

<sup>1</sup> In Saarland, federal state spatial planning and regional planning are combined in accordance with its two-tier administrative structure.

|                        |                               |   |
|------------------------|-------------------------------|---|
| <b>Local authority</b> | Planning office (Planungsamt) | Municipal development plan ( <i>Kommunaler Richtplan</i> );<br>land-use master plan (zoning plan) ( <i>Rahmennutzungsplan [Zonenplan]</i> );<br>binding land-use plans (special building regulations) ( <i>Sondernutzungsplan [Sonderbauvorschriften]</i> ) |
|------------------------|-------------------------------|---|

Table 1: Overview of the planning systems in Belgium, France, Germany, Luxembourg and Switzerland / Source: The authors, 2015

Table 1 provides a general overview of the existing planning systems in the Greater Region and the Upper Rhine region. The comparison illustrates that the planning processes take place in the context of very different administrative systems, with evident discrepancies between the respective institutions and the range of formal instruments.

In addition to the existing planning levels and planning instruments, the planning systems have characteristic features that permit a brief typology:

- > Belgium: The Belgian planning system is characterised by the duality of the Flemish and Walloon planning system. As far as the Greater Region is concerned, the Walloon planning system applies, which operates at the regional and local level.
- > France: French planning processes are traditionally based on regional development strategies, i.e. the *aménagement du territoire* and on local planning activities at the municipal and intermunicipal level.
- > Germany: In accordance with its federal structure, Germany has a multi-level planning system that covers the territory of each level concerned. The planning documents at the federal state and regional level are legally binding in relation to the respective subordinate level, which must adapt its plans accordingly (*Anpassungsgebot*).
- > Luxembourg: As a small country, Luxembourg has a comprehensive planning system, which essentially applies at the national and municipal level.
- > Switzerland: The planning system in Switzerland, a small country, is characterised by local, regional and cantonal structures.

This results in partially different but partially comparable challenges, tasks and objectives for spatial planning:

- > As far as Belgium is concerned, the challenges include containing suburbanisation processes and steering polycentric development.

- > In France, with its centrally structured state, attempts to mitigate the disadvantages of the central settlement structure have been pursued for many years. Moreover, there are challenges in regard to the steering of land-use development, which also includes the containment of suburbanisation.
- > In Germany, planning is confronted with the task of addressing the spatial consequences of demographic change and the resulting aging society. Other challenges arise from the implementation of the energy transition, the safeguarding of equivalent living conditions and in this context from the protection of the polycentric settlement structure.
- > As a growth hub, Luxembourg must manage the further urban expansion of the urban centres, particularly Luxembourg City, which includes the provision of residential space and a solution for the increased traffic volume caused by this growth. Steps to this end include decentralisation (southern region and Nordstad).
- > In Switzerland, with its highly developed economy and high level of prosperity, there is a high demand for land use due to the limited space available for settlements.

To adequately address the spatial demands and to safeguard the quality of life, spatial planning supports certain paradigms; these are typically formulated in normative sets of rules and establish the basis for planning policies in each country concerned (Pallagst 2013). This also applies in the countries that participate in the relevant border region (see Table 2).

Interestingly, it can be observed that despite the differences in the planning systems and the planning challenges, all aforementioned planning paradigms essentially aim to achieve the overarching objective of sustainable (spatial) development, which reflects a European, indeed even an international consensus in this field. Since the 1990s, sustainability has been a key component of spatial planning, which bridges social and spatial concerns (Owens/Cowell 2011). Yet the question arises: What does sustainability mean in a cross-border context?

While the formulated planning paradigms are very similar, the differences are apparent in the design of the relevant planning systems. This fact can be attributed to the different planning cultures. Based on the particularities of each planning culture (Pallagst 2010), the following features can be observed:

- > different circumstances locally and in society,
- > different normative sets of rules,
- > varying differentiation of the planning and administrative levels,
- > different cartographic formats for the information or plans,
- > different scales,



- > different methods in regard to the acting stakeholders and the shaping of the stakeholder arenas,
- > different planning content and categories,
- > differing extent of political influence on planning and
- > different ways and means of participation.

| National           | Normative framework   | Important planning paradigms   |
|--------------------|---|--|
| <b>Belgium</b>     | Walloon Code of Spatial Planning, Urbanism, Heritage and Energy ( <i>Code wallon de l'Aménagement du Territoire, de l'Urbanisme, du Patrimoine et de l'Energie</i> )  | Reducing land take, resource-friendly actions  |
| <b>France</b>      | Act on sustainable spatial planning and development ( <i>Loi d'orientation pour l'aménagement et le développement durable du territoire [LOADDT]</i> )<br>Grenelle Act 1, Grenelle Act 2  | Sustainable development  |
| <b>Germany</b>     | Federal Spatial Planning Act<br>Federal Building Code<br>Guiding principles for spatial development in Germany of the Conference of Ministers for Spatial Planning (2006, 2016)<br>Federal state spatial planning acts<br>German national sustainability strategy | Sustainability, sustainable spatial development<br>Equivalent living conditions,<br>Reducing land take (objective: 30 ha),<br>Climate protection and adapting to climate change (mitigation of consequences of climate change),<br>Reduction of carbon emissions |
| <b>Luxembourg</b>  | Act of 30 July 2013 on Spatial planning<br>Spatial planning framework programme (2003)<br>Integrated transport and spatial development concept for Luxembourg (2004)  | In regard to the population in rural and urban areas: equal access to housing, employment, education, infrastructure, transport, nature  |
| <b>Switzerland</b> | Spatial Planning Act<br>Act on housebuilding and home ownership subsidies   | Sustainability<br>Economical use of land   |

Table 2: Planning paradigms at the national level in Belgium, Germany, France, Luxembourg and Switzerland / Source: The authors, 2015

Some of these differences in planning instruments are illustrated below through selected examples of planning documents of the partners in the Greater Region. Sample maps will be used, though without a direct comparison due to the differences in the nature of the instruments.

**France**

For the French planning system, a map of the SCoT Sarreguemines was selected. The territory covered by this intermunicipal planning document borders on Saarland. The planning document focuses on developing the municipal level. Cross-border cooperation appears to be accorded a high level of importance as the plan contains clear references to neighbouring Germany and Saarland's institutions are involved in the planning process.

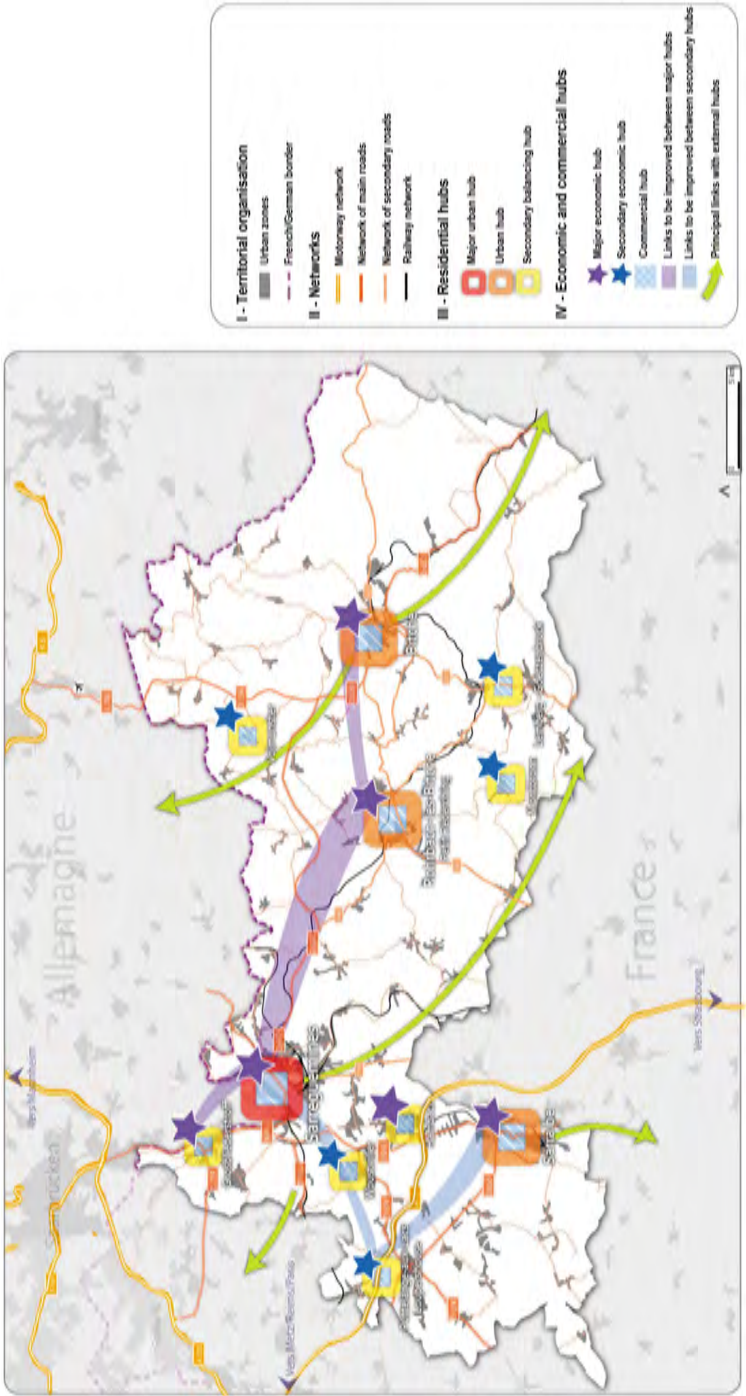


Fig. 1: Territorial Coherence Programme (Schéma de Cohérence Territoriale [SCoT]) of the Sarreguemines administrative district: Development of urban centres /Source: Joint association of the Sarreguemines district (Syndicat Mixte de l'Arrondissement de Sarreguemines) (Ed.) (2013): 4

**Germany**

The mutual feedback principle closely interlinks the different planning levels in the German planning system. This makes it one of the few systems in Europe to have regional planning documents across all areas for the entire republic and is of a binding nature for local planning (there is an obligation to adapt urban land-use planning to the objectives of spatial planning).

For this chapter, a map of the regional spatial structure plan for Western Palatinate, which shares a border with France, was selected. The border region concerned is a peripheral rural area. The plan makes no reference to cross-border cooperation: in fact, the entire document contains merely a single reference to France. This illustrates that there are sub-regions in the Greater Region which are hardly affected by cross-border issues, or where those aspects have not yet been considered for the purposes of spatial planning.

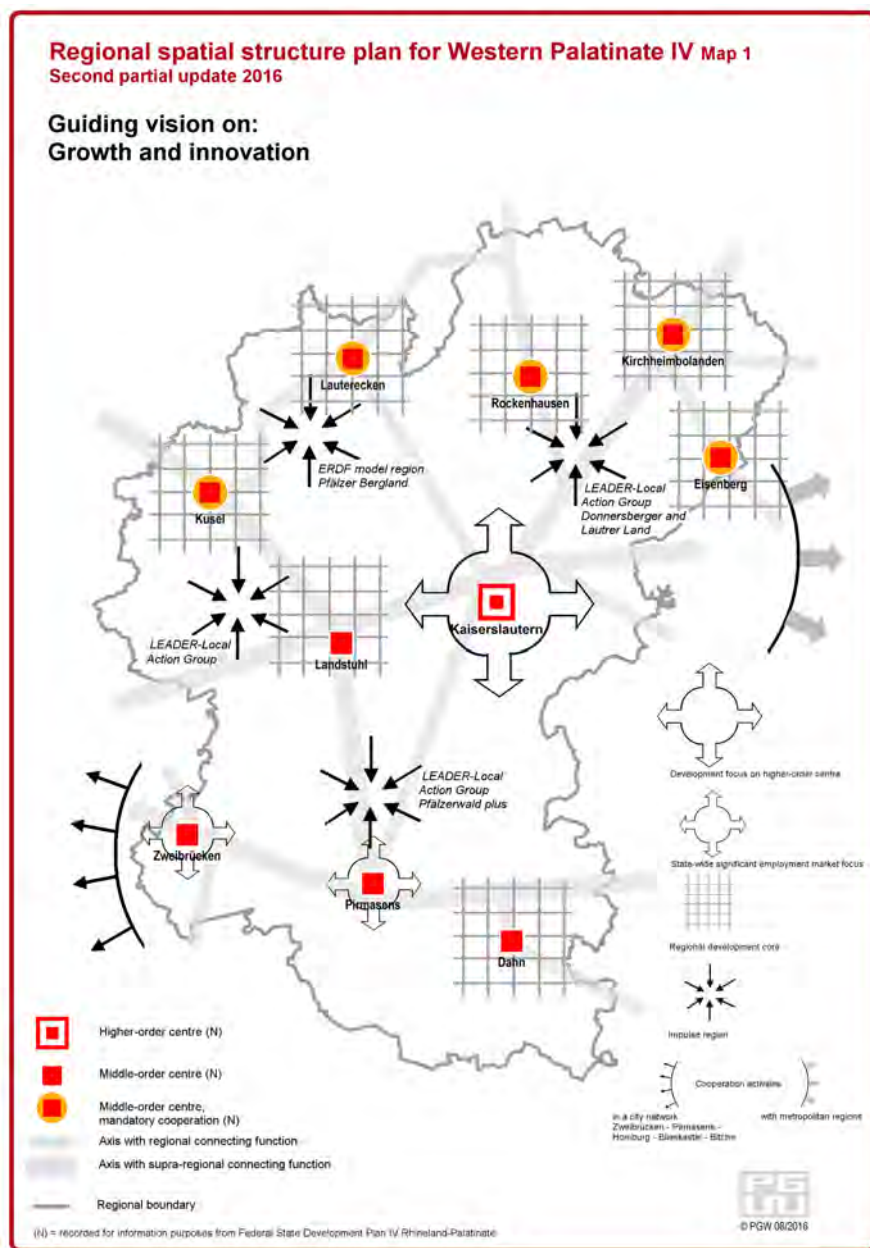


Fig. 2: Regional spatial structure plan for Western Palatinate (Regionaler Raumordnungsplan Westpfalz) IV/Source: Western Palatinate Planning Consortium 2012: 8

***Luxembourg***

As a small country in the core area of the Greater Region of a cross-border region, Luxembourg is closely intertwined with its neighbours and embedded in cross-border cooperation. Figure 3 shows the integrated transport and spatial development concept with the map of the spatial model of the ‘polycentric urban structures integrated in the landscape’ with Luxembourg City as the metropolitan centre. The map emphasises polycentricity as a key objective. Cooperation with neighbouring countries is considered to be a basic prerequisite in this respect.

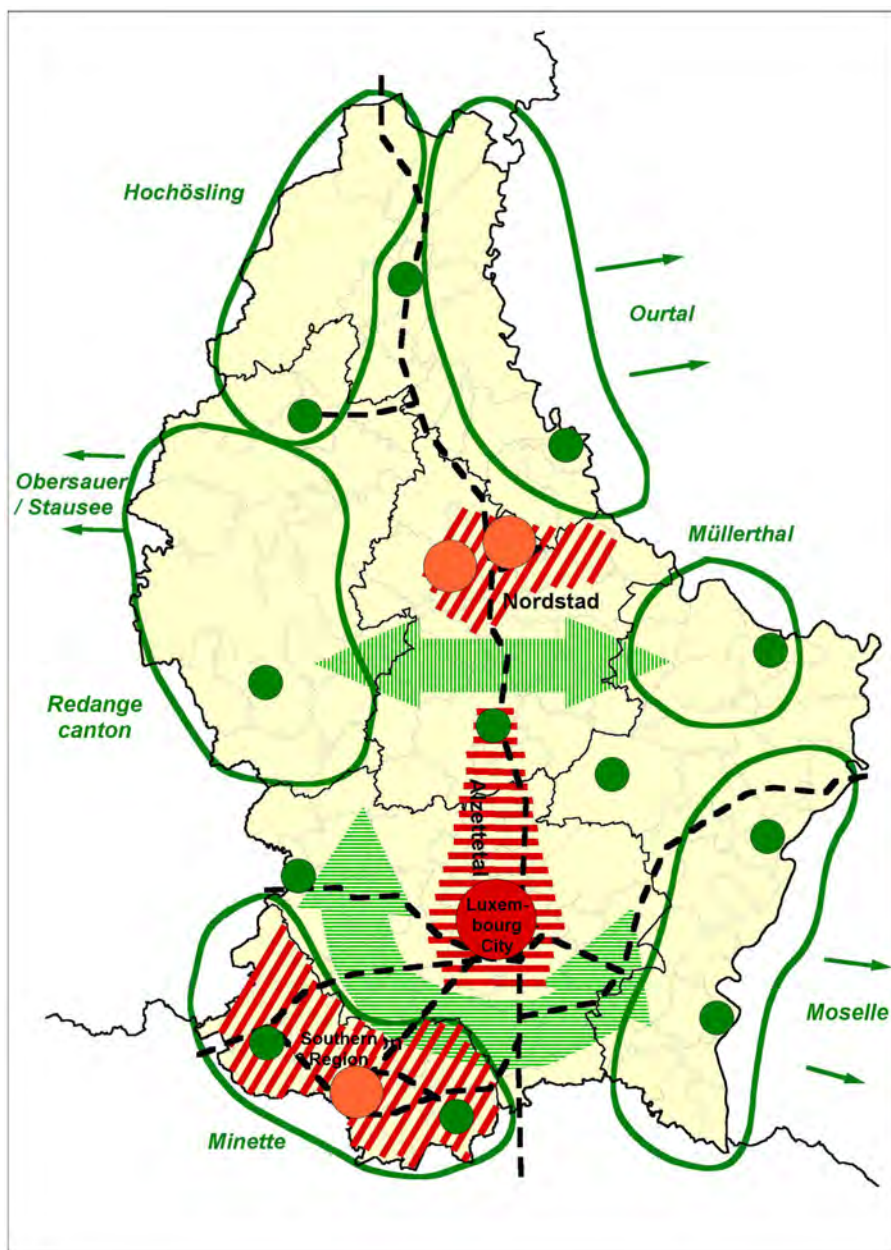


Fig. 3: Integrated transport and spatial development concept (IVL) for Luxembourg: Spatial model of the polycentric urban structures integrated in the landscape / Source: Government of the Grand-Duchy of Luxembourg 2004: 60

### **Switzerland**

For Switzerland – in very much the same way as for Luxembourg – integration into European and global contexts is a very important task. The spatial development strategy of the cantonal development plan of Basel-Country contains references to neighbouring countries on the map, while the textual explanations frequently refer to global (economic) contexts.

This selection of planning documents illustrates not only the differences between planning graphics, but also the different approaches to spatial planning in different planning cultures: the spectrum spans all planning levels from informal spatial visions and development strategies to legally binding planning documents. In addition, it is clear that statements on cross-border tasks and requirements vary considerably between the national planning documents or are often considered only to a minor extent. These different planning forms and contents in the border regions necessitate continuous cross-border communication between the stakeholders involved.

To facilitate cross-border cooperation despite such differences in the planning systems, or to even allow it in the first place, additional planning instruments and processes as well as unified or comparable planning principles have been developed for the border regions across Europe.

### **Overview of cross-border planning instruments that are used in the Greater Region**

In the past 20 years, a series of cross-border planning activities and informal instruments have been initiated and implemented for the Greater Region, e.g.

- > Project financing tools: INTERREG IVA and/or V A (see the paper by Caesar and Pallagst in this volume)
- > Governance tools: EGTC Greater Region (see the paper by Caesar and Pallagst in this volume)
- > Monitoring tools: GIS-GR (Geoportal of the Greater Region 2017)
- > Policy tools: Metroborder project (ESPON; University of Luxembourg (Eds.) 2010)
- > Visioning tools: regional development strategy (*Regionalentwicklungskonzept, REK*) (Agape et al. 2016)

While the GIS-GR and the Metroborder project were treated as INTERREG projects in the programming period up to 2013, the regional development strategy for the Greater Region is a process which was launched by the Greater Region's Coordinating Committee for Spatial Development (*Koordinierungsausschuss für Raumentwicklung, KARE*) and adopted by the Summit of the Greater Region. Several preliminary studies have been carried out or are underway, e.g. a transversal analysis of the planning documents of the individual sub-regions (duration 2015–2016). These studies are to serve as the basis for determining the nature of the regional development strategy and the objectives and focal points to be addressed. The elaboration of the



Greater Region's regional development strategy has proven to be very time consuming and challenging as far as coordination is concerned, due to the size and diversity of the border region, but also because of the diversity of the stakeholders. Hence, the regional development strategy as an instrument cannot currently be used to respond to short-term or current requirements and problems.

Luxembourg, Rhineland-Palatinate and Saarland have launched a joint cross-border development strategy for the Upper Moselle Valley to better coordinate and agree on the developments in this dynamic area (*Büro für Mobilitätsberatung und Moderation und pact s.à r.l.* 2013). The Upper Moselle Valley development strategy is jointly financed by the three partners and has been elaborated since autumn 2015. The results and planning statements are to be included in the integrated national development programme for Luxembourg and in the federal state development plans of Rhineland-Palatinate and Saarland. In addition, their embedding in the strategy statements of the regional development strategy is indispensable.

### **Overview of cross-border planning instruments used in the Upper Rhine region**

- > Project financing tools: INTERREG IVA and/or V A (see the paper by Caesar and Pallagst in this volume)
- > Governance tools: EGTC Eurodistrict PAMINA (see the paper by Pallagst/Dörrenbächer/Weith in this volume); EGTC Rhine-Alpine Corridor (see the paper by Caesar/Heilmann/Saalbach/Schreiner in this volume)
- > Monitoring tools: GIS for the region of the Upper Rhine GeoRhena (previously GISOR) (GeoRhena 2017)
- > Policy tools: Metroborder project (ESPON; University of Luxembourg (Eds.) 2010); Guidelines for cross-border housing policy in the PAMINA area
- > Visioning tools: Spatial Planning Policy Guidelines for the Upper Rhine; PAMINA spatial development scheme (City of Karlsruhe 2017)

This overview reveals that a range of planning instruments is available for both the Greater Region and the Upper Rhine region, yet they are of an informal nature because of lacking administrative or legislative powers for cross-border spatial planning.

## **3 Conclusions**

The information in this chapter serves to illustrate the differences and commonalities in the planning systems that converge or clash in border regions, and thus serves as a basis for the other papers in this volume.

It demonstrates that spatial planning in the national sub-regions of border regions is organised in quite different ways, and not merely in regard to the normative foundations and types of plan, but also in regard to values, paradigms and planning cultures.

Border regions are, however, always decisive for the emergence of new spatial planning considerations up to the creation of new instruments – both in a national and cross-border context. For example, the spatial category of metropolitan border regions was introduced in Germany as part of the guiding principles for spatial development. Cross-border development strategies, too, offer approaches for genuine cross-border discourse in regard to spatial planning. This augments the complexity of cross-border spatial planning and thus presents new challenges for the stakeholders. This leads to the question of how existing strategies, processes and structures of cross-border spatial development can be better focused toward the future-oriented shaping of border regions.

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Andrea Hartz

## THE CONCEPT OF METROPOLITAN BORDER REGIONS: DEVELOPMENT, STRATEGIES AND NEW DIRECTIONS

### Contents

- 1 Introduction
- 2 The concept of metropolitan regions
- 3 Characteristics of metropolitan border regions
- 4 Metropolisation strategies in border regions
- 5 Metropolitan governance in border regions
- 6 The role of spatial planning
- 7 The concept of metropolitan border regions as an opportunity?

References

### Abstract

In recent decades the challenges of globalisation, European integration and strengthened regionalisation have led to a reassessment of metropolitan regions. In Germany, the guiding principles issued by the Conference of Ministers for Spatial Planning in 2006 provided an occasion on which to rethink the role of border regions in the context of the discourse on metropolises. The metropolitan potential of border regions is far from fully exploited. This is particularly true in relation to cross-border spatial development. The concept of metropolitan border regions could be a promising way of intensifying cross-border cooperation and territorial integration. A precondition for this is that metropolisation strategies are proactively pursued using key measures and that existing structures of cooperation are further developed towards ‘metropolitan’ governance.

### Keywords

Metropolitan border regions – border regions – metropolitan regions – metropolitan governance – metropolisation strategies – metropolitan areas – (cross-border) regional development

## 1 Introduction

From a national perspective, border regions frequently appear as peripheral spaces. National borders continue to have a barrier effect, which is an impediment to coherent spatial development aiming at functional integration. Nevertheless, it must be noted that in some border regions intense interactional relationships, i.e. polycentric structures with cross-border agglomerations and a high volume of inner-regional commuters, have developed.

In this context, the structural differences between the national sub-regions, which result from national policy and legislation among other aspects, are an essential driver for cross-border interactions. The residents of the border regions make use of the variety and diversity of employment opportunities, services, housing, leisure offerings and culture available on both sides of the border. However, even after four decades of cross-border cooperation it has become clear that national borders have essentially remained an obstacle to development. This has been felt particularly keenly in areas where functions can be identified in the various national sub-regions, which (could) be concentrated for the entire border region to become a metropolitan potential.

This chapter deals with the concept of metropolitan border regions, their spatio-structural prerequisites, the scope of action of regional stakeholders and the potential (new) orientation of regional, national and European policies to their specific needs. Among other things, the paper revisits the results of the two Model Projects for Spatial Planning on cross-border interactional areas and metropolitan border regions (Hartz/Damm/Köhler 2010; *BMVBS* [Federal Ministry of Transport, Construction and Urban Development] 2011, 2013<sup>1</sup>).

## 2 The concept of metropolitan regions

The challenges of globalisation and European integration as well as of increased regionalisation (New Regionalism) have given rise in recent decades to a 'reassessment of the metropolitan region as a spatial category', as metropolitan regions focus on interregional economic competition (Blatter/Knieling 2009:232 et seq.). With the establishment of expansive urban regions and agglomerations, strong players have

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1 In 2008, the former Federal Ministry of Transport, Construction and Urban Development (*Bundesministerium für Verkehr, Bau und Stadtentwicklung, BMVBS*) and the Federal Institute for Research on Building, Urban Affairs and Spatial Development (*Bundesinstitut für Bau-, Stadt- und Raumforschung, BBSR*) launched a Model Project for Spatial Planning (*Modellvorhaben der Raumordnung, MORO*) in collaboration with the special purpose association of the Aachen region, the Mittlerer Oberrhein, Südlicher Oberrhein, Hochrhein-Bodensee and Bodensee-Oberschwaben regional associations and Saarland, which addressed the role of cross-border interactional areas (*BMVBS* 2011). A key result of this Model Project for Spatial Planning was the establishment of the Metropolitan Border Regions Initiative Group (*Initiativkreis Metropolitane Grenzregionen, IMeG*) on 17 March 2011 in Berlin. The initial phase of the Metropolitan Border Regions Initiative Group was accompanied for two years by another model project on the part of the federation (*BMVBS* 2013). Ever since, the Metropolitan Border Regions Initiative Group has been self-funded ([www.metropolitane-grenzregionen.eu](http://www.metropolitane-grenzregionen.eu)).

emerged, not merely at the national level, but also in a European and international context. They are considered ‘important drivers of social, societal and economic developments in a region and country’ (*BMVBS/BBR* [Federal Office for Building and Regional Planning] 2006: 39). Against this backdrop, the metropolitan regions in Germany and Europe have been given a ‘key role in spatial development’ (*BMVBS/BBR* 2007: 1).

In this process, functional interactions and political and administrative areas of responsibility are increasingly falling asunder. The reorganisation of space in conjunction with the choice of location made by companies and the employment market, together with sustained (sub)urbanisation of their intake area and increasing commuter flows, strengthen the emergence of new regional opportunities for action. A distinction must be made in this regard between metropolises as monocentric urban regions focused on a core city with pronounced metropolitan functions and the metropolitan region. In an analytical sense, the latter is a ‘regional location cluster of metropolitan facilities’; in a political and planning sense, it means a regional space of cooperation between cities and their regional interactional areas (Blotevogel/Danielzyk 2009: 24). The spatial outlines that result from an analysis of metropolitan location clusters generally diverge from the politically institutionalised cooperation areas (e.g. *BBSR* 2010). The metropolitan functions are essentially defined and operationalised through strategic functions: innovation and competition, decision-making and control, as well as gateway and symbolic functions (Blotevogel/Danielzyk 2009: 25 et seq.; see also Federwisch 2012: 49 et seq.).

In Germany, too, with its pronounced polycentric structure, metropolisation trends are changing the urban structure. Schmitt points out, however, that compared to France and the Netherlands, metropolises or metropolitan regions were not an issue in German spatial planning policy prior to 1995 (Schmitt 2009: 62). This process commenced only significantly later and has pursued a different approach: unlike in the neighbouring countries, German spatial planning policy relies on the large-scale demarcation of metropolitan regions and their interactional areas (Hartz/Damm/Köhler 2010: 505).

The changed role of large, predominantly polycentric agglomerations was examined (initially) from an analytical perspective in spatial planning (*BBR* 2005; *BBSR* 2010) and was actively supported through the adoption of the guiding principles for spatial development in Germany (MKRO [Conference of Ministers for Spatial Planning] 2006). The concept of the ‘European metropolitan region in Germany’, which is both spatially and substantively concretised in the guiding principle of growth and innovation of 2006, gave rise to a new hierarchical level in the urban system. ‘Reinforcing strengths’ and ‘bundling and linking capabilities’ are key elements of the strategy, as much as assuming joint responsibility in the framework of (supra) regional partnerships. ‘This is expressed as the necessity of each development centre to be aware of its responsibility for its surrounding area, because development is dependent on a growing region as an economic hinterland’ (*BMVBS/BBR* 2006: 39).

The eleven metropolitan regions in Germany were acknowledged in two phases – 1997 and 2005 – by the Conference of Ministers for Spatial Planning (*Ministerkonferenz*

*für Raumordnung, MKRO*) and included in the concept. Both the general spatio-structural circumstances as well as the economic perspectives are quite different; this applies likewise to the established forms of metropolitan governance, which range from regional associations institutionalised by law, informal municipal associations through to joint administrative structures (Ludwig/Mandel/Schwieger et al. 2008: 183 et seq.).

As was to be expected, the concept of metropolitan regions gave rise to heated controversies. The stakeholders in peripheral areas observed the development with concern: they feared an (even) greater focus of policies on economically strong regions and a redistribution of the European and national subsidies in particular. In addition, the stakeholders in the wider interactional areas of the metropolitan regions questioned the added value of this 'label' for the overall region and its various sub-regions, especially those areas outside the core spaces. Initially, however, the efforts of many regions to gain recognition as metropolitan regions showed that they expected some benefits from the concept and the label. They initiated and undertook at times rather complex institutionalisation processes, such as in the Nuremberg region or the Rhine-Neckar region. At the federal level, the concept and its implementation were considered to be a 'success story' (BBSR 2009).

However, extensive associations for cooperation also lead to increased transactional costs, especially when the metropolitan regions are organised in a polycentric manner: 'A win-win situation is all the more difficult to achieve, the more partners are involved, the more pronounced the competitive environment is, and the more disparate the objectives of the partners are. Hence, the presence of several, similarly strong centres in a polycentric metropolitan region increases the challenge of achieving a win-win situation' (BMVBS/BBR 2007: 36). In addition, a sense of economic, political or historical competitiveness or even resentments that have evolved over time make it more difficult to arrive at win-win situations.

While the added value for the core cities in the metropolitan regions is still clearly apparent, those benefits are quite questionable for the (wider) interactional areas and peripheral sub-regions. Matern (2013) outlines the benefits for the peripheral sub-regions of the Hamburg region. Improving accessibility could mitigate depopulation, and 'the negative image as a structurally weak area could be replaced by the image of a prosperous, competitive region' (Matern 2013: 330 et seq.; see Fig. 1). At the same time, Matern warns that 'metropolitan regions could promote territorial cohesion, but not compensation'. The aim should be to give greater consideration to structural differences to prevent disparities from becoming more pronounced through large-scale cooperation (Matern 2013: 355). In regard to regional economic spill-over effects, Rusche/Oberst (2010: 252) believe that within the large-scale metropolitan regions these effects are limited to the surrounding areas of the agglomeration cores and that peripheral sub-regions do not benefit from them. Instead, the latter would even have to accept that they are not able to develop their own profile due to their association with the metropolitan region.

Federwisch moreover describes metropolisation processes as 'coping' strategies used to influence temporal and spatial aspects of the development of metropolitan regions,

the success of which is jeopardised by the competing phenomena of acceleration and persistence, by integration and legitimacy deficits and by consolidation difficulties (Federwisch 2012: 213 et seq.). Even though Federwisch believes that the concept of metropolitan regions is ‘to benefit the process of collective re-embedding and to promote the resynchronisation of policymaking with the accelerated social spheres’, he identifies a ‘quasi-protectionism’ as a response to ‘border-free’ social conditions (2012: 228). In addition, ‘frantic stagnation’ (Rosa 2005) can be observed, which lacks any ambitious, targeted policy development despite an increase in activity and gives rise at the individual level to frustration effects in the sense of *frustrated regional governance* (Rosa 2005).

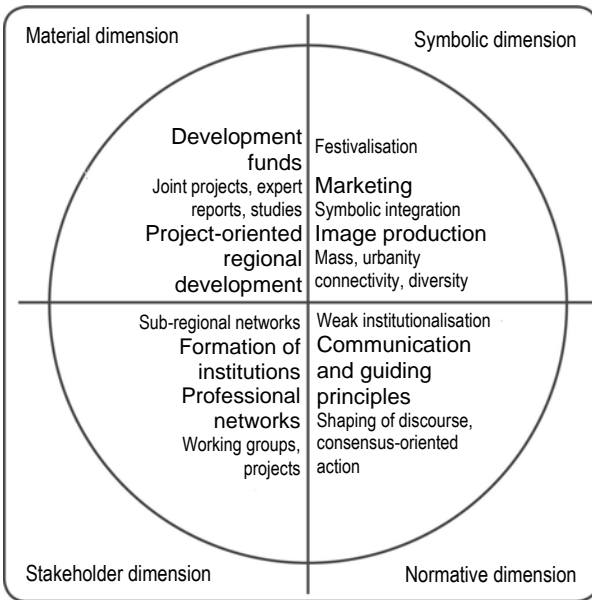


Fig. 1: Potential benefits for stakeholders / Source: Matern 2013: 330; the author

Opposition to the 2006 guiding principle of growth and innovation was also voiced from the perspective of the border regions. However, this primarily concerned the fact that the ‘strong’ border regions at the (south)western border of Germany did not feel themselves to be sufficiently taken into account (e.g. Köhler 2007). This was acknowledged at the federal level, and the need for the concept of metropolitan regions in spatial planning to be further developed was recognised in the light of the increasing significance of cross-border European metropolitan interactional areas, for example along the Upper Rhine and in the German-Belgian-Dutch border area (BMVBS/BBR 2006: 44). The first fundamental analyses used to identify and localise metropolitan functions based on a uniform set of indicators showed that a purely national view reaches its limits given that in areas close to the border important metropolitan functions are partly located outside of Germany (BBR 2005: 185). This means that the metropolitan potential of a border region can only be captured by



considering all of the national sub-regions of that border region. This assessment was confirmed in 2010 by a study on metropolitan areas in Europe conducted by the Federal Institute for Research on Building, Urban Affairs and Spatial Development (*BBSR* 2010; see Fig. 2), which examined the concentration of metropolitan functions in Europe, as well as the analysis by the Metroborder ESPON project (ESPON/ University of Luxembourg 2010: 15 et seq.) based on Functional Urban Areas (FUA). The results of the analysis supported the political initiatives at the national and European level to support the concept of the metropolitan regions in a European perspective and thus to involve the border regions (see Fig. 3). The metropolitan perspective changes the perception of Europe overall: national borders fade into the background.

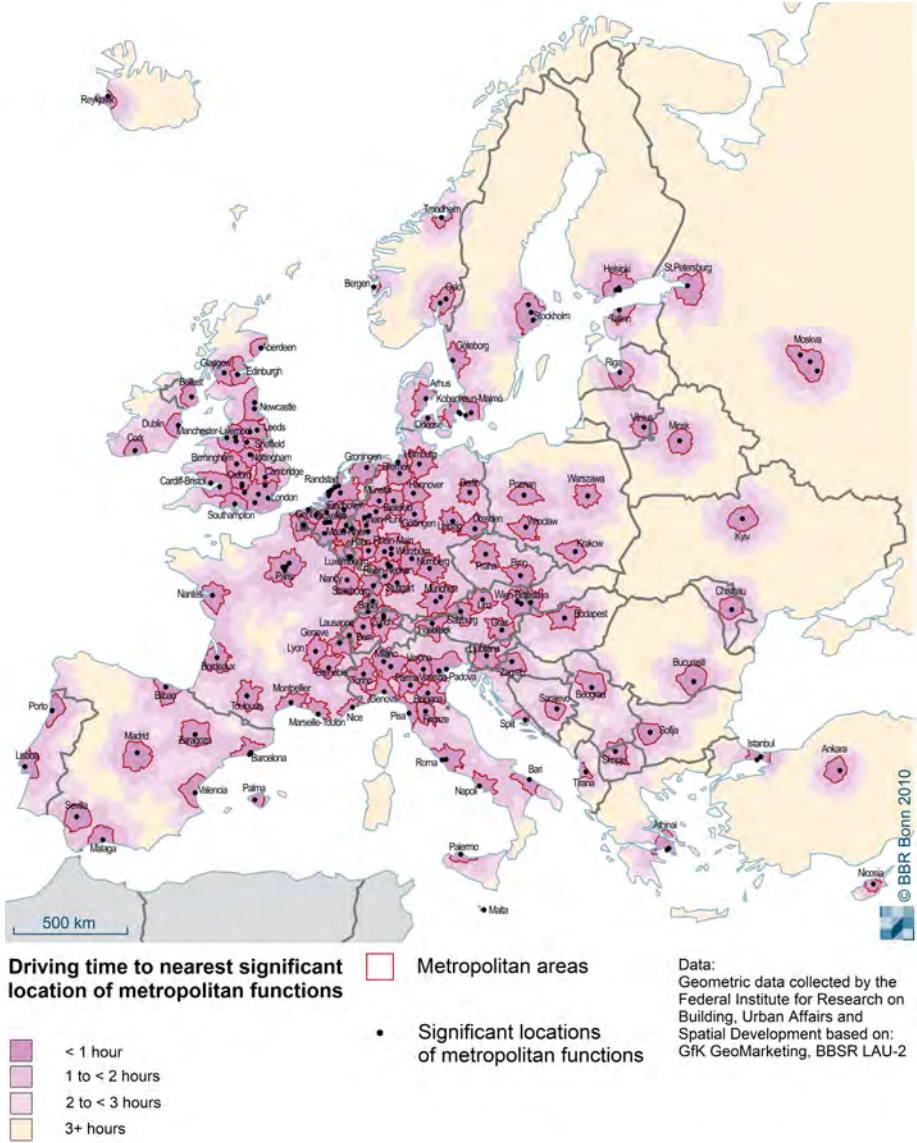


Fig. 2: Metropolitan areas and significant locations of metropolitan functions in Europe / Source: BBSR 2010: 82

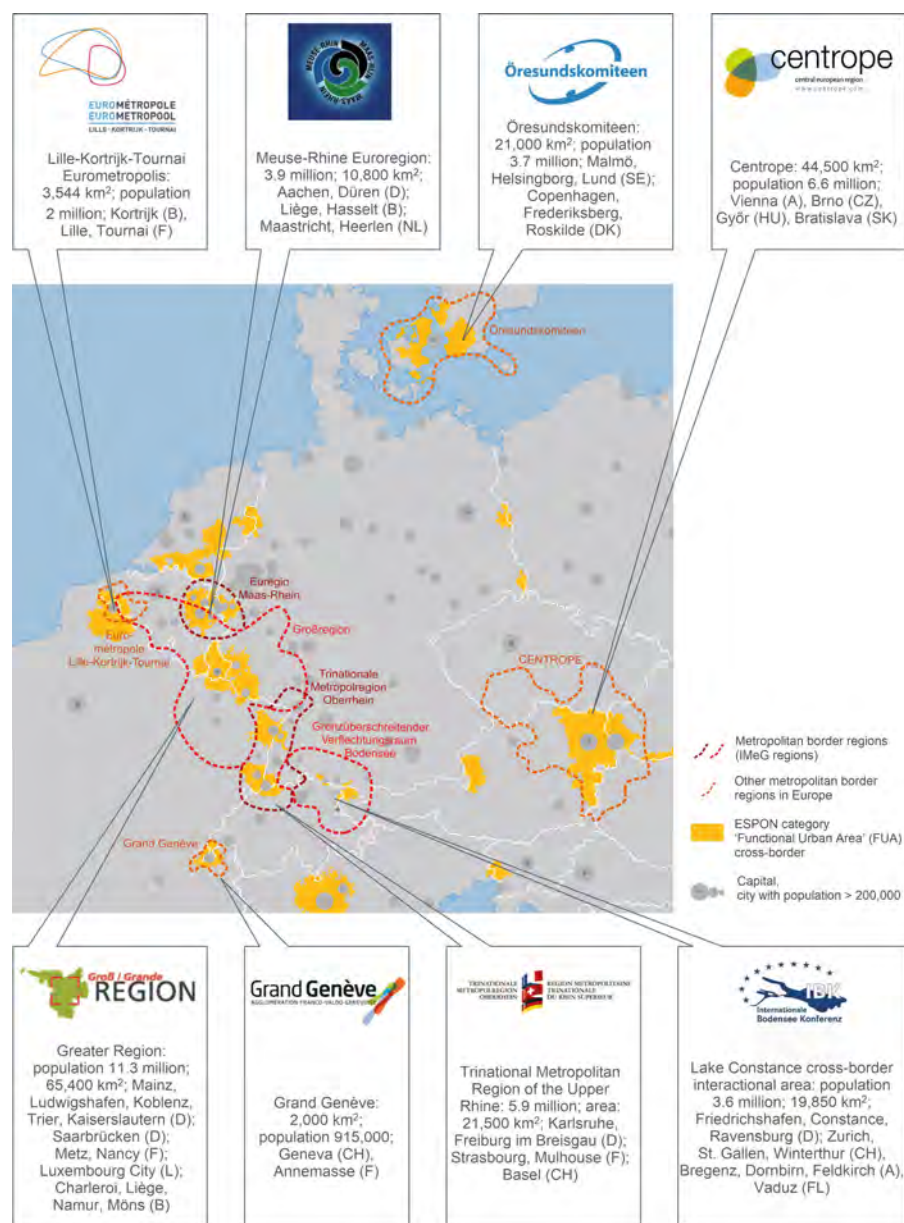
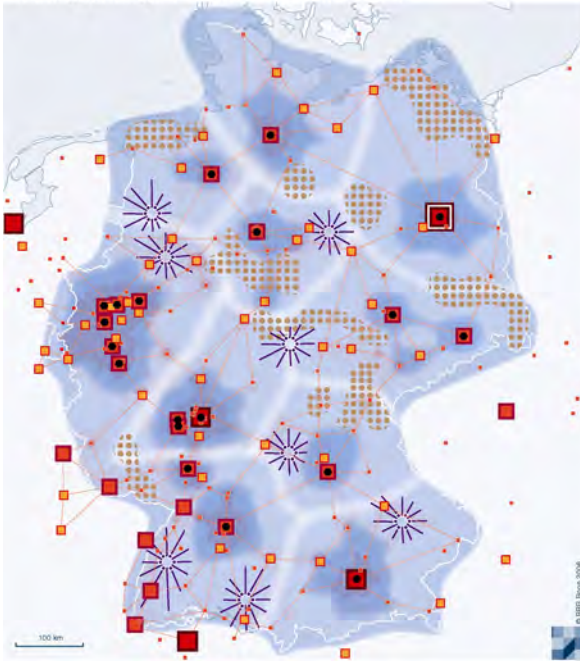


Fig. 3: The metropolitan border regions in Europe /Source: BMVBS 2013: 23

The further development of the guiding principles in Germany took these insights into account: the guiding principle of enhancing competitiveness adopted in 2016 replaced the 2006 guiding principle of growth and innovation and integrated the metropolitan border regions as a new territorial category (MKRO 2016; see Fig. 4).

**Guiding principle: Growth and innovation**



**Metropolitan areas**

- Cores of the capital region and of existing European metropolitan regions
- Other locations of metropolitan functions
- Narrow metropolitan interactional area
- Wider metropolitan interactional areas including rural areas
- Transition zone between metropolitan interactional areas

**Growth regions outside of narrow metropolitan interactional areas**



**Stabilisation areas**



**Spatial structure**

- High-density central areas
- Dense intermediate area

This map illustrates the guiding principle. The markings do not represent planning stipulations.

**Competitiveness**



The map merely visualises the guiding principle. The markings do not represent planning stipulations.

**Metropolitan areas**

- Cores of the capital region and the European metropolitan regions
- Other locations of metropolitan functions
- Narrow metropolitan interactional areas
- Wider metropolitan interactional areas including rural areas
- Transition zone between metropolitan interactional areas

- Cores of metropolitan border regions (IMeG, 2015)
- Narrow metropolitan interactional areas in metropolitan border regions (IMeG, 2015)
- Metropolitan border regions (IMeG, 2015)

- ↔ Examples of potential cross-border interactional areas

**Rural and urbanised economic growth regions**



**Areas with a special structural need for action**



**Transport infrastructure**

- (according to Trans-European Transport Network 2013)
- Road network
- Rail network
- ✈ International airport
- ✈ International seaport
- Main shipping routes
- Kiel Canal
- Maritime planning area

Fig. 4: Comparison: the 2006 guiding principle of growth and innovation and the 2016 guiding principle of enhancing competitiveness / Source: MKRO 2006, 2016



In principle, metropolitan regions continue to be planned and designed according to the national logic of spatial development: ‘The strategies of the neighbouring countries differ in part considerably from the approach taken by German spatial planning’ (Hartz/Damm/Köhler 2010: 503). The French system, for example, pursues a centralised, programme-oriented and functional approach. Current reforms focus on a national strengthening of decentralised metropolisation approaches in the regions. As part of its decentralisation processes, the French state initiated a competition to provide stimuli for metropolitan cooperation and projects – beyond the *Ile de France* – in the regions. In the wake of the competition, in 2004 15 metropolises were selected, which were to enhance their competitiveness and regional economies with national support. The metropolitan hubs (*pôles métropolitains*) were eventually established based on Article 20 of the Act on the Reform of Local and Regional Authorities (*Loi de réforme des collectivités territoriales françaises, Loi RCT*) of 16 December 2010 (*Réseau des Pôles Métropolitains [Network of Metropolitan Hubs]* 2015). Eight of them alone relate to cross-border agglomerations, for example *Sillon lorrain* or the *agglomération Strasbourg-Mulhouse* (see Fig. 5).

The Spatial Concept of Switzerland allocates priority areas for action, among them the metropolitan areas of Zurich, Basel and the Lake Geneva region (*Métropole Lémanique*) as well as the Swiss capital region (Swiss Federal Council [*Schweizerischer Bundesrat*] / *KdK [Swiss Conference of Cantonal Governments]* / BPUK [*Swiss Conference for the Directors for Building, Planning and Environment*] et al. 2012). Cross-border approaches are particularly apparent at the more specific level of the Swiss agglomeration policy, which includes a total of 50 agglomerations: a tri-national future vision for 2030 was elaborated in a cross-border context as part of the Basel agglomeration programme (Agglo Basel Headquarters 2016).

Luxembourg is currently undergoing a reorientation of spatial strategies at the state level. This concerns for example ‘a reorientation from rather rural development perspectives to an adoption of actual urban policies, including the aspiration for further metropolization of the urban landscape – both within the country (e.g. through large-scale projects such as Belval, Ban de Gasperich or the “Nordstad”) and at the interregional level (i.e. cross-border polycentric metropolitan development as guiding principle for the Greater Region – see METROBORDER’ (Chilla/Schulz 2014: 17). Luxembourg plays a key role in regard to the implementation of metropolitan strategies, not only at the national level, but also in a cross-border context (Vidal/Niedermeyer 2011; Sohn 2012).

The national spatial planning policies in Europe support metropolisation processes and thus pursue comparable objectives and strategic approaches: ‘the consistently low level (with a few exceptions) of institutionalisation of functionally closely interlinked urban regions is increasingly perceived as a deficit by public authorities’ (Wiechmann 2009: 127). Differences arise both in the design process and during implementation. The cross-border perspective in the concept of the metropolitan regions is based on more recent analyses, political initiatives and interventions. This, too, begs the question of the added value compared to traditional forms of cross-border cooperation: is it merely a question of *branding* regions, or does it create a

benefit for functional and territorial integration? And how can these concepts be successfully implemented as part of existing cross-border cooperation projects?

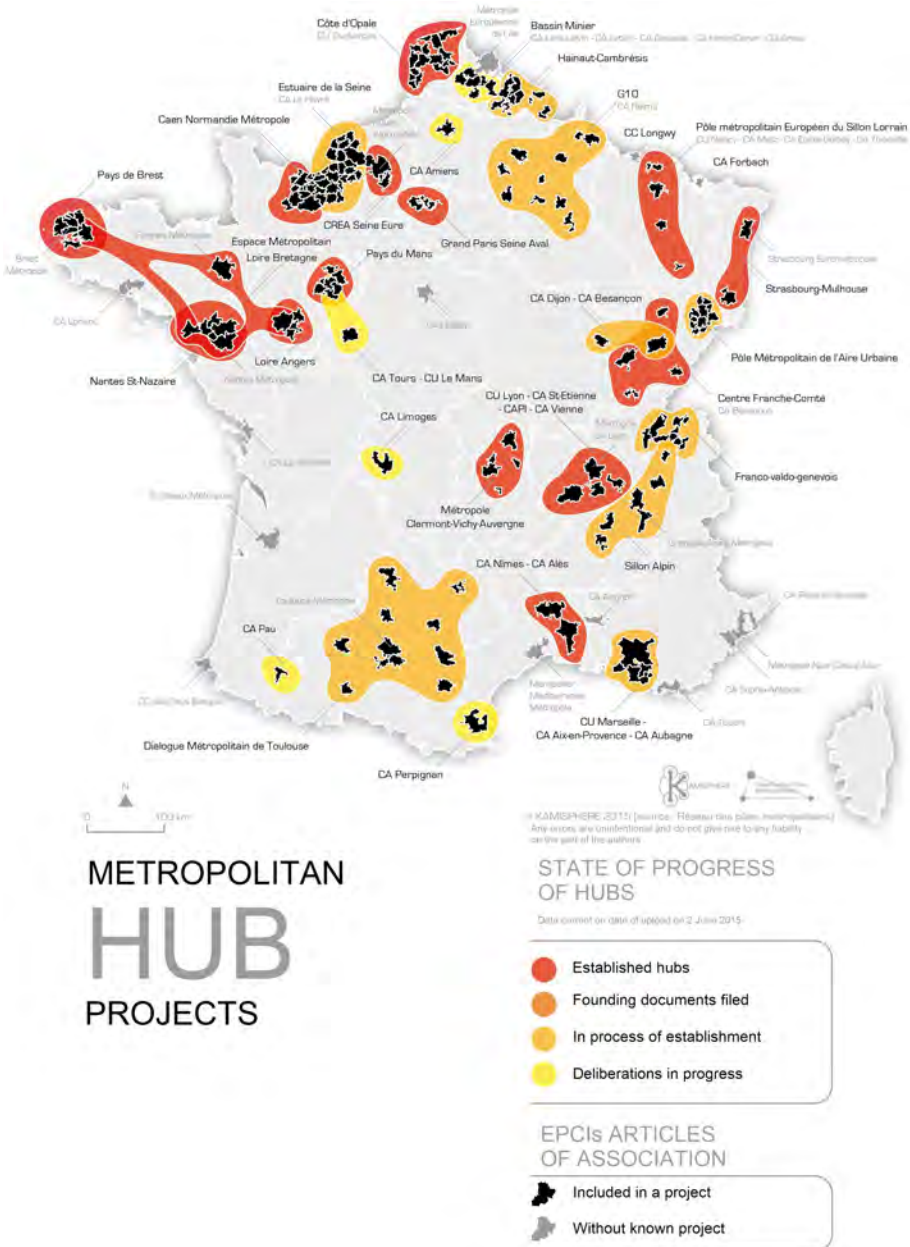


Fig. 5: The metropolitan hubs (pôles métropolitains) in France /Source: Réseau des Pôles Métropolitains 2015

### 3 Characteristics of metropolitan border regions

What are the typical characteristics of metropolitan border regions? This question was the focus of the first Model Project for Spatial Planning on cross-border interactional areas. It examined the Meuse-Rhine Euroregion (EMR), the Greater Region, the Trinational Metropolitan Region of the Upper Rhine (TMO) and the Lake Constance region. Several workshops between the project partners and expert opinions provided the basis for the project (TU Dresden 2009, 2010a, 2010b; *BBSR* 2010; ESPON/University of Luxembourg 2010; *BMVBS* 2011).

The starting point was a comparison of metropolitan functions of the border regions concerned with selected European metropolitan regions in Germany (TU Dresden 2009, 2010a): 'The present results demonstrate that large sub-regions of the examined border regions show a potential that is comparable to that of smaller German metropolitan regions such as Nuremberg, Hanover or central Germany' (*BMVBS* 2011: 37; see Table 1). However, these functions and administrative powers are only of limited legal effectiveness for integrated (metropolitan) development of the border regions, because complex multi-level interactions make joint action and administrative processes more difficult, and settlement and subsidy policies for companies as well as research and development policy or transport policy continue to have a predominantly national focus (TU Dresden 2010a; *BMVBS* 2013).

In addition to metropolitan location factors, a special focus was placed on functional interactions across national borders. The commuter relations between the national sub-regions are an excellent indicator: the commuter flows in the Greater Region are the highest in Europe (ESPON/University of Luxembourg 2010: 38 et seq., 44). The other regions involved in the Model Project for Spatial Planning are also characterised by strong links between their employment markets. However, according to a study by the Technical University Dresden (TU Dresden 2010b: 8), intense functional interactions remain limited to the areas close to the border and cannot be documented from an analytical perspective for the territory of the large-scale border regions, such as the Greater Region or the Trinational Metropolitan Region of the Upper Rhine.

The border between the national sub-regions can become a driver for the intensification of functional interactions. Strong economic locations and in particular the structural disparities between the national sub-regions are decisive drivers in this regard. Sohn (2013: 2) proposes 'that the opening-up of borders represents a fresh opportunity for urban border areas to reinforce their positions within the networks of a globalized economy and to assert their autonomy as cross-border regional entities. As harnessed by actors (e.g. organizations, groups, interests) that exploit the benefits of position or of difference, as spaces of hybridization or as objects of recognition, borders can be seen as a resource. Without minimizing their possible obstructive effects, it is helpful to recognize that borders can also represent an advantage in the composition of CBMRs<sup>2</sup> (see Table 2).

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2 CBMR = Cross-Border Metropolitan Region.

| Comparison region  | Capitals, state capitals  | Top 500 universities  | UNESCO World Heritage Sites   |
|--|---|---|---|
| Lake Constance European interactional area                   | 7 (Bregenz, Vaduz, St. Gallen, Frauenfeld, Schaffhausen, Zurich, Aarau) | 3 (Constance, ETH [Swiss Technical University] Zurich, University of Zurich)      | Monastic Island of Reichenau in Lake Constance<br>Abbey of St Gall  |
| Trinational Metropolitan Region of the Upper Rhine           | 2 (Basel, Strasbourg)   | 4 (Basel, Freiburg, Strasbourg, Karlsruhe)  | Grande-Île of Strasbourg<br>Fortifications of Vauban in Neuf-Brisach  |
| Greater Region SaarLorLux                                    | 4 (Luxembourg, Mainz, Metz, Saarbrücken)                                | 2 (Nancy, Mainz)  | Speyer Cathedral<br>Roman monuments, Cathedral of St Peter and Church of Our Lady in Trier<br>Völklingen Ironworks<br>Upper Middle Rhine Valley<br>Place Stanislas, Place de la Carrière and Place d'Alliance in Nancy<br>City of Luxembourg: its old quarters and fortifications<br>Ship lifts on the Canal du Centre<br>Medieval belfries in Flanders and Wallonia<br>Neolithic flint mines near Spiennes (Mons)<br>Notre Dame Cathedral in Tournai |
| Meuse-Rhine Euroregion                                       | 3 (Eupen, Liège, Maastricht)  | 3 (Aachen, Maastricht, Liège)   | Aachen Cathedral<br>Flemish beguinages<br>Medieval belfries in Flanders and Wallonia  |
| Nuremberg Metropolitan Region                                | 0   | 3 (Würzburg, Erlangen-Nuremberg, Bayreuth)  | Town of Bamberg   |
| Hanover–Braunschweig–Göttingen–Wolfsburg metropolitan region | 1 (Hanover)   | 4 (Braunschweig, Hannover Medical School, Leipzig University Hannover, Göttingen) | St Mary's Cathedral and St Michael's Church in Hildesheim   |
| Central German metropolitan region                           | 3 (Dresden, Magdeburg, Erfurt)  | 4 (Halle-Wittenberg, Leipzig, Jena, Dresden)                                      | Bauhaus and its sites in Weimar and Dessau<br>Classical Weimar<br>Garden Kingdom of Dessau-Wörlitz<br>Wartburg Castle near Eisenach<br>Luther Memorials in Eisleben and Wittenberg<br>Collegiate Church, Castle and Old Town of Quedlinburg   |

Table 1: Comparison of the regions involved in the Model Project for Spatial Planning with metropolitan regions in Germany (capitals and state capitals, presence of Top 500 universities [Shanghai ranking], UNESCO World Heritage sites) / Source: BMVBS 2011: 34 et seq., the author

| Types of benefit       | Border func-tions involved | Rationales  | Examples of CBMRs*   |
|------------------------|----------------------------|---|--|
| Positional benefit     | Delimitation               | Territorial gateway<br>Cross-border delocalization (metropolitan overflow)  | Basel, Geneva<br>Geneva, Hong Kong, Singapore                              |
| Differential Benefit   | Differentiation            | Exploitation of cost differ-entials (value capture)   | El-Paso Ciudad Juarez, Hong Kong, Luxembourg, San Diego-Tijuana, Singapore |
| Locus of hybridization | Differentiation            | Confrontation of differences resulting in (1) cultural or (2) institutional innovation  | (1) San Diego-Tijuana<br>(2) Basel, Geneva, Lille                          |
| Object of recognition  | Affirmation                | Staging of the international character of a city-region (territorial marketing)<br>Political recognition of peripheral actors | Basel, Copenhagen-Malmö, Strasbourg<br>Geneva                              |

\* The list of CBMRs mentioned here is meant to be illustrative and is by no means exhaustive.

Table 2: The border as a resource / Source: Sohn 2013: 12; the author



Unlike (most) domestic metropolitan regions in Germany, the border regions in question have a culture of cooperation that has been tried and tested over decades as well as diverse, established institutional structures for cooperation. They form part of a political and administrative framework and are thus clearly defined in spatial terms. Embedding new concepts in existing structures can entail benefits, although it may prove to be a disadvantage if this cannot be achieved and existing organisations and stakeholders are critical of them or the resulting changes.

The same applies to the spatial framework of the border regions when concepts such as ‘cross-border polycentric metropolitan region’ (CBPMR) of the Greater Region relate primarily to a core area (see Petra Schelkmann’s paper in this volume). This is where the concept of variable geometry, i.e. of flexible demarcations of spaces for cooperation and action given the respective needs for action, reaches its limits: the stakeholders of non-participating, peripheral sub-regions may feel at a disadvantage if this highly symbolic concept of a metropolitan cross-border region is implemented with a heavy focus on the core area. At the same time, large-scale, heavily polycentric metropolitan areas show deficits in their perceptibility and transparency (*BMVBS/BBR* 2007: 70), as well as in bridging competing or divergent development objectives in the various sub-regions for the benefit of joint strategies. The findings by Rusche/Oberst (2010: 252 et seq.) on regional economic aspects in metropolitan regions appear to confirm these concerns and moreover suggest that very large regions are not always able to meet the expectations for their economic performance.

As part of the Model Project for Spatial Planning, the project partners agreed on key constitutive characteristics of metropolitan border regions (*BMVBS* 2011a: 9; *BMVBS* 2011: 40 et seq.; *BMVBS* 2013: 15 et seq.): ‘Metropolitan border regions are characterised by

- 1 cross-border functional interrelations and commonalities,
- 2 existing institutional agreements for large-scale cross-border cooperation,
- 3 large-scale regionalisation processes and a polycentric spatial structure, as well as
- 4 metropolitan locational factors and potentials for growth and innovation.’  
(*BMVBS* 2011a: 9)

#### **4 Metropolisation strategies in border regions**

Although border regions such as the Greater Region or the Trinational Metropolitan Region of the Upper Rhine offer good starting points for metropolisation strategies, it becomes clear that despite cross-border cooperation spanning (in many cases) decades, the barrier effect of national borders remains an obstacle to their adequate functional and territorial integration and the successful exploitation of their economic and innovation potential. Different legal, taxation and planning systems, as well as differences in administrative cultures and complex multi-level governance in the bor-

der area, competing dual structures and language barriers often present obstacles to the implementation of cross-border strategies and programmes. Many cross-border projects fail despite promising ideas and plans. These deficits in regional development become particularly clear in border regions with very closely-knit interrelations.

Which levers could be used to adapt and enhance metropolitan qualities and developments in border regions? It is certainly helpful in this context to look at the positioning of the Initiative Group of European Metropolitan Regions in Germany [*Initiativkreis Europäischer Metropolregionen in Deutschland, IKM*] (IKM, undated), which was established in 2001 and represents the interests of the domestic metropolitan regions. The Initiative Group of European Metropolitan Regions in Germany acts as a lobby group at the national, European and international level. The group sees the improvement of transport networks between the metropolitan regions in Germany and the neighbouring countries, the shaping of effective metropolitan forms of governance and of knowledge regions and knowledge management or joint regional monitoring to be important fields of action.

Particular importance is attached to the questions of accessibility and access to knowledge and information, but also to a 'metropolitan foreign policy' for representing the metropolitan region outside of the region itself and joint marketing. In principle, the metropolisation process is associated with the prioritisation of specific fields of action, which leads to a shift in the spectrum of tasks. Blatter/Knieling point out that the tasks of land-use planning, which relate to internal coordination, recede into the background, while the development of locations and marketing become more important (Blatter/Knieling 2009: 252).

For border regions, this results in additional challenges: a 'small-scale foreign policy' in the cross-border context can quickly turn into a national affair due to the direct or indirect involvement of public authorities (Euro-Institute 2010). As a result, a foreign policy for the metropolitan region, which may be par for the course for Berlin, Hamburg or Frankfurt, is an extremely sensitive political issue for border regions.

Likewise, cross-border coordination and the agreement of 'hard' infrastructure measures will collide only too quickly with national interests. While the increasing mobility in border regions is welcome, traffic and transport problems increase due to the insufficient infrastructural development of the border area and public transport systems that are not aligned with the needs of commuters.

Mobility planning in the sense of an integration of the border regions into the transnational European networks as well as the improvement of internal mobility is certainly a key policy. This aspect illustrates, for merely one among many spatially-relevant policy areas, the specific need for action in the context of metropolisation strategies in border regions.

In the Greater Region, a list of transport projects, which are a priority for the metropolitan development of the entire region, was approved (KARE [Coordinating Committee for Spatial Development] / Summit of the Greater Region / WSAGR [Eco-

nomic and Social Committee of the Greater Region] 2014: 1; see Petra Schelkmann's paper in this volume). In the same year, a Spatial Development Strategy of the Greater Region was adopted to promote economic, social and territorial cohesion for the benefit of intelligent, sustainable and inclusive growth and thus contribute to the overall strengthening of the metropolitan, polycentric and cross-border dimension (Summit of the Greater Region 2014: 5). The development of mobility was to play a key role in the regional development strategy. Yet Chilla/Schulz (2014: 13) point out with regard to the Metroborder initiative or strategies to improve the cross-border transport situation (as part of the *Schéma de mobilité transfrontalière*, SMOT [cross-border mobility scheme]): 'Nevertheless, these initiatives remain non-binding instruments of concertation. To date, these were not able to remedy the obvious "institutional void" in this cross-border context, requiring further efforts for formal "supra-regionalization" of spatial development policies (Evrard: 2013) while certain actors deliberately profit from the opportunities of an underregulated border regime, e.g. in the field of large retailing infrastructure (Affolderbach: 2013)'.

In addition, the discussions on a New Regionalism suggest that regionalisation processes, as a counterweight to globalisation and deterritorialisation, should not be limited to economic aspects. Only a more comprehensive consideration of their endogenous potential and their embedding in territorial strategies will enable (metropolitan) regions to become strong players with their own formative powers. Yet New Regionalism was likewise criticised for being too closely linked to competitive thinking and focused on optimising the economic performance of a region (Zimmermann/Heinelt 2012: 23).

## 5 Metropolitan governance in border regions

In the context of the successful implementation of metropolisation strategies, particular importance is attached to the elaboration of appropriate forms of governance: 'Metropolitan governance relates to a changed understanding of how an urban region is managed. Governance in this regard refers to the stakeholders, institutions and processes that characterise the development of an urban region and the manner and means of its management' (Blatter/Knieling 2009: 234). Blatter/Knieling (2009: 263) see metropolitan governance 'as a complex regulatory system with numerous parallel levers. It is characterised by the direct interaction between a task and its organisation ("form follows function"); other crucial impacting factors are its strategic orientation, geographic demarcation, functional differentiation or integration, the participation of private stakeholders from the economy and civil society, planning culture, the instruments used, integration in the multi-level governance system and contextual control.' From their perspective, two typical forms of metropolitan governance have evolved, the individual characteristics of which are consistent (see Table 3).

| Metropolitan Governance Type I  | Metropolitan Governance Type II                               |
|---|---|
| <b>External profile</b>   | <b>Internal management and integration</b>                    |
| <b>Functional differentiation</b> /special-purpose associations and other organisations | <b>Functional integration</b> /comprehensive organisation     |
| <b>Soft</b> institutionalisation  | <b>Hard</b> institutionalisation                              |
| <b>Integration</b> of private/civil-society stakeholders                                | <b>Consultation</b> of private/civil-society stakeholders     |
| <b>Selective:</b> (Large) projects/flagship projects/festivalisation                    | <b>Integrative:</b> Guiding principles/development strategies |
| <b>Communicative</b> instruments/organisational development                             | <b>Regulatory</b> elements                                    |
| Symbolic capital  | Legal framework   |

Table 3: Models of metropolitan governance /Source: Blatter/Knieling 2009: 26; author's own illustration (modified)

A look at the eleven domestic metropolitan regions in Germany reveals the diversity of governance forms and thus their dependence on the context (cf. IKM 2013); hence, there is no indication that a compelling development towards a 'specific optimal state' of metropolitan governance exists (Ludwig/Mandel/Schweiger et al. 2008: 186). In their analysis of selected metropolitan regions, Zimmermann/Heinelt (2012: 136 et seq.) conclude that this diversity is less due to institutional and structural differences than to specific constellations of stakeholders and administrative powers. These include, in particular:

- > the 'breaking up of stakeholder constellations' to break down routines and barriers (149);
- > the development of metropolitan leadership to overcome fragmented structures and to initiate a 'basic understanding of shared challenges and options for action' (141);
- > consensus-oriented behaviour to develop management strategies. This requires platforms or 'coupling instances' 'to force the stakeholders to meet, interact and to explain or justify their respective decisions' (143);
- > positive sum games to overcome or reduce distribution conflicts between the stakeholders and various sub-regions of the metropolitan region (144 et seq.).

In addition, the range of stakeholders in regional development has continuously expanded since the 1990s due to increased collaboration with other social stakeholders, such as social and business partners, as well as through the closer involvement of civil society. In metropolitan regions in particular, with their boggling diversity of stakeholders, stakeholder networks and their arenas, this leads to increased complexity in governance processes and increasing requirements. High densities of use, competing interests and well-organised interest or lobby groups lead to a clearly

increased level of conflict. With a view to spatial planning, this means an instrumental shift, which focuses on communicative and cooperative instruments. At the same time, complex conflict situations require effective spatial planning policy instruments, in other words, a 'shadow of hierarchy' (Blatter/Knieling 2009: 238).

Zimmermann/Heinelt (2012: 151 et seq.) believe, moreover, that a 'flexible political geometry' and 'loose coupling by means of different coherence mechanisms', which include 'guiding principles and rules on the exchange of information and coordination of actions', play a decisive role in the required processes of horizontal self-organisation in metropolitan regions. Metropolitan governance is always also multi-level governance, and especially in complex, loosely coupled management systems, there is a need for a joint strategic orientation (meta governance), which sets a framework for the action of the institutions involved (second order governance) (Zimmermann/Heinelt 2012: 29 et seq.).

Von Löwis (2012) specifies the following factors for the success of metropolitan governance:

- > strong coordination in the sense of the metropolitan leadership; this is associated with effective network management and key players who create confidence
- > a 'variable geometry' – in space, time and policy, and thus stronger horizontal and vertical interactions
- > strategies which are locally and regionally relevant and have a symbolic impact
- > a translation or transfer of strategies into a specific set of references – for local and regional stakeholders – in social practice
- > a mobilisation of regional resources – material as well as immaterial and at all levels
- > rules for behavioural standards and cost/benefit compensation in the form of framework agreements or coupling transactions/relationships
- > 'structural gaps' to ensure that 'autonomous action' remains or becomes possible and to give rise to the (potential) for bottom-up activities

The border regions examined as part of the Model Project for Spatial Planning show very different contextual conditions at a regional level as well as a different logic in the development of cross-border cooperation, similar to the domestic metropolitan regions in Germany. Nevertheless, the development phases in all regions can be well parallelised (BMVBS 2011: 61; Euro-Institute 2010; see Table 4).

| Phase                                    | Period                    | Characteristic   | Manifestation in the regions involved in the Model Project for Spatial Planning  |
|--|---------------------------|--|--|
| Formation of administrative institutions | Late 1960s to early 1970s | First experimental experiences gained: establishment of individual relations led to the formation of official intergovernmental commissions with subdivisional regional committees/commissions and themed working groups or the establishment of foundations | <b>Euroregion:</b> Establishment of the Meuse-Rhine Foundation in 1975<br><b>Greater Region:</b> Establishment of the Franco-German-Luxembourg intergovernmental commission on the Saarland-Lorraine-Luxembourg-Trier/Western Palatinate regional commission in 1969–1971<br><b>Upper Rhine:</b> Establishment of the Franco-German-Swiss intergovernmental commission (later Upper Rhine Conference) in 1975<br><b>Lake Constance:</b> Establishment of the International Lake Constance Conference (IBK) in 1972 with its conference of heads of government and themed commissions |
| Governmental differentiation             | Late 1980s to early 1990s | Creation of legislative bodies   | <b>Euroregion:</b> 1995 Euroregion Council<br><b>Greater Region:</b> 1986 Interregional Parliamentary Council, followed by an interregional Economic and Social Committee<br><b>Upper Rhine:</b> 1997 Upper Rhine Council<br><b>Lake Constance:</b> 1991 Lake Constance Council  |
| Project-oriented professionalisation     | From the early 1990s      | Implementation of cross-border projects  | Advanced in particular through the implementation and successful execution of the INTERREG community initiative in all four border regions   |
| Level-specific differentiation           | From 2000                 | Establishment of Eurodistricts, city networks, Agenda processes  | <b>Euroregion:</b> Aachen-Heerlen Eurodistrict (project)<br><b>Greater Region:</b> SaarMoselle Eurodistrict, QuattroPole city network<br><b>Upper Rhine:</b> 4 Eurodistricts (REGIO PAMINA, Strasbourg-Ortenau, Freiburg Region-Centre et Sud Alsace, Basel Trinational Eurodistrict)<br><b>Lake Constance:</b> Lake Constance Agenda 21   |

*Table 4: Phases of the institutionalisation of cross-border cooperation in the Greater Region and the Trinational Metropolitan Region of the Upper Rhine /Source: BMVBS 2011: 61, based on the cross-sectional analysis of cooperation structures of the Euro-Institute 2010*

Overall, the financial resources provided and the extent of organisation and professionalisation are at a pronounced imbalance in relation to the diversity of tasks – there are no easy cross-border issues – and the increasing challenges of cross-border cooperation in intensely interlinked border regions. A clear dependency on the European funding landscape (particularly the INTERREG funding programme) is apparent; reliance on each sub-region's own budget is comparatively limited. Stakeholders who are engaged in cross-border activities generally remain embedded in their national political and administrative contexts; in addition, their administrative powers are in line with their national sectoral logic and are therefore greatly fragmented. One exception is the Upper Rhine region, which has implemented considerable personnel cuts in the context of cross-border facilities (BMVBS 2011: 62 et seq.).

State and municipal actors dominate cross-border cooperation for reasons of their historical development. Funding programmes such as INTERREG make these stakeholder constellations manifest. Even if business or social partners participate in cross-border cooperation as part of committee work, as in the case of the Greater Region or the Trinational Metropolitan Region of the Upper Rhine, the integration of societal stakeholders is at a level far below that in the domestic metropolitan regions.

In addition, a pronounced multi-level mismatch characterises the border regions: in the committees of the Greater Region, national, regional and municipal stakeholders meet, which entails a considerable imbalance of decision-making powers and scope. Both in local and in (macro) regional cooperation associations across national borders, the following applies: 'Due to disparities in competences across the various borders, the political governance of local cross-border spaces requires the involvement of higher territorial levels [...]' (Peyrony/Denert 2012: 237).

The established structures display a marked persistence; hence, the principle of unanimity in decision-making processes and the ‘forced parity’ resulting from strong national constraints tend to counteract innovations in cross-border cooperation. The problem of principal agents leads to protracted coordination and feedback processes (Euro-Institute 2010: 14). There are virtually no routines for the negotiation of conflict-prone interests; instead, conflicts are avoided and attention is directed only to pleasant matters, resulting in fair-weather relations; this is not only true for the elaboration of joint INTERREG projects (Schniedermeier 2010). Control in the ‘shadow of hierarchy’ is only possible in the political and administrative context of national sub-regions: ‘When it comes to cross-border cooperation, governance has to serve as a substitute for government, because the latter remains within a national framework’ (Peyrony/Denert 2012: 236). To this extent, coherent territorial and functional integration is significantly complicated without an agreed cross-border orientation of regional development (meta governance) and of its embedding in the political and administrative systems as well as the planning systems of the national sub-regions. ‘The cooperation of autonomous stakeholders instead of integrated structures and processes as well as occasional project work instead of consolidation based on shared objectives lead, in conjunction with the lack of joint instruments, to potentially lower efficiency’ (BMVBS 2011: 65).

The conclusion is quite sobering: the tradition and practice of cross-border cooperation appear to be difficult to reconcile with the demands of metropolitan governance. However, it must always be taken into account that the known obstacles are also and have always been the triggers and drivers of cross-border cooperation.

Previous experiences show that the reorientation of cross-border governance must be a focal point in order to successfully implement metropolisation strategies. The recommendations based on analyses and discussions as part of the Model Projects for Spatial Planning (BMVBS 2011: 67 et seq.; Euro-Institute 2010) relate to

**... the strengthening of the cross-border strategy context** (as a negotiation process in the framework of meta governance): Even if strategies exist for all the border regions in question, their binding effect on the stakeholders in the national sub-regions remains insignificant. ‘In practice, a sectoral policy approach specific to each individual project prevails in which the wider context of integrated, cross-border spatial development often recedes into the background compared to initiatives focusing on individual issues’ (BMVBS 2011: 67).

**... a subsidiary differentiation of levels of action:** This is combined with a vertical division of tasks, which takes the various levels and functional interactions into account. The benefits of a variable geometry must be interpreted not only in a spatial but also in a temporal perspective. Initial approaches are apparent both in the Greater Region and the Trinational Metropolitan Region of the Upper Rhine: ‘the former through the structuring of the INTERREG programme into an overall regional programme line and five sub-programmes, the latter through the conceptual differentiation between the Trinational Metropolitan Region of the Upper Rhine and the Eurodistricts or the urban network’ (BMVBS 2011: 68). Yet, the cross-border context quickly reveals that ‘defining and concretising a perimeter of action is a

sensitive topic. In particular, the differentiation between institutional perimeter and the political focus can be crucial' (ESPON/University of Luxembourg 2010: 10). In addition, national competences cannot be transferred without further ado to cross-border institutions in border regions, often for constitutional reasons: 'In most cases, it would be helpful if the responsible actors could agree to facilitate integrated cross-border agencies for the tasks which are still nationally defined and under the auspices of the national authorities' (BMVBS 2011: 67).

**... a differentiation of the stakeholder structures:** In a national context, it is already common practice to involve business and social partners as well as civil society in governance processes at different levels. In a cross-border context, this step requires numerous preconditions to be met, not only due to language and cultural differences, but also due to the historical development of the cooperation relationships. This would, however, allow for a better counterbalancing of the dominance of public stakeholders in the cross-border cooperation. In addition, proactive and systematic interactions between the various stakeholder and decision-making arenas is necessary to minimise the *principal agent* as well as the *multi level* mismatch issues.

**... a further development of the existing institutional structure in the direction of 'metropolitan' governance.** From the perspective of the Euro-Institute (2010), different models are open for discussion (BMVBS 2011: 72):

- > 'the integrated central model: the bundling of all management powers at the overall regional level with loosely linked, decentralised, project-related units at the sub-regional level of implementation
- > the vertical cascade model: the concretisation of formative powers across the various levels of action, from the overall regional to the sub-regional and local levels
- > a model of decentralised concentration: the bundling of the primary management and implementation powers at the sub-regional level, mediation of good practices, an exchange of experience and shaping of general conditions at the overall regional level
- > a model of functional interaction: synergetic networking of existing organisations and initiatives without an actual institutional management at its core.'

The 1996 Karlsruhe Accord on cross-border cooperation between territorial authorities and public bodies signed by France, Luxembourg, Germany and Switzerland created essential stimuli in the border regions concerned for the intensification and institutionalisation of cooperation (Dörrenbächer 2014: 170). The Regulation of the European Parliament and of the Council of 5 July 2006 on establishing a European Grouping for Territorial Cooperation (EGTC) charted an entirely new course for the European Union. The opportunities offered by the EGTC as a legal basis for territorial cooperation in Europe create new impulses for restructuring legally established border regions. It is hoped that this instrument will 'place cross-border cooperation on a permanent, stable basis' (Gabbe 2011: 99). More recent research on the Greater



Region shows, however, that there is fundamental scepticism on the part of stakeholders about the transfer of competences to cross-border institutions (Henn 2016: 226).

In January 2008, the modernisation discussions on current cross-border cooperation gave rise to a resolution of the 11th Tri-Nations Congress to develop the Upper Rhine region into the Trinational Metropolitan Region of the Upper Rhine. The founding document was signed on 9 December 2010. The collaboration was structurally and institutionally designed to create a network comprising the four pillars of policy-making, the economy, science and civil society. A vertical division of responsibilities is to apply between the level of the metropolitan region (interregional) and the Eurodistricts (intermunicipal) (TMO 2010; Fig. 6).

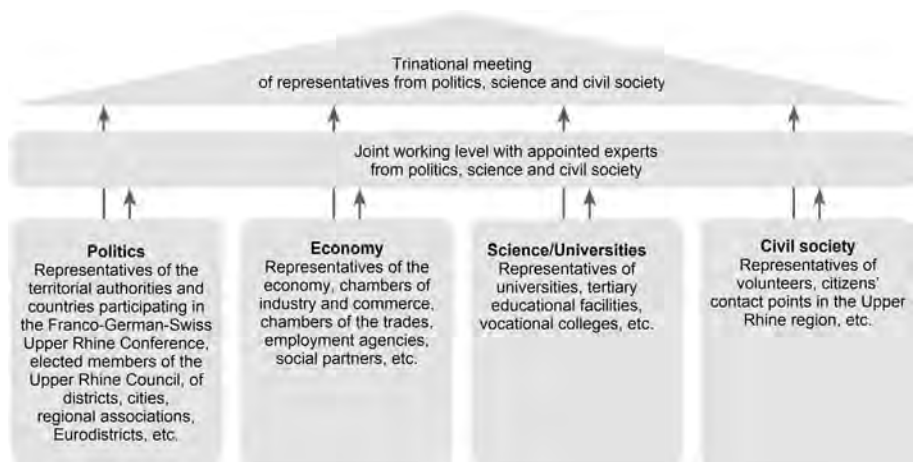


Fig. 6: Institutional structures of cooperation in the Trinational Metropolitan Region of the Upper Rhine /Source: BMVBS 2011: 31, based on data from the Franco-German-Swiss Upper Rhine Conference, modified

After initial euphoria, disillusionment quickly set in: the implementation of crucial aspects of metropolitan governance proved to be impossible. Instead, the (new) governance processes remained steeped in the traditional problems. As Frey (2010: 343 et seq.) observed, 'at the regional level competences have not yet been transferred to interstate or cross-border coordination structures': due to the principal agent problems related to such a transfer, the resolutions of cross-border coordination structures would frequently exceed the boundaries of the powers of the individual partners in the national context; moreover, the principle of consensus is said to lead to 'a pronounced culture of (preliminary) negotiations and compromise'.

In the Greater Region, too, the CBPMR concept and a potential concentration of metropolitan governance in the core region (see Petra Schelkmann's paper in this volume) give rise to controversial discussions. Although the key role of Luxembourg in

the Greater Region – as an economic driver and a location for metropolitan functions – is widely acknowledged, the stakeholders within the governance arrangements are critical about the focus on a core area around Luxembourg (Henn 2016: 221).

The conclusions of Megerle (2009: 37) on the institutional reorganisation of the metropolitan regions apply especially to the border regions: ‘the problem that German metropolitan regions have in attaining the ability to act both externally and internally is largely due to their comparatively weak institutionalisation (*BBR* 2002: 127), as well as to the lack of interest of the German administrative culture in integrated, interdisciplinary planning (John 2006: 676). In order to reveal the full strengths of the metropolitan regions “institutional restructuring of these regions” would be required (Adam/Göddecke-Stellmann/Heidbrink 2005: 418)’.

## 6 The role of spatial planning

The active shaping of metropolitan regions as attractive living environments with the aim to balance ecological, economic and socio-cultural aspects in the sense of sustainable spatial development requires suitable management mechanisms and instruments. The question of the functions and role of spatial planning arises in this context. Preising (2013: 188 et seq., 200 et seq.) distinguishes between opportunities, risks and potential functions of spatial planning in a metropolitan region based on four fundamental dimensions of action (cf. in this regard Blatter 2005: 126): norm-oriented action, benefit-oriented action, communicative action and dramaturgic action. Against this backdrop, Table 5 addresses the specific opportunities of and obstacles to spatial (development) planning in metropolitan border regions.

The diverse opportunities of spatial (development) planning in metropolitan border regions are faced with significant obstacles, which are partly owing to the general structural circumstances of cross-border cooperation. It must be assumed, however, that without overall regional objectives for cross-border regional development, the implementation of ambitious metropolisation strategies does not appear to be promising. At the very least, the desired added value cannot be achieved and/or imbalances in the border region are reinforced.

While formal regional planning in the sense of German spatial planning law is hardly applicable to border regions, overall regional development strategies can offer a basic strategic framework and a coordinated action programme for cross-border cooperation despite the lack of a binding legal effect. This depends on the decision-making bodies in the national sub-regions accepting the need to agree on the thematic and spatial focal points and on key projects for the metropolitan region. Controversial topics must also be addressed, and a road map or at least options for their resolution must be indicated. A prerequisite in this regard is that the acting stakeholders (can) agree on integrating and compensatory approaches and develop ‘package deals’ to balance interests. In addition, as part of joint (informal) spatial planning it must be indicated how the metropolisation strategies and recommended actions for spatial development should be reflected in the formal planning measures of the national sub-regions. In the Greater Region (as in other places) the benefit of informal planning

strategies has been recognised, and the drafting of a spatial development perspective for the Greater Region (REKGR) has been initiated (see Petra Schelkmann's paper in this volume).

| Opportunities  | Obstacles  |
|--|--|
| <b>Benefit-oriented action</b>   |  |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A joint look at the border region to identify challenges, potentials and fields of action for the entire region in regard to cross-border spatial development</li> <li>• Jointly dealing with spatially-relevant issues as a stimulus for building up cross-border data and shared expertise</li> <li>• Identifying relations between the (national) sub-regions as a basis for collaborative and integrative approaches as well as strategies for package deals</li> <li>• Agreed guiding principle, objectives and strategies as a basis for an accepted regional profile and a coordinated frame of action in the sense of an 'Agenda for the Border Region'</li> <li>• Bundling of (sub)regional resources; national and European funding for joint key projects that support metropolisation strategies</li> <li>• A concerted framework for action for the border region to create investment security for public and municipal stakeholders, enterprises and the population, for the coupling of spatial development and funding policies</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Complex structures of cooperation with protracted work processes and necessary link back to national decision-making structures</li> <li>• Imbalances in the multi-level governance system between the national sub-regions (e.g. national level meets the municipal level)</li> <li>• The dominance of public stakeholders and reduced representation of social and economic partners as key actors and resources for metropolisation strategies</li> <li>• The size of metropolitan border regions and their complex spatial structure with non-transparent stakeholder constellations and competing interests</li> <li>• Insufficient availability and compatibility of data on the assessment of the potential of cross-border spatial development</li> </ul>   |
| <b>Norm-oriented action</b>  |  |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• An accepted guiding principle for the border region as 'identification core' and policy guidelines with objectives for the entire region as a 'counterweight' to sub-regional and national interests</li> <li>• Joint spatial (development) planning as a roadmap for cross-border spatial development policy for the embedding of metropolisation strategies and as a reference level for themed or sub-regional network and project work</li> </ul>   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 'Policy of the smallest common denominator' as the result of resorting to informal spatial development perspectives because formal, binding spatial (development) planning in border regions will hardly be feasible</li> <li>• Differences in planning law, planning systems and planning cultures of the national sub-regions, which significantly impede reaching agreement on spatial planning strategies</li> <li>• Insufficient acceptance of spatial and thematic focal points given the concerns that the disparities between the core and the peripheries will increase in border regions</li> <li>• Insufficient involvement of municipal stakeholders in cross-border cooperation across the entire region as 'fault lines' in the planning hierarchy</li> <li>• Insufficient provision of resources for planning projects across the entire region relative to the complexity of the planning task in border regions</li> </ul> |
| <b>Communicative action</b>  |  |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• In-depth understanding of different (planning) cultures and decision-making routines, the perception of problems and the setting of agendas in the Greater Region through planning for the entire region</li> <li>• Communicating the added value of the concept of the metropolitan border region internally through a coordinated spatial development policy, specific action programmes and key projects</li> <li>• Joint spatial (development) planning as a point of contact for spatially-relevant and metropolitan region issues to bring the responsible stakeholders of the national sub-regions together</li> <li>• Broadening and solidifying the planning dialogue through participation processes which take the strategies for the entire region or for metropolisation to all planning levels and stakeholder arenas</li> </ul>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Resistance to new themes and strategies (e.g. metropolisation strategies) because of a traditional understanding of cross-border cooperation and the associated strategies</li> <li>• Resistance to opening up to an expanded group of stakeholders through building up existing cross-border committees, dialogue and coordination processes</li> <li>• Language barriers, different planning and dialogue cultures as well as the size of the established border regions as specific obstacles to a common understanding in relation to spatial development, as well as to the communication of spatial development strategies</li> </ul>   |
| <b>Dramaturgic action</b>  |  |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Strong symbolic effect of joint spatial (development) planning and a shared spatial vision that garner attention and contribute to the formation of identity</li> <li>• A strong internal signal for strategies coordinated across borders and across issues for an increased focus on action across national borders and different planning levels</li> <li>• Joint external representation of interests in the European and national context through visible spatial (development) policy</li> </ul>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Impression that there is no binding effect or political enforceability through informal spatial development perspectives</li> <li>• Impression of a standstill when negotiating hard or controversial topics and thus of protracted coordination processes, especially in a cross-border context</li> <li>• Shifting of focus to core spaces, especially in the context of metropolisation strategies with the result that imbalances can arise between the stakeholders in the border region or are perceived to do so</li> </ul>  |

*Table 5: Opportunities and obstacles of spatial (development) planning for metropolitan border regions / Source: the author*

The key actors of spatial development should be regularly included in an ongoing planning dialogue by means of a consistent communication process. Their responsibility is to develop forms of dialogue that provide better access for business and social partners and for municipalities and the population.

In the analysis of border regions, the question arises of the availability of the basic data that is required to achieve reliable results: ‘At present, there exist no relevant statistical indicators for most of the cross-border territories. Such indicators are nevertheless essential for performing appropriate analyses of these territories, their handicaps and assets, as well as for establishing evidence and making shared diagnoses on which to base joint policies and actions’ (Peyrony/Denert 2012: 231). In particular for cross-border interactional areas, consistent data foundations must be made available across borders as a starting point for a shared notion of space and coordinated regional development. Projects were launched several years ago in the Greater Region and along the Upper Rhine: in the latter region, GeoRhena replaced the previous geographic information system for the area of the Upper Rhine (GISOR) in 2015 and has offered its own geoportal since May 2017. In the Greater Region, various databases have been compiled in recent years as part of the ‘geographic information system for the Greater Region’ (GIS-GR) project and numerous sets of maps drawn up. A meeting of representatives of both information systems took place in November 2015, where an intensification of the strategic cooperation between both projects was agreed (GeoPortal of the Greater Region 2015). Since the end of 2015, the exchange on cross-border spatial observation has also been strengthened on the federal level. To this end, the Model Project for Spatial Planning on ‘Spatial observation in Germany and adjacent regions’ was conducted (2015–2017). The federal state of Rhineland-Palatinate and the Upper Rhine region were selected for a model project; they have elaborated strategies for the cross-border provision, processing and harmonisation of data and communicated their experiences with the federation and the other model regions.

## **7 The concept of metropolitan border regions as an opportunity?**

In a cross-border context, the concept of metropolitan regions generally offers the opportunity to adapt cooperation structures and spatial development to the needs of an increasingly interconnected world, a converging Europe and increasingly intra-regional competition. The shared guiding vision of a metropolitan border region can also lay the foundations for adapting (national) spatial development policies to a greater extent to the needs of closely-interlinked interactional border regions with a high volume of cross-border commuters.

Nevertheless, the most recent decade has shown that metropolisation strategies in border regions come up against substantial structural and political obstacles. The concept of metropolitan regions is only sluggishly implemented in a cross-border context. For the Greater Region, Lorig (2016: 2) comments that ‘it has not yet been possible to achieve the objective of seeking to represent the best practice for European regional policy’ and that there are indications that the political and practical significance of the Greater Region project is waning. He raises the question of the

extent to which the redefinition of the *Grand Est* region in France can be reconciled with the guiding principle of the Greater Region, and also to which extent the concept of the cross-border polycentric metropolitan region (CBPMR) means a continuation of or de-parture from the previous objectives of cross-border spatial development.

The fundamental criticism of the concept of metropolitan regions (see section 2) also applies in the context of cross-border cooperation: What transactional costs does the concept entail? How are peripheral or structurally weak areas integrated? How can a consensus-oriented balance be struck between the different sub-regions? Where do legitimacy deficits occur, and how can they be counteracted? These (unresolved) issues currently arise both in the Upper Rhine region and the Greater Region (see Petra Schelkmann's paper in this volume).

The concept of metropolitan border regions is thus not a sure-fire success. Its successful implementation will not be possible without broad-based political support, proactive implementation of key measures, metropolisation strategies and the courageous further development of existing cooperation structures all the way to 'metropolitan' governance.

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Petra Schelkmann

## THE EMERGENCE OF A METROPOLISATION STRATEGY FOR THE GREATER REGION

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### Abstract

This chapter describes the process by which a cross-border metropolitan region develops, using the example of the Greater Region. Between 2008 and 2010 the idea of a cross-border, polycentric metropolitan region in the Greater Region was investigated and further developed within the ESPON project 'Metroborder'. In recent years, driven by policy declarations, strategic approaches for implementing this metropolitan region have been developed. A Spatial Development Strategy of the Greater Region with a focus on the metropolitan dimensions of the sub-regions provides the foundation for this. The issue of governance in relation to the cross-border interactional area (in the narrower conception of this area) is also discussed.

### Keywords

Metropolitan border region – Greater Region – spatial development strategy – politics – state spatial planning – transport – cross-border cooperation

## 1 Introduction

With the discussion about the reorientation of the cohesion policy, the Territorial Agenda of the EU 2020, the Europe 2020 Strategy and in the course of incorporating the objective of territorial cohesion in the Treaty of Lisbon, the border regions have increasingly gained attention since the mid-2000s in the context of the emerging metropolisation debate (Böhme/Zillmer 2010). Metropolises and metropolitan areas play a key role in the implementation of the objectives of the Europe 2020 Strategy. A not inconsiderable part of the metropolitan functions and factors that are essential for the competitiveness of Europe are found in metropolitan areas. Metropolitan areas are driving forces for research and development, innovation and cutting-edge technology. They are centres of knowledge and creativity and often also trailblazers in the field of economic and social innovations. The establishment of the European metropolitan regions in Germany, in line with the resolution of the Conference of Ministers for Spatial Planning (*Ministerkonferenz für Raumordnung, MKRO*) of 2005 entitled ‘Evolution of guiding principles and action strategies for spatial planning policies’, proceeds along very heterogeneous lines. In addition to the material, organisational and structural differences, the spatial boundaries vary in particular. The associations and networks labelled ‘metropolitan region’ share a characteristic focus on maintaining and expanding their capabilities and competitiveness as powerful economic regions. At the same time, the strategy should have ‘*an internal as well as an external impact*’ (Grotheer 2011: 3).

The management of metropolitan regions is, however, still predominantly driven and defined at the national level, and interactional areas of cross-border metropolitan regions rarely play a crucial role in national investment decisions, whether in regard to transport infrastructure or in the choice of locations. This has a negative impact in particular on the development of cross-border areas. Improving the perception of and strengthening the Greater Region as an economic location was therefore the driving motivation for the cross-border metropolisation strategy.

With the first action programme under the Territorial Agenda of 2007 and later as part of its Presidency of the Summit of the Greater Region (2008/2009, see Luxembourgian Presidency 2009), the Grand Duchy of Luxembourg placed the issue of the cross-border polycentric metropolitan areas on the European and cross-border agenda on an entirely practical level for the first time and launched the ‘Metroborder’ project, financed with EU funds (see also Andrea Hartz’s paper in this volume).

The resolution of the Conference of Ministers for Spatial Planning (*MKRO* 2016) on the revised ‘Concepts and Strategies for Spatial Development in Germany’ placed the spotlight on cross-border metropolitan border regions. The guiding principle of ‘enhancing competitiveness’, for example, acknowledged for the first time the existence and significance of metropolitan border regions alongside the existing national ‘European metropolitan regions’ as part of the concept of metropolitan areas and provided for specific approaches to action (*MKRO* 2016: 4 et seq.) (see also Andrea Hartz’s paper in this volume).

Their implementation reflects the same challenges, and the same aspects are or were discussed as in the debates on the national metropolitan regions. The principal point of discussion and criticism in the Greater Region was the question of how rural sub-regions could benefit to the same extent from the concept. This reflected and still reflects the concern that a cross-border metropolisation strategy would primarily further strengthen the ‘strong’ urbanised areas and that the ‘weak’ rather rural sub-regions would not benefit in the same way.

## 2 The ESPON project ‘Metroborder’ and the process toward a Cross-Border Polycentric Metropolitan Region (CBPMR) in the Greater Region

As part of the evolution of the European spatial development policy and with the embedding of the notion of territorial cohesion in the Treaty of Lisbon, the metropolisation process in the Greater Region was launched in the 2008–2010 period under the Luxembourgian Summit Presidency based on the ‘Metroborder’ study co-financed by the European ESPON programme (European Spatial Planning Observation Network) (see Andrea Hartz’s paper in this volume). Ever since, numerous resolutions have been passed by the Summit of the Greater Region<sup>1</sup> and by the Conferences of the Ministers of the Greater Region and political declarations have been made by various committees on its further elaboration.

The Metroborder study, which examined the Greater Region as part of a case study, confirmed that the Greater Region has the potential to develop a cross-border polycentric metropolitan region (CBPMR) in its cross-border core area around Arlon/Luxembourg, Saarbrücken/Sarreguemines, Metz, Nancy, Trier and Kaiserslautern (DATer 2010). This is based on the finding by the Metroborder study that the Greater Region has metropolitan qualities comparable to other national metropolitan regions. It is conditional, however, on the further development of the ‘critical mass’ of metropolitan functions.

The Metroborder study is based on the following understanding of a CBPMR:

*‘[...] the Metroborder project considers CBPMR as political constructions based on cross-border agreements which consider the existence of national borders as a resource for increasing interactions at the local level and based on the embeddedness of the metropolitan centre(s) in global networks. Because CBPMRs are composed of several urban centres located on either side of a border, these regional political initiatives can mobilise different geographical scales in order to utilise the assets and complementarities of the morphological and functional polycentricity.’ (DATer 2010:13).*

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<sup>1</sup> The Summit of the Greater Region is the meeting of the executives of the partner regions in the Greater Region. Summit meetings have been held regularly since 1995. For further information, please see: <http://www.grossregion.net/Institutionen/Der-Gipfel-im-Detail/Gipfel2>.

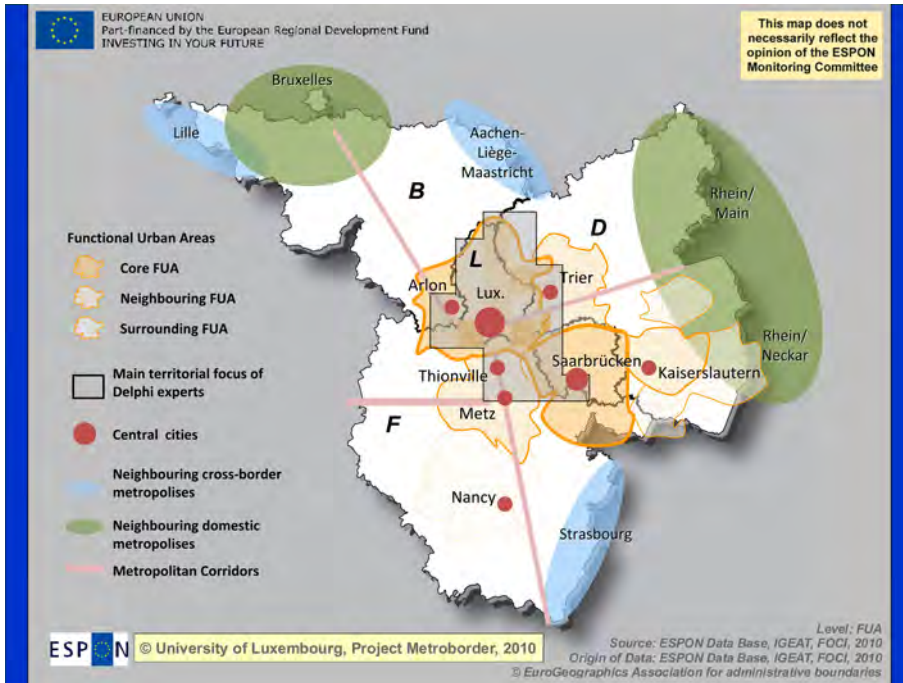


Fig. 1: A cross-border, polycentric metropolitan region in the Greater Region – schematic synthesis map of the findings of the Metroborder study / Source: DATer 2010: 19

Specifically, this means that CBPMR are ultimately spatial arrangements on either side of the border which can exploit the different characteristics and potentials on both sides of the border in a complementary fashion in the sense of a win-win situation. The success of these regions depends decisively on the will and strategies of the stakeholders to decisively cooperate within this multi-level governance structure. Practice has shown that an important factor in this regard is that all stakeholders involved have the same understanding and that the different areas and spatial categories do not consider the situation to amount to a virtual competition.

Based on the findings of the Metroborder study, the politically responsible parties have confirmed their political intention to further develop the Greater Region as a CBPMR in various Summit resolutions and declarations and to explore the areas and fields of action where closer cooperation appears necessary or useful, and whether or how the governance structures may have to be developed in future. The process was launched with the elaboration of the Spatial Development Strategy of the Greater Region: 'The executives instruct the Coordinating Committee for Spatial Development (*Koordinierungsausschuss für Räumliche Entwicklung, KARE*) to continue the work on the elaboration of the Spatial Development Strategy of the Greater Region (*Raumentwicklungskonzept der Großregion, REKGR*) and to specifically take the metropolitan dimension into account in this regard' (Lorraine Presidency 2013: 6).

### 3 Cornerstones of the resolutions to implement the CBPMR

Following the policy resolution of the Summit of the Greater Region on the Metro-border study seeking to emphasise the metropolitan characteristics of the Greater Region more clearly, various summits and responsible stakeholders have adopted the following Position Papers and resolutions on the development of a metropolisation strategy for the Greater Region (cf. Gerd-Rainer Damm's paper in this volume):

The ministers for spatial planning and responsible parties from the partner regions in the Greater Region adopted the following declarations and resolutions in Luxembourg on 15 July 2010:

- > The polycentricity of the Greater Region depends to a considerable extent on the economic strength of Luxembourg and on the socio-economic interactions of the Saarbrücken-Moselle-Est hub.
- > Recognition of a cross-border dynamic depends to a considerable extent on a high degree of mobility of employees as well as on cross-border and interregional cooperation.
- > A Spatial Development Strategy of the Greater Region (*Raumentwicklungskonzept der Großregion, REKGR*) is to be elaborated to establish a CBPMR.
- > The development of multi-level governance can only be meaningfully pursued together with regional and local stakeholders and in collaboration with stakeholders from the economy, science and civil society (principle of shared responsibility).
- > The Coordinating Committee for Spatial Development (the working level of the representatives of the executive for spatial planning in the Greater Region, *KARE* in short) has been commissioned, together with the CBPMR committee, to elaborate a joint declaration on CBPMR. The purpose of this declaration is to express the intention of the Greater Region to pursue 'enhanced cooperation' with the European institutions and thus to also contribute towards the implementation of the Europe 2020 Strategy (Conference of the Ministers of the Greater Region for 'Space' 2010). This was further detailed as part of an informal meeting of the executives of the Summit of the Greater Region on 7 July 2011 in Berlin by means of the Berlin Declaration.

#### 3.1 Berlin Declaration of 2011

With the Berlin Declaration of 7 July 2011 (2010 Summit of the Greater Region), the recommendations of the Conference of the Ministers for 'Space' were politically validated and further specified. They confirmed their expectation to jointly develop the Greater Region into a European metropolitan region. At the same time, they emphasised that the special contribution of the border regions to Europe would have to be expressed in the shaping of the European regional policy.

*'The Greater Region is aware of its capabilities, which were confirmed in the METROBORDER study and which enabled it to form a metropolitan region. This is possible subject to the proviso that these forces are bundled by unifying all stakeholders and regions behind a strategy that is consistent with the priorities of the European Union and with the prerequisites and cooperation paths that were created as part of the seminar on 31 May 2011 in Lorraine.*

*The members of the Summit of the Greater Region are convinced of the necessity to raise the profile of the Greater Region and its European competitiveness in Europe and to give it the recognition it deserves.*

*As a pioneer in cross-border territorial cohesion policy, the Greater Region, as with other cross-border regions, will contribute to the consolidation of the European space, by offering itself as a political laboratory to the European Union and serving as a contact point for the next funding period of the cohesion policy.*

*The objective of the integrated development of the cooperation area within a process of bundling the metropolitan functions at the level of the region concerned is confirmed. At the same time, the cooperation area is to be developed proportionately and the economic attractiveness of the region and its attractiveness for residential purposes is to be maintained; the primary concern is to create a space with a high living standard, which offers citizens all services they expect at the various stages of life.*

*The members of the Summit of the Greater Region reiterate their political intention to consolidate the territorial and social cohesion of a progressive Greater Region in accordance with the Treaty of Lisbon.*

*It is the declared aim of the Greater Region to develop into a European metropolitan region.*

*The European Commission is invited to promote and support increased cooperation, using technical and financial means, in line with the objective of growth and stability.'*

For the implementation of this ambitious project, the 12th Summit defined the following four guiding principles for the development of the CBPMR on 24 January 2011 in Völklingen (Saarland Presidency 2010):

- > Economy: towards a competitive and sustainable economic area
- > People: towards living conditions that facilitate everyday life
- > Space: towards an attractive, balanced environment
- > Governance: towards an area with shared political responsibilities

Further political resolutions and statements followed as part of meetings of relevant ministers and the subsequent Summits of the Greater Region.

### 3.2 Conference of the Ministers of the Greater Region for ‘Spatial Planning and Transport’ 2013

Based on the results of the Metroborder study, under the Lorraine Summit Presidency, the approach of an integrated development strategy for the Greater Region with a bundling of the metropolitan functions was further implemented; this was confirmed by the Berlin Declaration of 7 July 2011. With the Coordinating Committee for Spatial Development (*KARE*) of the Greater Region in charge, two position papers on the question of the centrality and transport infrastructure of the Greater Region were elaborated and validated by the ministers responsible for spatial planning and transport and the specialist, responsible parties of the Greater Region (i.e. in Lorraine, by the Prefect at the time), and by the respective Presidents of the General Councils and/or of the Regional Council. Particular attention was paid to the metropolitan qualities (Conference of the Ministers of the Greater Region for ‘Spatial Planning and Transport’ 2013a and b).

The following working documents were adopted by the Conference of the Ministers of the Greater Region on 17 January 2013 in Luxembourg:

- > Spatial Development Strategy of the Greater Region – Section 1: The metropolitan dimension of the Greater Region.
- > Priority transport projects for the metropolitan development of the Greater Region.

#### ***Working paper: ‘The metropolitan dimension of the Greater Region’***

(cf. Conference of the Ministers of the Greater Region for ‘Spatial Planning and Transport’ 2013a)

The working paper, which examined the spatial and structural starting points, represented a first building block for the Spatial Development Strategy of the Greater Region. The ‘Greater Region perspective’ was important from the outset, i.e. the question of which central places are significant for the further development of the Greater Region as a functional interactional area from a cross-border viewpoint, e.g. in connection with the provision of public services. In the foreground was the question of how the different spatio-structural and planning situations in the sub-regions of the Greater Region could lead to a first comparative (pragmatic) view, which would make it possible to define the framework for further metropolisation process. The paper ultimately proposes to focus on two levels of centrality, the higher-order centres and middle-order centres as development hubs of a cross-border dimension.

The paper contains the mandate to develop the actual ‘CBPMR area,’ i.e. the central cross-border interactional area with a metropolitan dimension in accordance with the qualities defined in the Metroborder study (cf. *DATer* 2010) around Arlon/Luxembourg, Metz, Nancy, Saarbrücken/Sarreguemines, Trier and Kaiserslautern. In addition, it also contains work assignments and supplemental explanations on the cooperation with the rather ‘peripheral’ sub-regions of the Greater Region with metropolitan potential. These are, however, focused rather on metropolises or national

European metropolitan regions outside the Greater Region. For Rhineland-Palatinate, these are the European metropolitan regions of Rhine-Ruhr, Rhine-Main and Rhine-Neckar, and for Belgium, it concerns northern Wallonia around Brussels. In these cases, the challenge is to identify complementary interests in the sense of urban-rural partnerships.

The map ‘The metropolitan dimension of the Greater Region’ (Fig. 2) visualises the aforementioned areas according to their centrality classification.



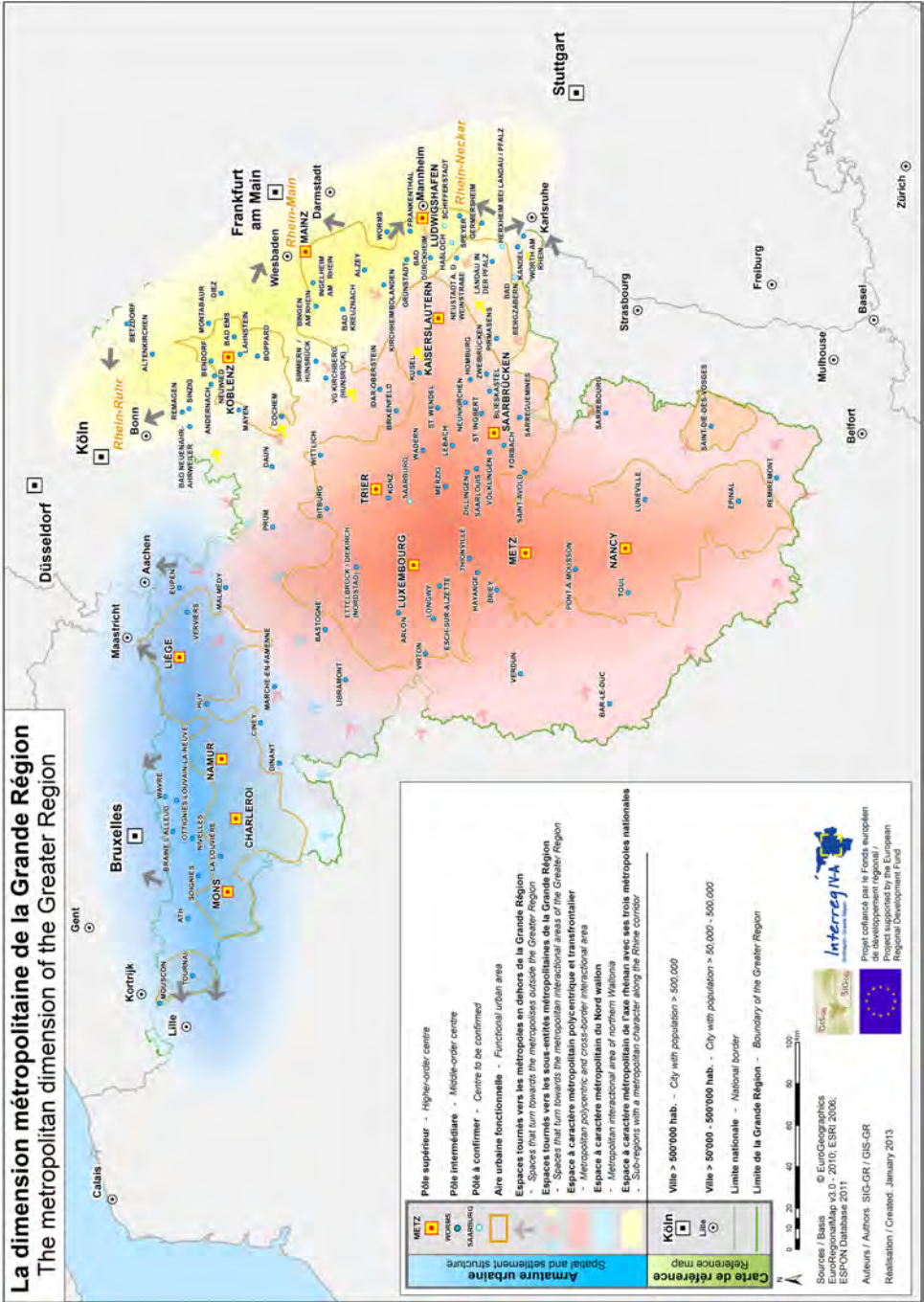


Fig. 2: The metropolitan dimension of the Greater Region /Source: Conference of the Ministers of the Greater Region for 'Spatial Planning and Transport' 2013: 8

***Working paper: ‘Priority transport projects for the metropolitan development of the Greater Region’***

An important objective to promote the competitiveness of the Greater Region and to enhance its metropolitan potential is the expansion of high-capacity transport for people and goods within the Greater Region and to the neighbouring areas of the Greater Region and its links to international transport. Especially in view of the high volume of commuters, mobility within the Greater Region is an important field of action and a foundation for its future development. Priority fields of action concern eliminating or reducing infrastructural bottlenecks, improving the quality of transport connections within the Greater Region and advancing multi-modality. Moreover, good international links to the surrounding metropolises and metropolitan regions and other long-distance connections are fundamental prerequisites for the development of the core area of the Greater Region into a polycentric metropolitan region.

Based on the above findings, the Coordinating Committee on Spatial Development of the Greater Region compiled a list of the priority projects for the various transport modes in collaboration with the Summit’s Transport Working Group, the Transport Working Group of the Economic and Social Committee of the Greater Region (cf. Gerd-Rainer Damm’s paper in this volume) and the experts from the administrations and institutions of the various partner regions. The focus was primarily on infrastructure; the papers were last updated in 2013. Figure 3 visualises the projects defined as a priority.

The 13th Summit of the Greater Region adopted additional resolutions on the further development of the CBPMR on 24 January 2013 in Pont-à-Mousson, under the Lorraine Presidency. They primarily focused on questions of governance and cooperation within the structures of the Summit of the Greater Region and the definition of cornerstones for its strategic and substantive orientation. In this context, the Lorraine Presidency presented an internal, informal working paper (Lorraine Regional Council 2012) together with the ‘Strategic Framework’. In line with the Metroborder study, the paper proposes to further develop the themes of ‘economic/business metropolis’, ‘European laboratory’, ‘mobile and accessible region’ as well as civic engagement, along with issues relating to governance and consistency with European funding programmes (Lorraine Presidency 2013: 19).

In the reporting period, the work for the permanent establishment of a geographic information system for the Greater Region (*geografisches Informationssystem für die Großregion, GIS-GR*), as an important tool for cross-border spatial planning and spatial development in the Greater Region, was completed. The roll-out phase from April 2010 to March 2013 was co-financed through the European INTERREG IV A ‘Greater Region’ programme. The *GIS-GR* is currently operated under the auspices of the Coordinating Committee on Spatial Development without INTERREG funding (Lorraine Presidency 2013: 19).

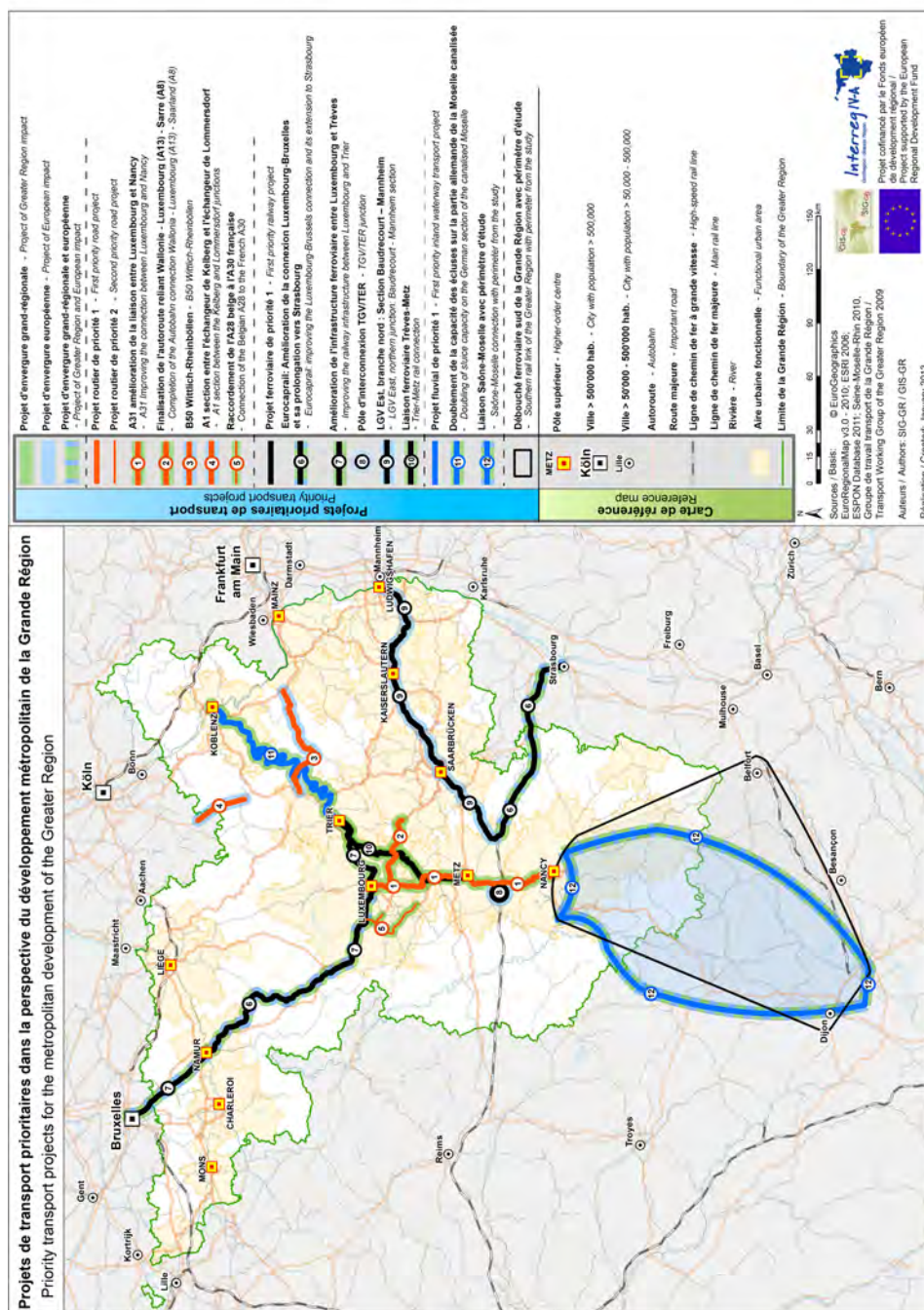


Fig. 3: Priority transport projects for the metropolitan dimension of the Greater Region / Source: Conference of the Ministers of the Greater Region for 'Spatial Planning and Transport' 2013: 6

### **3.3 Regional conference of Rhineland-Palatinate on the ‘Metropolitan Strategy of the Greater Region’ 2014**

At a regional conference on 28 April 2014, the federal state of Rhineland-Palatinate presented the current status of the discussion on CBPMR within the Greater Region within the narrower interactional area of Rhineland-Palatinate and discussed the opportunities and obstacles for increased cross-border cooperation for Rhineland-Palatinate with the municipal and regional levels. An important aspect of this conference was to identify perspectives and courses of action for the increased participation of local stakeholders, to transparently shape the metropolitan process in the Greater Region and to discuss its further implementation in Rhineland-Palatinate.

### **3.4 Conference of the Ministers of the Greater Region for ‘Spatial Planning and the Economy’**

The Conference of the Ministers for ‘Spatial Planning and the Economy’ on 17 November 2014 in Trier was convened on the occasion of the completion of the preliminary study for the elaboration of the economic section of the Spatial Development Strategy for the Greater Region (*REKGR*), which was then under preparation. The objective of the preliminary study was to present quantitative and qualitative economic data and information to resolve the question of whether – and which – fields or potential fields of action were suitable for strengthening the Greater Region as an ‘integrated economic area’ through improved cross-border economic cooperation, to benefit the economic performance of the individual sub-regions and to improve the visibility of the Greater Region in external relations (Conference of the Ministers of the Greater Region for ‘Spatial Planning and the Economy’ 2014).

As a result, the following insights and recommendations were adopted:

- > The spatial configuration of the Greater Region is extremely heterogeneous for historical reasons.
- > Due to the different economic dynamics in the sub-regions, the identification of common focal points is deemed to be difficult.
- > Despite the very disparate economic structure and the fact that the chief economic sectors differ between the partner regions, synergies can still be realised through better coordination of the economic policies between the sub-regions in the Greater Region.

It was further recommended that the Greater Region should derive a joint cross-border innovation and economic development strategy based on the existing strategies in the sub-regions and create the corresponding operational structures for its implementation.

To permit the Greater Region to develop into a ‘more closely integrated economic area’, greater identification of citizens with the Greater Region border area was



deemed necessary (Conference of the Ministers of the Greater Region for ‘Spatial Planning and the Economy’ 2014).

Rhineland-Palatinate held the rotating Presidency of the 14th Summit for the 2013/2014 period. The title of the Rhineland-Palatinate working programme of the Presidency Summit was ‘The labour market in the Greater Region. Common challenges and cross-border responses.’ The focus was on the challenges for the labour market in the Greater Region as a consequence of demographic change and on the further implementation of the CBPMR process. The 14th Summit on 4 December 2014 in Trier confirmed the work on the Spatial Development Strategy of the Greater Region and assessed it as an important strategic approach also to strengthen the metropolisation process. The resolutions of the Conference of the Ministers for ‘Spatial Planning and the Economy’ were taken into account, and the need ‘to complete this analysis with a view to drawing up the economic development strategy for the Greater Region’ was emphasised (State Chancellery of Rhineland-Palatinate [*Staatskanzlei Rheinland-Pfalz*] 2014: 12).

### 3.5 2016 Conference of the Ministers for ‘Spatial Planning’

At the Conference of the Ministers of the Greater Region for ‘Spatial Planning’ on 23 November 2016 in Namur a progress report was provided about the ongoing work. In so doing, the Spatial Development Strategy of the Greater Region (*REKGR*) was emphasised as the foundation for the strategic orientation for the work of the Summit. The Spatial Development Strategy will be completed as part an Interreg project (*REKGR*) and is co-financed by the Greater Region Interreg VA programme in the 2018–2022 period. It will also include the elaboration of a specific action programme (Conference of the Ministers of the Greater Region for ‘Spatial Planning’ 2016).

The overall process is organised in accordance with multi-level governance. This means that the narrower cross-border interactional area of metropolitan significance at the core of the Greater Region, which is defined by the metropolitan dimension and the economic dynamic and prosperity of Luxembourg, is to be developed, while the diversity and heterogeneity of the entire territory of the Greater Region must be taken into account as well. This creates a connection between the metropolitan interactional areas and adequate integration in the European space and in the European networks.

Issues that should be addressed with priority are:

- > the demographic development dynamics and their impacts on important territorial and municipal fields of action, such as the provision of public services
- > mobility
- > economic development (including the tourism sector, education and training)
- > the environment, energy and climate protection

The Spatial Development Strategy will be completed as part of the ‘*REKGR*’ Interreg A project through a broad-based, participatory process with the involvement of the municipal level, relevant stakeholders and experts. This serves to ensure that all areas and regions are included and that any underlying conflicts or residual reservations about any competition between the ‘urban’ defined metropolitan areas and the more rural spaces and areas can be eliminated.

The results of the Conference of the Ministers were confirmed on 20 December 2016 in Arlon by the Summit of the Executive of the Greater Region under the Walloon Summit Presidency.

#### **4 Conclusions and outlook: The Spatial Development Strategy of the Greater Region as a steering instrument for the CBPMR process**

Previous experience gained in the process, which has now been running for an extended period, shows that processes and political decisions, such as the conscious focus on the metropolitan potential and the related strategy to strengthen the area as a whole together with all its sub-regions, cannot be implemented ad hoc; a thorough and complex process of discussions and decision-making, which must evolve slowly, is needed. This is all the more significant in cross-border cooperation areas which have different planning systems and administrative cultures. The decision to steer the CBPMR process in the Greater Region through a cross-border spatial development strategy is the result of this discussion process and now a decision, which is supported by all parties.

Based on the subsections of the future Spatial Development Strategy of the Greater Region (*REKGR*) adopted by the Summit of the Greater Region on the fields of action of ‘centrality and metropolitan potential’, ‘priority transport projects’ and the preliminary assessment on the economy, the subsections of the Spatial Development Strategy have in the meantime undergone monitoring. The actual Spatial Development Strategy of the Greater Region is to be completed by the end of 2022.

Other areas with a metropolitan character that are not in direct vicinity of the border but which are part of the Greater Region are to be included alongside the actual core space, the ‘cross-border interactional area of metropolitan character’. These are the national European metropolitan regions in Germany along the Rhine corridor (Rhine-Ruhr, Rhine-Main and Rhine-Neckar) and northern Wallonia. The Spatial Development Strategy of the Greater Region should reflect the development framework for the further development of the Greater Region as a whole. Greater attention is also to be given to the topic of urban-rural partnerships, and the municipal level and other relevant stakeholders are to be more closely involved. This aims to overcome existing reservations about competition between different spatial categories (metropolitan areas versus rural areas).

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Antje Schönwald, Annette Spellerberg, Florian Weber

## BORDERS – IDENTITIES – HOME: THEORY-BASED APPROACHES TO CONSTRUCTS AND CONCEPTS IN A CROSS-BORDER CONTEXT

### Contents

- 1 Introduction: Everyday experience and scientific issues
  - 2 Borders and border demarcations
  - 3 Spatial and regional identity/identities and language
  - 4 Home
  - 5 Identity/identities in border regions: the example of the Greater Region
  - 6 Conclusions
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### Abstract

Life in the border regions within the European Union has become normal for many people, especially for younger generations. Crossing the borders is part of everyday life. In recent years, until the refugee crisis, national borders had lost significance due to their increased permeability, although neither borders nor border demarcations have ever become meaningless. National policies and frameworks determine fundamental orientations that have specific implications on both sides of borders. This is associated with processes of inclusion and exclusion, (regional) identities, feelings of belonging and issues concerning a sense of home. Against this background, this paper provides a theory-based introduction to the central constructs and concepts that gain significance in the cross-border context: border(s) and border demarcations, (spatial and regional) identities and home. Identification processes are illuminated and categorised using the example of the Greater Region.

### Keywords

Cross-border context – theory – identities – home – Greater Region

## 1 Introduction: Everyday experience and scientific issues

For numerous people, especially younger ones, living in regions of the European Union that are frequently described as ‘border regions’ has been ‘normalised’, and crossing borders has become part of everyday life. With the Schengen Agreement of 1985 and its political implementation on 26 March 1995 (e.g. Euro-Informationen GbR Agency for Consumer Communication 2015), crossing the national borders between Belgium, Germany, France and Luxembourg is often almost imperceptible (see also the paper by Wille/Roos in this volume). The experience of border crossings, e.g. between Germany and France, with border posts, border officials and barriers, is a fading memory. The buildings and structures of the border stations are slowly disappearing; they have been demolished or repurposed as residential buildings, and only people who know where the border ran for decades still notice the signs in passing. The temporary suspension of the Schengen Agreement, e.g. for the G7 Summit in Elmau (Bavaria) in June 2015 or the resumed border controls in connection with the ‘refugee crisis’, on the other hand, appear rather strange as people have grown used to crossing national borders in their daily life without having to undergo ID checks or passport controls. Yet, ‘borders’ and ‘border demarcations’ have never become meaningless. National policies and frameworks determine basic orientations, which entail specific implications on both sides of the borders – with regard to transport and infrastructure, the economy and labour market, education and science, law and spatial planning, etc. The ‘Greater Region’ (see also the paper by Hartz/Caesar in this volume) is presumed to have about 213,000 cross-border employees (IBA [Interregional Labour Market Observatory] 2013), although public transport in particular has not been sufficiently adapted to this development as yet. Public services also still tend to be provided on a national basis. Although it is increasingly becoming common practice to live in one country and work in another, there are still obstacles in regard to employment contracts, legal regulations or medical insurance. On the one hand, there is the example of the Schengen Lyceum in Perl as a joint school which has emerged from the collaboration between Saarland and Luxembourg (cf. Pallagst/Hartz in this volume), yet on the other hand, there are still language barriers that can impede cooperation. Cross-border cooperation is increasingly enabled and strongly pursued, as evidenced by INTERREG or opportunities for the establishment of European Groupings of Territorial Cooperation (EGTC), yet different planning cultures and planning competences have not at all become irrelevant as yet (cf. the papers by Damm or Pallagst/Hartz in this volume). It is, moreover, important to focus on (regional) identities, on a shared sense of belonging and of ‘home’ when considering the future of cross-border cooperation. With whom are people interacting and with whom are they spending their leisure time if they work, e.g. in Luxembourg but live in Rhineland-Palatinate? Do they look for social contacts among Luxembourgers or do they make new friends among people from Rhineland-Palatinate ‘quickly and easily’? What do they consider to be ‘home’; with what do they identify?

The following discussion will seek to provide a theory-based approach to constructs and concepts such as ‘border(s)’, ‘identity/identities’ and ‘home’ and place them in relation to each other – as a structural framework for the paper by Spellerberg/Schönwald/Engelhardt/Weber and other papers in this volume.

## 2 Border(s) and border demarcations

Despite globalisation, increasing interactions, market liberalisation, the elimination of trade barriers and customs duties, etc., ‘borders’ are still perceived as ‘borders’ – both on the political level (e.g. through various laws and provisions) and on the social level (e.g. through language barriers or different cultural habits). They are institutionally embedded on many different levels, in many different ways, and remain pervasive. At the same time, they are not incontrovertible and one-dimensional, as shown by the changing interpretation of the border between Bavaria and the Czech Republic over a short period (see in this regard Weber 2013, 2015). The history of this national border between Germany and the Czech Republic changed over the course of less than two decades from an Iron Curtain border to an external EU border and later, in 2004, through the accession of the Czech Republic to the European Union, into an internal EU border and eventually into a Schengen border in 2007.

Against the background of borders in the sense of ‘artificial’ border demarcations, border studies evolved as an interdisciplinary field of study, which now examines social, political, economic and cultural processes and analyses borders. A corresponding social-constructivist perspective has become established in cultural studies and the social sciences since the 1990s (cf. Doll/Gelberg 2014: 18).

As an abstract concept, a ‘border’ (see also the paper by Pallagst/Caesar in this volume) is first and foremost presumed to designate a line that separates different territories, causing them to be distinguished from one another. A border can also be visualised on different levels: as a territorial border marked by border controls or walls, as a social border characterised by status symbols, or as an aesthetic border which can be perceived and construed in different ways (cf. Doll/Gelberg 2014: 15). Bös and Zimmer (2006: 162) classify the functions of territorial, political borders into four groups:

- > The **identity function** refers to the processes of reconstructing national identities and preserving established identity formations.
- > The **solidarity function** refers to the types of solidarity within national borders (e.g. welfare state) and also to solidarities that exist across borders.
- > The institutional **stabilisation function** designates the general legal conditions that stabilise the welfare state systems or economic framework or contribute to their destabilisation, either because they are outdated or too novel for a society.
- > The external **regulatory function** structures the international system, both in the sense of limiting the nation state’s spaces of power and in extending those spaces across borders (e.g. through military power).

In nation states, established border demarcations are (re)produced that are stabilised through constructs such as national identity as well as specific welfare and economic systems. At the same time, the nation state’s scope of action is in part undermined through globalisation processes, while other points of reference, such the orienta-

tion on local and regional affairs – key word: glocalisation – become increasingly important (see e.g. Chilla/Kühne/Weber et al. 2015; Kühne/Meyer 2015; Robertson 1995, 1998). But here, too, border demarcations separate – the ‘own’ from the ‘other’; a differentiation is made: ‘every border demarcation is an act of differentiation, which is associated with the constitution of meaning, as any definition is based on the principle of exclusion’ (Doll/Gelberg 2014: 17; see also Weber 2013: 51 et seq.). The establishment but also the shifting and ‘elimination’ of borders can be viewed as constitutive for the production of ‘order’ – as the basis to which reference can be made.

According to Simmel (2006: 21), the border is the ‘spatial expression of that standard relationship between two neighbours, for which we do not have an entirely standard term and which we could describe as the state of indifference of being defensive and offensive, as a charged state which latently harbours both, whether it develops or not’. This state of indifference of being defensive and offensive is nowadays frequently characteristic of social borders. Accordingly, ‘the border is not a factual spatial situation with sociological impacts but a sociological fact which is formed in space’ (Simmel 2006: 23). In other words, it is not the countries, parcels of land or city districts which set up boundaries between each other; instead, the inhabitants themselves produce and effect the impact of the border (cf. Simmel 1992: 697). Social practices can thus serve to shift or confirm borders, e.g. from a bottom-up direction. Borders are formed not only by nation states, but by citizens who demarcate the borders or modify – or even reject – them (‘Borderwork’, e.g. in the healthcare sector in the EU; Rumford 2006). In order to remain constant and effective, borders must be reproduced (which also includes their breaching), otherwise they would eventually become irrelevant and disappear.

Michel Foucault additionally suggests that borders must be crossable in order to be perceived as existing: borders can only be experienced when they can be crossed. Borders, border demarcations and border crossings are closely related notions. Walter Benjamin later described crossings as thresholds (Benjamin 1991: 1025), i.e. as ‘transition zones’, where negotiation processes constantly take place. In this way, borders turn into spaces of interaction (Doll/Gelberg 2014: 24). Accordingly, everyday border-crossing practices – activities that would generally be considered ‘normal’ outside the context of a national border – gain special meaning through or make sense only in this context. This includes, for example, the purchase of cheaper products (e.g. fuel, tobacco, coffee or alcohol) and work or residential migration or visiting friends or acquaintances (cf. Wille/Schnuer/Boesen 2014: 339 as well as Wille/Roos in this volume).

Closely connected with the question of borders is that of identities and how they function in border regions.

### 3 Spatial and regional identity/identities and language

Identity can be described as a continuous, always provisional and open-ended as well as a contradictory process of self-definition, which is formed in social interactions (cf. Kmec/Reckinger 2014: 35). It can also be viewed as a subjective individual performance or an act of construction (cf. Reckinger/Wille 2010: 12). Inspired by Judith Butler, ‘identity’ can be described as performative and staged; this amounts in principle to a rejection of the notion of a ‘real’ identity, which can offer permanent stability and strength. Just like borders, identities must be understood as mutable. They are not based on an ‘essential core’, but are created (Butler 2008) – in other words, there are no ‘perfect, whole and definitively determined identities’ (Glasze 2013: 80). At the same time, constructed identities have become so pervasive in everyday life that they are accepted and reproduced as given (Weber 2013: 56). The fall of the Berlin Wall, for example, did not lead to a change in food purchasing behaviour on either side of the wall, even if businesses in the other part of the city were more easily accessible (Scheiner 1999). At the symbolic level it is to be expected that making use of and partaking in opportunities on the other side of the border expresses an open attitude and is more appreciated in modern milieus than in more traditional environments, especially if it requires bilingualism.

In addition to attempts to define one’s own identity, there are also references to ‘collective identities’ based on joint attributions and allocations as part of a ‘larger’ framework (see also Glasze 2013). The notion of a collective identity is determined not only by being part of a group, but rather by a framework shaped by moral principles and customs, by which individuals perceive themselves as part of a collective. The collective can thus be of a structural (e.g. age, state of health), social (e.g. family, networks, level of education), everyday cultural (e.g. intimacy, understanding of norms, consumption and lifestyle, values) or national nature. This shows that such references are not exclusive – overlaps can occur, which may partly contradict each other; they testify to the fragmentary nature of identities.

To examine the notion of ‘identity’, Brubaker (2007) distinguishes between the phenomenon of identifying certain categories of people according to social stakeholders or discourses, cognitive self-presentation or self-identification, as well as a sense of community or a feeling of collective belonging. This means that identification can also be understood as categorisation. In other words, individual self-identification within a group occurs if choices were made based on personal decisions and socialisation (cf. Kmec/Reckinger 2014: 39 et seq.). The groups from which social identity is drawn may vary depending on the situation (Tajfel 1982). Differences thus arise between groups, which are distinct from each other. The ‘stranger’ is thus not seen as part of the group: the group has no relationship with the person, who is viewed as both proximate and distant at the same time. There is a tension between the two elements: since the stranger shares only the most general commonalities with the group (being human), the aspects that are not shared are emphasised. As a rule, the interaction is based less on the individual than on the origin of the stranger, which is analysed and stereotyped (cf. Simmel 1992: 770). Identity is therefore created precisely and especially by that which is not part of one’s ‘own’ identity or realm, i.e. based

on a delineation of ‘self’ from ‘other’ – the ‘alien’. Delineation and exclusion processes can thus be seen as constitutive for the creation of identities (see extensively in this regard Glasze 2013).

Globalisation leads increasingly (according to Giddens (1995)) to *dis-embedding*, i.e. a loss of orientation among humans, which they seek to compensate ‘through *re-embedding*, by re-establishing a sense of local context’ (Kühne 2006: 113). Identity is spatially manifested as a spatial identity; when the focus is on the subnational level, as a ‘regional identity’. Regional identity is shaped as the ‘regressive reference to what is close and familiar, as an anxious response to the lack of transparency of globalisation processes, which are reflected in the permanent presence of strangers’ (Häußermann/Roost 2000: 81). Global and local processes are thus not mutually exclusive; they mutually influence and change each other, as emphasised by Robertson (1995, 1998) with the term of glocalisation.

Spatial identities can be examined in different ways. The identification with spaces within different groups of people can be analysed, such as being part of a cross-border region, or such identification can be determined by examining space-related representations. For example, the sense of being part of a border region that people feel and can identify with depends on their ties with their place of residence and everyday activities. Hence, a change of residence is often associated with a change of aspects of their identity (cf. Wille et al. 2014: 340).

The relationship between constructions of space and constructions of identity can be examined by observing the affiliation of a group of people with a region, nation, professional group, family, gender, etc. Various identities are generated at these levels. The analysis of identities is becoming more complex through the increasing differentiation, individualisation, pluralisation and globalisation of societies; values and traditions in regard to identity are de-traditionalised and scrutinised. Individuals now also have greater freedom in their life choices, but also greater responsibility regarding their goals in life. The opportunities for new lifestyles are juxtaposed with risks or failures resulting from a certain lifestyle (cf. Reckinger/Wille 2010: 11). As a person’s place of residence evolves into an element of their identity in the course of the socialisation process, this identity is challenged – in the case of ‘residential migrants’ – through the elimination of routines and things taken for granted. ‘Identities are shaped in particular through linguistic and everyday cultural interactions as well as through spatial representations and in the confrontation between one’s self-perception and the perception of others’ (Reckinger/Wille 2010: 20).

Language is another important instrument to ‘understand’ identities. Apart from the communicative function, language has a socio-symbolic function, which is closely related to identity. Language also characterises a speaker and provides information about the speaker’s affiliation with a group, e.g. through dialects. ‘Dialect continua are characterised through increasing linguistic differences in their spatial expansion while remaining mutually intelligible with regard to neighbouring dialects’ (Sieburg/Weimann 2014: 347). When political borders separate a language or dialect area, spaces with different linguistic usages can arise. German may become a barrier compared to French, for example, which can have various implications. Language

becomes a barrier to entering the labour market in the neighbouring country; at the same time, interactions among scientists become more difficult if they cannot rely on English as a ‘lingua franca’ (see also Weber/Kühne 2016). A further object of consideration is the difference between the language which is used in everyday conversation and the language used for formal, media or written communications.

#### **4 Home**

The notion of home can be viewed as a key counterpoint to the alienation and individualisation processes that occur in the course of globalisation. It becomes a narrative, as described by Lyotard – an element of making sense of things in a pluralist world (see Kühne 2006: 113). Constitutive elements of ‘home’ are social embedding, opportunities for expressing oneself and for taking part, and a positive identification with the local socio-spatial situation. Today, home is perceived as playing an anchoring role in terms of stability and identification in a globalised world, as well as a means to decelerate modernity (cf. Schlink 2000: 22). At the same time, it has been proposed that the sense of home is being lost due to individualisation, increased mobility, global mass communication media and online contacts (Heinze et al. 2006: 8). Yet home is mostly understood in a spatial sense, as demonstrated by a study by Kühne/Spellerberg in 2010 (see Table 1), although ‘place’ is not equivalent to ‘home’. Home is equated with feeling safe and secure, i.e. the congruence between personality and living environment. The sense of feeling at home is lost, for example, when a person relocates, when city cores are regenerated, farmhouses converted, settlements expanded and when shrubs begin to grow on meadows. Hence, relocating for work purposes in border regions raises questions about where ‘home’ is perceived to be. Does the new place of residence become ‘home’, does ‘home’ remain the place where the work migrants originate, or do the ties to home become more pluralistic? Even today, the term produces ambivalent and contradictory responses: from the ‘positive power of the local link’ to the image of looking backwards.

When home is described in spatial terms, the borders of the space of identity become apparent through shared values and preferences for certain symbols, i.e. literature, food, location, landscape and social structures into which a person has grown (see also the paper by Spellerberg/Schönwald/Engelhardt/Weber in this volume). Symbolic attributions are also used to draw borders vis-à-vis strangers, by separating one’s own sphere from that which is alien.

| Home is ...                                      | Percentage of answers | Percentage of respondents |
|--|-----------------------|---------------------------|
| where I feel safe and secure.                    | 15                    | 77                        |
| where I spent my childhood.                      | 15                    | 76                        |
| where the house in which I live is located.      | 15                    | 76                        |
| where my friends are.                            | 14                    | 74                        |
| where my language/dialect is spoken.             | 11                    | 59                        |
| where my familiar landscape is.                  | 11                    | 58                        |
| where people who think and feel like I do live.  | 9                     | 45                        |
| where there are familiar customs and traditions. | 7                     | 38                        |
| the place I yearn for.                           | 3                     | 16                        |
| an ideal place that does not exist.              | 1                     | 5                         |
| Total  | 100%<br>n=6205        | n=1185                    |

Table 1: The meaning of home /Source: Kühne/Spellerberg 2010; data: Kühne and Spellerberg, postal survey in Saarland 2007

## 5 Identity/identities in border regions: the example of the Greater Region

The above discussion on borders, constructions of identity, spatial identities and the notion of home offer various indications for exploring how identity in border regions can be illuminated. The following section focuses on the Greater Region (see also the paper by Hartz/Caesar in this volume) and examines the identity relationships which hold there.

It is unclear how a Greater Region identity or a sense of being part of a cultural community can be formed, and what impact this would have on the actions of actors in this region (Wille/Hesse 2014; Weichhart/Weiske/Werlen 2006). The Greater Region under study here has some characteristics that make it particularly interesting for the exploration of identities and stereotypes because the internal and external territorial borders of this area have always been characterised by a ‘variable geometry’ (Schulz 1998). According to Brücher (1989: 526), the borders in the SaarLorLux area have been the most unstable borders over the past 200 years. The Greater Region has a population of 11 million and spans a comparatively large area of 65,000 km<sup>2</sup> (IBA 2010: 7). Furthermore, the Greater Region is characterised in many ways by a pronounced heterogeneity. Three languages, German, French and Luxembourgish, are spoken in the region. The sub-regions, which belong to four different nation states (Belgium, Germany, France, Luxembourg), have different administrative and legal concerns and interests. The individual partners have different powers to act, and



there are also significant economic differences. The cooperation in the cross-border area of the Greater Region is comparatively intense. For example, the Summit of the Greater Region, which has convened annually since 1995 and is composed of the highest-ranking representatives of the individual sub-regions, the joint SaarLorLux+ Spatial Development Scheme, the Economic and Social Committee of the Greater Region (*Wirtschafts- und Sozialausschuss der Großregion, WSAGR*) or the Espace Culturel Grande Région (Greater Region Cultural Space) are proof of the high level of interconnectedness.

As explained above, borders are increasingly perceived as constructs – thus not as rigid and immutable – and can be scientifically observed. Social considerations such as shared interests, language, symbols, or even the idea of a shared benefit to be gained from cooperation, have been proven to be significant identity-building factors, which can form even without a specific spatial reference. ‘Conservative’ concepts of ‘home’ and regional identity, harking back to a shared source, such as being a long-established resident, common origins and history, are no longer the sole and decisive factors in current constructions of identity. In the international scientific discourse, the studies by Paasi (e.g. 1996), Rumford (e.g. 2006) and Newman (e.g. 2006) which have decisively advanced and shaped border region research and the discourse about regional identities since the 1990s are noteworthy.

The determination of qualitative Greater Region identity types (cf. Table 2; for further discussion see 2012, 2015), which should be understood as sub-identities, indicates a changed construction of identity in border regions in the sense of an orientation towards ‘as-well-as’ identities (Beck 2004). Conventional reference points for identity, such as national identities, remain relevant but are time and again replaced by different reference points in various contexts. Identity type 1 is of a specific nature: the ‘territorial Greater Region identity’, which is predominantly shaped by the Greater Region spatial category as an identifying characteristic (similarly to a national identity), exists in the minds of interviewees as an (unattainable) ideal of a Greater Region identity, but is not experienced in daily life. Contemporary ‘either-or’ notions frequently form the basis for the public discourse about identity, but are not decisive for identity forming processes in daily life today. Types 2, 3 and 4 are to be expected especially in cross-border interactional areas: they are determined by a sense of individual benefit created through the border location and its commonalities, and by its role as a potential model region for Europe. Identity types 5, 6, 7 and 8, on the other hand, are by no means found only in border areas, although they are manifested in a particular way there.

|   | Type                                | Characteristic  |
|---|-------------------------------------|---|
| 1 | Territorial Greater Region identity | Self-image: Greater Region resident; the Greater Region as a category is generally relevant   |
| 2 | Added benefit identity              | Motivated by the added benefit of cross-border cooperation  |
| 3 | Sub-type of European identity       | Greater Region is not a category of its own but a 'model for Europe'  |
| 4 | Cross-border regional identity      | Everyday border experience in the present and the past creates a sense of community   |
| 5 | Cultural identity                   | Cultural commonalities in the foreground; language  |
| 6 | Value-based identity                | Peace, tolerance, freedom   |
| 7 | Transnational identity              | Plurilocal, permanently structured relationships across nation states, without the nation states losing their significance (Pries 2002) |
| 8 | Cosmopolitan identity               | Being different is acknowledged, and no hierarchies of differences are created; instead they are appreciated (Beck 2006)                |

*Table 2: Identity types in the Greater Region / Source: Schönwald 2012: Identity types of the Greater Region. Data: Empirical survey in the Greater Region in 2009 and 2010 (29 stakeholders were qualitatively interviewed)*

The physical borders of the Greater Region as a construct does not play a significant role in the Greater Regional identity types. Only in the case of identity type 4, 'cross-border regional identity', does the physical space appear constitutive due to the emphasis on the proximity of the place of residence. The interviews that were conducted, however, show (for details see Schönwald 2012) that here, too, the notion of a physical border is not rigid, but can be described as subjective and situational. This is because the interviewees do not act only within the official boundaries of the political Greater Region construct; they often define the Greater Region as a larger or smaller space, depending on the context.

In the case of cross-regional identity, the border is the identity-forming characteristic. The sense of community is based on the everyday, past and current experience of the border with all its resulting advantages and disadvantages. Creating a Greater Region identity by demarcating what lies outside of it scarcely appears possible, as there simply is no internal homogeneity within the Greater Region which would be conducive to making such a demarcation. A specific Greater Region awareness does not require internal homogeneity – it can even be based on difference. Schönwald's study (2012) shows that the heterogeneity (and the conscious appreciation of this diversity) is viewed to some extent as a unique feature and thus itself serves as a form of demarcating what lies outside of the Greater Region.

## 6 Conclusions

As illustrated by our theory-based discussion, border(s) and identity/identities are closely interrelated. Constructed identities are not only related to self-ascribed characteristics and self-assumed definitions, they are also always based on demarcating oneself from others. In the cross-border context along national borders, this is particularly evident. On the one hand, borders become blurred: crossing the borders between France, Germany, Luxembourg and Belgium has become a normal occurrence. Luxembourgers live in Germany but work in their ‘homeland’. Germans frequently buy petrol or work in Luxembourg. Living and working in different countries has become an everyday reality for many residents of the Greater Region. Yet, on the other hand, ‘borders’ continue to exist: borders in people’s minds, prejudices, borders due to language barriers, administrative obstacles and different planning cultures. Globalisation has destabilised these ‘unique’ relations and identifiers even more, but they have not at all become irrelevant in people’s daily lives. Indeed, the notion of ‘home’ is becoming all the more an anchor with a very specific emotional connotation in the cross-regional context. Living environments in border regions and cross-border cooperation are confronted daily with these different facets and variations in practice, as is also documented by the other papers in this volume.

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Annette Spellerberg, Antje Schönwald, Katharina Engelhardt, Florian Weber

## LIFE IN BORDER REGIONS – ‘WHERE WOULD WE END UP?’

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### Abstract

What is life in a border region like? This paper aims to answer this question, drawing on empirical research in four twin villages in the Greater Region. The findings, based on a postal survey in the twin municipalities and face-to-face interviews, show that both sides see the border situation as bringing financial and practical advantages. The cooperation between the municipalities is generally described very positively. In regard to a sense of identification, there are feelings of belonging to both the nation state and the (cross-border) region, although there are differences between those surveyed in the different countries. In terms of the importance of the border, there is general agreement that it is scarcely noticed anymore, and that since its disappearance life has become more convenient and has benefited. Yet there various challenges can also be identified, which represent tasks for the coming years.

### Keywords

Border region – twin municipalities – cross-border cooperation – home – quantitative and qualitative research

## 1 Introduction: The perception of the border in twin villages

The borders between Luxembourg, France and Germany, and with the neighbouring countries (see the paper by Andrea Hartz/Beate Caesar in this volume) have shifted over time, meaning that the people who live in the border region were part of different nation states in different periods of history. This paper examines issues such as commonalities and differences in regard to regional ties, the sense of home and regional identities in cross-border cooperation (for a theory-oriented background, see the paper by Schönwald/Spellerberg/Weber in this volume). To this end, interviews on the subject of ‘Home and the perception of the border situation’ were conducted in four *twin villages* – i.e. municipalities facing each other directly across national borders – along the Saarland/Lorraine and Rhineland-Palatinate/Luxembourg borders. In addition to a semi-standardised, comprehensive survey, oral interviews were conducted as well in selected places.

In this empirically-oriented paper, we examine the issues raised in the introduction to this chapter (see the paper by Schönwald/Spellerberg/Weber in this volume), which relate to the future viability of border regions as far as everyday border demarcations, a sense of home and identification are concerned. When a woman at the German-French border was asked in 1982 to explain what would change if Europe were to become an area without border checks her reply was ‘Wo kämen wir denn da hin?’, which literally means ‘Where would we end up?’.<sup>\*1</sup> (cf. Schilling, undated). The 1983 film from which this quote is taken, *Grenzfall Leidingen* [The Border Case of Leidingen] by Alfred Gulden, preceded a study in the Saarland-Lorraine border area in 1984 (ibid.). At the time, about 30 years ago, various aspects of daily life in the border region were examined. The quote ‘Where would we end up?’ reflects the fears and concerns of people about a converging Europe and the dilution of internal European borders. We took up this quote in our survey and asked where we indeed ended up, how daily life in the border area had turned out to be and how people envisaged the future of the border region (their hopes and concerns) in the mid-2010s. In addition to these questions about daily life and perceptions of the future in the border area, some fairly general questions on constructions of identity and home were included in the questionnaire to be able to compare the results with earlier studies. The study should thus be viewed in the context of sociological studies on spatial identities (Sievers 2014; Weichhart/Weiske/Werlen 2006), which partly also relate to the area examined here (Kühne/Spellerberg 2010; Schönwald 2012, 2015; Wille 2012; see paper by Christian Wille and Ursula Roos in this volume).

The empirical surveys took place against the backdrop of – or parallel to – the major refugee movements in March/April 2015, which led to the partial reintroduction of border controls a few months later. It can be assumed that in the meantime people have become much more aware of the border than at the time of the interview (see also the paper by Karina Pallagst and Beate Caesar in this volume). The study focused on the following research questions:

- > What role do national borders play in daily life?
- > How do the respondents define the spatial dimensions in regard to home and regional identification?
- > Do perceived affiliations differ in the twin villages?
- > Does life in a border region create new forms of regional identity?
- > Do the residents of the twin municipalities use the infrastructure and services offered by their counterpart, or do symbolic borders remain?
- > Does a strong sense of home lead to a tendency to marginalise the municipality or region on the other side of the border?
- > Is the border region a unique place for social activities and ties?

The survey took place in the following twin villages: Wasserbillig (Luxembourg) and Langsur (Rhineland-Palatinate) as well as Heining-lès-Bouzonville (Lorraine) and Leidingen (Saarland) (cf. Fig. 1). These places were selected for the study on the basis of the variations between the two border areas: with Wasserbillig and Langsur, the choice fell on two municipalities on opposing sides of the border in a prosperous region, while Heining-lès-Bouzonville and Leidingen are affected to a greater extent by urban shrinking and an ageing population. Wasserbillig/Langsur also appeared to be a suitable area for investigation because in a previous study a person from Langsur had reported on (then) current tensions and opportunities for cooperation between the two villages (Schönwald 2012). Heining-lès-Bouzonville/Leidingen is characterised by the fact that Leidingen, a small town, is in itself a border town: part of the town is on French territory and part lies on German territory.

Wasserbillig is a town in Luxembourg with around 2,300 residents and a railway station. In addition, there are several supermarkets and discount stores, as well as boutiques and other services for daily needs. Wasserbillig is located on the banks of the Moselle and the Sauer rivers (Sûre in French), separating it from its neighbouring town of Langsur, which is in Germany (Commune of Merttert 2015). Langsur has around 1,635 residents and only a few shops for daily needs. The municipality of Langsur also includes the boroughs of Metzdorf and Mesenich. Langsur does not have a railway station (Associated municipality of Langsur 2015). Heining-lès-Bouzonville is located in France and has around 500 residents, while Leidingen, a small town with around 200 residents, lies partly on German and partly on French territory. Both towns are situated directly on the national border. There is no supermarket or bakery in Leidingen. Heining-lès-Bouzonville is within walking distance from Leidingen.





*Fig.1: Geographic location of the towns in the study /Source: Department of Urban Sociology (Tim Weber) based on the annual report of the University of the Greater Region (June 2014 to May 2015)*

## 2 Methodology

The study of the two twin villages was based on a mix of quantitative and qualitative empirical social research methods. The quantitative study was the first step, while qualitative interviews were conducted in a second step with individual participants who took part in the standardised survey. Here, one of the objectives was to gain more detailed insights to illuminate noteworthy results of the quantitative survey.

### 2.1 Conduct of the written survey

Ten days before the start of the survey in March 2015, local representatives of the municipality in question were contacted about the survey in a personal letter and requested to post the enclosed information about the imminent survey to local residents. In addition to the seven-page questionnaire, the households received a letter, a contact form with a declaration of consent for a further oral interview (with the request to return the form and their contact details should they give their consent), as well as a return envelope with postage paid.

The questionnaires were distributed in two ways. In three of the four towns (Leidingen, Heining-lès-Bouzonville, Wasserbillig), a student assistant delivered the questionnaires to all households that had a postbox with a person's name on it; no questionnaires were delivered to postboxes with company names. Notices were also posted in local retail shops (where present). In Langsur, the questionnaires were distributed as a supplement to the *Trierischer Volksfreund* regional newspaper, and posted to non-subscribers of the newspaper. This was done in an attempt to conduct a comprehensive survey. The questionnaires were distributed on two successive days: in Wasserbillig on 10 March 2015 to 1,060 households, on 11 March 2015 to 85 households in Leidingen and to 129 households in Heining-lès-Bouzonville. On the same day, the 640 households in Langsur received the questionnaire as a supplement to the *Trierischer Volksfreund* newspaper. In total, 1,914 questionnaires were distributed.

After three weeks, the residents of the municipalities were reminded of the questionnaire and requested to participate through notices posted in the municipality. At the initiative of a journalist, a short article on the survey also appeared in the local section of the *Luxemburger Wort* daily newspaper during the survey period.

The questionnaires were returned over a period of seven weeks, but unfortunately the average response rate was only 13% (n=253), which can be broken down by town as follows: Langsur had the highest response rate (n=123, 19%) followed by Leidingen (n=15, 18%). The response rate of the non-German towns Wasserbillig (n=105, 10%) and Heining-lès-Bouzonville (n=10, 8%) was even lower. Evidently, there was no real willingness to take part in a German study. An in-person approach, such as at a festival or other public event where the local population gathers, might have produced a better result.

## 2.2 Qualitative interviews

57 people (23% of the returned questionnaires) expressed their willingness to take part in a further, detailed personal interview. Four interviews were held in both Langsur and Wasserbillig in September 2015. Of the two women and six men, one is working, while the others are retired. As regards citizenship, four German and four Luxembourgers took part (interviewees are identified in the results section by the first letter of their surnames).

Qualitative interviews were held with two people each in Leidingen and Heining in June 2015. In Leidingen (Germany), the interviewee was a French woman (Ms B), who has been living in this border region all her life, although previously on the French side, and a German woman (Ms A), who moved to the border region as an adult from another part of Saarland. In Heining (France), the selection was similar: one interviewee, a German national (Mr D), moved to the border region as an adult, whilst the other (Mr C) is a native of the border village.

A guideline with biographical elements was elaborated, which provided the interviewees with sufficient scope to freely recount their views (Kühne/Schönwald 2015). The guideline included the following topics: the person’s biography, the significance of the border over time and into the future, life in the border region over time until the present day, the significance of home and an assessment of the Greater Region.

The interviews were recorded and subsequently fully transcribed. The analysis followed Mayring’s principles of qualitative content analysis, according to which an analytical summary of the contents is followed by coding and the development of categories. This method can therefore be described as inductive as the categories are derived directly from the material. To identify suitable categories given the research interest, it was first necessary to define selection criteria based on the topics in the guideline, hence this part of the process was rather deductive. As it was not possible to define any further new categories, saturation was achieved and the process of analysis began (Mayring 1996: 91 et seq.).

### **3 Results**

For the results of the quantitative survey, only the two twin towns of Wasserbillig (n=105) and Langsur (n=123) were taken into account given the low response rate of only 25 questionnaires in total which were received from Leidingen and Heining-lès-Bouzonville. Passages and explanations from the interviews at times supplement and at times form a contrast with the quantitative findings.

#### **3.1 Socio-structural background of the respondents**

108 women and 118 men took part in the survey in Wasserbillig and Langsur, with the percentage of women in the German town of Langsur (55%) being higher than in the Luxembourg town of Wasserbillig (40%). The age of the respondents from the towns ranged from 18 to 84, with an average age of 55. Respondents under 30 were underrepresented in both towns, with merely 9% in Wasserbillig and 2% in Langsur. This also correlates to the length of their residence in the town: more than one-quarter of the respondents had lived there constantly since birth (27% in Wasserbillig, 30% in Langsur) and a further significant proportion had lived in the town since birth, but with interruptions (17% in Wasserbillig, 12% in Langsur). The other respondents had been living in the twin towns for over 20 years (20 years in Wasserbillig and 23 years in Langsur). In other words, people who had been living in the towns for many years and who had experienced life in the region before and after the opening of the border showed particular interest in the survey. The respondents in both towns clearly differed in their educational levels, which was probably due to the different educational systems (21% answered ‘other’ in Wasserbillig). Respondents in the two towns had very similar levels of tertiary education (22% and 23%) (cf. Table 1).

|              | Age     | Gender* | Education**    |                |                |            |       |
|--------------|---------|---------|----------------|----------------|----------------|------------|-------|
|              | Average | Female  | Max. Hauptsch. | Mittlere Reife | (Fach-) Abitur | University | Other |
| Langsur      | 55      | 55%     | 32%            | 30%            | 15%            | 22%        | 1%    |
| Wasserbillig | 55      | 40%     | 15%            | 11%            | 30%            | 23%        | 21%   |

n=206-219, Cramer's V, \*: p: < 0.05, \*\*: p: < 0.01

Please note: The survey only included German school-leaving certificates: after four years of secondary school (Hauptschulabschluss), after five years of secondary school (Mittlere Reife) and after seven years of secondary school ((Fach-)Abitur). The latter serves as certificate of general qualification for university entrance.

*Table 1: Social structure of the interviewees /Source: Authors' survey, March 2015*

More than four out of ten respondents in Langsur live in a household with three or more people, while in Wasserbillig the percentage was still 37%. In both places, families and couples prevailed; single households accounted for a smaller percentage. In view of the border situation, the questionnaire also asked about the nationality of the interviewees. 94% of the respondents from Langsur are German nationals, while 3% have Luxembourg nationality and the rest are nationals of other countries. In Wasserbillig, 90% of participants have Luxembourg nationality, while 8% are German nationals (not shown in the table).

### 3.2 The uniqueness of the place of residence

The situation in both towns, Wasserbillig and Langsur, is rather special due to their border location, as their national affiliations are separated by the River Sauer/Sûre. For the survey, it was therefore interesting to examine the role that the national border played in people's awareness and in their daily activities.

The findings showed that the national border evokes almost no negative associations, but rather indifferent or neutral to positive associations. For more than half of the respondents from both twin villages, the border had no significance (59% and 55%; cf. Table 2). There is a noticeable difference as regards their agreement with the statement: 'The border connects us with our neighbours' – nearly six out of ten German respondents agreed, while only four of ten residents of the Luxembourg town agreed. A third or more than a quarter of the respondents from both towns agreed that the border made their hometown unique. In the Luxembourg town, there is a stronger sense that the border presents a disadvantage than in the German town: at least one-quarter of respondents consider that the border location entails economic disadvantages. Among German respondents, the positive aspects of the national border prevail.

| Selected from list (multiple responses possible) | Langsur | Wasserbillig |
|--|---------|--------------|
|  | in %    |              |
| The border has no significance for me.           | 59      | 55           |
| The border connects us with our neighbours.**    | 58      | 40           |
| The border makes my town unique.                 | 33      | 27           |
| The border represents an economic barrier.**     | 11      | 24           |
| The border represents a language barrier.        | 7       | 13           |
| The border represents a cultural barrier.        | 6       | 11           |

L: n=123, W: n=103, Cramer's V, p: \*\*: p: < 0.01

*Table 2: The role of the national border with the neighbouring country / Source: Authors' survey, March 2015*

The question about the impact of the elimination of border controls (since the Schengen Agreement of 1992) on the daily lives of the inhabitants reveals a differentiated result as well, however, with very similar outcomes as far as the two towns are concerned. More than three-quarters of all respondents stated that their daily life had become much easier, but certain aspects were considered in a far less favourable light. About one-quarter of respondents stated that cultural life had been enriched. 35% of the respondents from Wasserbillig, but only 20% people from Langsur, believe that the elimination of border controls had increased potential risks. Only a minority in each case expected cultural convergence, greater security or more complex relationships (not shown in the table).

The qualitative interviews expand the perspective that the border had been perceived as an inconvenient barrier prior to its opening, as the border controls had been time-consuming, especially for commuters and those crossing the border frequently. Inspections of foreign cars had served to control and contain the smuggling of petrol. Going further back in time, even coffee had been smuggled across the border into Germany during the post-war period.

*'In those days, when you drove into Luxembourg, you would get a note telling you how many centimetres you would be allowed to take back. You would not be allowed to have more petrol in your tank, because fuel was so much cheaper in Luxembourg. [...] And there were border checks, which would cause traffic to back up in the evening when returning home. That was always less pleasant.'* (Mr S, line 48)

Economic benefits are created by the differences in prices. For Luxembourgers, this concerns shopping as well as the housing and property prices in Germany, and for Germans the cheaper petrol prices and the price of coffee and cigarettes in Luxembourg (see also the paper by Christian Wille/Urusula Roos in this volume). The advantage of the economic benefits on the one side of the border are at the same time the disadvantage for the residents on the other side of the border. The cheaper petrol prices from which Germans benefit lead to increased noise and exhaust emissions in Wasserbillig with its many petrol stations. Luxembourgers, who purchase

a building plot in Langsur or rent a house or an apartment, drive up prices on the German side due to the increased demand.

*‘The traffic and lorries on the narrow roads every day, on the Trierer Straße, that is quite a nuisance, very stressful. It’s almost unbearable. And that’s despite the Autobahn. It’s also due to all the petrol stations we have here.’ (Mr V, line 195)*

Projects between the two municipalities can be initiated because they are eligible for EU subsidies due to their border location. The proximity to Luxembourg City is also a benefit for the structurally weak region, especially for the (young) bank employees of the border region. German tradespeople get a lot of work from Luxembourg and can thus secure their livelihoods.

*‘As far as building and work is concerned, of course, because where would our young people find work otherwise in this economically underdeveloped area? We have quite a number of young people who work in the banking sector and who see this as an opportunity, a place where they can work and earn money. And the tradespeople, too, who are here in this region – 80% of our tradespeople in the HVAC and construction sector earn their money in Luxembourg.’ (Mr M, line 144)*

The respondents at the German-French border still remember the border before the Schengen Agreement very well. It is described as having been a major obstacle in those days, but is also perceived as part of their own biography, e.g. Ms A (cf. also the paper by Schönwald/Spellerberg/Weber in this volume):

*‘This proximity of the border that has always been part of my daily life – even when we were kids, when there were still border posts. It used to be one of our favourite pastimes – to crawl across the meadow and check them. When the border patrols were gone, we would quickly slip over into France, where we would go into a shop and buy green jam – woodruff jam, which we did not yet have on our side, in my childhood.’ (Ms A, page 2)*

Ms A also described the daily work of her parents, who were farmers and had part of their farmland on French territory. According to her recollections, the farming community had always shown a mutual willingness to help each other across the border. The respondents assess the current border situation as positive; they describe it as ‘more pleasant’ (Ms A, page 2) and as an ‘absolute relief’ (Ms A, page 3) due to the elimination of controls. Mr B, who is a native of Saarland and who has been living in Heining for ten years and commutes daily to his work in Saarland, also confirms that he is glad that ‘there are very few obstacles to going from one country to another twice a day thanks to the European Union’ (Mr B, page 1). Shopping on both sides of the border has become much easier and helps people to feel ‘perhaps not quite so foreign’ to each other (Ms A, page 3). The added benefit of freedom of movement for the economy is also emphasised:

*‘[there are] new building areas everywhere, and you see how many building materials suppliers from Saarland do business there, and it only works because of the permeability of the border (Mr D, page 6)*

Ms A characterises the remaining differences as positive and worth retaining:

*‘I still feel that I’m on holiday<sup>1</sup> when I’m over there. It’s simply the different speed, the different language. It has something that does you good. [...] The special qualities which give the place a general charm, this is something I wouldn’t want to see disappear.’ (Ms A, page 6, page 10)*

This pattern of thought is familiar from other studies of the Greater Region: the border region is appreciated especially as unity in diversity; an elimination of all differences is not desired (Schönwald 2012, see also the paper by Spellerberg/Schönwald/Weber in this volume).

When asked in the standardised question in the quantitative survey to identify the aspects of life for which the open border was advantageous, the respondents in Langsur in particular replied that they fully agreed with the statement that they benefitted economically from the border location (57%, compared to 41% of participants from Wasserbillig; cf. Table 3). In the other aspects covered by the survey, it is apparent that the respondents from Wasserbillig tend to consider the border region to be less of an advantage than the participants from Langsur.

One-quarter of the respondents – who by virtue of having responded in the first place demonstrate a comparatively high level of interest in the topic – feel that it amounts to an interpersonal advantage. Only a minority on either side of the border perceive it to generate a sense of community, a shared culture or the same aims.

| The residents of the neighbouring regions ...<br>(on a scale of 1 to 5, ‘fully agree’) | Figures in % |              |
|--|--------------|--------------|
|  | Langsur      | Wasserbillig |
| benefit economically from each other.  | 57           | 41           |
| benefit on a human level from each other.  | 30           | 26           |
| benefit culturally from each other.  | 24           | 20           |
| share a common history.  | 20           | 14           |
| have a sense of belonging together.  | 11           | 10           |
| share a common culture.  | 10           | 3            |
| share common political goals.  | 7            | 3            |
| cannot communicate with each other due to different languages.*                        | 3            | 2            |

L: n=118, W: n=99, Cramer’s V, \*: p: < 0.05

Table 3: Special aspects of a border location /Source: Authors’ survey, March 2015

1 When questioned in more detail, she explained that the sense of going ‘over there’ starts for her at the next larger town of Bouzonville, in other words not in the French part of Leidingen or in Heining.

The interviewees in the qualitative research referred to the shared history of both places. Due to their affiliation with the ‘Roman Empire’ (interviewee) or, more recently, the good relations prior to the Second World War as expressed in reciprocal church visits, they feel connected with the neighbouring town. However, things changed with the Second World War, which is still expressed by some of the older interviewees as an antipathy towards Germans. This aversion appears to be generational and is scarcely discernible among the post-war generations.

*‘Some people hated Germans because of the Second World War. And it continues in some families. As an outsider, you won’t notice it, but locals can feel it. [...] When you have a conversation with older people, you notice it.’ (Mr J, lines 98, 103)*

### 3.3 Cross-border cooperation

Given the challenges, such as traffic problems, a sense of uncertainty or economic barriers, the question arises of how much importance people attach to cross-border cooperation. Overall, the respondents from both towns see a great need for action. Crime control is considered to be the most important goal of cross-border cooperation and is described by more than three-quarters of respondents as ‘very important’. Cooperation in environmental issues is considered to be almost equally important and relevant by respondents from both towns. As regards other aspects, e.g. the economy and trade, the respondents from Langsur were more likely to consider these ‘very important’, although the overall distribution did not reveal significant differences in regard to the characteristics. As outlined above, traffic is a significantly more important issue for respondents from Wasserbillig than for the German respondents. Other important issues are combating unemployment and promoting language skills, although respondents from Wasserbillig attach less importance to these issues than to the availability of housing in their country. For both towns, the goal of eliminating regional differences and discrepancies was the least important issue (cf. Table 4).



| Issues ranked as ‘very important’ on a scale of 1 to 5 | Figures in % |              |
|--|--------------|--------------|
|  | Langsur      | Wasserbillig |
| Crime control  | 78           | 86           |
| Cooperation in environmental (protection) issues       | 75           | 73           |
| Economic cooperation                                   | 70           | 57           |
| Trade  | 69           | 57           |
| Traffic development*                                   | 68           | 82           |
| Energy supply  | 58           | 63           |
| Promoting language skills                              | 58           | 45           |
| Combatting unemployment                                | 53           | 44           |
| Improving healthcare                                   | 46           | 47           |
| Improving the availability of housing                  | 45           | 55           |
| Cooperation in schooling, education and research       | 41           | 45           |
| Developing tourism                                     | 41           | 37           |
| Advancing culture and cultural activities              | 36           | 25           |
| Mitigating regional differences                        | 25           | 22           |

L: n=118, W: n=103, Cramer’s V, p: \*: p: < 0.05

Table 4: Importance of cross-border cooperation / Source: Authors’ survey, March 2015

In the qualitative interviews, people in Wasserbillig and Langsur consistently characterise the current cooperation between local municipalities and associations as positive. For example, a new tourism information office was being built, and the two voluntary firefighting services were cooperating. The national bureaucracies were generally perceived to be an obstacle to cooperation.

*‘The cooperation between certain organisations and associations could still be improved. This is quite common – you’re not allowed to do this in Luxembourg, no, you can’t do that in Germany for this or that reason. Because some of the regulations are different. And this may mean that you can’t do this or that. There is a lot of bureaucracy attached to such things, which you don’t have so much in private matters.’ (Mr S, line 266)*

In Heining and Leidingen, the German-French border area, the current cross-border cooperation is generally described in positive terms. While one interviewee (Ms B) complained about the lack of interest between the Germans and the French, she also emphasised the decline in resentment. All four interviewees highlighted the language problems in the region, which make and keep the borders relevant (see also the paper by Schönwald/Spellerberg/Weber in this volume). Mr C in particular expressed his concerns in this regard. Mr C, a native of Lorraine, grew up with Moselle-Franconian as his mother tongue, but residents along the German and French border rarely learn this dialect today. In addition, German as a foreign language in school curricula is declining. Mr D is very critical of this trend:

*‘Our Minister of Education has now come up with the idea that the German language, that German at high school level should be reduced. For us, this is a catastrophe. It was an opportunity for us. If I hadn’t spoken German or Moselle-Franconian, I would not have been able to work in Germany. This was an opportunity for me, and it was an incredible stroke of luck in my life.’ (Mr C, page 2)*

Ms A., who is from Saarland, shared this criticism and concern that the language barrier was not being eliminated and was instead even being reinforced. While Mr C, from Lorraine, initially described the language issue to be a problem on the French side and lauded the attempts of Saarland as expressed in its most recent ‘France strategy’,<sup>2</sup> Mr D, from Saarland but currently living in Heining, criticised these attempts for not yet producing any noticeable results in practice.

*‘At the beginning, there seems to have been talk of efforts to promote language courses, similar to what the federal state government of Saarland was talking about, but I haven’t seen anything come of it.’ (Mr D, page 5)*

In all interviews, the language problem was described as a major issue at the German-French border. Due to the waning significance of the Moselle-Franconian dialect on the French side, language is even considered to be a problem that will become increasingly important, and often even the biggest problem in cross-border cooperation.

### 3.4 Advantages and disadvantages of the border region

The mutual interest that the inhabitants of Langsur and Wasserbillig have in each other is expressed in the quantitative survey by the fact that more than half of the residents of both towns (55%) regularly seek information about daily events in the other country, e.g. through the internet, radio, TV or newspapers. Of particular interest are cultural events, which people enjoy attending, as reflected in the interviews.

*‘Yes, of course. Sure, every now and then I read about what is happening. Maybe there’s an exhibition, concert or some other event. Saarburg, for example, has very good shows, exhibitions and festivals. And in Metz, there’s the Mirabelle Plum Festival. And in Trier, as well.’ (Mr V, line 269)*

To learn more about the future significance of the border region for the respondents, the quantitative survey also asked whether they thought that border checks should be resumed. Half of the respondents from Langsur and four out of ten respondents from Wasserbillig opposed this. Likewise, the reintroduction of different national

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<sup>2</sup> The ‘France Strategy’ introduced by the federal state government of Saarland in 2014 seeks to develop Saarland ‘into a high-performance, multilingual region of a German-French character within one generation. French would then serve as the language of interaction in addition to German as the mother tongue and official language, supplemented by English’ (Saarland Ministry for Finance and Europe 2015).

currencies is not desired by a majority. Nevertheless, the respondents from the Luxembourg border town consider border checks to be useful more frequently than those from the German border town. However, a clear majority disagreed with the statement that the national borders should be eliminated entirely (not shown in the table).

An increase in checks at the border had been apparent during the recent waves of migration. In early 2015, at the time of the written survey, there had not yet been any expectations that the border between the neighbouring towns would be affected. Even at the time of the qualitative interviews in Wasserbillig and Langsur in September 2015, no one imagined that the border between the towns could be closed:

*‘Here, at the heart of Europe, I don’t believe in the border anymore. Not any longer. External borders, yes. But here, along the internal borders, I don’t believe in them anymore.’ (Mr J, line 216)*

During the interviews in the German-French border region of Heining and Leidingen, the subject of the open borders was raised frequently. About 30 years ago, as mentioned at the outset of this paper, the major concern of residents of the border region appeared to be that the border would become too permeable, yet in the summer of 2015 the interviewees stated that they were concerned about a border closure (which still appeared very unlikely at that time) or about increased checks at the national borders as a negative future scenario:

*‘And what we should actually have learnt in Europe is that it doesn’t change anything in the sense of more crime, more hardship – that no country is really worse off because they got rid of border checks.’ (Ms A, page 14)*

Ms B responded to the question about which potential future changes at the border would make her sad as follows:

*‘Well, that they would become more strict, less permeable again. But I don’t think that this will be the case anymore.’ (Ms B, page 9)*

She expressed her wish for the future of the border region as follows:

*‘It would be great if we would be Europeans then, without any borders at all.’ (Ms B, page 9)*

In his interview, Mr D emphasised the importance of open borders as a positive economic factor for the region. He is content with the current situation at the border (June 2015) and does not want any changes. Borders, physically manifested by border controls, are no longer desired.

In addition to renewed, more intense controls at the border or even the closing of the borders, the interviewees were concerned to the same extent about at least one other negative future scenario: the challenges related to the demographic change in the region. The interviewees reported problems in connection with maintaining the

infrastructure in the villages: the primary school in Heining was already at risk of being closed (Mr C), church services were no longer held regularly (Ms A), large parcels of land were difficult to sell (Mr C), and the bus connection was described as ‘very bad’ (Mr C, page 3). To overcome these challenges, the interviewees suggested that cooperation was indispensable and was already underway:

*‘Yes, I think that eventually cooperation will be necessary as well because there are too few of us – on all sides, regardless of how you want to look at it. You can do a lot on a small scale, and a lot has been achieved already. That we have the same... Let’s say, both mayors saw to it that we would have reasonable arrangements for sewage or street lighting – so that both sides would not start to dig and do their own thing.’ (Ms A, page 9)*

The structural problems were described by the two French interviewees (Ms B on the Saarland side and Mr C on the Lorraine side) as more severe on the French side. Ms B reported, for example, that her gym club in Saarland had members from Lorraine. But she was not aware of any comparable exchange in the other direction, from Saarland to Lorraine. Mr C, too, likes to use the neighbouring infrastructure in Saarland:

*‘For us cross-border commuters, this is indeed a benefit. We go to see doctors in Germany because we can speak German, and also use the hospitals there when necessary. My wife gave birth to four children in Germany.’ (Mr C, page 3)*

In summary, it can be said that the interviewees believe that cooperation is not only personally desirable, but also important for the future of the border region. Mr C describes in particular the changed regional outline in France beyond Alsace and Lorraine as a hazard for cooperation, fearing that the border region will be neglected as a result of this new territorial reorganisation.

Language skills are mentioned time and again as an important factor for the future development of the border region:

*‘If we were bilingual [it] would be a major opportunity for our region, because here in France, in Lorraine, Moselle, our youth unemployment rate is 20%. We don’t have any industry for young people to work in – we have nothing left. Big ones don’t exist anymore. And this would then be the opportunity to say, you can go work on the other side.’ (Mr C, page 4).*

### 3.5 Activities in the border region

The respondents from Langsur more frequently pursue activities in Luxembourg than those from Wasserbillig do in Germany. 67% of respondents go shopping for daily needs in the other country, which is a reflection of the respective supply structures. Likewise, people frequently shop for non-daily needs such as clothing in Germany, but only rarely vice versa in Luxembourg. The distribution in connection with fuel and employment was to be expected (38% of the respondents from Langsur

work in Luxembourg while only 1% of those from Wasserbillig work in Germany). The survey shows that almost a third of the residents of Langsur make use of social associations and medical services in Luxembourg and that every 11<sup>th</sup> child of Langsur attends school in Luxembourg, while the residents of Wasserbillig rarely go to Germany for such things. The families (42%) and friends (52%) of the participants from Wasserbillig appear more likely to live in Germany. The inhabitants of Langsur attend cultural events in Luxembourg more frequently (66%) than those in Wasserbillig do in Germany (56%). Almost two-thirds of respondents in both countries make excursions to the other country, and slightly more than one-third take part in sports activities in the neighbouring country (cf. Table 5). Hence, nine out of ten respondents from Langsur and six out of ten respondents from Wasserbillig cross the border at least once a week (not shown in the table). In many everyday activities, the national border thus fades into the background.

The activities listed in Table 5 demonstrate the brisk daily interactions in the border region (see also paper by Christina Wille and Ursula Roos in this volume). The columns not marked in colour indicate the percentages for activities which are performed in the respondents’ own country.

| Where do you carry out the following activities? | Figures in % |            |                  |            |
|--|--------------|------------|------------------|------------|
|  | Langsur (G)  |            | Wasserbillig (L) |            |
|  | Germany      | Luxembourg | Germany          | Luxembourg |
| Petrol (G)**, (L) not significant                | 11           | 95         | 1                | 96         |
| Excursions (G)**, (L)*                           | 92           | 79         | 70               | 89         |
| Shopping (daily needs)**                         | 98           | 67         | 67               | 90         |
| Attending cultural events (G)**, (L)*            | 91           | 66         | 56               | 80         |
| Going out (eating out, drinking, cinema)**       | 95           | 64         | 72               | 92         |
| Visiting friends**                               | 92           | 61         | 52               | 96         |
| Work**   | 59           | 38         | 1                | 84         |
| Sports activities**                              | 83           | 35         | 34               | 77         |
| Visiting family**                                | 97           | 29         | 42               | 86         |
| Medical services**                               | 94           | 25         | 12               | 99         |
| Shopping (e.g. clothes)**                        | 99           | 21         | 91               | 57         |
| Activities in clubs and associations**           | 81           | 21         | 5                | 81         |
| Attending school/ kindergarten**                 | 61           | 9          | 1                | 54         |

L: n=180–220, W: 96–101; n= Cramer’s V, p: \* < 0.05, \*\* < 0.01; if only indicated once, the asterisk(s) apply to both countries

Table 5: Activities abroad / Source: Authors’ survey, March 2015

The interviewees on the German-French border gave varying reasons for their daily border crossings. In particular, the greater range of choice offered by the border region, e.g. shopping for daily purchases, is appreciated.

3.6 Home and regional identity

While the place of residence generally triggers a sense of home (56% in Langsur, 61% in Wasserbillig), a ‘familiar landscape’ did to a different extent in both places. 40% of the interviewees from Langsur have a sense of belonging, while only 15% of the people from Wasserbillig do. In terms of crossing the border, it is the opposite: the respondents from Luxembourg sense this significantly more than those from Germany (cf. Table 6).

| What makes you feel most at home?* | Figures in % |              |
|------------------------------------|--------------|--------------|
|                                    | Langsur      | Wasserbillig |
| The place you live                 | 56           | 61           |
| A familiar landscape               | 40           | 15           |
| Crossing the border                | 2            | 16           |
| Other                              | 1            | 8            |
|                                    | 100          | 100          |

L: n=94, W: n=69, Cramer’s V, p: \*\*: < 0.01

Table 6: Triggers for a sense of home /Source: Authors’ survey, March 2015

When asked if the adjacent region of the other country could possibly be considered home, 18% of the participants from Langsur and 16% of the respondents from Wasserbillig already considered the neighbouring region their home. The neighbouring region is considered a potential home for half of the respondents from Langsur, but only for 20% of those from Wasserbillig. Respondents from Wasserbillig were also more averse in their responses by stating they would probably not (31%) or not at all (25%) consider the neighbouring region as home. Among the respondents from Langsur, 19% stated that the neighbouring region was probably not a potential home, and 9% stated that they definitely did not consider the neighbouring region to be their home (not shown in the table).

The reasons for the choice of residential location can be found in the biographical accounts the interviewees gave in the qualitative survey. The interviewees’ current residential location was chosen mainly for social reasons, with the family playing an important role in this connection. The reasons included wanting a nice, safe environment to raise children, or because family members such as a brother or sister live close by, or because a family member needs assistance. The rural area was mentioned as a further reason for the choice of residential location.

*‘So we then looked for something rural, where the children would have a bit of space to run around.’ (Mr S, line 5)*

The majority of respondents felt quite rooted in the region. Special significance was attached to the place and the region where a person was born and raised. In many cases, respondents had built a house in their place of birth or the surrounding area.

*‘But I have lived here from the beginning, [I’m the] third generation. [...] I have spent almost my entire career here in Wasserbillig at the school, and we built a house in Mertert and lived there.’ (Ms L, lines 4, 6)*

### **A sense of home**

Participants in the quantitative survey were asked by means of an open-ended question to list typical keywords about their home (cf. Table 7). The answers given by the respondents indicate that three main characteristics apply to both regions, but to differing extents. The landscape, which was described as ‘beautiful’, ranks in first place, along with the Rivers Moselle and Sauer. 32 respondents from Langsur and 12 from Wasserbillig mentioned wine or viticulture. Language, which predominantly means the dialect in this context, ranked third. The number of respondents giving this answer did not differ greatly between countries. Respondents from Langsur moreover mentioned a great willingness to help among local people and neighbours (it was not clear if this referred to neighbours over the border) and emphasised the friendliness of the people. Regional food was the second most frequent response provided by respondents from Wasserbillig as being typical of their home.

Respondents from Wasserbillig also mentioned aspects that were not mentioned by those in Langsur. Based on the many people from different nationalities who live and work in Luxembourg, it is not surprising that multiculturalism was mentioned eight times as a characteristic of the home region. The respondents also characterised home as defined by origins, linguistic diversity, petrol tourism and the rural character, where people all know each other (cf. Table 7). In addition to these aspects, which point to the interconnectedness of global and local influences, the overall less frequent mention of characteristics is noteworthy.

In the qualitative interviews, the question about what home meant was also put to interviewees on the German-French border. As with earlier studies on the subject (Kühne/Spellerberg 2010), the survey shows the great significance of social considerations for the understanding of home. The interviewees understand their home to be the place where they feel ‘that I understand the people here and they think like I do and I think like they do.’ (Ms A, page 11-12). Great importance is also attached to the language or dialect, as Mr C explains in regard to the Moselle-Franconian dialect: ‘So there’s the matter of language. It is the essence of the entire sense of home.’ (Mr C, page 11). In addition to these social aspects, physical and spatial factors also apply, although upon closer examination they also related to social considerations:

*‘[...] I would say that for me, Leidingen is home; this is where I want to stay if possible. Of course, you never know what life has in store for you, but I expect that I will stay here [...] because of the people, because of the small town, because of the proximity to the border, because of the peace and quiet you generally have here. And because I think that I understand the people here.’ (Ms A, page 12)*

Aspects of the landscape were also drawn on to define home, such as the ‘open landscape’ (Ms A, page 13), the ‘beautiful landscape’ (Mr D, page 8). But financial and practical everyday matters also played a role, such as things being ‘within relatively easy access’ and affordable land and housing prices. Another aspect of home was its history, and closely associated with history, the border location:

*‘The identity of our home is shaped by this border, because it has shaped its history. If you go back 75 years, there was nobody here 75 years ago because they had all been evacuated and people had lost their lives. So if you now go back 70 years, people had to find a way to come together again. This region is really steeped in history, and this is also a part of home.’ (Mr C, page 10)*

| Associations with home                     | Langsur | Wasserbillig |
|--|---------|--------------|
| Landscape (river region)                   | 53      | 27           |
| Wine (viniculture)                         | 32      | 12           |
| Language (dialect)                         | 15      | 12           |
| Willingness to help                        | 11      | 3            |
| Friendly people                            | 10      | 3            |
| Family and friends                         | 10      | 6            |
| (Regional) food                            | 8       | 13           |
| Proximity to border                        | 8       | 2            |
| Village idyll                              | 7       | 2            |
| Sense of wellbeing/feeling safe and secure | 6       | 6            |
| Festivals                                  | 5       | 3            |
| History                                    | 4       | 1            |
| Multiculturalism                           | 1       | 8            |
| Place of origin                            | 0       | 5            |
| Language diversity                         | 0       | 4            |
| Petrol tourism                             | 0       | 4            |
| People all know each other                 | 0       | 4            |

L: n=170; W: n=115

Table 7: Associations with home /Source: Authors’ survey, March 2015



The respondents want to understand each other (in a dual sense: they want to speak the same language as the inhabitants of their home and they want to feel understood by them in the way they think); they want a ‘beautiful landscape’, although the definition of a beautiful landscape or of a feel-good scenery is evidently shaped by their own biographies (cf. ‘the normal landscape of home’ as mentioned by Kühne 2006), and they want to know that they are surrounded by a social network.

Translating the German term *Heimat* (home) into French is complicated. Neither of the two French interviewees could think immediately of a French equivalent to the German notion. Mr C believed that the expression *mon pays* (my country) comes closest, and Ms B proposed *patrie* (fatherland) as a possible translation. In Luxembourgish, the term *Heemecht* is used.

**Close ties to a place, identification with the place of residence and the border region**

The responses to the question about a sense of belonging show that the majority of respondents have a sense of belonging in regard to their place of residence, followed by the region on their side of the border. 32% of the residents of Langsur include the immediate region on the other side of the border and the region on both sides of the border (30%) in their assessment, compared to a clearly smaller percentage of respondents in Wasserbillig (13% and 19%). The biggest difference is evident in the sense of belonging to the Greater Region, as the percentage of people from Langsur who expressed a sense of belonging to the Region is three times higher than those from Wasserbillig. A greater percentage of the respondents from Wasserbillig associated a sense of belonging with their nationality than those from Langsur did. The residents of Langsur have a greater sense of belonging to the Greater Region and the directly adjacent region over the border than the residents of Wasserbillig, who emphasised a very strong sense of identification with Luxembourg and their place of residence (cf. Table 8).

| I have a sense of belonging ... (those answering ‘yes’ based on a scale of 1 to 5) | Figures in % |              |
|--|--------------|--------------|
|  | Langsur      | Wasserbillig |
| to the place where I live.   | 70           | 65           |
| to the region on this side of the border.  | 62           | 60           |
| to the region immediately across the border.*                                      | 32           | 13           |
| to the region on both sides of the border.   | 30           | 19           |
| to the Greater Region SaarLorLux+RLP.**  | 33           | 10           |
| to the country in which I live.  | 62           | 74           |
| to another country.  | 3            | 1            |

L: n=117, W: n=96, Cramer’s V, \*: p: < 0.05, \*\*: p: < 0.01

Table 8: Sense of belonging / Source: Authors’ survey, March 2015

The participants in the qualitative survey from Wasserbillig and Langsur explained that the sheer size and expansiveness of the Greater Region was the reason why it did not generate any clear sense of belonging. The interviewees believed that constituent regions of the political association had been selected based on economic interests and not the cultural commonalities of the inhabitants.

*'I think that the Greater Region exists as a landscape, but I think as far as living and working together is concerned, they're still in the early stages. [...] The Greater Region is somehow on top of everything, but that's maybe because it is so big, so anonymous, so abstract.'* (Mr S, lines 184, 240)

When asked what the participants would describe as home, there are clear differences between the interviewees from both places. 63% of participants from Langsur described their own region as home, compared to only 18% from Wasserbillig. The border region is home for 42% of the participants from Langsur (compared to only 20% of those from Wasserbillig). On the other hand, 42% of the participants from Wasserbillig considered the language area as their home (25% in Langsur). Their village is considered home by the majority, while their actual house is mentioned less frequently. Here, too, the results show that the residents from Langsur apparently have a greater sense of belonging to their (border) region, while for those from Wasserbillig, the place of residence and language area played an important role in their sense of home (cf. Table 9).

| What would you designate as your home?<br>(multiple answers possible) | Figures in % |              |
|---|--------------|--------------|
|   | Langsur      | Wasserbillig |
| My region**   | 63           | 18           |
| My place of residence   | 61           | 54           |
| The border region**   | 42           | 20           |
| My house/apartment  | 39           | 46           |
| Europe  | 32           | 30           |
| My language area**  | 25           | 42           |
| None of the above   | 3            | 2            |

L: 122, W: 105, Cramer's V, p: \*\* < 0.01

Table 9: Designation of home /Source: Authors' survey, March 2015

When asked about how home could be defined, the family is always mentioned first. Home can be localised based on the respondents' roots. The place where the respondents were born and raised is (also) their home. Home is also described as a person's own house and the place of residence.

*‘Due to the fact that I have travelled so much and have lived elsewhere, the centre of my life is always where I feel at home, where I live and where the people I love are.’  
(MsB, line 87)*

The motivation for living on the other side of the border is explained nearly identically in both places by tax and economic reasons, although an overall lower percentage of respondents from Wasserbillig state that they could envisage living on the German side of the border.

### ***Dimensions of home***

The results have shown that home has different connotations, e.g. as the place where the family lives, the place of birth, ties to nature or familiar customs and traditions. The aspect that was most commonly selected in connection with the question ‘Home is ...’ was ‘where I feel safe and secure’ (77% in Langsur, 81% in Wasserbillig), followed by ‘where my family lives’ (70% and 66%), ‘where I live’ (69% and 67%), ‘where my house is’ (59% and 66%) and ‘where I was born’ (50% and 53%). Items that were ranked lower also show greater variation: ‘where I want to live’ (42% compared to 34%), ‘where I experience nature’ (39% compared to 31%), ‘where my dialect is spoken’ (31% compared to 38%), ‘where there are familiar customs and traditions’ (29% compared to 42%) or ‘where the border is’ (22% compared to 16%). Family and friends represent stable, reliable social relationships, while the response ‘my own house’ emphasises the participant’s own biography and achievement. By means of factor analyses, it was determined in a next step whether the individual aspects are underpinned in both places by the same structure (cf. Table 10).

| Home is where ...                          | Langsur   |                 |             | Wasserbillig                 |                           |                 |
|--|-----------|-----------------|-------------|------------------------------|---------------------------|-----------------|
|  | Tradition | Ideational home | Family seat | Sense of safety and security | Long-established resident | Ideational home |
| my dialect is spoken.                      | .87       |                 |             | .40                          |                           | .61             |
| I was born.                                | .80       |                 |             | .62                          |                           |                 |
| there are familiar customs and traditions. | .73       | .31             | .33         | .82                          |                           |                 |
| my friends are.                            | .57       | .43             |             | .42                          | .41                       |                 |
| any ideal place.                           |           | .83             |             |                              |                           | .82             |
| I want to live.                            |           | .70             |             |                              | .43                       | .69             |
| I can experience nature.                   | .45       | .63             |             | .54                          | .34                       |                 |
| the border is.                             |           | .58             |             | .44                          |                           | .67             |
| my house is.                               |           |                 | .82         |                              | .80                       |                 |
| I live.                                    |           |                 | .79         |                              | .63                       |                 |
| I feel safe and secure.                    |           |                 | .61         | .64                          |                           |                 |
| my family lives.                           |           |                 | .43         | .55                          | .31                       |                 |

L: KMO: .79/Bartl. P: .00/cumul. V.: .58      W: KMO: .69/Bartl. P: .00/cumul. V.: .55

*Table 10: Meaning of home – Factor loadings for the variables / Source: Authors' survey, March 2015*

In both towns, three dimensions were identified for the 12 individual characteristics. In Langsur, these three aspects can be identified as tradition, an ideational home and the seat of the family. The first factor is formed by the following variables: dialect, place of birth, familiar customs and traditions, and the place where friends live. The item 'where I experience nature' also correlates with the first factor, but it is captured under the second dimension of an 'ideational home', combining the aspects of an ideal place, a desired place and the border. Factor 3 relates to the family seat with the following characteristics: house, the current place of residence, a sense of safety and security, and family.

In Wasserbillig six of the twelve characteristics form two factors, which means that the answer is much less clear than in Langsur and that it is also much more difficult to interpret the individual factors. The first dimension includes familiar customs, a sense of security, the place of birth, family and appreciation of nature – this factor

therefore focuses on a sense of safety and security. The second factor can be interpreted as being a long-established resident, because it comprises living in their own house and the spoken dialect. The third factor corresponds largely to the second factor identified in Langsur: the *ideational home*.

Even though quite different patterns are discernible in regard to the dimensions of home between the Luxembourg and the German border towns, there are hardly any differences in regard to socio-structural differentiation between the two countries. In their assessment of the individual characteristics, men do not differ significantly from women, nor younger people from older ones, nor financially well-off people from those with less resources. The responses given in the two countries differ only with regard to the educational qualifications of the respondents to the extent that those with higher education qualifications tended to have a less pronounced stance on the individual characteristics, i.e. they considered home to be less important overall.

#### 4 Conclusions

To conclude, the key findings are summarised and answers provided to the research questions presented at the outset. Firstly, it became apparent that the border as a boundary controlled by organs of the national state is now considered to be of minor significance. The end of the border controls in the wake of the Schengen Agreement is perceived to be positive in Langsur and Wasserbillig – the border checks had previously been perceived as an obstruction in everyday life. At the same time, references to one’s own nation state do not become obsolete; distinctions between a respondent’s own country and the neighbouring country continue to be relevant. The German respondents tend to show a greater openness to their neighbouring country of Luxembourg. The respondents from Wasserbillig, on the other hand, show a stronger sense of being locally rooted. For them, the dialect and familiar customs and traditions are very important to their sense of home. Their strong ties to the Luxembourg nation is also manifested in the fact that very few respondents could envisage living in Germany.

The respondents at the German-Luxembourg border show a fairly broad notion of home. While many mentioned that their place of residence was their home, it became clear during further explanations that home was also associated with various factors, in particular socially defined factors, such as a sense of safety and security, family, dialect or the ‘specific landscape’ (the latter particularly in Langsur). At the same it is apparent that the respondents from Wasserbillig predominantly feel at home in their country, because being in a familiar language area is also important to them. The participants from Langsur, on the other hand, were more likely to consider home to encompass the region on both sides of the border. The question of whether life in a border region creates new forms of a local identity cannot be answered unequivocally because there is already an appreciation of a special space, which certainly affects identification; a specific place identity, however, concerns only a minority of the respondents.

The economic cooperation between Luxembourg and Germany is deemed to be very positive by all respondents. Approximately one-third of the respondents from Langsur works in Luxembourg, meaning that they profit from tax advantages and the wage levels. The residents of Wasserbillig mainly do their shopping in Germany, and inhabitants of Langsur refuel their cars in Luxembourg. The border location offers economic benefits for respondents on both sides of the border. However, the increased traffic and associated air pollution, compounded on the Luxembourg side by the ‘petrol tourism’ from foreigners, are viewed as negative.

A good relationship with neighbours on the other side of the border, as in the survey by Vogelsang (2011), is also discernible among participants of this survey. However, it is clear that individual respondents from Langsur would like to see better neighbourly relations through more tolerance on the part of their neighbours in Wasserbillig. Relationships with friends and family also exist beyond the respondents’ own national border. Unlike in the case of the study on cross-border commuters by Christian Wille et al. (2014), there is significant interest among the participants of this survey in events in the neighbouring country. More than half of the inhabitants of both places regularly seek information about daily events in the other country. One reason for doing so is certainly the location of both municipalities directly on the border, due to which the residents pursue various forms of regular communication and interaction with the other side, whether in a professional, private or social capacity or through excursions.

The assumption that a local identity would influence daily activities is not borne out by the results of the survey. Daily activities take place regularly and pragmatically in the adjacent country, which is reflected in particular in shopping and refuelling behaviour. At first, this finding gave rise to the impression that the border no longer existed even at a symbolic level in the area. Yet the language barrier increasingly appears to be a difficult boundary to cross. Alongside this barrier and the different regulations, which are also obstacles to cooperation, there is also a positive side to the border, which continues to exist partly as a symbolic border: the residual ‘otherness’ on the other side is still thoroughly appreciated, such as on outings or excursions.

The participants from both villages stated in the written survey that they consider the multiculturalism in the border region to be a significant advantage. At the same time, a greater affinity with the border and Greater Region is evident among the respondents from Langsur. Cultural differences are emphasised more by the respondents from Wasserbillig than by those from Langsur, although the findings were predominantly similar in the twin villages. The border region of the municipalities is generally perceived as a positive aspect and the sense of home is primarily associated with the more immediate private and residential sphere.

The results of the quantitative survey and the qualitative interviews largely coincide with the results from previous studies. As in the study by Wille and Hesse (2014), this empirical survey also emphasised that spatial affiliation is not primarily shaped by the border location. In conclusion, we would like to revisit the question with which we started this paper: ‘Where would we end up?’ – or rather ‘Where did we end up?’ In

terms of the importance of the border, there is general agreement that it is scarcely noticed anymore, and that since its disappearance life has become more convenient and has benefited in particular ways. At the same time, there are challenges, especially for cross-border cooperation, for example in regard to crime prevention, demographic change or deficits in language skills on both sides, which represent tasks for the years to come.

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Christian Wille, Ursula Roos

## CROSS-BORDER EVERYDAY LIVES ON THE LUXEMBOURG BORDER? AN EMPIRICAL APPROACH: THE EXAMPLE OF CROSS-BORDER COMMUTERS AND RESIDENTIAL MIGRANTS\*

### Contents

- 1 Introduction
- 2 Cross-border commuters
  - 2.1 Social contacts at the place of residence/work
  - 2.2 Everyday cross-border practices
- 3 Residential migrants
  - 3.1 Social contacts at the place of residence/work
  - 3.2 Everyday cross-border practices
- 4 Conclusion
- References

### Abstract

Luxembourg is characterized by phenomena of mobility that include cross-border commuters and residential migrants. While both groups have been mainly examined from a socioeconomic perspective, this paper adopts a sociocultural approach. We will focus on the question of the extent to which cross-border mobility in everyday life promotes cross-border lifeworlds. This will involve examining people's social contacts at their place of work and/or place of residence as well as the spatial organization of practices of the everyday life of both groups. The paper gives insights into everyday lives at the EU's internal borders, whose organization into nation states is subordinate and at the same time constitutive.

### Keywords

Border studies – residential migration – cross-border commuting – integration – Luxembourg

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## 1 Introduction

With foreign nationals constituting 45.3% of the country's resident population (cf. Statec 2014, p. 9), Luxembourg is shaped in a singular way by phenomena of immigration. Other characteristic features of the Grand Duchy are local phenomena of cross-border mobility that are especially conspicuous in border regions. Of particular relevance here is the phenomenon, which has been on the increase since the 1980s, of cross-border commuters, i.e. workers from the neighboring regions with employment in the Grand Duchy, as well as the more recent phenomenon of residential migrants, i.e. people moving from Luxembourg to neighboring Germany, France, or Belgium. Both groups are—even if partly with opposite tendencies—regularly mobile in border-crossing activities, be it to get to their place of work or residence, or be it to engage in everyday practices in the neighboring country.

Phenomena of cross-border commuters and residential migrants on the Luxembourgish border have so far received little attention in sociocultural research. Current studies about cross-border commuters (e.g. Belkacem/Pigeron-Piroth 2012 and 2015) and residential migrants (e.g. Carpentier 2010; Wille 2011) in the Greater Region have focused, with only a few exceptions, (Wille 2012, Franziskus/de Bres 2012; Boesen/Schnuer 2015; Wille 2016) mainly on the socioeconomic implications of these forms of mobility. This contribution, then, centers on the sociocultural aspects, aiming to shed light on cross-border or rather on spatially fragmented everyday lives along the Luxembourgish border. At the same time, these reflections also point to the more general question of how significant the EU's internal borders actually are in border regions—particularly 30 years after the signing of the Schengen agreement. This study will investigate the development of social contacts at people's places of employment and/or of residence as well as the spatial organization of the everyday practices that can be observed among cross-border commuters and residential migrants along Luxembourg's border. For both partial aspects of the realities of cross-border life, quantitatively and qualitatively gathered results are amalgamated from various studies (Table 1) per group under review.

| Studies                         | Wille 2012   | Wille et al. 2016  | Roos 2016  |
|---------------------------------|--|--|--|
| Context of the study            | Ph.D. project<br>(University of Luxembourg und University of the Saarland)   | Project “IDENT2 – Regionalisierungen als Identitätskonstruktionen in Grenzräumen”<br>(University of Luxembourg)  | Ph.D. project<br>(University of the Saarland)  |
| Period when study was conducted | 2006/2007  | 2012/2013  | 2012/2013  |
| Sample of the study             | cross-border commuters with employment in Luxembourg (N=233)<br>of these living in:<br>Saarland (n=28)<br>Lorraine (n=85)<br>Rhineland-Palatinate (n=106)<br>Wallonia (n=14)<br>Interviewed cross-border commuters with place of work in Luxembourg (N=25)<br>of these living in:<br>Saarland (n=3)<br>Lorraine (n=5)<br>Rhineland-Palatinate (n=15)<br>Wallonia (n=2) | cross-border commuters <sup>1</sup> (N=287)<br>of these living in:<br>Saarland (n=13)<br>Lorraine (n=157)<br>Rhineland-Palatinate (n=25)<br>Wallonia (n=92)<br>residential migrants from Luxembourg (N=56)<br>of these living in:<br>Saarland (n=6)<br>Lorraine (n=16)<br>Rhineland-Palatinate (n=12)<br>Wallonia (n=22) | resident population of the district town of Merzig (N=856)<br>of these:<br>Persons without migrant background: n=487<br>Persons with migrant background: n=366, of these 40 residential migrants with Luxembourgish nationality<br>Interviewed residential population with migrant background in the district town of Merzig (n=12), of these one residential migrant with Luxembourgish nationality |
| Methodology                     | Quantitative survey<br>Qualitative interviews  | Quantitative survey<br>Qualitative interviews  | Quantitative survey<br>Qualitative interviews  |

Table 1: Data drawn on in this article /Source: The authors

We will begin by first sketching a statistical portrait of the cross-border commuters and residential migrants that takes into account key developments—in particular since 2000. Building on this, we will then look at the abovementioned partial aspects of cross-border life realities on the basis of empirical findings, and finally we will compare the groups of cross-border commuters and residential migrants with each other. Reconnecting the observations to the question of this contribution shows that one can indeed speak of cross-border everyday lives along Luxembourg's borders.

## 2 Cross-border commuters

In the following, we will first discuss the group of cross-border commuters who have shaped the Luxembourg labor market for over 30 years and represent 44% of the labor force employed in Luxembourg today. Statistically, their emergence can be

<sup>1</sup> It is assumed that these cross-border commuters primarily work in Luxembourg.

traced back to the 1960s, but it is only since the 1980s that the employment of cross-border commuters has developed a striking dynamic. This will be outlined below (cf. Wille 2012, p. 143–200), followed by a discussion of the extent to which cross-border commuters have social contacts in their countries of residence and employment, and in which everyday practices they engage there.

The increasing employment of cross-border commuters that began in the 1980s has continued almost unabated to the present day, with a majority of workers coming from France, their numbers having multiplied tenfold between 1980 and 2000. Until 1985, the annual growth rate of this commuter flow in Luxembourg, the most significant since 1987, did not exceed the 8% mark; from 1986 onwards, though, it increased significantly, and by 1992 it ranged between 13 and 22%. This increase was due to the difficult labor market situation as a result of the steel crisis, which was particularly palpable in the border regions of Lorraine. Between 1985 and 1994, commuters from France benefited in particular in the area of market services (386.2%) and the construction industry (361.1%); in the manufacturing industry their growth rates were lower (cf. Statec 1995, p. 260).

The development of the commuter flow from Belgium, which increased more than fourfold between 1980 and 2000, follows the general development of cross-border worker employment. Until 1983, the annual growth rates of the previously most significant commuter flow did not exceed the 3.5% mark; from 1984 onwards, they increased significantly, with an annual increase of a little less than 10%. In 1987, the Belgians were supplanted by the French as the largest cross-border commuter group, which was due to the development of employment in the services sector in Luxembourg, with a concomitant clear decline in employment in the former strongholds of the iron and steel industry in France. Nevertheless, the flow from Belgium increased between 1987 and 1991, with annual growth rates between 10 and 13%. Despite the economic recession in the early 1990s, in the subsequent years an increasing number of workers commuted from Belgium, with the momentum initially slowing down, but picking up speed towards the end of the decade, with annual growth rates between 7 and 10%. Between 1985 and 1994, the cross-border commuters from Belgium benefited in particular from the development of market services (254.8%) and the construction industry (232.7%); in the manufacturing industry, the growth rate (6.6%) was significantly lower compared to that of commuters from France and Germany (cf. Statec 1995, p. 260).

The development of the flow from Germany, which increased eleven-fold between 1980 and 2000, also follows the general trend of cross-border commuter employment in Luxembourg. Even though the numbers of cross-border commuters from Germany compared to those from France or Belgium remained on a relatively low level until the turn of the century, the annual growth rates can compare with those of the other commuter flows. Until 1983, they were below 10%, but from 1984 onwards they suddenly accelerated, and by 1991 they ranged between 17 and 22%. After the economic slowdown in the 1990s, the annual rates of change grew again to above 10%. Between 1985 and 1994, cross-border commuters from Germany benefited from job growth in particular in the market services industry and in the construction industry (cf. Statec 1995, p. 260).

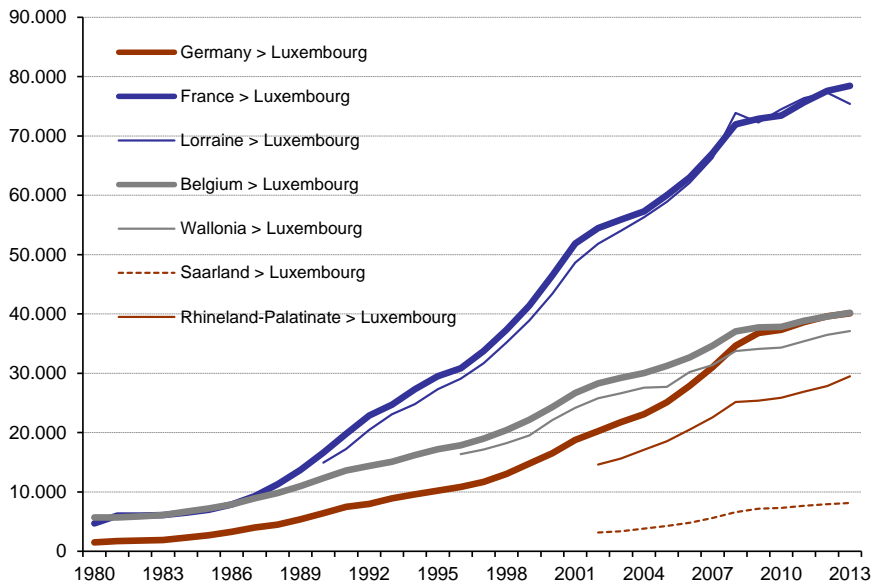


Image 1: Development of cross-border commuter employment by country of origin, 1980–2013 / Sources: Bundesagentur für Arbeit (Germany), Inspection Générale de la Sécurité Sociale (Luxembourg), Institut national de la statistique et des études économiques (France), Institut national d'Assurance Maladie-Invalidité (Belgium)

The remarkable development of cross-border commuter employment since the 1980s not only justifies looking into the question of the cross-border or spatially fragmented everyday lives along the Luxembourg border, but has also led to an atypical situation in Luxembourg: between 1998 and 2008, employment in Luxembourg grew by 51%, in particular in the corporate services sector. Here the shift, already registered in the 1990s, of the labor force with Luxembourgish nationality from the manufacturing industry to the (semi-)public sector continued. This segmentation of the labor market increased Luxembourg's reliance on foreign labor, since the development in the private economic sector was sustained mainly by cross-border commuters and resident foreign nationals.

In the following, we will take a closer look at the development of the volume of commuting since the turn of the millennium. In 2013, Luxembourg counted 158,758 cross-border commuters (including 2.7% atypical commuters), half of whom came from neighboring France (78,454) and a quarter each from Germany (40,105) and Belgium (40,199). Their number has grown 1.5-fold since 2003, with the flow from Germany showing particular momentum—so that in 2012 there were more commuters coming to Luxembourg from Germany than from Belgium for the first time. The development since the turn of the millennium did not, however, proceed evenly: in the course of the economic crisis in the early 2000s, growth initially slowed down, picking up speed again from 2004 onwards. The economic and financial crisis of 2008 had a much deeper impact. While it did not lead to a reduction in cross-border

commuters employed in Luxembourg, it did slash the high development rates of previous years—especially in the manufacturing industry and in the finance industry. The flows from France and Belgium were particularly affected, even though—like the commuters from Germany—they were able to achieve minor increases in employment in 2009. While the slowed-down momentum of development was able to recover slightly by 2011, it is still far removed from the pre-crisis level (cf. IBA 2014, p. 18).

With regard to everyday lives along the Luxembourg border, one needs to additionally take into account the places and regions of residence of cross-border commuters, which show that the attraction of the Luxembourg labor market extends beyond the directly bordering regions (cf. Wille 2012, p. 143–200). In France, for instance, in 2008 more than half (57.3%) or a fifth (20.1%) of cross-border commuters lived in Thionville or Longwy; however, the catchment area expanded increasingly towards the south and the east of Lorraine. Thus the regions around the Bassin Houiller or Sarreguemines, mainly in the ambit of the German labor market, showed relatively high growth rates in cross-border commuting between 2000 and 2008; the areas around Metz and Nancy in the south also showed a palpable increase in Luxembourg cross-border commuters domiciled there. The cross-border commuters from Wallonia, by contrast, in the period of investigation, lived for the most part in direct proximity to Luxembourg: 17.8% in the province of Liège and 77.5% in Belgian Luxembourg (2008). The ratio of cross-border commuters resident in the province of Luxembourg declined between 2000 and 2008; by contrast, the province of Liège increased in importance, which shows an expansion of the range of influence of the Luxembourg labor market. In the two German federal states too, the Luxembourg cross-border commuters lived predominantly near the border: in 2008 slightly less than two thirds (64.0%) of cross-border commuters from the Saarland were resident in the rural district of Merzig-Wadern, close to the Luxembourg border, and a further 17.7% lived in the neighboring district of Saarlouis. In Rhineland-Palatinate, the catchment area was concentrated around the region of Trier; in addition, 42.5% of commuters from Rhineland-Palatinate lived in the district of Trier-Saarburg and 25.9% in the rural district of Bitburg-Prüm.

## 2.1 Social contacts at the place of residence/work

To investigate the question of the extent to which cross-border commuters employed in Luxembourg have social contacts at their place of residence and work, we will first draw on the findings of Wille et al. (2016) regarding the practices of commuters in relation to visiting family and friends (Table 2). Due to data constraints, the observations focus on commuters living in Lorraine and Wallonia, which are compared with the border-region residents of the respective resident regions as a comparison group.

| Region of residence       | Lorraine                       |                                 | Wallonia                      |                                 |
|---------------------------|--------------------------------|---------------------------------|-------------------------------|---------------------------------|
|                           | cross-border commuters (n=157) | border-region residents (n=867) | cross-border commuters (n=92) | border-region residents (n=517) |
| Visiting friends in ...   |                                |                                 |                               |                                 |
| France                    | 88                             | 75                              |                               |                                 |
| Luxembourg                | 44                             | 17                              | 54                            | 17                              |
| Belgium                   |                                |                                 | 85                            | 76                              |
| Visiting relatives in ... |                                |                                 |                               |                                 |
| France                    | 88                             | 76                              |                               |                                 |
| Luxembourg                | 13                             | 7                               | 21                            | 6                               |
| Belgium                   |                                |                                 | 80                            | 76                              |

Table 2: Visiting practices of cross-border commuters and border-region residents with place of residence in Lorraine or Wallonia, in percent (multiple entries) /Source: Wille et al. 2016

We can observe that cross-border commuters primarily visit friends and family in their country of residence. As regards friendships in Luxembourg, they report making only half as many visits to friends than in their country of residence—but still significantly more frequently than other border-region residents—which points to friendly relations in the country of work. But compared to friends, cross-border commuters make distinctly less frequent visits to relatives in the Grand Duchy, but more frequently than the border-region residents as a whole. That friends are visited more often than relatives in a neighboring region corresponds to the general trend (cf. Wille 2015, p. 149) and is connected to the (non-)existence of cross-border family relations.

The findings show that cross-border commuters have contact to friends and family in Luxembourg—albeit to a lesser extent than in their country of residence—but that these are significantly more pronounced than cross-border social contacts of border-region residents as a whole. We can say that everyday cross-border mobility common among cross-border commuters encourages the development of social relations, in particular friendships, in Luxembourg.

For the further discussion of friendly relations in the country of work, we draw on findings by Wille (2012, p. 296). In that study, two-thirds (67.9%) of cross-border commuters employed in Luxembourg state that they regard people living in their country of work as belonging to their circle of friends. This applies more to commuters from Rhineland-Palatinate (75.5%) and to a lesser degree to those from Lorraine (56.5%). A closer look at the friendly relations of all the cross-border commuters interviewed shows, however, that the majority of these are (former) colleagues (87.3%), a fact that some cross-border commuters confirm in interviews (cf. Wille 2012, p. 298):

*Of course, I also know Luxembourgers, but only among my colleagues—current and former colleagues. I still have contact to a few of them from the firm where I did an internship once and we meet occasionally during the lunch break or some such. (Saarland–Luxembourg)*

*Yes, I do know some Luxembourgers. But these acquaintances, as I'd call them, all develop via my work. Going out and getting to meet people, that's not the case. (Rhineland-Palatinate–Luxembourg)*

*It does occasionally happen that after work I go out with colleagues or former colleagues to have a beer in a pub in Luxembourg. But that doesn't happen that often, because of all the driving. I have a demanding job and when I finish work at eight in the evening I want to go home, then I want to do something private. (Rhineland-Palatinate–Luxembourg)*

We can say that friendly relations outside of the work context seem to develop only rarely. The reasons given by cross-border commuters are long journeys to the workplace or family obligations, and point to insufficient time to make new contacts with residents of the Grand Duchy. This leads to the question to be discussed in the following of how far cross-border commuters spend time in Luxembourg outside of their work.



## 2.2 Everyday cross-border practices

To explore the question of which everyday practices the cross-border commuters from Lorraine and Wallonia who were interviewed engage in in their countries of residence and work, we draw on findings by Wille et al. (2016) (Table 3).

| Everyday practices                     | performed in... | Lorraine (region of residence) |                                 | Wallonia (region of residence) |                                 |
|--|-----------------|--------------------------------|---------------------------------|--------------------------------|---------------------------------|
|  |                 | cross-border commuters (n=157) | border-region residents (n=867) | cross-border commuters (n=92)  | border-region residents (n=517) |
| Shopping                               | France          | 77                             | 63                              |                                |                                 |
|  | Luxembourg      | 78                             | 48                              | 91                             | 49                              |
|  | Belgium         |                                |                                 | 71                             | 55                              |
| Grocery shopping                       | France          | 83                             | 71                              |                                |                                 |
|  | Luxembourg      | 53                             | 23                              | 76                             | 27                              |
|  | Belgium         |                                |                                 | 78                             | 69                              |
| Recreation in the countryside/ Tourism | France          | 76                             | 64                              |                                |                                 |
|  | Luxembourg      | 53                             | 33                              | 48                             | 34                              |
|  | Belgium         |                                |                                 | 68                             | 62                              |
| Attending cultural events              | France          | 73                             | 61                              |                                |                                 |
|  | Luxembourg      | 45                             | 18                              | 46                             | 12                              |
|  | Belgium         |                                |                                 | 69                             | 59                              |
| Going out                              | France          | 63                             | 53                              |                                |                                 |
|  | Luxembourg      | 59                             | 23                              | 56                             | 15                              |
|  | Belgium         |                                |                                 | 65                             | 50                              |
| Seeing the doctor                      | France          | 87                             | 77                              |                                |                                 |
|  | Luxembourg      | 38                             | 9                               | 45                             | 7                               |
|  | Belgium         |                                |                                 | 83                             | 78                              |

*Table 3: Spatial distribution of everyday practices of cross-border commuters and border-region residents with place of residence in Lorraine and Wallonia, in percent (multiple entries) / Source: Wille et al. 2016*

What becomes clear here is that, compared to border-region residents, cross-border commuters, on the whole, engage more frequently in everyday practices in Luxembourg and make more use of facilities in the Grand Duchy. Nevertheless, the cross-border commuters conduct their everyday practices primarily in their country of residence, although their country of work also plays an important role—such as for grocery shopping and leisure. Cross-border commuters primarily carry out consumer activities in Luxembourg and go out there. The more or less equal importance of country of residence and country of employment is here partly due to the necessary lunchtime restaurant visits and buying articles of daily use. It is worth mentioning in this context that for cross-border commuters the opportunities for doing the grocery shopping, which is necessary in any case, often lie ‘on the way’,

and that the shops in their place of residence are already closed by the time they arrive home (cf. Wille 2012, p. 301). This is also confirmed by a commuter in an interview (cf. Wille 2012):

*Well, I do occasionally get my groceries on the way home because the bigger shops are open longer than the local ones here [in Rhineland-Palatinate]. They are located exactly so that you pass them on the way home—although I don't shop that often in Luxembourg because the price difference for food products is relatively high. (Rhineland-Palatinate–Luxembourg)*

The second most frequent everyday practices performed in Luxembourg are leisure activities and visits to cultural events, which slightly less than half of the cross-border commuters carry out in their country of work (Table 3). What is particularly appreciated are the multilingual cultural opportunities in Luxembourg City, which in terms of cultural policy is intended to compete with other large European cities:

*I also spend time in Luxembourg outside of my work. In the first two years that was different, but then, gradually ... you also get a wider range of cultural activities there than here where I live—here it's just countryside. (Rhineland-Palatinate–Luxembourg)*

*Occasionally, I also spend some time in Luxembourg. I go to restaurants, the theatre, and cultural events. (Lorraine–Luxembourg)*

*In the summer, I sometimes drive over with the family, perhaps to Echternach—then the border doesn't really exist; we also go for walks with the kids, or cycling. (Rhineland-Palatinate–Luxembourg)*

Finally, we can observe among the cross-border commuters a clear preference for the country of residence when going to see the doctor, which is why visits to the doctor – which cross-border commuters can also carry out abroad – are the least frequent everyday practice in Luxembourg (Table 3). Conversations with cross-border commuters have indicated that one advantage of seeing the doctor in the Grand Duchy is that waiting times for consultation appointments with specialists in Luxembourg are distinctly shorter than in France, for instance.

The findings show that cross-border commuters perform everyday activities in the country of employment, and they do this more often than the rest of border-region residents. This finding should however not obscure the fact that despite everyday cross-border mobility, many cross-border commuters prefer the country of residence for carrying out everyday practices. Cross-border commuters explained this, such as in Wille (2012), with financially more favorable leisure activities in the country of residence, long travelling hours, lack of social contacts in Luxembourg or with a habitus centered on the private sphere:

*I rarely spend time in Luxembourg outside the job – very rarely. I occasionally go to a fair or a movie, but otherwise I don't go to Luxembourg any more – because then I'm glad not to have to take the car again. And I don't stay there directly after work either. (Rhineland-Palatinate–Luxembourg)*

*No, I live in Metz, and that's a long way away. I don't spend much time in Luxembourg outside my work. I have lunch in Luxembourg, but I don't eat there in the evenings, because I don't know of many places to go in Luxembourg. My partner also lives in Metz and my friends are mostly here. I've never thought of going out in Luxembourg because that doesn't interest me. (Lorraine–Luxembourg)*

*Even for lunch, I often eat at the canteen in the bank, and I arrive by train at eight thirty and take the train back at six. So it's rare that I stay in Luxembourg after work. (Lorraine–Luxembourg)*

### 3 Residential migrants

After having taken a closer look at the cross-border commuters, this section now turns to cross-border residential migration, which was detectable in the Greater Region up until the 1990s, in particular at the border between the Saarland and Lorraine (cf. Wille 2011). On the Luxembourg border, residential migrants are still a recent phenomenon, which has, however, gained considerable significance since the turn of the millennium and is increasingly shaping life in the districts in Germany, France, and Belgium that are close to the border. The residential migrants include not only Luxembourgers, but also French people, Germans, and Belgians as well as other foreign nationals who move primarily due to the price differences for real estate and building lots that exist between Luxembourg and the bordering countries. In the following, we will first outline the development of residential migration since the turn of the millennium, and then investigate the questions of what effects moving house has on social contacts at the former and the new place of residence, and how everyday practices are distributed spatially after relocating.

Statements about the volume and the features of cross-border residential migrants can only be made with great caution, since there is as yet insufficient detailed information on the migration movements that are of interest to us. The present data have been made available by regional statistical offices in the Saarland, in Rhineland-Palatinate, in Lorraine, and in Wallonia, and differ greatly in their significance.<sup>2</sup> We therefore have to draw primarily on information regarding the subgroup of atypical cross-border commuters, who are better covered by the Luxembourg office of statistics. These are people who, after moving out of Luxembourg into a neighboring region, continue to work in the Grand Duchy, thus differentiating themselves—in an atypical way—from the group of cross-border commuters who do not work in their country of origin.

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2 The office of statistics in Lorraine (INSEE) provides figures for the number of people of Luxembourgish nationality living in Lorraine in the years 1999 and 2010; the office of statistics in Wallonia (IWEPS) provides no figures.

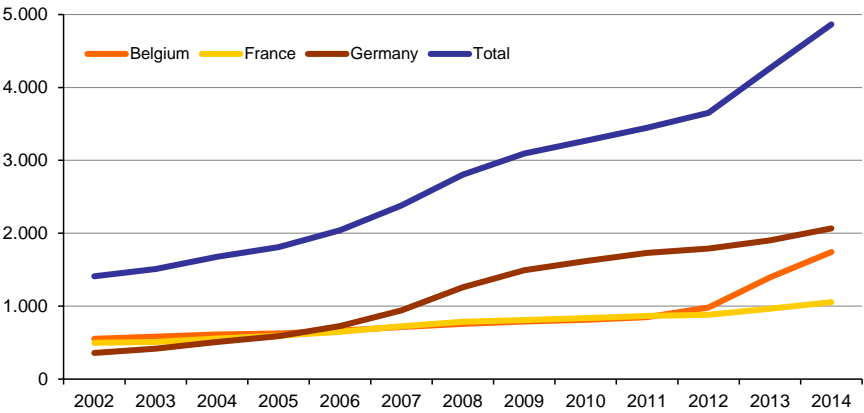


Image 2: Development of cross-border commuters with Luxembourgish nationality and Luxembourg as country of work by countries of residence 2002–2014 /Source: Inspection Générale de la Sécurité Sociale (Luxembourg)

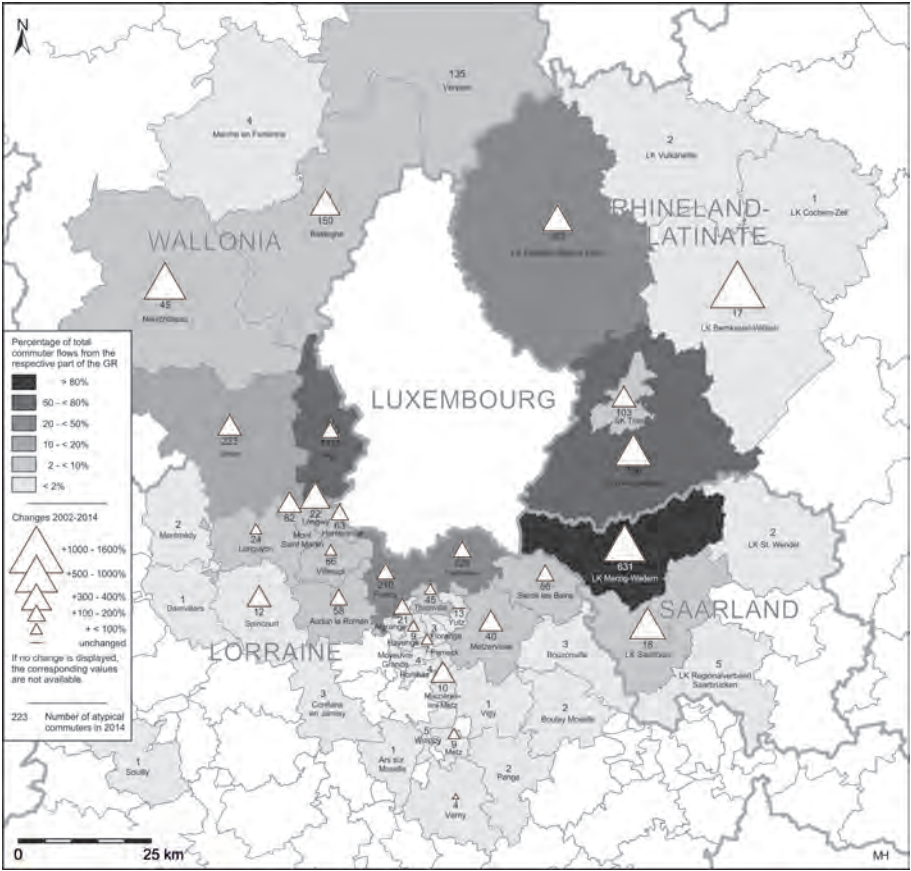


Image 3: Cross-border commuters with Luxembourgish nationality and Luxembourg as country of work by residential districts 2014, and changes in percent 2002-2014/ Source: Inspection Générale de la Sécurité Sociale (Luxembourg), cartography: Malte Helfer

In 2014, the number of atypical cross-border commuters with Luxembourgish nationality totaled only 4,865 people, but since 2002 it has increased 3.5-fold—particularly in the border regions (Image 3). The majority commutes to Luxembourg from Germany (42.5%), followed by Belgium (35.8%) and France (21.7%). This distribution is the result of a shift that has occurred in the last decade: while until the early 2000s, more than two-thirds of the atypical cross-border commuters still lived in the Belgian and French regions, it is Rhineland-Palatinate and Saarland that have gained importance in recent years. Since 2006, they have constituted the largest group of atypical commuters with Luxembourgish nationality (Image 2). The most recent developments show that atypical cross-border commuters increasingly come from Belgium to Luxembourg to work (Image 2), which, however, can be interpreted as a real increase in the phenomenon to only a limited extent. This is connected to the fact that since 2010 it has become easier to acquire Luxembourgish citizenship—provided one can prove Luxembourgish ancestry—and that this has been acquired by many Belgians in recent years. Some of the cross-border commuters employed in

Luxembourg anyway have since then been listed in the official statistics as a typical cross-border commuters.

In their study of atypical cross-border commuters, Brosius/Carpentier (2010) additionally incorporate people of non-Luxembourg nationality and observe for the years 2001 to 2007 that the Luxembourgers constitute only a quarter of this group. By contrast, people of German, French, and Belgian nationality constitute a remarkably high percentage (57%), followed by Portuguese (10%) and people of other nationalities (8%). The atypical cross-border commuters of French, Belgian, and German nationality have, in the course of cross-border residential migration, almost without exception chosen their new place of residence in their land of origin.

In the following, we will take a closer look at the volume and the key developments of residential migration in the different regions of the Greater Region. On the basis of the available official statistics, we will take into account here not only atypical cross-border commuters, but also people of Luxembourgish nationality as well as people who have moved from Luxembourg.

In 2011, 2,725 Luxembourgish nationals lived in the Saarland. Since 2001, their number has increased more than threefold. Particularly strong changes compared to the previous year can be observed in the years 2006 and 2007, in which the number of Luxembourgers increased annually by up to a third (33.2% in 2008/2007). But with the economic and financial crisis, the momentum collapsed abruptly, so that growth slowed down markedly in the following years—albeit with a continuous positive tendency. The number of annual moves from Luxembourg to the Saarland has also increased more than threefold in the last decade: whereas in 2000, 161 moves from Luxembourg were registered, in 2011 it was already 576. Here we can observe that after 2008, an annually increasing number of non-Luxembourgers moved out of the Grand Duchy.

In Rhineland-Palatinate, the number of Luxembourgers has increased by more than four times since 1995: while 1,422 Luxembourgish nationals lived in the federal state that year, in 2012 it was already 5,637. Within this period, we can distinguish between three phases: in the years 2000–2004—with rates of annual change still below 10%—we can observe an initial increase in moves by Luxembourgers; between 2004 and 2008, the annual rates of change increased by up to 20%; and finally the momentum slowed down markedly after 2008. The majority of Luxembourgers (90%) lived in close proximity to the border: 43% in the rural district of Trier-Saarburg, 36.2% in the Eifel district of Bitburg-Prüm and 10.2% in the urban district of Trier. As regards the moves to Rhineland-Palatinate, in 2012 1,242 people from the Grand Duchy were counted, comprising 726 Luxembourgers and 516 non-Luxembourgers. The percentage of annual moves accounted for by non-Luxembourgers has remained at around 40% since the mid-2000s.

Analogously to the increase in moves from Luxembourg, the number of atypical cross-border commuters who reside in Germany has also increased, as mentioned above. Almost all of the 2,067 Luxembourg commuters (2014) with Luxembourg nationality coming from Germany lived in the neighboring Rhineland-Palatinate and

in the Saarland. The majority lived in Rhineland-Palatinate (1,366), and here particularly in the districts Trier-Saarburg and Bitburg-Prüm. Approximately a third lived in the Saarland (657), where they lived primarily in the border district of Merzig-Wadern. The most significant residential communities of the atypical cross-border commuters living in Germany are the municipalities of Perl, Trier, Mettlach, Nittel, Palzem, Freudenburg, Wincheringen, and Konz. Since the mid-2000s, areas further away from the Luxembourg border have also been affected by the phenomenon of residential migration.

In 1999, 2,550 Luxembourgers lived in Lorraine, and 2,399 in 2010. This corresponds to a drop of 6% within eleven years. The available statistics, however, only provide information on people of Luxembourgish nationality, while those of other nationalities who moved from Luxembourg (e.g. French or Portuguese) are not included here. But we can assume that their proportion of the Lorraine resident population is not insignificant, since 84% or 59% of the gainfully employed French and Portuguese who have moved their place of residence into the neighboring country moved to Lorraine (cf. Brosius/Carpentier 2010, p. 32). The atypical cross-border commuters with Luxembourgish nationality have more than doubled (112%) in the last decade (2002–2014); in 2014, their numbers amounted to 1,055. Two-thirds of them lived in the Moselle department, in particular in the cantons of Cattenom and Fontoy. Around one third was registered in Meurthe-et-Moselle department, particularly in the cantons Villerupt, Audun-le-Romain, Herserange, and Mont-Saint-Michel.

There are no statistical data available regarding resident Luxembourgers or the annual number of moves from Luxembourg into Wallonia. But the information on the 1,743 (2014) Luxembourgers living in Belgium who work in the Grand Duchy provides some pointers. 89% of them lived in the Wallonian province of Luxembourg; their numbers there increased threefold between 2002 and 2014, and in 2014 amounted to 1,553 people. They lived primarily in the Arrondissement d'Arlon (72%), followed by the Arrondissement de Virton (14.4%). The most significant areas of residence of atypical cross-border commuters living in Belgium include Arlon, Aubange, Messancy, Bastogne, und Attert (cf. Gengler 2010, p. 270). Recently we have also been able to observe an increase in the atypical cross-border commuters in the Arrondissement Verviers, which belongs to the German-speaking community of Belgium.

For the past decade, we can, in summary, observe a continuous increase in cross-border residential migrants from Luxembourg and, coupled with that, an increase in atypical cross-border commuting. Here, neighboring Germany is particularly popular as a country of residence compared to neighboring France and Belgium. It needs to be pointed out that the situation outlined above only very approximately reflects the actual development and the extent of residential migration, because the number of those who move while keeping their place of residence in Luxembourg, for all kinds of reasons—and are thus not included in the statistics on population movements—is presumably significant. We can therefore assume that the phenomenon of cross-border residential migration is far more marked than it has been possible to describe here.

### 3.1 Social contacts at the place of residence/work

In the following, we will look at the development of social contacts also with regard to the group of residential migrants. Drawing on Wille et al. (2016), we will examine the question of how far individuals' social relations with various groups of people in the former and the new place of residence have changed since moving into a neighboring region.

With regard to Luxembourg, one can first observe a reduction in social contacts there, since the interviewees state that since moving, they see friends (41%) and family (14%) in the Grand Duchy less frequently. This is also confirmed by the findings provided by Roos (2016, p. 352): even though residential migrants maintain contact with friends/acquaintances and relatives in Luxembourg—since their circle of friends there is often larger than in their new place of residence—despite their good intentions, their visits become less frequent the longer they live in the neighboring country:

*In the beginning I always said to my friends: 'Once a week I'll always be down there.' Now not any more at all. There is nothing that makes me want to go there. If it wasn't for my grandchild, I'd go there even less often. (Residential migrant in Germany)*

This development in their visiting habits is often explained by the greater geographic distance and subsequently longer travelling times. Carpentier/Gerber (2010, p. 89f.) observe here a doubling of driving times among atypical cross-border commuters after moving. To avoid additional journeys, Roos' (2016) interview partner combines work-related and personal appointments, or invites friends and family to their new place of residence:

*When there is something on in Luxembourg and I have to work anyway, when I'm doing a late shift for instance and they have something organized and then the next day I have a late shift or an early shift again, then I stay down there. Then I stay there. [...] But when there's something on, I say to my mother: 'Come on up.' As long as my father still drives—he's 76 [...]—and likes to drive, he can come here. My mother also likes to come here. It's something totally different for her. (Residential migrant in Germany)*

The quantitative and qualitative findings show that moving primarily reduces social contact to friends in the Grand Duchy, while family relations remain stable. But on the other hand new friendships develop in the course of these migrants changing their place of residence, as more than half of the interviewees had made friends at their new place of residence, although new social contacts with locals (69%) seem to be more common than with fellow residential migrants (55%). These findings provided by Wille et al. (2016) can be explained by the residential migrants' stated intentions to integrate locally—as, for instance, described by Boesen/Schnuer (2015)—as well as by the desire of some to distance themselves from their own group of fellow residential migrants. Such efforts at local integration are also reflected in the results presented by Roos (2016, p. 351, 353), according to which there is a great variety of neighborly contact with locals, which develops in everyday life, but also at parties or in situations of mutual support:



*We reach out to people. It's not that we stand in a corner and don't talk to anyone, for example, when something happens.* (Residential migrant in Germany)

*If you're pruning roses and someone stops, then sure, you have a chat. Happened to me a couple of times. Someone came along and said: 'Oh, but you have to do some more pruning here.' OK, I've no idea. This is my first garden. I prune where I think it's right. 'No, but you have to do some more here.'* (Residential migrant in Germany)

*Also, when there's work to do, you help each other. One of our neighbors is coming over now to borrow our trailer. Also, when there's something that needs to get done: 'Can you give me a hand for an afternoon?' they immediately say yes. We do too because we're used to it from back home. There we also did that, that everybody lends a hand.* (Residential migrant in Germany)

In terms of social contacts beyond the immediate living environment of one's home, a residential migrant living in the district town of Merzig mentions membership of associations that promote contact with locals:

*Joining clubs and associations. That's something you can do immediately. It's easy to make friends there. Then there's always someone who knows someone else and so on.* (Residential migrant in Germany) (Roos 2016, p. 354).

Among the residential migrants interviewed, the desire for social inclusion at their new place of residence is directed primarily at the local population. Contact to other Luxembourgers, by contrast, is less explicitly sought; in the interview we can even observe tendencies to dissociate oneself. For instance, for the interviewee, the municipality of Perl was out of the question as a place of residence, because too many residential migrants from Luxembourg live there:

*But Perl didn't appeal to me at all. Not that I'm a racist, but there are just too many Luxembourgers. That's too many for me.* (Residential migrant in Germany)

Despite this kind of rejection, social contacts also develop between residential migrants and other non-locals. Such informal networks common in the context of migration serve for the exchange of information, experience and the collective use of material goods. For networks between non-locals to form, places of sociability relevant to everyday life such as the neighborhood (34%), place of work (29%), or associations (13%) seem to play an important role, since the residential migrants also state that these are places where they have got to know other people who moved from the Grand Duchy (cf. Wille et al. 2016).

We can observe that, for practical reasons, contact to existing friends and family at a migrant's former place of residence is limited in the course of them changing their place of residence, in particular contact to friends in Luxembourg. At the same time, however, friendships develop at their new place of residence through encounters in the neighborhood, associations, and at their place of work, primarily with the local population and to a lesser extent with other residential migrants.

### 3.2 Everyday cross-border practices

In a further step, we will inquire how residential migrants from Luxembourg organize their everyday practices in spatial terms. Wille et al. (2016) have investigated which (selected) everyday practices residential migrants perform in which of the countries in question. Here we can generally observe that after moving, residential migrants visit Luxembourg particularly frequently for everyday practices (Table 4), which suggests a “certain attachment to the country of origin” (Carpentier/Gerber 2010, p. 97).

|            | Shopping | Grocery shopping | Recreation/ Tourism | Cultural events | Going out | Seeing the doctor | Club and association activities |
|------------|----------|------------------|---------------------|-----------------|-----------|-------------------|---------------------------------|
| France     | 38       | 30               | 51                  | 28              | 21        | 18                | 16                              |
| Luxembourg | 86       | 65               | 56                  | 65              | 65        | 86                | 22                              |
| Belgium    | 33       | 23               | 34                  | 32              | 23        | 23                | 9                               |
| Germany    | 41       | 34               | 39                  | 33              | 23        | 20                | 6                               |

Table 4: Spatial distribution of everyday practices by countries for residential migrants from Luxembourg in the Greater Region, in percent (multiple entries, N=56) /Source: Wille et al. 2016

This is evident in particular in shopping activities and doctor’s visits, which show a strong discrepancy between which ones are performed in the country of residence and which in Luxembourg (Tab. 4). With regard to doctor’s visits, the interviewees differentiated between GPs and specialists. While a number of the interviewees in Wille et al. (2016) and Roos (2016) had already looked for a new GP at their place of residence—which is probably due to the geographic proximity and a greater regularity of visits compared to specialists—primarily the latter continue to be consulted in Luxembourg. This is explained by the fact that specialists will have been familiar with the interviewees’ medical history for many years and that this has created a relationship of trust:

*I still go to see several doctors in Luxembourg. Those are my doctors that I’ve been going to for years. But otherwise, my daughter goes to the ophthalmologist here, and she also wants to look for a dentist here. But for the rest ... And we just have this one GP here. For that, we don’t go to Luxembourg anymore, only to the specialists.* (Residential migrant in Germany)

*Well, I also still have some doctors in Luxembourg who have treated me for four years and who know my medical history. So it’s easier for me to go there than to explain my medical history all over again.* (Residential migrant in France)

Next, we will turn to shopping and attending cultural events, which occur approximately twice as often in the Grand Duchy than in the migrants’ country of residence (Tab. 4). Restaurants, bars, cinemas, theatres, etc. in Luxembourg hold a particular attraction, since here there is a wider discrepancy between the opportunities for such activities in the country of residence and in the Grand Duchy (Tab. 4).

Shopping behavior was determined, for some of the interviewees (cf. Wille et al. 2016; Roos 2016, p. 353), primarily by the differences in price and range of products between the different countries (cf. Wille 2015, p. 136) and maximization of personal benefit. Thus, certain products—such as food and clothes—are mostly bought in the country of residence, where they are as a rule cheaper, while alcohol, petrol, and tobacco continue to be bought in the Grand Duchy:

*We cherry-pick. What we like better in Luxembourg we do there. [...] Shopping we do here. We don't do any shopping in Luxembourg anymore. [...] We fill up our cars with gas in Luxembourg.* (Residential migrant in Germany)

Other interviewees in Wille et al. (2016), however, emphasize that for them it is not the price but the quality of the products that is important, which is why they shop in Luxembourg despite the higher prices. But this is financially only possible because their place of residence is in the neighboring country and money can be saved this way and invested elsewhere:

*Well, I come from the country, meaning I like to know where the things I buy come from ... when I buy meat then I like to buy Luxembourgish meat. When I buy vegetables then I also go to the market. That's just the cook in me, who always pops up; it's not that I don't trust their stuff, but it's just a different quality. And with the prices that we save in Belgium with housing I can still afford the quality from Luxembourg. If I were living here [in Luxembourg], I probably wouldn't go shopping here; that's the irony of it.* (Residential migrant in Belgium)

We can see a relatively balanced distribution of everyday practices between country of residence and Luxembourg in the migrants' touristic practices and recreation in green surroundings. Even though interviewees visit the Grand Duchy most frequently for these activities, leisure opportunities in neighboring France seem to be equally attractive (Tab. 4). In addition, interviewees in Wille et al. (2016) mention leisure activities in Belgium and Germany, for instance motorbike trips or visits to concerts, restaurants, open-air swimming pools, or Christmas markets:

*In the Saarland for instance, when it's nice weather and warm outside, there are swimming pools that we don't have in the region. They have big open-air pools and big lawns. When we can't go on a vacation, the children like that. Yes, and Rhineland-Palatinate, we have some friends there too. Once in a while we go there for the weekend. We also like to go to the Christmas market in Trier, because we used to live in Grevenmacher.* (Residential migrant in France)

Also for the generally poorly developed practice of attending association events, Luxembourg continues to be important, even though residential migrants in France participate relatively frequently in local associations (Table 4). And after moving, a residential migrant in Germany did decide to join an association at his new place of residence because he expected social integration would be easier this way.

The quantitative and qualitative results show that Luxembourg continues to be an important reference for residential migrants after moving. Besides the reasons already mentioned, this is also due to the atypical cross-border commuters among the interviewees, whose employment brings them back to Luxembourg regularly. With regard to this subgroup, the findings presented by Carpentier/Gerber (2010, p. 91) permit more differentiated statements than is possible with the above data; they observe that the new place of residence of the atypical cross-border commuters indeed plays a role in the way they conduct everyday practices. One needs to take into account, however, that more than half of the interviewees included German, Belgian, and French nationals. Even before moving, they had already conducted numerous everyday practices in their country of origin. Luxembourgers and Portuguese, by contrast, performed their activities almost exclusively in the Grand Duchy. Among them, one can observe a continued strong attachment to their country of origin after moving, since around half of their everyday activities continue to take place in Luxembourg. With atypical cross-border commuters of German, French, and Belgian nationality, by contrast, one can observe a shift of everyday practices into their new country of residence.

Against this background, we can say that residential migrants continue to conduct particular everyday practices after moving (also) in Luxembourg, in the case of atypical cross-border commuters who benefited from their everyday cross-border mobility. Probably there are differences between residential migrants with Luxembourgish and Portuguese nationality who for the most part no longer reside in the Grand Duchy and have a stronger geographic anchoring, and residential migrants with nationalities of their new countries of residence, who probably concentrate their everyday activities more on their new place of residence.

#### **4 Conclusion**

This contribution has examined two mobile groups of people at the Luxembourgish border in order to gain insights into the everyday lives of cross-border workers. To this end, we discussed the development of their social contacts at their place of work and/or residence, as well as the spatial organization of everyday practices of cross-border commuters and residential migrants.

Our observations have shown that cross-border commuters do indeed maintain relationships with friends and family in Luxembourg, albeit distinctly less than in their country of residence. Compared to other border-region residents, their social contacts—in particular friendships—in the neighboring country or country of employment are more marked, which can be ascribed to the everyday cross-border mobility of cross-border commuters and the concomitant contacts at their place of work. We further observed that friendships outside of the context of work tend to be rare, a fact which cross-border commuters explain with long journeys, family obligations, and generally a lack of time. So while cross-border commuters maintain social contacts in both their country of residence and that of their work, their contact to friends and family in their country of residence predominates.

As regards residential migrants, we were able to establish that, after moving, they visit friends and relatives in the Grand Duchy less often than before. This applies in particular to friendships, which is explained by longer travelling times. On the other hand, residential migrants form new friendly contacts at their place of residence, in particular with members of the local population. Typical places of sociability such as the neighborhood, clubs and associations, or place of work are especially relevant. For the most part, their connections with relatives remain stable after moving, while those with friends are reduced, with new contacts developing at their place of residence.

As far as the spatial organization of everyday practices is concerned, it became clear that cross-border commuters conduct these more frequently in Luxembourg than the border-region inhabitants on the whole. These primarily involve consumption and going out, which are often connected with working in the Grand Duchy. Nevertheless, commuters prefer their country of residence for everyday activities, which is explained by more favorable leisure opportunities in their country of residence, long journeys, or a lack of social contacts in Luxembourg. Thus, while cross-border commuters also perform their everyday activities in Luxembourg, they do this very selectively and are guided by economic considerations.

For residential migrants—in particular those of Luxembourgish and Portuguese nationality—we can establish that they continue to conduct certain everyday practices in the Grand Duchy after moving, and also complementing others in their region of residence. A relevant factor here is not only the subgroup of atypical cross-border commuters who connect errands with their work in Luxembourg. Equally important are habits, (new) financial scope, trust (in doctors or in the quality of products), and economic considerations. Residential migrants continue to perform their everyday activities on both sides of the Luxembourgish border after moving, with the Grand Duchy remaining an important region of reference for many of them.

The comparison of cross-border commuters and residential migrants shows that one can indeed speak of cross-border everyday lives at the Luxembourgish border. Both groups maintain social contacts on both sides of the border; connections with relatives remain for the most part unchanged in the course of cross-border mobility. On the other hand, new mobility-related friendly contacts develop in their immediate work and residential environments. Everyday practices are also carried out by both groups on both sides of the Luxembourgish border, with the Grand Duchy being visited for different reasons: while cross-border commuters prefer their country of residence for everyday practices and make use of opportunities in Luxembourg for rational and practical reasons, for residential migrants it is often routines and emotional reasons that play a role in them conducting their everyday practices in Luxembourg.

Against this background, the aforementioned effectiveness of European interior borders can be qualified for the region under review, which however should not obscure the (latently) continuing spatial fragmentations, such as the preferences for their country of residence voiced by cross-border commuters or the characterization, made by some residential migrants, of their new place of residence as a “place

to sleep”. In addition, the organization in nation states with their system-related differences (e.g. the level of taxes and prices or the real estate and labor market) has to be regarded as territorial fragmentation, which, however, encourages cross-border lifeworlds at the Luxembourgish border—motivated by maximization of personal benefit—and continues to be constitutive for the issues discussed here.

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Frank Baur, Barbara Dröschel

## CROSS-BORDER COOPERATION IN THE ENERGY SECTOR\*

### Contents

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- 2 Status quo – Energy in the Greater Region
  - 2.1 Starting point and objectives
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### Abstract

The recent history of the Greater Region has been strongly characterised by fossil fuels. The area thus faces significant challenges as a model region in terms of the cross-border activities necessary to meet the requirements of climate protection and the energy transition. Based on the targets defined in Europe, this paper presents examples of approaches to action and projects undertaken in the field of energy in the Greater Region. Experiences gathered in the area – including those of the authors – reveal the need for action, firstly in relation to the implementation of structures and networks, and secondly to the potential development of research excellence in the field of energy/climate protection. As relevant actors in the energy transition, the municipalities have a particular role to play here.

### Keywords

Energy transition – climate protection – cross-border energy projects – network structures – zero-emissions municipalities – research platform

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\* This article was first published in 2018 and is based on data from 2017 and previous years. As such, the figures presented in this article do not reflect the European member states' most recent progress in terms of renewable energy targets, the current state of European climate policy or the more recent developments regarding the European exchange of electricity.



## 1 Introduction: Energy targets – The European challenge

In the 2020 Climate and Energy Package,<sup>1</sup> the European Union (EU) has set binding targets for greater climate protection, the expansion of renewable energies (RES) and increased energy efficiency. The package sets the following three key targets:

- > 20% cut in greenhouse gas emissions (from 1990 levels)
- > 20% of EU energy from renewables
- > 20% improvement in energy efficiency<sup>2</sup>

To achieve these targets, directives have been adopted requiring all member states to cover a certain proportion of their energy consumption through renewable energy (Directive 2009/28/EC) and to increase energy efficiency in the heating and electricity supply (Directive 2012/27/EU). The reduction in greenhouse gas emissions is also addressed by the European Emissions Trading instrument, which, following a reform, aims to ensure that the sectors affected will produce 30% fewer emissions in 2030<sup>3</sup> than in 2005 in affected sectors.<sup>4</sup>

While emissions trading is centrally organised at EU level, the paths to achieving the renewable energy expansion targets and energy efficiency must be implemented and documented by each member state at country level.

New targets for the period 2020 to 2030 have already been agreed in this regard to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and further increase energy efficiency and to expand renewable energies (COM 2016). These can be represented as follows:

- > at least a 40% reduction in greenhouse gas emissions from 1990 levels
- > at least 27% of the total energy consumption to be supplied from renewable energy sources
- > at least a 27% increase in energy efficiency<sup>5</sup>

While the RES targets are expected to be met by most member states by 2020 (COM 2015a), the achievement of the efficiency targets by 2020 and even beyond is rather uncertain (COM 2014).

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1 [https://ec.europa.eu/clima/policies/strategies/2020\\_en](https://ec.europa.eu/clima/policies/strategies/2020_en) (16 May 2017).

2 Related to the consumption of primary energy in the forecast for 2020: this target translates into a reduction of 368 million tonnes of oil equivalent (Mtoe) and primary energy consumption (gross inland consumption less non-energetic uses) by 2020 compared to the consumption of 1,842 Mtoe, which is forecast for 2020 (<http://ec.europa.eu/energy/en/topics/energy-efficiency>) (16 May 2017).

3 Energy production and energy-intensive industry (approximately 12,000 plants across Europe).

4 [https://ec.europa.eu/clima/policies/strategies/2030\\_en](https://ec.europa.eu/clima/policies/strategies/2030_en) (16 May 2017).

5 Cf. footnote 4.

## 2 Status quo – Energy in the Greater Region

### 2.1 Starting point and objectives

France, Luxembourg and Belgium, among others, will have difficulties in achieving their targets for expanding renewable energy by 2020. It is clear that there is a need to develop joint strategies at European level, not least in view of the somewhat heterogeneous starting points of the various countries, both in the expansion of renewable energies and in energy efficiency. Figure 1 documents the expected achievement of the target for the expansion of renewable energy by all 28 member states by 2020.

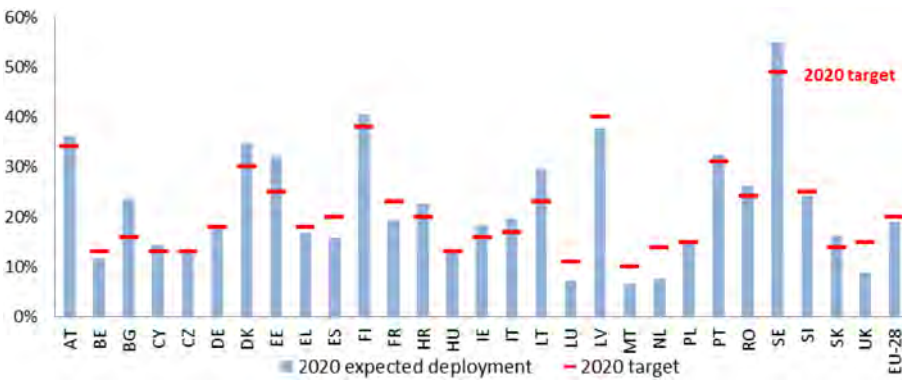


Fig. 1: Expected achievement of the target for expanding RES in the EU-28 countries<sup>6</sup> /Source: COM 2015a: 5

Developments in the EU towards achieving the climate protection targets by 2020 and beyond by 2030 are also uneven. In regard to European emissions trading, the CO<sub>2</sub> reduction target of -20% by 2020 compared to 1990 is likely to be overachieved at -24%. In the transport, agriculture and private household sectors, which are not covered by emissions trading, the targets set out in the so-called ‘Effort Sharing Regulation’ are not expected to be met by only four member states, including Luxembourg and Belgium (COM 2015b).

As regards the climate protection targets by 2030 agreed under the European Emissions Trading Scheme, the planned 40% reduction in greenhouse gas emissions is expected to be missed by a margin of 13% with the instruments currently implemented in the member states (a 27% reduction is likely) (COM 2015a: 10).

<sup>6</sup> The graph is based on data from the member states up to 2013. All policies implemented after 2013 to promote RES have not been taken into account.

Nevertheless, the Greater Region has a comparatively heterogeneous starting point with regard to the strategic objectives and framework conditions of the energy sector. This is reflected in (generally national) targets which are similar in and of themselves but which express differing levels of ambition for the reduction of greenhouse gas emissions and RES shares by 2020.

Figures 2 to 5 show the progress made by Belgium, Luxembourg, Germany and France under Directive 2009/28/EC. The actual expansion of RES in 2013 (darker colours) is compared to the respective target for 2020 (lighter colours) in the electricity, heat and transport sectors (Keep on track 2015).

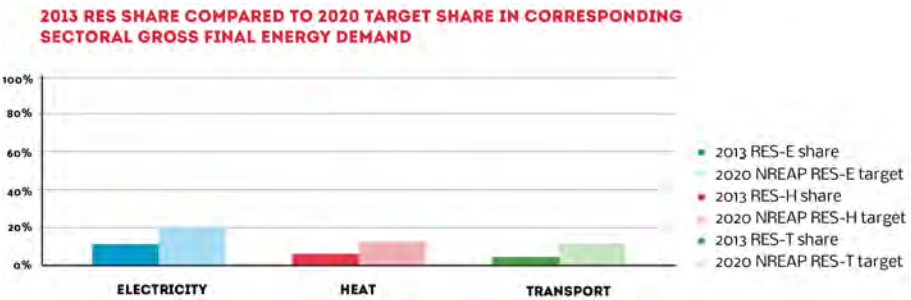


Fig. 2: Actual expansion of renewable energy compared to the target in Belgium (as in 2013) / Source: Keep on track 2015: 22

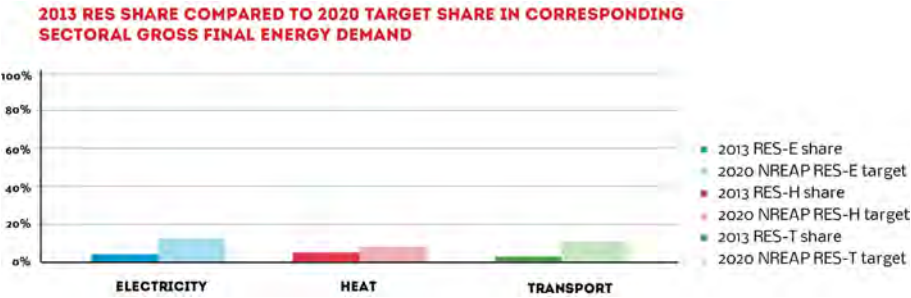


Fig. 3: Actual expansion of renewable energy compared to the target in Luxembourg (as in 2013) / Source: Keep on track 2015: 70

The figures show that the target levels vary widely from one country to another and that there is still a long way to go to achieve the target for 2020, particularly in Belgium and Luxembourg. This lag could be compensated by closer cooperation in the border region, as already started by the projects mentioned below.

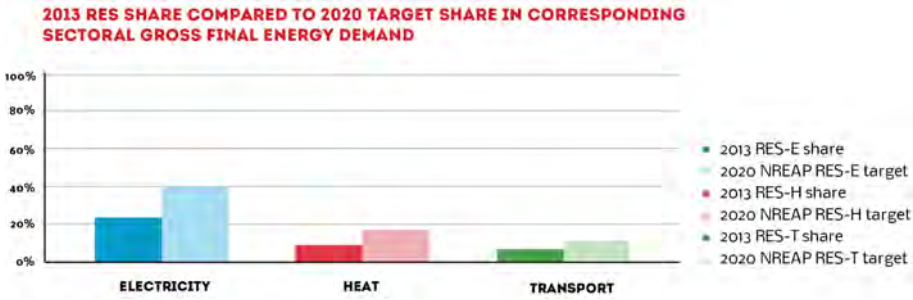


Fig. 4: Actual expansion of renewable energy compared to the target in Germany (as of 2013) /Source: Keep on track 2015: 49.

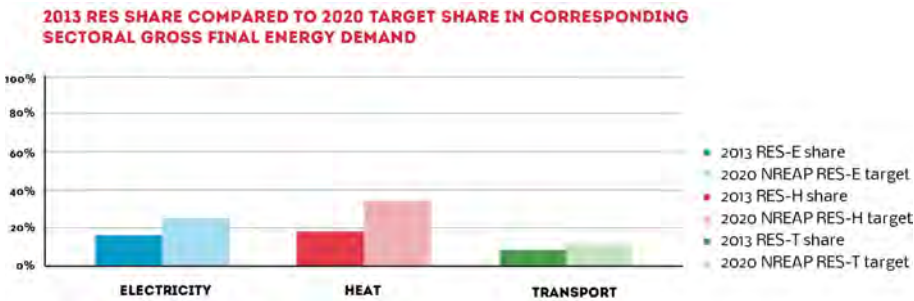


Fig. 5: Actual expansion of renewable energy compared to the target in France (as of 2013) /Source: Keep on track 2015: 46

With regard to incentive systems and financing mechanisms for the expansion of renewable energy in the Greater Region, different instruments have been implemented in the currently very dynamic environment. The following options may serve as examples (in part also as a mix):

- > fixed feed-in tariffs for renewable electricity
- > defined RES expansion corridors; flexible caps, in which feed-in tariffs are linked to the RES expansion
- > tendering process models, quota models
- > flexibility incentives (e.g. biomass)
- > with/without incentives for biomethane feed-in
- > investment grants (e.g. heat market)

Depending on the financing mechanism (and associated investment security), various stakeholder structures are involved in the corresponding project developments.

Taking into account the long-term (by 2050) successes that will be required to reduce greenhouse gas emissions in accordance with the COP 21,<sup>7</sup> this shows the need for increased cooperation in the climate protection and energy sectors at both transnational/international and at the transnational/interregional levels. Corresponding contexts and approaches are thematised below with reference to the example of the Greater Region.

## **2.2 Cross-border cooperation in relation to energy – Approaches in the Greater Region**

Directive 2009/28/EC on promoting the use of energy from renewable sources provides for cross-border cooperation between member states. The further development of the internal energy market in the important electricity sector also aims at an established, sustainable energy exchange and trade across national borders, which should contribute to greater climate protection, affordable energy prices and security of supply. However, significant efforts are still needed to achieve and unite both the climate protection targets and the objectives of a European Energy Union.<sup>8</sup> At present, there is more evidence of a conflict of objectives between climate protection and further integration of the electricity market.

The electricity trade within the EU was regulated for the first time by Regulation 1228/2003, which sets out conditions for access to the network for cross-border exchanges in electricity. Since then, the intensity of trade between member states has developed considerably. For example, the electricity trade between Germany and other EU countries increased from 59,878 GWh in 2010 to 74,588 GWh in 2014 (ENTSOE Database 2015).<sup>9</sup>

The conversion of the CWE Market Coupling<sup>10</sup> to the load flow method in May 2015 has made it possible to reduce grid bottlenecks in the cross-border electricity exchange/trade and to prioritise, at least theoretically, renewable energy with almost no marginal costs. This coupling of previously disparate markets is intended to level price differences in the individual bidding zones and to make optimal use of boundary coupling points for physical load flows.

However, as European emissions trading has been missing its target for years, coal and lignite power plants in Germany in particular can produce electricity particularly cheaply. This is increasingly being exported abroad because it is not needed in Germany due to the favourable cost structure of renewable energy and its feed-in

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7 UN Climate Conference Paris Nov/Dec 2015: Climate Agreement limiting global warming to well below 2°C, 1.5°C if possible.

8 On the current status of the Energy Union, see COM 2015c.

9 <https://www.entsoe.eu/data/data-portal/exchange/Pages/default.aspx>, for download: Detailed Electricity Exchange (16 May 2017).

10 <https://www.entsoe.eu/data/data-portal/exchange/Pages/default.aspx>, for download: Detailed Electricity Exchange (16 May 2017).

priority. As a result, German coal-fired power is displacing more expensive gas-fired power plants in Europe.<sup>11</sup>

In order to achieve the EU's desired climate protection targets in the integrated European electricity market, cross-border activities must be increasingly initiated, e.g. in the form of target-oriented research approaches as a basis for energy projects within the meaning of Directive 2009/28/EC. At the level of the Greater Region, however, there is currently no institutionalised cooperation in the field of energy, as has long been established in other areas such as culture, education or spatial planning. Therefore, the last Summit of the Greater Region in December 2016 instructed the Energy Working Group to progress the implementation of the relevant declaration of the Summit of March 2014 and to promote 'potential cooperation between universities, research institutes, companies and public authorities'.<sup>12</sup>

Not least against this background, the Greater Region positioned itself in terms of a joint development strategy for the energy sector at the Energy Summit in Trier in March 2014. The following points were documented, among others (Energy Summit of the Greater Region 2014):

- > Cross-border cooperation in energy policy is to be more closely coordinated in the future.
- > Energy dependence is to be reduced and the Greater Region's own energy production increased.
- > The Greater Region is expected to make a significant contribution to tackling climate change and can make a major contribution to the European energy transition. It sees itself as a European model region for renewable energy and energy efficiency.
- > Regional energy infrastructures will be further developed and networked across borders.
- > The existing regional, business and scientific networks are to cooperate more closely across borders in the future.
- > Greenhouse gas emissions associated with mobility in the Greater Region should be reduced, both in a regional and supra-regional context.

These target agreements were taken up again at the 14th Summit of the Greater Region in Mainz on 4 December 2014. This states that the Greater Region wants to 'contribute to the energy and climate protection goals of the European Union and reduce its dependency on increasingly scarce fossil fuels' (14th Summit of the Greater Region 2014).

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<sup>11</sup> See also Agora 2015.

<sup>12</sup> Joint Declaration of the 15th Summit of the Greater Region of 20 December 2016: 33.

The settlement structures relevant to the supply infrastructure cover both densely populated areas (partly shaped by the mining industry) as well as rural areas throughout the Greater Region, such that the aspect of urban-rural interaction is of great importance in terms of the supply of 'own' resources and mobility needs (living/working environments, supply of goods/services for daily needs).

The municipalities of the Greater Region are key players in the provision of public services with regard to the objectives and fields of action defined in the context of the energy transition due to their mediating function between different interests (e.g. citizens, land users, companies, etc.) as well as their planning responsibility for very heterogeneous issues and to a large extent for climate/energy-relevant issues (e.g. urban land-use planning, urban/regional development, utilities, transport planning). Strategically and operationally, they therefore have an important role to play, especially with regard to the transformation of the energy system – also and especially in the heat market – as well as the implementation of energy and resource efficiency measures or energy-saving measures. The focus in this regard is not only on the direct possibilities for action on the part of the local authorities, but also on the manifold possibilities of interaction with other municipal actors as well as the stringency of a planning responsibility to be claimed for the implementation of the Greater Region's objectives. In this context, new, additional areas of responsibility arise for the municipality on its way to becoming a 'zero-emissions municipality', which is necessary in the long term, with generally complex and trans-sectoral issues as well as a wide range of interactions (see Figure 6).

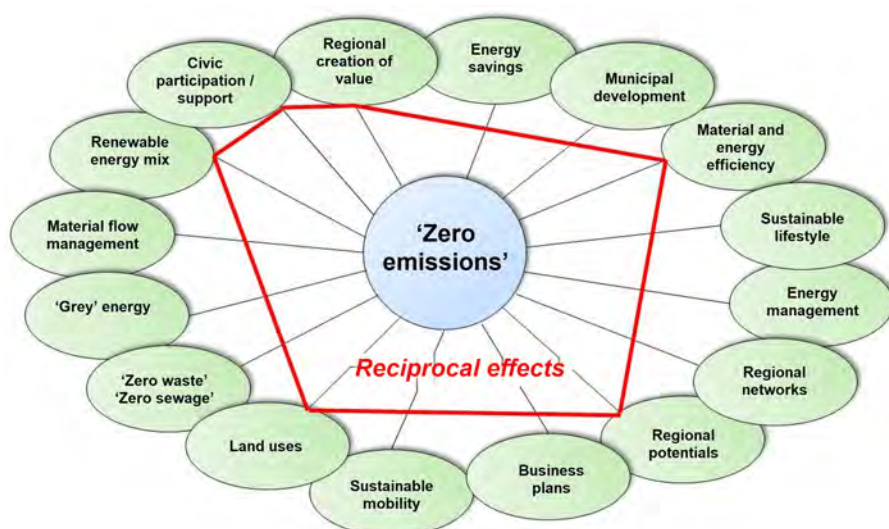


Fig. 6: Essential elements of zero emissions municipal strategies in the context of resulting responsibilities /Source: The authors, IZES (Institute for Future Energy Systems)

Against this background, a number of cross-border projects have been carried out in recent years, mainly based on INTERREG A funding, which have specifically focused on the issue of biomass due to its relevance for the area and the potential cross-border material flows. Some examples of such project approaches are explained below; the authors of the present paper took part in many of them.

***Project RUBIN – Regional strategy for the sustainable implementation of biomass use (INTERREG III A, Final report 2008)***

The RUBIN project approach was based on the fact that biomass use, e.g. can make a significant contribution to a sustainable energy supply due to the availability and potential of land in rural areas as well as the demand for energy in densely populated areas; it can also entail a high level of regional creation of value and lead to a strengthening of the region.<sup>13</sup> Despite the potential,<sup>14</sup> the development of biomass in the area stagnated and fell far short of the European and national targets. In order to address and potentially remove the existing barriers, the RUBIN project pursued the following objectives (IZES 2008):

- > Establish a biomass study to document the general regional conditions with regard to current resources (biomass potentials), activities, legal bases and technological possibilities.
- > Develop an interregional biomass strategy for the Greater Region in cooperation with the relevant political structures with a view to defining recommended actions.
- > Support and initiate model and pilot projects in the Greater Region, taking into account cross-border cooperation opportunities.
- > Establish and maintain regional and cross-border stakeholder networks, including communication activities, websites, information events, conferences and working groups.
- > Create an interregional biomass centre of excellence with the aim of strengthening the networking of existing research institutions and intensifying university cooperation.

Among other things, an analysis of potentials was undertaken; although the varying availability of data and methodological approaches of the project partners did not result in a uniform data structure for the study area, it nevertheless provided the first indications for a framework for the total available biomass. Figure 7 illustrates the potential of grassland grass in Saarland by way of example.

Together with political and administrative decision-makers, the project also developed the basic principles of an interregional biomass strategy. However, despite the consensus reached, it has not been possible to produce a politically legitimised paper for the whole region, which could be used to jointly further develop the biomass issue.

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<sup>13</sup> E.g. new fields of action in agriculture and forestry; securing a sustainable, regional energy supply.

<sup>14</sup> E.g. interested stakeholders/enterprises, biomass potentials, derelict land, innovative potential, etc.



The project approaches accompanied or initiated<sup>15</sup> initially pursued a primarily regionally-oriented approach, generally without cross-border effects. Only the efforts to establish the Warndt-Rosseltal energy region as part of the Saarbrücken/Moselle-Est METROPOL initiative had a cross-border focus, but despite great interest at the municipal level the project was not pursued further due to unclear structures in Lorraine.

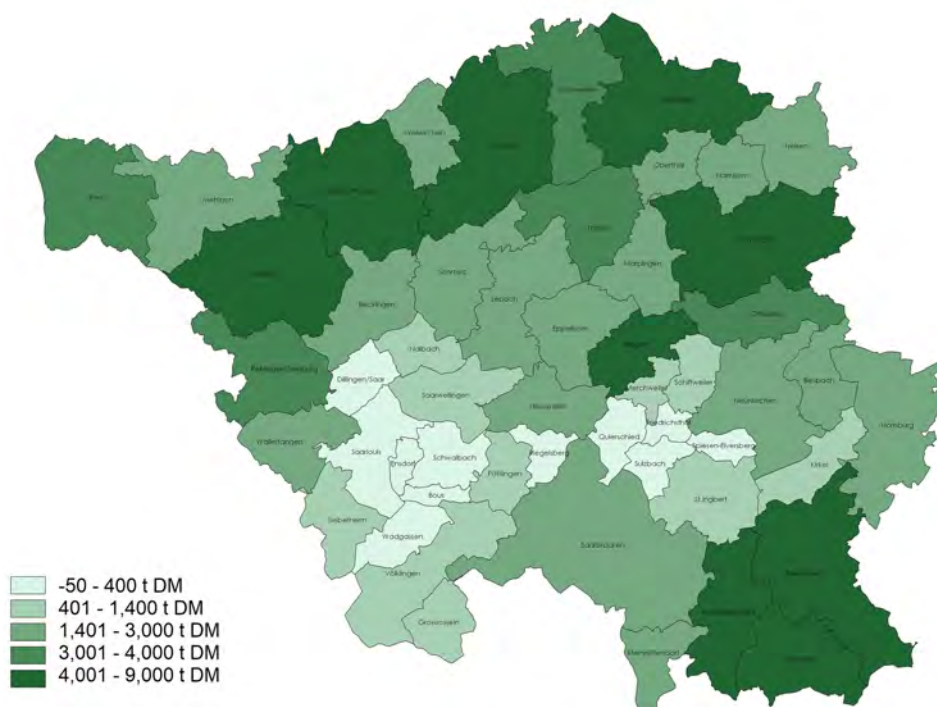


Fig. 7: Grass potential of each municipality in Saarland /Source: The authors, IZES

### **Saarland-Lorraine joint projects in the field of waste management (ongoing since 2012)**

A joint project between two waste management associations, EVS in Saarland and SYDEME in Lorraine, developed partly on the basis of the stakeholder networks formed through the RUBIN project. This project has now led to cross-border material flow management, in which residual waste from the SYDEME area is used for energy consumption in one of the two thermal treatment plants in Saarland. In return, part of the biowaste collected in Saarland is recycled at the SYDEME biowaste fermentation

<sup>15</sup> E.g. for the De-Lor study area: renewable energy centre at the Warndt former open-cast mining facility, recycling centre for by-products of a sawmill and planing plant on the Moselle, biogas plant for the recycling of green waste, renewable resources and landscape maintenance materials in the Saarpfalz district, implementation of the Méthavalor project of the SYDEME/Forbach, wood chip drying system at the Zweibrücken disposal and service plant, feasibility of two biogas plants for gas feed-in in the Perl-Merzig-Sierck-les-Bains border region.

plant in Forbach. Thanks to the ecological and economic improvements that were achieved, the waste management associations (Saarland) received the special prize for cross-border cooperation awarded by the German Association of Local Utilities (*Verband Kommunalen Unternehmen, VKU*) in 2013. It is currently planned to extend this joint project to the green-waste sector. The foundations for this were again developed in an INTERREG project.<sup>16</sup>

### ***ENERBIOM (project completed in 2011)***

The INTERREG IV A project ENERBIOM looked at the possibilities for the sustainable use of energy crops in the Greater Region. Scientists cooperated with the public administration to establish a regionally consistent definition of requirements profiles. In addition, interregional cultivation trials have been launched, some of which have been continued by other projects (OPTIBIOGAZ, ECOBIOGAZ) in recent years. The cultivation variants of these energy crops were investigated for their economic efficiency, eco-balance and practical relevance. The results provide important information for biogas plant operators on the sustainable use of substrates in their plants.

### ***OPTIBIOGAZ and ECOBIOGAZ***

The research contacts established in ENERBIOM were expanded with stakeholders in the biogas sector and further intensified in the INTERREG IV A project OPTIBIOGAZ (completed in 2012) and ECOBIOGAZ (completed in 2015). As a result, an inter-regional biogas research team was established in the Greater Region with largely compatible skills profiles (mutual learning).

The OPTIBIOGAZ project focused on the eco-balance and improvement of the general ecological conditions for the operation of biogas plants. The plants in the Greater Region and their potential for technical optimisation were examined in detail on the basis of representative model plants. This study of the model plants has helped to improve the technical efficiency of the entire biogas supply chain – from cultivation to gas feed-in and electricity and heat production. In addition, for the first time, a comparison of the specific support and funding mechanisms and the environmental aspects in the context of the biogenic energy supply in the countries of the Greater Region was carried out.

The ECOBIOGAZ project has now expanded to include economic aspects. The focus was again on biogas plants, which have now been economically optimised on the basis of ecologically consistent requirements profiles along the entire bioenergy supply chain. In particular, the various funding mechanisms could be compared in terms of their economic effects. It was demonstrated, for example, that in 2014 Germany had the best conditions in the entire Greater Region, especially for small biogas plants. On the other hand, the possibilities for biomethane feed-in were the most advantageous in Luxembourg. The major legal differences in the conveyor systems, but also in the application systems for fermentation residues, were also evident.

All of the projects have been supported by intense publicity and further education so that the results could be disseminated both in agricultural colleges and universities as well as among farmers throughout the Greater Region.

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<sup>16</sup> INTERREG IV B – ARBOR, 2015.

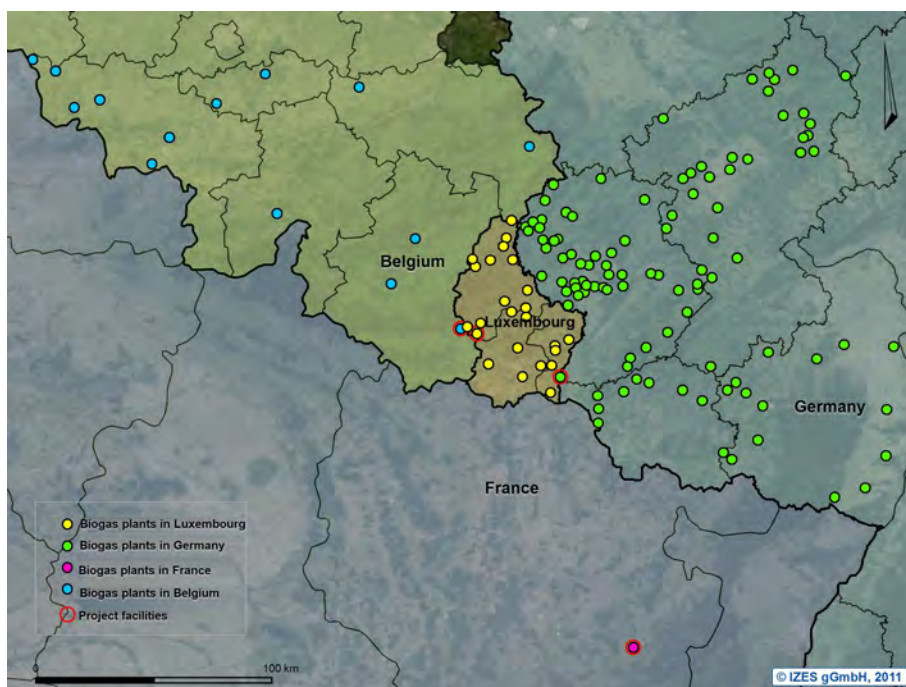


Fig. 8: Biogas plant stocks in the Greater Region – Project OPTIBIOGAZ as in 2011 /Source: The authors, IZES

### ELEC'TRA

Between 2013 and 2015, a cross-border mobility strategy was elaborated to reduce the individual commuter traffic in the Greater Region by promoting electric mobility solutions as a complement to public transport systems. In addition to the IZES, the technical partners were *imove* at the TU Kaiserslautern, *LIST* in Luxembourg and the *Département Moselle* in Lorraine.

Further projects are currently being prepared in the INTERREG V A programme. With the participation of the authors, the projects PERSEPHONE<sup>17</sup> and GR energy zones<sup>18</sup>, among others, were developed.

In addition, in the context of the energy sector, the activities to establish the Environmental Technology Network of the Greater Region in November 2013 and the Franco-German 'Energy Efficiency/Renewable Energies – ENEFF' (*Energieeffizienz/Erneuerbare Energien*) network are noteworthy.

<sup>17</sup> Transfer of biogas plants to the structures of the bio-economy. The aim is to consider how other products in addition to energy, such as ecosystem services, fertiliser or algae can be provided with the help of biogas technology.

<sup>18</sup> Regional and cross-border regulation of electricity generation and demand in defined model areas (energy zones) in Luxembourg, Lorraine and Rhineland-Palatinate in order to avoid curtailing the RES entering the grid as far as possible.

## 2.3 The need for action

### ***Building supporting structures***

At the EU level, there is a medium-term risk of failure to meet climate change targets. Especially in connection with effort sharing,<sup>19</sup> the member states must implement instruments that contribute to a significant reduction in greenhouse gas emissions. The internal energy market being aimed at has also not yet been fully implemented, e.g. due to a lack of transmission capacities, insufficiently competitive markets and inadequately involved consumers.<sup>20</sup>

Apart from the established working groups,<sup>21</sup> no institutionalised cooperation in the field of energy exists as yet in the Greater Region. This may be one reason for the sluggish expansion of renewable energy in the region. The initial steps toward a cross-border expansion of renewable energy were undertaken by the German Federal Government with the ‘Ordinance for the tendering process for promoting electricity from renewable energy and the amendment of further regulations for promoting renewable energy’ (BMWi [Federal Ministry for Economic Affairs and Energy] 2016). This ordinance is to be applied in a first step to tendering processes for PV open air installations.<sup>22</sup>

Not least because of the energy projects that have already been and are in the process of being implemented in the Greater Region, networks have been created with the participation of administrations and authorities, municipalities, NGOs, research institutions and energy actors in the private and commercial sector. These should be brought together by creating a framework for lasting cooperation through harmonised network management, without any need for new funding to be requested, and linked to the established working groups in the Greater Region.

The following points, among others, would be on the agenda:

- > Ensuring security of supply in the energy sector in the Greater Region, taking into account the widest possible expansion of renewable energy from regional potentials and future activities in the field of sector coupling (transport, heat)
- > Developing interregional objectives, strategies and action plans through participatory processes
- > Implementing a cross-border research network/energy cluster for a ‘European model region for renewable energy and energy efficiency’

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<sup>19</sup> Areas not covered by European emissions trading, such as agriculture, transport and private households.

<sup>20</sup> For details in this regard, see COM 2015c: 2-11.

<sup>21</sup> The energy issue has been dealt with thus far in a sub-committee of the Environment Working Group. In accordance with the joint declaration of the Energy Summit of the Greater Region of 17 March 2014, a specific working group for this issue has been set up.

<sup>22</sup> Cf. the relevant ordinance: BMWI 2016; for further explanations, cf. BMWI 2017.

- Setting up a network of best practice examples; setting up a fixed, established annual meeting
- Establishing interregional working groups for specific issues
- > Compensating for the diverging freedom of discretion among the partners and diverging general conditions, e.g. in relation to financing mechanisms, through cross-border synergy projects
- > Creating a homogeneous, transparent investment landscape to reduce potential risks
- > Strengthening cooperation and training in the trades and other enterprises in the energy sector to create synergies, particularly in education and training
- > Strengthening cooperation between educational, in-house or other educational institutions to better embed knowledge about the energy transition and its benefits, as well as the techniques and behaviours necessary for this purpose
- > Involving the municipalities in the Greater Region as key players in climate protection and the energy transition as well as setting up an interregional and European network of municipalities (e.g. Covenant of Mayors for Climate & Energy).

In order to cope with the challenges ahead, additional capacity would have to be built up at the municipal level, which is problematic in view of the budgetary constraints in many municipalities in the region. Therefore, funding budgets are often used, e.g. for municipal climate protection strategies, but these are usually time-limited and thus do not provide a long-term solution for adapting administrative structures. It would therefore be expedient to establish regionally effective structures in the Greater Region to support the municipalities in decision-making processes.

### ***Building supporting structures***

In the context of the approaches outlined above, as well as the global challenges in relation to climate protection and resource conservation, various research institutes have developed in the Greater Region in recent years and have established themselves as institutions of supra-regional significance. As a result, a (currently still rather loose) network has been created, which has already successfully developed and completed joint project approaches in several instances (e.g. EU-INTERREG, EU-CONCERTO, 6th Research Framework Programme).

An increased need for discussion, communication and cooperation is now perceived due to increasing complexity and the increasing necessity of systematic observation of the examination of regional energy and material flow systems, which could be met by establishing a shared research platform at the interregional level. Such an approach would provide an important impetus for an innovative reorganisation of the Greater Region, e.g. as a study area for zero-emission strategies and as a model region for renewable energy and energy efficiency, as well as for the idea of cross-border cooperation in the sense of a European approach. For example, the expansion of

renewable energy within the meaning of Directive 2009/28/EC and possibly also direct cross-border electricity exchange/trade could be tested here.

In the context of an informal discussion with various institutes of the Greater Region, the following potential objectives were formulated with regard to the design of a corresponding platform:

- > Stabilisation and further development of research excellence in the Greater Region by pooling and expanding existing competences
- > Development of an interregional ‘brain pool’ as an ideas workshop and facility for political consulting for the Greater Region
- > Creation of a personnel pool to optimise the allocation of competencies for specific tasks
- > Optimised quality management, e.g. through improved availability of people with management functions
- > Increased attractiveness in terms of attracting skilled, qualified employees through an international focus
- > Sharpening and highlighting the profiles of each institution within the framework of a joint development plan
- > Creating regional added value through exemplary implementation strategies
- > Creating complementary educational opportunities through regional universities

To this end, the (partly) existing bilateral forms of cooperation should be deepened within the framework of a common supra-regional organisational structure (e.g. establishment of a supra-regional ‘research holding’). This structure should be developed in consensus with the participating countries and should be consistently aligned with sustainability criteria in terms of content. A distinctively thematic approach relates to the (applied) scientific examination of climate protection and energy strategies as well as to the prospective implementation and monitoring of corresponding measures and projects.

The actual work on the structure of the organisation (including its financing) and on the integration of strategic approaches to sustainability in the Greater Region could be carried out within a joint project. Based on the results of the discussions thus far, potential requirements for the new research platform can be summarised as follows:

- > The new structure will require basic staffing and a ‘face’ (both within the organisation and in external relations). Thematically, competent employees from the participating institutes will be allocated to specific tasks.

- > The research platform will mainly deal with overarching conceptual issues with a strategic dimension (projects close to implementation will remain with the individual institutes).
- > The legal form (company, holding, foundation, etc.) of the new structure should be consistently aligned with the tasks and partner structures that are ultimately defined.
- > The platform should initially be formed from a 'core' of primarily suitable institutes of the Greater Region. The inclusion of further research institutions and cooperation with the University of the Greater Region would have to be aligned with the research corridor to be further defined.
- > The research platform should have an internationally perceivable profile.
- > In addition to addressing scientific issues, the platform should be seen as a political advisory body.

Suitable approaches for the implementation of the platform were discussed at a joint cabinet meeting of the governments of Saarland and the Grand Duchy of Luxembourg in November 2010 and at a meeting of the Environment Working Group of the Greater Region in February 2011. Both meetings concluded with a positive vote, but no further steps have been taken.

### **3 Conclusions**

Not least against the background of the target agreements under COP 21, Europe faces enormous challenges in meeting the targets for climate protection and the energy transition. Given its hitherto strongly fossil- and nuclear-oriented energy landscape and the innovative energy research landscape, the Greater Region offers excellent conditions for becoming a model region for the sustainable conversion and networking of energy systems in the context of a European energy transition.

On the basis of multifaceted but still strongly sectoral projects, mutual definitions of targets have already been developed and network structures have been established. This must be further developed in a systemic sense and integrated into a cross-border political discourse and decision-making process in order to achieve the climate protection targets. This requires appropriate structures that connect the key players in the Greater Region and provide a framework for existing research institutions to promote efficient and excellent research collaborations and active political advisory functions. The establishment of a cross-border research platform on 'Climate Protection and the Energy Transition' could be a basis for developing the Greater Region as a European learning area for the energy transition.



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## CROSS-BORDER PUBLIC TRANSPORT – CONTINUED BARRIERS DESPITE THE EU\*

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### References

### Abstract

This paper addresses the extension of cross-border transport within the EU. Despite the longstanding efforts of transport and cohesion policies to improve cross-border transport, many border regions still face challenges related to transport infrastructure and local public transport; these are discussed in the first part of this paper. Transport policy goals and instruments on the EU level are then discussed and their impact is assessed using case studies in the border area. As EU policy and funding instruments are not particularly concrete or binding, there are still significant variations between the national policies of member states. Implementation requires strong political will and secure funding. As transport is an important foundation for other aspects of cross-border cooperation, sustained investment in this key area is required.

### Keywords

Cross-border transport – EU policy – cohesion policy – transport policy – trans-European transport networks – European territorial cooperation

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\* This article was first published in 2018 and is based on data from 2017 and previous years. As such, the figures presented in this article do not reflect the latest efforts in the field of cross-border transport through transport and cohesion policy nor the most recent transport policy objectives and instruments at EU level.

## **1 Introduction**

The creation of the European Single Market enabled the unrestricted mobility of people, goods, services and capital within the European Union and thus across the national borders of the member states (European Commission 2017). The 1985 Schengen Agreement facilitated these fundamental freedoms even further by abolishing border controls at national borders within the EU Schengen states. This occurred against the backdrop of the realisation of the European single market and served to support the economic and social cohesion of the EU and its integration. Despite efforts to dismantle national borders within the EU, today – 30 years later – the borders are still tangible. In early 2016, in the course of the refugee crisis, physical barriers were erected again at some internal European borders and controls reintroduced. European border regions are still often classified as disadvantaged areas entitled to special EU support. In addition, there are barriers to cross-border public transport across national borders (European Commission 2011a: 2).

This study will first briefly outline the importance of cross-border transport and the challenges that arise in border areas in connection with transport and mobility. The following section will examine the impact of EU policies on cross-border transport. This serves to present the current conditions in regard to transport/mobility for cross-border cooperation and to illustrate the changes that have occurred over time. To that end, the diversity of transport policy objectives and instruments at EU level are firstly identified and elucidated. To highlight the current and future conditions for cross-border cooperation in transport/mobility, the focal point here is the new 2014–2020 funding period. The concrete impact of EU policy on cross-border transport at regional and local level will then be analysed based on case studies from cross-border public rail transport, an EU-funded INTERREG project and a bilateral approach to cooperation. The interregional cooperation in the Rhine-Alpine corridor under the INTERREG project CODE24 and the European Grouping of Territorial Cooperation (EGTC) which resulted from this project is then discussed as a best practice example of sustainable transport development promoted by EU policy. The paper concludes with a discussion of the challenges and opportunities of managing cross-border transport at the European level.

## **2 Significance and challenges of cross-border transport**

This paper describes the importance and challenges of transport at the internal European borders. The study refrains from describing the challenges at external European borders. Road, rail and water-based transport such as ferry connections all play a role in cross-border transport. Air traffic within cross-border regions is not particularly relevant due to the fairly small scale of border regions.

### **2.1 Significance of cross-border transport**

A well-developed cross-border transport network plays an important role in increasing cross-border mobility and cooperation, as well as in eliminating barriers at the

border (BMVBS [Federal Ministry of Transport, Construction and Urban Development] 2011: 83). With good transport connections, services in border regions can complement each other, leading to reciprocal use (Spierings/van der Velde 2013: 4). In addition, the interconnection of transport systems, for example by bridges, has a distinct symbolic significance for overcoming national borders and the convergence of neighbouring regions (BMVBS 2011: 84). The different modes of transport are relevant not only for passenger transport, but also for the movement of goods within the EU (Peter 2015). Furthermore, good cross-border connections are very important for (cross-border) tourism. In many cases, the accessibility of tourist destinations by public transport is very poor (Grauvogel 2015). In areas with a high volume of commuters, such as the Greater Region, a well-developed infrastructure and cross-border public transport systems are very important to minimise congestion and pollution.

## 2.2 Challenges of cross-border transport

Border areas and transport across national borders present a wide range of challenges. There are often significant interactional flows of commuters within border areas (see the paper by Christian Wille and Ursula Roos in this volume). If the infrastructure is under-developed, traffic in the border area will quickly become congested. Poor public transport services in particular lead to an increase in private motor vehicle transport, which in turn has a negative impact on traffic flows on underdeveloped roads. In addition, there are also sparsely populated border areas whose public transport systems experience such low demand that it is difficult to maintain them or make them more appealing to users. Deficiencies in the physical infrastructure are easy for outsiders to identify. These include a lack of crossings at the border, such as bridges, cycling paths, roads and pedestrian paths. Organisational and financial aspects are still highly dependent on national regulations, and sometimes the border still persists as a clear demarcation in the consciousness of the border inhabitants (see contribution by Spellerberg/Schönwald/ Weber in this Volume).

Border regions are traditionally regarded as disadvantaged regions, as they lie on the periphery rather than in the centre of a country; this means that they are often not well connected to the rest of the country's infrastructure and therefore suffer from poor accessibility. After the opening of the internal European borders, many border regions were no longer on the periphery, but in the centre of Europe and able to benefit from their proximity to the border. The EU promotes cooperation between border regions and aims to improve the connectivity of these regions to the overall transport network so that they can mutually benefit from their proximity to the border. However, this is often not easy: despite ambitious objectives and efforts to create a well-functioning European transport network, there are still bottlenecks and inefficient cross-border traffic flows in most of the EU (European Commission 2011a: 2). Cross-border transport is often seen as lagging behind in the new member states in particular (Monti 2010: 65). This is indeed the case, although the EU has been stressing the importance of cross-border transport for some time now and is calling for the strengthening of infrastructure in border areas.

In addition to individual challenges caused by the different characteristics of the border regions, there are challenges in cross-border transport that apply to almost all border areas; these are described below.

### **2.2.1 Legal and administrative challenges**

European transport and cohesion policy consists entirely of framework directives and regulations for the member states. The member states and their respective levels are solely responsible for their implementation. As a result, the EU member states have very different transport laws based on different traditions and experiences (Giorgi/Pohoryles/Freudensprung et al. 1999: 7, 37). In addition, the implementation of (European) policies is often a matter of interpretation and can take different courses in practice; the original objectives of the policy strategies can change during implementation (Jann/Wegrich 2003: 89). Moreover, the precise implementation of EU transport policy is not monitored. These different national rules and regulations make cross-border cooperation more difficult (CONPASS Consortium 2002: 55 et seq.; Giorgi/Pohoryles/Freudensprung et al. 1999: 7), as can be seen in the differing legal frameworks for public transport across the EU member states, e.g. different national safety standards or licensing regimes. These differences may hinder cross-border operations by restricting or even prohibiting certain means of transport on the other side of the border. There can also be national differences in labour law, which raises questions about employees who are deployed across borders (CONPASS Consortium 2002: 55 et seq.). The fundamental problem is usually that the laws are only available in the national language and are therefore difficult to access and understand in the neighbouring country. As a result, legal disparities can create additional delays in the implementation of projects (ESPON 2004: 243; CONPASS Consortium 2002: 55 et seq.). It has also been observed that local levels of government are not heavily involved in EU policy unless the policy offers financial or other benefits (ESPON 2004: 267).

### **2.2.2 Challenges in cross-border transport planning**

The joint development of cross-border infrastructure is difficult because it requires joint planning and coordination (see the paper by Karina Pallagst and Beate Caesar contribution in this volume), which requires more effort and more time. The involvement of authorities on both sides of the border can delay decision-making. This also means that implementation takes longer. The process is further prolonged if responsibility does not rest with the local authorities, but with higher levels of government/administration. This can lead to communication and coordination problems, because the decision-making processes are often structured in a fundamentally different way. In particular, the transport operators must be involved in the cooperation in compliance with EU regulations in order to ensure implementation (CONPASS Consortium 2002: 55 et seq.; Giorgi/Pohoryles/Freudensprung et al. 1999: 7). In addition, the needs of the cooperating partners are often focused only on national added value and not on the common border area (CONPASS Consortium 2002: 56 et seq.). This is often due to a lack of available data on cross-border transport flows and demand,

making it difficult to offer the appropriate services (Schreiner 2015). In addition, cross-border cooperation structures often have to be established first (COMPASS Consortium 2002: 56 et seq.). Finding partners for this is difficult if the relevant decision-makers are not known or are not keen to interact. Moreover, different planning traditions and processes can make collaboration more difficult. Cooperation is also complicated by different attitudes to current transport trends (Giorgi/Pohoryles/Freudensprung et al. 1999: 8 et seq.). Cooperation is difficult when fundamentally different or negative attitudes, including with regard to the neighbouring country, prevail (Giorgi/Pohoryles/Freudensprung et al. 1999: 8 et seq.). Regular contacts between decision-makers can create trust and increase the chance of projects being implemented, although this requires committed stakeholders. National systems which are incompatible in a technical sense are another challenge, as they increase the cost of cross-border infrastructure (Peter 2015).

### 2.2.3 Financial challenges

Funding a cross-border transport project is difficult. When demand in the border area is low, a high level of investment in infrastructure is called into question. In most cases, subsidies are made available nationally which may only be used on national territory. Therefore, binational funding requires special agreements and must comply with specific rules (COMPASS Consortium 2002: 55 et seq.). In order to avoid funding problems, large projects are often divided into several sub-projects, which are then carried out in the respective countries. This entails a risk that ideas and strategies, which were initially jointly developed, will not be (fully) implemented (Giorgi/Pohoryles/Freudensprung et al. 1999: 10).

While financial support for the implementation of European transport policy is available, in the past it focused – particularly in rail transport – on cross-border high-speed transport systems and not on cross-border local public transport, which is of much greater significance for internal mobility between two border regions (Schreiner 2015).

The EU level has no power to regulate the collection of taxes and charges uniformly across the EU (ESPON 2004: 53, 241). As a result, the pricing for the use of the infrastructure and services varies widely between the member states, and different strategies are pursued. For example, public transport is funded to minimise private transport, or motorway tolls are charged to finance road maintenance (Giorgi/Pohoryles/Freudensprung et al. 1999: 9 et seq.).

## 2.3 Challenges in cross-border public transport

Cross-border public transport services are often insufficient due to low demand, especially in structurally weak, sparsely populated areas. Many lines end at the national border and do not continue across the border. In addition, timetables on either side of the border may not be harmonised, meaning that changing for connections is inconvenient and wastes time. Because of the poor provision of cross-

border public transport services, public transport is not an appealing option for potential users, who prefer to use their own vehicles. In addition, switching between different modes of transport, such as the bus and train, may not be satisfactorily regulated, hence intermodal transport does not work well for users (CONPASS Consortium 2002: 51 et seq.).

Due to the complexity resulting from different public transport systems, the lack of transparency in terms of timetables, destinations, ticket sales locations and ticket prices hinders accessibility as well. The information is not always provided in both/all languages of the border area, thus a lack of knowledge of the other language(s) is another barrier to using public transport. (CONPASS Consortium 2002: 49 et seq.).

With a common cross-border transport network, the question ultimately arises of the distribution of revenue between the various transport operators. Experience is lacking in this regard, and the lack of clarity can prevent the implementation of a common fare structure. In addition, due to different national currencies in European countries that are not part of the Eurozone, highly fluctuating exchange rates can also cause problems in setting ticket prices (CONPASS Consortium 2002: 59). The costs for a cross-border journey by public transport are higher than for a comparable national journey due to additional costs on both sides of the border and the attempt to cover the costs through increased revenue. Ticket choices are also often limited: for example, often only single tickets are available and no travelcards or monthly or annual tickets. Student or senior benefits are also rare. This precludes possible ticket discounts. While these aspects are intended to facilitate the sale of tickets and the distribution of revenue between different operators, it is not particularly user-friendly. When changing trains, a new ticket may have to be purchased (CONPASS Consortium 2002: 60 et seq.).

In summary, there are many barriers and challenges in cross-border public transport that make it difficult to jointly plan infrastructure and services and to operate them.

The next section describes the objectives and instruments for the transport sector at EU level.

### **3 Transport policy objectives and instruments at the EU level**

In the 1957 treaty establishing the European Economic Community, the member states decided to create a common transport policy. This aimed to support the common single market, economic growth and the harmonious development of the EU area (European Coal and Steel Community Publications Service 1957: Article 2f). Today, the development of transport continues to be coordinated at European level: it falls within the remit of the European Commission's Directorate-General for Mobility and Transport. The objective is to develop a well-functioning, sustainable and environmentally friendly European transport network (Ruete 2010).

Initially, European transport policy focused on transport within and between member states. In 1970, a first law on financial support for transport infrastructures was

adopted, which was further developed in 1976 (Council of the European Community 1976). The first priority projects were defined in 1978 (Council of the European Community 1978), and the number of projects supported increased rapidly over the years. Ten years later, an action programme on transport infrastructure was launched with the aim of supporting the full realisation of the European single market (European Commission 1988).

A well-developed European transport network is seen as an essential prerequisite for the European single market, economic growth and European competitiveness (European Commission 2011a: 3). In order to ensure barrier-free, multimodal European transport, the Maastricht Treaty introduced the Trans-European Transport Networks as an EU policy area in 1992 (Treaty on European Union 1993: Article 129b(1)). The aim was to support the free movement of people, goods and services within the EU (Maastricht Treaty 1992: Article 129b(1)). Only road traffic was included in the initial deliberations and documents (Commission of the European Community 1993). The first legally binding directives of 1996 then took account of the other modes of transport (European Parliament and Council of the European Union 1996: Article 3(2)). These Directives have since been revised three times (2001/2004/2006) and amended in 2010 and 2013. Nowadays, the policies aim to improve interoperability between the different modes of transport and national networks. In addition, access to these networks for every European citizen is to be ensured (Maastricht Treaty 1992: Article 129b(1)).

The current 2013 Directives were adopted in response to the White Paper ‘Roadmap to a Single European Transport Area – Towards a Competitive and Resource Efficient Transport System’ (European Commission 2011b). It proposed to develop the core network, consisting of the main transport corridors, as a priority. This aims to increase and concentrate investments in European transport infrastructure in order to achieve the objectives of the Europe 2020 Strategy and to fully realise the European single market (European Commission 2011a: 1 et seq.).

In addition to these objectives, which focus on the implementation of a European transport network, a wide range of other transport-related issues are addressed at EU level, including energy consumption in passenger transport, the provision of European flight navigation services, working conditions in the interoperable cross-border service sector, intermodal charging stations, etc.

Other EU policies and documents also have a strong impact on European transport development. The Europe 2020 Strategy, for example, calls on EU member states to actively contribute to the implementation of infrastructure projects that support the efficiency of the core network (European Commission 2010: 19 et seq.). The spatially-relevant documents of the 1999 European Spatial Development Perspective (ESDP) prepared by the Informal Council of National Ministers for Spatial Planning of the Member States and the two Territorial Agendas (TA 2007 and 2011) also deal with European transport policy and confirm their importance for the future of the EU (Informal Council of Ministers responsible for Spatial Planning 1999: 27 et seq., 2007: 4 et seq., 2011: 8 et seq.). Cohesion policy also addresses the development of transport infrastructure as an important issue; it aims to achieve the economic, social and



territorial cohesion of the member states. To this end, it also supports transport investment (European Union 2006: Article 3).

Because European transport development is a key issue for the EU, it provides various funding opportunities for this:

- > Cohesion Fund
- > European Regional Development Fund (ERDF)
- > TEN-T programme (until 2013)
- > Marco Polo programme (until 2013)
- > 7th research framework programme (until 2013), since 2014: ‘Horizon 2020’



Since 2014, merged into the  
‘Connecting Europe Facility’

The Horizon 2020 programme funds research projects in the field of transport under the title ‘Smart, green and integrated transport’ (European Commission 2014c).

In the 2007–2013 EU funding period, both the cohesion policy, in the form of European Territorial Cooperation (ETC), and the transport policy within the framework of the Trans-European Transport Networks made the development of cross-border transport a priority. Improved cross-border transport should contribute to the full realisation of the European single market, increased competitiveness and increased accessibility and networking between member states in both policy areas. The TEN-T policy focused on supporting cross-border infrastructure in the TEN-T network and was thus also supported by the ETC. In addition, the expansion of secondary networks and transport corridors within transnational cooperation was supported in ETC projects (Caesar 2015: 5 et seq.).

The European Commission explains the continuing problems in cross-border transport as being caused by a lack of coordination between member states and the lack of a common financial framework (European Commission 2011a: 3). The new EU funding period (2014–2020) aims to address the problems. Compared to the previous funding period, EU provisions have been revised and efforts have been made to better interconnect the funding programmes and to clarify their content in order to better improve EU-wide transport in the long term. In particular, support for cross-border transport is to be increased.

**Transport policy** provides for the further development of the transport network. To this end, the aforementioned new guidelines for the Trans-European Transport Networks were created, which provide for a new financial instrument, the Connecting Europe Facility. Funding has been tripled, and the funding budgets for the Marco Polo programme and the TEN-T programme have been merged (European Commission 2014b: 2). In this context, newly introduced results indicators seek to better measure the impact of projects (European Parliament and Council of the European Union 2013b: Article 4). In addition, a two-level structure consisting of a core and an overall network was introduced (European Parliament and Council of the

European Union 2013a: Article 6). The European core network, consisting of multi-modal transport corridors, is to be implemented by 2030. This core network consists of the most strategically relevant routes and will focus on major bottlenecks, multimodal hubs and cross-border connections. The rest of Europe's transport infrastructure is to be adapted to EU guidelines, and the overall network is to be completed by 2050 (European Commission 2011a: 3). In addition, the new TEN-T legislation strengthened, elucidated and detailed a number of issues.

The transition to the 2014–2020 funding period has also been used to adapt the **cohesion policy** and the guidelines for European Territorial Cooperation. All new EU documents have a stronger focus on specific priority issues, with the aim of concentrating financial support and achieving clearer results. In addition, EU policies have been designed to meet the objectives of the Europe 2020 Strategy by 2020 (European Commission 2014a). The new rules for the cohesion policy include a common strategic approach in which thematic priorities have been defined that apply to all funds (European Parliament and Council of the European Union 2013d: Article 9). They also defined how the cohesion policy is to be coordinated with other European policies and funding instruments in order to avoid parallel structures (European Parliament and Council of the European Union 2013d: Appendix I, point 4). The Cohesion Fund and the ERDF continue to support transport projects, but some of the benchmarks have been stipulated in more detail. The share of the Cohesion Fund reserved for TEN-T priority projects has been clearly defined as of the new funding period. The rest of the money can be used to support other transport projects in the EU (European Parliament and Council of the European Union 2013e: Article 3 et seq.). In the case of the ERDF, the priorities have been formulated a bit more precisely and are therefore somewhat more detailed than those of the Cohesion Fund. As with the Connecting Europe fund, results indicators have been defined for the ERDF in order to better measure project results (European Parliament and Council of the European Union 2013c: Article 5).

In promoting cross-border transport, EU policy documents on ETC and TEN-T provide for the coordination of the two policy areas. This serves to contribute to the achievement of the Europe 2020 Strategy (European Commission 2010). The Europe 2020 Strategy acts as a catalyst that streamlines the objectives of both policies in cross-border transport. Common objectives of promoting cross-border transport projects include reducing carbon emissions, contributing to sustainable transport and further European integration. In addition, an integrated European transport system is to be established. The ETC policy focuses its resources primarily on the overall network, thereby also promoting secondary and tertiary transport networks. TEN-T supports both levels – the core network and the overall network – but for now, the primary focus is to expand the core network. ETC, on the other hand, aims to improve overall accessibility in the EU and has a stronger planning background; for example, projects aimed at improving the cross-border planning process for cross-border transport infrastructures and services can be funded (Caesar 2015: 9 et seq.).

To outline the impact of EU policy on cross-border transport at the regional and local level, the following section presents experiences and results in the Greater Region and the Upper Rhine research area.

## 4 Impact of the EU policy on strengthening regional and local cross-border transport

As the EU has oriented some of its policies towards financial support for cross-border transport projects, as described above, this section will examine the actual impact of the EU on cross-border transport at the regional and local level using case studies. Cross-border rail transport between Palatinate and Alsace is described, followed by the EU-funded POS NORD INTERREG project and the binational cross-border cooperation strategy *Schéma stratégique de mobilité transfrontalière*, which is being implemented without EU funding.

### 4.1 Cross-border rail transport between Palatinate and Alsace – Practical example from the special purpose association for public rail transport (ZSPNV) Rhineland-Palatinate South (Upper Rhine North)<sup>1</sup>

#### ***Preliminary remarks***

In 2007, and thus at the beginning of the Upper Rhine INTERREG IV programme, the special purpose association REGIO PAMINA organised a forum in Haguenau to address the challenges of cross-border public transport in the PAMINA area. Since then, the INTERREG IV programme has put several million euros towards transport projects in areas further south along the Upper Rhine, while the situation with cross-border rail transport in the REGIO PAMINA Eurodistrict stagnates. The challenges, problems and potential solutions to improve cross-border public transport which were discussed at the time in Haguenau remain largely unchanged today, on the threshold of the successor programme INTERREG V.

Although various measures to upgrade and increase the appeal of rail lines and railway stations have been implemented in recent months, particularly in Alsace and Rhineland-Palatinate, the quality and quantity of cross-border connections have hardly changed.

This can generally be explained by the fact that different priorities have been set for the further development of rail transport on both sides of the border. While in Rhineland-Palatinate the emphasis is on coordinating service timetables in the form of the 'Rhineland-Palatinate Timetable', the priority in Alsace is on commuter traffic and the connection with the TGV. This makes it more difficult to achieve compatibility between the systems and coordinated improvements in cross-border transport.

#### ***Review: Decommissioning and revival***

Between 1970 and 1980, cross-border rail services between Palatinate and Alsace were closed down. The infrastructure of the routes was neglected; road-based replacement measures faced a lack of demand (long journey times, too many changeovers).

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<sup>1</sup> The following discussion was prepared by Werner Schreiner and is largely based on his presentation at the meeting of the EURODISTRICT Transport Committee on 18 July 2014. Michael Heilmann also contributed his experience to the text.

The rail connection was revived in the wake of the planning for the Rhineland-Palatinate Timetable, namely on 1 March 1997 on the Winden–Wissembourg route and in December 2002 on the Wörth–Lauterbourg route, after having initially been set up as an excursion route in 1999.

The revived Winden–Wissembourg route is served daily. As a result, in September 1999 the Alsace region and SNCF decided to resume public rail transport between Wissembourg and Haguenau, which had been suspended at weekends. Public acceptance of the transport services on the German side has been positive and constant for years.

The cross-border fares of the Rhine-Neckar Transport Association (*Verkehrsverbund Rhein-Neckar, VRN*) and the Karlsruhe Transport Association (*Karlsruher Verkehrsverbund, KVV*) are valid up to Wissembourg and Lauterbourg stations.

The Rhineland-Palatinate Timetable's excursion service includes cross-border trips from Mainz (Elsass Express) and Koblenz (Weinstraße Express), which also create added value for cycling tours in the region. These 'excursion trains' to Wissembourg run on Sundays and public holidays from May to October. In addition, an 'excursion train' has been running for several years now on Saturdays and Sundays (all year round) from Neustadt via Wissembourg to Strasbourg. This train connection is currently operated with SNCF railcars. ZSPNV Rhineland-Palatinate South pays an annual fee for this service. The train is in high demand, depending on the tourist season and weather conditions.

In 2005, a fare agreement was concluded between the Alsace region and the VRN with the intention to create a range of special fares for the VRN lines and railway lines in the *département Bas-Rhin*: the 'Ticketplus Alsace' and the 'Alsace-Rhine-Neckar Pass'. The fares are valid on weekends and public holidays, the Ticketplus Alsace only for certain user or fare groups (e.g. holders of a Job Ticket [for commuters] or discount cards for seniors over 60, etc.). Their user numbers also show the varying use of public transport services among the population.

The creation of a fare scale for user groups (similar to the VRN) from the area of the KVV has to date found no support from the Alsace region (reference has been made to the establishment of a comprehensive strategy for the Alsace area). The comprehensive strategy has since been rejected by the Alsatian side, and work is now underway on individual solutions. Similarly, there is still no cross-border solution for transporting bicycles. The partners from Baden are in favour of the project and are prepared to bear the balancing payments for the fares, similar as with the VRN. As of 1 December 2016, a solution was found for the KVV, which is analogous to the solution for the VRN.

### ***Rail transport task areas***

- > Rail transport and tourism: Cross-border rail transport in the North Alsace-Palatinate area has so far mainly served tourist demand. The area between Neustadt an der Weinstraße and Haguenau/Niederbronn-les-Bains, with particular

regard to the Palatinate Forest / Vosges du Nord cross-border biosphere reserve, forms a unit for tourist purposes and is therefore to be developed as a common transport area through an attractive range of coordinated, cross-border transport services. In this context, the accessibility of Strasbourg as a tourist centre and the rail links between the twin towns of Haguenau and Landau deserve particular attention.

- > Rail transport and the labour market: At present, cross-border rail transport plays a minor role in vocational education and labour mobility; cross-border commuter transport largely takes other forms (private motor vehicles, carpooling, company bus services). In the context of the current initiatives to promote the cross-border training and labour market, cross-border public rail transport should be improved for commuters in the future as an alternative to private motor vehicle transport. In this sense, public transport supports training and employment policy measures.
- > Feeder function for long-distance transport: The improvement of cross-border rail links is also interesting and important from the point of view of links to railway hubs outside the REGIO PAMINA Eurodistrict, for example connecting to long-distance or high-speed trains at Strasbourg Central Station in the direction of the Rhine/Rhone or for reaching the new fast connections to Paris.

### ***Reasons for the stagnation in recent years***

The reasons for the stagnation in rail transport in recent years are manifold:

- > High costs for the equipment and retrofitting of the control and safety technology of the trains. Costs of approx. €1 million/locomotive are to be expected. The expansion of the French and German rail infrastructure was postponed due to the lack of a comprehensive strategy for services and infrastructure expansion.
- > Thus far there are no funding opportunities at EU level for these investments.
- > Currently, there are only just over a dozen railcars that are used daily in cross-border transport between Offenburg, Strasbourg and Saarbrücken and on weekends as part of the excursion train from Neustadt to Strasbourg (via Wissembourg) and back. Since these railcars have only a small capacity of about 80 seats, expensive multiple traction units are required. The increased demand for intra-Alsatian routes will affect the Strasbourg–Saarbrücken route as of December 2016 in the sense that direct cross-border train services will be abandoned and changeover connections will be established.
- > Different service philosophies: in Germany according to timetables, in France a focus on commuter transport on the secondary routes or on the TGV for the Strasbourg–Wissembourg route, which has been connecting Strasbourg with Paris since July 2016; since autumn 2016, the travel time on this route has been reduced to 1 hour 48 minutes. At the border stations of Wissembourg and Lauterbourg, these systems are often not compatible with the Rhineland-Palatinate Timetable, so that there are numerous poor connections with long waiting

times or, in the worst case, an ‘on-demand departure’ in Lauterbourg – partly corrected as of 11 December 2016.

- > User-friendliness in regard to customer information and ticket sales must be improved. When cross-border passenger transport ceased to be provided by state rail operators, their consistent fare regime was also withdrawn. While it was still possible in 1968/69 to buy both a train ticket from Neustadt/Weinstraße to London (outbound via Brussels and Ostend, return via Calais and Metz) as well as direct train tickets from Neustadt to neighbouring Alsace without any problems, today it is only possible to buy some cross-border tickets on the internet from different train operators or to involve a travel agency. Even in areas close to the border, ticket machines only offer limited options with complicated routes – which are therefore more expensive – to travellers wishing to purchase cross-border tickets. Improvements are urgently required in this regard.
- > Increasing competition from long-distance buses: Deutsche Bahn, for example, is not averse to providing competition with its own Mannheim–Strasbourg rail service by offering an InterCity bus service at a bargain rate of €9.

### ***The EU's impact on cross-border rail transport***

The EU's impact on cross-border rail transport in recent years has largely been characterised by the fact that the focus has generally been on a few long-distance transport projects, e.g. the extension of the Frankfurt–Mannheim–Saarbrücken–Paris line following the La Rochelle Agreement of 22 May 1992 between Germany and France (Federal Republic of Germany 1992). In fact, the development of public rail transport has not been supported by the EU in recent years as there have been no suitable funding programmes. The launch of INTERREG V offers the opportunity for the first time to improve cross-border public rail transport by investing in infrastructure or locomotives.

In general, however, the possibilities for achieving significant improvements in European border transport in the foreseeable future are limited by the fact that in recent decades a broad range of conditions have been created which make it considerably more difficult to operate rail transport seamlessly across borders, e.g. different train control systems that are not mutually compatible. Moreover, the rules and regulations of the national railway companies have tended to become rather more disparate instead of converging, especially in the last 20 years.

In the coming years, therefore, countless small and even tiny steps will have to be taken to enable public rail transport to achieve a significant share of the cross-border modal split and to raise awareness about these services among the population.

### ***Conclusions, future tasks and next projects***

In order to increase the acceptance of cross-border local public transport, a number of steps are required:

- > Improvements to connections in the transport services in Wissembourg and Lauterbourg are urgently needed. In order to be able to compete with private

transport, it is important to create transport services that are as seamless as possible.

- > Along with improvements to the services offered, the fares (price/ticket sales/marketing) must be improved. From the customer's point of view, it would be helpful if tickets for cross-border transport could be booked for both transnational long-distance transport and, in particular, for regional cross-border rail services, such as between Neustadt/Weinstraße and Strasbourg via Lauterbourg.
- > To improve customer information, the direct trains between Strasbourg-Hague-nau and Neustadt/Weinstraße and in the opposite direction should also be displayed on the platforms.
- > The data exchange between EFA Baden-Württemberg, VRN, Alsace and the other timetable information systems of the transport associations in the Trinational Metropolitan Region should be improved, and the timetable information should be harmonised (routes, connection times, language selection).
- > To fund the high level of investment in locomotives, a funding outlook is needed: the Upper Rhine INTERREG V programme was launched at the end of 2014. Rail transport projects contribute to programme objective no. 7 ('Limiting the increase in cross-border motorised transport through the development of less polluting modes of transport in the Upper Rhine region', INTERREG V A Upper Rhine 2014: 60) and thus are in principle eligible for funding.
- > An equally sensible use of these EU funds could be to support the development of railway infrastructure in the border region. For example, the Neustadt-Wissembourg route currently suffers from the disadvantage that from the French border, the speed must be reduced from 100 km/h to 80 km/h and then very quickly down to 30 km/h; this adds approximately 2 to 3 minutes to the travel time in each direction. If that could be rectified, the trilateral connection Karlsruhe-Winden-Wissembourg could be made even more stable, and the changeover connections in Wissembourg could then be improved.
- > In order to improve the highly unsatisfactory connections between DB Regio and SNCF trains in Lauterbourg today, discussions are currently underway between the Commissioner for Cross-border Affairs of the State of Rhineland-Palatinate, Werner Schreiner, the ZSPNV Rhineland-Palatinate South, the Alsace region and the French railway operator, SNCF. The aim is to be able to offer direct connections for the Wörth-Strasbourg link on weekends as of December 2016. This project must be accompanied by a range of fares offered by the Karlsruhe Transport Association and the Alsace/SNCF region. This was effected in an analogous way with VRN from 1 December 2016.

All of this will only be possible if there is a firm political resolve on both sides to improve cross-border rail transport and to fund the necessary investments. It should be in the interest of all transport policy and cross-border stakeholders to use EU funds to improve cross-border rail transport throughout the Upper Rhine region (and

not only in the southern Upper Rhine region, as in the past) by programming an INTERREG V project at an early stage. The challenges in the south and north vary in substance but not in their significance for the areas concerned.

#### 4.2 INTERREG IV A project: POS NORD (Greater Region)

The German-French INTERREG project, ‘POS NORD – Optimisation of the cross-border Baudrecourt–Saarbrücken–Kaiserslautern–Mannheim section of route no. 4 of the Trans-European Transport Networks and Corridor C06 of the RailNet Europe Network’, which was funded between 2011 and 2014 in the Greater Region cross-border cooperation area, involved the expansion of the high-speed public rail network between Baudrecourt on the French side and Mannheim on the German side, the POS<sup>2</sup>-Northern branch (INTERREG IV A Greater Region 2017). The section is part of the Atlantic TEN-T core network corridor, which extends from Mannheim/Strasbourg via Paris to Le Havre, or via Bordeaux to the western part of the Iberian Peninsula.

Trains have not yet been able to achieve full speed on the line between Paris and Frankfurt via Kaiserslautern, as the expansion provided for under the current Federal Transport Infrastructure Plan has not yet been fully implemented. There are concerns that once the southern branch via Strasbourg has been completed, the travel time between Frankfurt and Paris will be shorter than via the northern branch (cf. Fig. 1). Hence, the German and French project partners were to agree on a joint list of priorities to decide which sections in the POS NORD high-speed rail network via Karlsruhe should be prioritised for expansion. The expansion of the most important sections were then to be implemented with national funding (INTERREG IV A Greater Region).

German-French cooperation on this section of the route has been in place since 1992. In 1992, the Treaty of La Rochelle between the German Federal Minister of Transport and the French Minister for Infrastructure, Housing Development and Transport established joint development objectives for cross-border high-speed rail transport. The links between the two national rail networks were to be improved, and it was decided to jointly expand various routes, including the connection between Frankfurt (Main) and Paris. To this end, specific construction measures were defined on the German and French sides, which were to be implemented by the respective national levels (Federal Republic of Germany 1992).

In the Baudrecourt Declaration of 2009, the Moselle *département* and the federal states of Rhineland-Palatinate and Saarland took a position on the rail link between Mannheim and Paris and called on both the German and French governments and the railway companies to support it. Their statement describes the inadequate development of the northern branch and draws attention to the structural and economic disadvantage compared to the southern branch between Paris and Strasbourg. It also called for investment in rail transport to connect more than just the start and end points; instead, the expansion was also to focus on improving the connections

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2 POS stands for Paris – Eastern France – Southwest Germany.



for the cities and regions along the route. The regions therefore first called on the national tiers to invest in the expansion of the route between Homburg and Kaiserslautern and between Baudrecourt and Forbach, as provided for in the La Rochelle agreement and which has not yet been implemented. The French and German railway operators are asked to align the national systems and to ensure a high-quality rail service in the long term. A cross-border marketing plan for this section of the route will also be developed. Finally, the need for good communication between the two national levels and infrastructure managers to ensure the coordinated development of the line is emphasised (Department of Moselle/Federal State of Rhineland-Palatinate/Federal State of Saarland 2009).

The aim of the collaboration is to concentrate on the competitive expansion of the northern branch of the POS network compared to the well-developed southern branch via Strasbourg (see Fig. 1). To this end, a Steering Committee called ‘POS NORD Working Group’ was set up, consisting of the regional and national representatives of the two countries, as well as a grouping of regional chambers of commerce and industry and national railway companies. The latter is supported by a technical working group (SMA und Partner AG 2014a: 1 et seq.).



Fig. 1: Paris–Eastern France–Southwest Germany connection Southern and northern branch /Source: The authors, Kaiserslautern 2017, based on SMA und Partner AG 2014b

The Steering Committee commissioned an investigation into the possible acceleration of trains on the northern branch, which was then processed and financed as part of the INTERREG project. The aim was to ensure the long-term competitiveness of the railway link. As part of strategic planning, a timetable was drawn up, based on the objectives of the transport operators, which was then used to determine the infrastructure investment which would be needed to make these services possible. The planning process was meant to ensure that accelerated services fitted into the existing local public transport connections and would not contribute to their deterioration (SMA und Partner AG 2014a: 1 et seq.).

In the course of the study, differences between the two national systems had to be taken into account. These include differences in the way connections are scheduled, whereby the ‘zero symmetry’ instrument<sup>3</sup> had to be used for coordination. At the same time, different standards apply to the design of rail routes, such as the specification of maximum speeds (*SMA und Partner AG 2014b: 16 et seq.*).

In the course of the study, differences between the two national systems had to be taken into account. These include differences in the way connections are scheduled, whereby the ‘zero symmetry’ instrument had to be used for coordination. At the same time, different standards apply to the design of rail routes, such as the specification of maximum speeds (*SMA und Partner AG 2014b: 16 et seq.*).

According to Eilers, if the best variant of the POS-NORD route extension identified in the process were to be implemented, the project would be of great importance for improved cross-border transport in this region, as the route would remain competitive. In addition, the planning was designed to maintain the existing local public transport system and thus ensure the accessibility of the region.<sup>4</sup>

From the point of view of the Rhineland-Palatinate South special purpose association for public rail transport, however, the implementation of this project was deemed to be irresponsible, since approximately €1 billion would be spent to gain a few minutes of travel time for four pairs of ICE train daily. The expenditure was deemed to be disproportionate to the gain. In addition, years of construction work would be required, which would significantly impede regional transport, as is the case with the current construction measures to increase the speed to 200 km/h in certain sections.

In the cross-border project, the EU’s impact was marginal, with the exception of the financial support from INTERREG funds. Without EU financial support, the study and the project would probably not have been possible due to the high costs. The EU does not prescribe the substantive development of the INTERREG projects; the local stakeholders concerned plan the further development of the route. In the case of INTERREG projects, a status meeting is held once a year, attended by a representative of the European Commission. However, no technical coordination takes place in these meetings, but financial aspects and marketing measures are discussed as a matter of priority. The INTERREG programme secretariat in the Greater Region has also had no technical influence. Once the project application has been approved, the actual project proceeds purely on a binational level, in this case with the participants of the Steering Committee, without EU intervention on particular issues.<sup>5</sup>

The concentration on this cross-border section has not resulted from the fact that it is part of the Trans-European Core Network Corridors within the European transport policy; it is rather based on a much longer-standing binational agreement between France and Germany, as described above. The actual expansion of the routes is carried

3 Here, a joint symmetry strategy was created for coordination purposes in order to establish the connections.

4 Telephone interview with Wolfgang Eilers on 1 April 2015 and 22 April 2015.

5 Telephone interview with Wolfgang Eilers on 1 April 2015 and 22 April 2015.

out by the individual member states and the infrastructure managers. In Germany, decisions about infrastructure investments are made at the federal level. The federal states of Saarland and Rhineland-Palatinate have already reported that the Federal Transport Infrastructure Plan has been implemented. On the French side, however, the implementation of the planned route has not yet been registered with a corresponding programme, so it is questionable whether the project will be implemented at all in the absence of political support.<sup>6</sup> It is also worth noting that there are now fewer direct connections between Mannheim and Paris than before the introduction of high-speed trains. On the routes to France, the stops for both Neustadt on the Weinstraße (junction on the Rhineland-Palatinate Timetable) and Homburg/Saar were removed from the network. The city of Metz is easily accessible by train from Rhineland-Palatinate.

This cross-border transport project, which was funded by European Territorial Cooperation, shows that the EU's influence is rather minor. Financial support plays a certain role, but the EU did not mandate any elements of the substance of the project after it was approved. EU transport policy also does not play an important role, as the core network corridors have been defined on the basis of existing transport axes. Thus far, this has not produced a strong stimulus for cross-border transport.

Another example of the impact of EU policy on cross-border transport is the INTER-REG IV B CODE24 project as part of the Trans-European Rhine-Alpine Corridor, described in more detail in section 4.3. The project partners want to continue their involvement after the end of the project and founded an EGTC for this purpose in 2015. In this INTERREG project, too, the EU has not exercised any substantive influence. As in all cooperation areas, the programme secretariat (in this case the INTER-REG B North-West Europe Cooperation Area), which is managed by the participating member states themselves, defines the priorities in an operational programme. The priorities then serve as the criteria for the approval of the project. Although the operational programme must be examined and confirmed by the European Commission, it cannot be described as the EU's programme since it is based on the cooperation area's own needs. Accordingly, the impact of the EU on the selection and content of projects is fairly marginal.

#### **4.3 Cross-border mobility strategy: *Schéma stratégique de mobilité transfrontalière* (SMOT)**

In 2009, a cross-border mobility strategy entitled *Schéma stratégique de mobilité transfrontalière* (SMOT) was elaborated as part of a collaboration between the Lorraine region and Luxembourg. The aim of this strategy is to make cross-border transport more sustainable by increasing the use of public transport and car-sharing (Luxembourg Ministry of Sustainability and Infrastructures 2009: 36). The leading players in the elaboration of the strategy were the Regional Council of the Lorraine Region and the Luxembourg Ministry of Transport (*Ministère du Développement durable et des Infrastructures du Grand Duché de Luxembourg* [Luxembourg Ministry of Sustainability and Infrastructures] 2009: 1).

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6 Telephone interview with Wolfgang Eilers on 1 April 2015 and 22 April 2015.

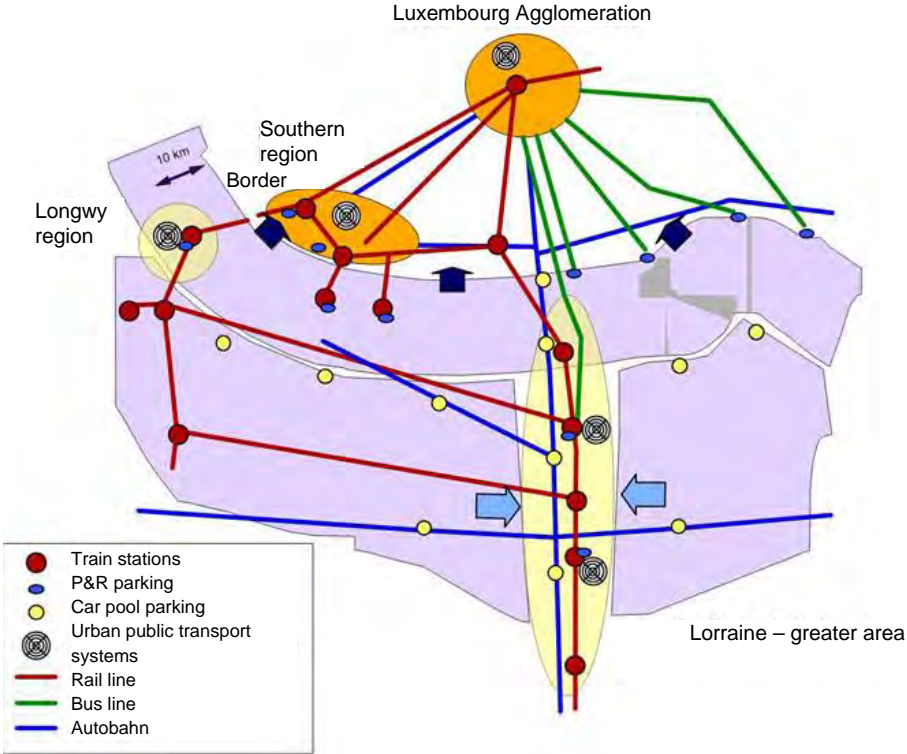


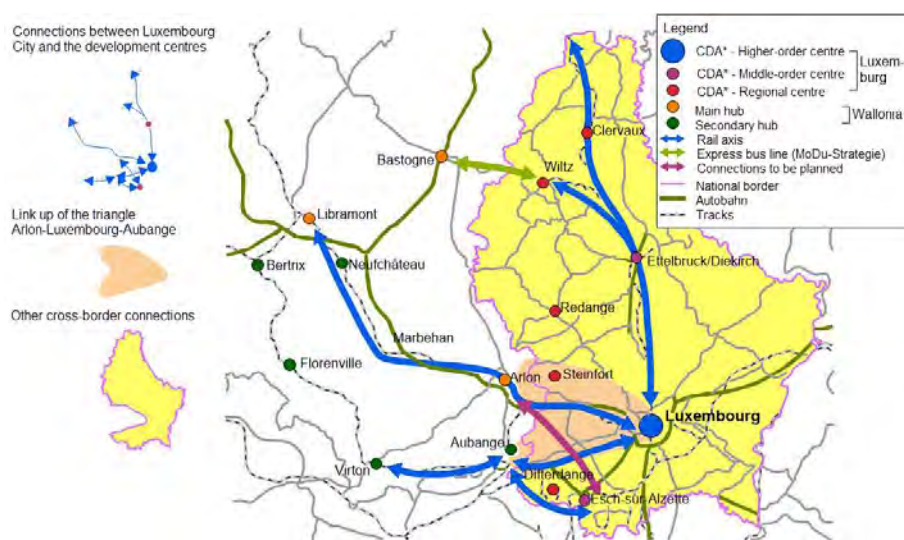
Fig. 2: Excerpt from the Luxembourg-Lorraine SMOT strategy /Source: The authors, Kaiserslautern 2017, based on the Ministry of Sustainable Development and Infrastructures of the Grand-Duchy of Luxembourg 2009.

This collaboration was conceived in view of the large number of people commuting from Lorraine to Luxembourg: in 2007, 65,000 residents of Lorraine commuted daily to their workplace in Luxembourg, with an increasing trend. 84% of these commuters use their own car for the journey – or at least for most of it. Just under 16% of commuters use public transport to get to work due to poor connections and uncoordinated timetables. The high volume of commuter traffic increases congestion on the roads (Government of the Grand-Duchy of Luxembourg 2009: 10, 27 et seq.).

The SMOT strategy defines joint action strategies for cross-border mobility and concrete actions which are to be implemented. Among other things, a time-based ticket has been introduced for the entire regional public transport system in Lorraine. It is also planned to set up one joint or two compatible ticketing systems between Lorraine and Luxembourg. In order to enhance the appeal of public transport, the frequency of cross-border train connections is also to be increased and new lines are to be established. In addition, a website is to be launched to improve the coordination of car-sharing between Lorraine and Luxembourg, and park-and-ride car parks are to be created. Other objectives with longer time horizons are the purchase of new train components, a further increase in railway capacity, the creation of new stops and

parking spaces in more peripheral areas, and the use of new cross-border bus routes to complement train connections and ensure that peripheral regions are linked to the network. Public transport is to be expanded in a structured manner to enable it to compete with private motor vehicle transport and to minimise pollution (Government of the Grand-Duchy of Luxembourg 2009). The link between these measures is shown schematically in Figure 2.

Two other SMOT strategies are now on the list: between Luxembourg and Wallonia, and between Saarland, Rhineland-Palatinate and Luxembourg. The aim is to develop strategies for the further development of cross-border public transport and to implement joint objectives (Saarland Federal State Parliament [*Landtag des Saarlandes*] 2014: 3).



CDA stands for Centre de développement et d'attraction (Centre for Development and Attraction).

Fig. 3: Excerpt from the Luxembourg-Wallonia SMOT strategy: Visualisation of the challenges /Source: The authors, Kaiserslautern 2017, based on Portail Wallonie 2015.

In Belgium, the decision to create a SMOT strategy was taken at the beginning of 2013 (Ministry of Sustainable Development and Infrastructures of the Grand-Duchy of Luxembourg 2013); it was completed in mid-2015. In both cases, the SMOT also aims to address the increased and projected further increase of the number of commuters between countries and to promote sustainable transport development based on collective passenger transport. Figure 3 shows the main challenges in cross-border transport between Luxembourg and Wallonia, for which different measures need to be taken. These measures have been bundled into a catalogue and will in future be implemented in action packages by the regions and coordinated across borders (Portail Wallonie 2015). These SMOT strategies were not developed with EU support, but on the basis of the bilateral political interests of representatives of the border regions or the states concerned.

The conclusion critically reflects on the planning of cross-border transport at European level and contrasts the advantages and disadvantages.

## **5 Conclusions: Steering cross-border transport at the European level – Challenges and opportunities**

Looking at the various cross-border transport projects, it is clear that transport development and demand are strongly linked to other issues of cross-border cooperation. There is a strong connection, for example, between the cross-border labour market (see the paper by Patrice Harster and Frédéric Siebenhaar in this volume) and commuters (see the paper by Christian Wille and Ursula Roos in this volume). This is particularly clear in the creation of the SMOT: in order to achieve sustainable, environmentally friendly cross-border mobility, public transport needs to be expanded, especially in busy border infrastructures. A good cross-border connection for providing public services is also an advantage, especially in relation to local services (see the paper by Kirsten Mangels and Julia Wohland in this volume). There is also a link with tourism (see the paper by Franz Schafranski in this volume); the rail lines between Palatinate and Alsace, for example, offer special excursion services on weekends. Such transport services linked to tourist destinations can ensure the continuity and development of cross-border mobility. Transport infrastructure therefore acts, so to speak, as a cross-border link between different action areas and is thus of great importance.

At the EU level, cross-border transport holds an important position: in the cohesion policy and transport policy, it has been repeatedly pointed out for years that cross-border transport needs to be developed and promoted. Money will be made available for this purpose. The funding guidelines for the Trans-European Transport Networks and European Territorial Cooperation make it possible to promote cross-border transport projects in the current funding period. The TEN-T funds give priority to supporting cross-border areas of the core network, and the ETC can also support border projects at a lower level. However, the EU documents remain relatively vague and leave it to the member states to decide which projects and priorities are ultimately chosen. The regulations thus have little reach and there is hardly any concrete governance at EU level.

However, it might be useful to manage cross-border transport at a higher level in order to ensure the transition of infrastructures between cooperation areas and to adopt some basic rules. At the EU level, it is also possible, at least in theory, to coordinate the various EU policies, but implementation at lower levels of administration is not assured. It would therefore be useful to establish a monitoring and evaluation procedure at EU level to review progress in the development of cross-border transport, as well as the implementation of EU policy documents and their coordination. However, a real review would be difficult because the assessment would probably be based on descriptions in project reports and not on the reality in the border area.



Apart from establishing the basic requirements and funding, the EU level has little impact on INTERREG projects. There are no concrete specifications for project content. This aspect is negotiated solely by the member states in the respective operational programmes, although they are based on the loose EU requirements. However, funding is a crucial issue in cross-border transport, as the examples described in this paper show. Without EU support, the implementation of projects is usually not guaranteed. In addition to the promotion of the road and rail network, there is a strong need for action in the area of cross-border public transport, which could be given greater support by the EU. The example of the SMOT shows that projects can also work without EU funds. However, it must be noted that the SMOT is merely a plan that formulates joint objectives – there is no guarantee that the objectives will eventually be implemented. At the very least, bilateral agreement on certain priorities is an important start and demonstrates strong political will. The INTERREG project POS NORD has relied on EU funds to draw up the plan, but the implementation is still uncertain on both sides of the border. This shows that political will is a crucial factor in the development of cross-border transport alongside the availability of financial resources. Depending on the national administrative structure, the member states or regional and local institutions or a combination of these stakeholders decide on the implementation of cross-border transport projects, which does not make it any easier to coordinate the plans across borders. Through their policies, the EU institutions are trying to reconcile and combine the interests and objectives of the member states and the European regions, and thus to connect transport infrastructures – which is no easy task.

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## INTERREGIONAL COOPERATION IN THE RHINE-ALPINE CORRIDOR

### Contents

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  - 2 The CODE24 INTERREG project: Regional-municipal cooperation for coordinated corridor development
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    - 3.1 Creation of a permanent successor organisation
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### Abstract

Cross-border, transnational regional development in the Rhine-Alpine EU transport corridor represents an ongoing challenge. With 18 partners from five countries, the Rhine-Neckar regional association (*Verband Region Rhein-Neckar, VRRN*) therefore initiated an EU-funded project along the corridor to tackle the task. The INTERREG-financed project used the acronym ‘CODE24’ and developed a joint strategy for developing the Rhine-Alpine Corridor from the perspective of the regional-municipal level. To ensure the continuation of this successful cooperation beyond the running time of the project, a new, permanent organisation was founded: the Interregional Alliance for the Rhine-Alpine Corridor. A European Grouping for Territorial Cooperation (EGTC) was chosen as the legal form. The organisation was founded on 24 April 2015 in Mannheim and was the first EGTC established in Germany, which now comprises 19 members.

### Keywords

INTERREG – CODE24 – Rhine-Alpine Corridor – EGTC – Interregional Alliance for the Rhine-Alpine Corridor

## 1 The Rhine-Alpine Corridor: Challenges for regional development

How should cross-border and transnational cooperation be organised for large-scale regional development? This question will be addressed based on the example of a specific transport corridor, and possible solutions will be identified. The Rhine-Alpine Corridor has been selected as a suitable area to serve as an example on account of the conjunction of issues relating to regional and settlement development and transport planning.

This corridor, which is of critical importance for Europe, essentially follows the course of the Rhine from the Rhine knee near Basel to its mouth in the North Sea; it also runs further south through the Swiss Alps and ends at the Mediterranean Sea near Genoa. The corridor thus connects the North Sea ports (Rotterdam/Antwerp/Zeebrugge) to the Mediterranean Sea (Genoa/Savona/La Spezia). This corridor has long been a central transport corridor in Europe, even in historical terms. The corridor runs through six European countries, one of which is not an EU member state; this fact accounts for complex planning and decision-making situations. The corridor also crosses numerous regions and provinces and thus gives rise to numerous bilateral cross-border challenges. The corridor thus also touches the area of the Hesse/Rhineland-Palatinate/Saarland Regional Working Group, which is in the centre of the corridor area.

The Rhine-Alpine Corridor is the most important north-south corridor in Europe. It runs through the economically strongest areas and densely populated regions in Europe. Its course largely comprises the part of Europe known as the 'blue banana' (Faludi 2015).

The importance of this European backbone for the transport of goods is demonstrated by the fact that around 50 percent of rail freight in the EU is transported along this route. It is also assumed that 1 billion tonnes of freight are transported annually along the Rhine-Alpine Corridor, accounting for about 50 percent of the total north-south freight volume in Europe; a further increase in the volume of goods traffic is to be expected (Rhine-Alpine Work Plan of the European Coordinator 2015: 3 et seq.).

In the past, navigation on the Rhine played a prominent role in this context; it is still an important factor for current transport requirements, which is also reflected in the fact that the Rhine ports of Duisburg, Cologne and Mannheim/Ludwigshafen are by far the largest inland ports in Germany.

Given the projected traffic volume, especially in goods traffic, the cross-border European corridors will have to assume considerable new transport loads, which will be difficult to implement in view of the spatial location of the Rhine-Alpine Corridor.

As part of the new European transport policy, the EU has set ambitious targets for the so-called 'core network corridors' to be achieved by 2030 (cf. Regulations (EU) 1315/2013 and 1316/2013). The Rhine-Alpine Corridor is one of nine core network corridors. An additional corridor network has been defined in addition to these new core network corridors. Overall, the EU plans to implement established standards for

development within the new network (cf. the paper by Patrice Harster and Frédéric Siebenhaar in this volume). The governance structure envisaged for the core network corridors is also significant. A ‘Corridor Forum’ has been established for each core network corridor, in which the main stakeholders are represented; in addition, the European Commission has appointed a Corridor Coordinator for each core network corridor to pool and advance the activities for the development of that corridor.

The planning for the optimisation of transport in the corridors pursues a multimodal approach, which includes hubs and intermodal handling facilities (freight centres) that are essential for efficient transport flows and crucial for hinterland connectivity and for the distribution of the flow of goods. Especially in the case of the Rhine-Alpine Corridor and the Rhine as a European waterway, inland waterways and the numerous ports with their concentration of logistics facilities are of tremendous significance.

The Gotthard base tunnel is currently under construction, which provides for the crossing of the Alps over a length of 57 kilometres as part of the New Rail Link through the Alps (NRLA) (cf. on Swiss transport policy: <https://sciendo.com/article/10.1007/s13147-012-0194-7>). The tunnel will be used entirely as a railway tunnel at ground level (flat track), which will allow even heavy freight trains to use this new infrastructure. The opening is planned for 2017. The Lötschberg base tunnel, which opened in 2007, is another important project forming part of the NRLA and enables the Alps to be crossed over a distance of 34.6 kilometres. In the Rotterdam-Genoa corridor, new capacities for transnational goods traffic are created thanks to the Swiss infrastructure expansions under the NRLA with a financial volume of around €30 billion, which will significantly improve the development opportunities for the corridor. However, infrastructure expansions to the north and south of the Alps to accommodate these additional traffic flows are lacking; thus, it is not possible to fully exploit the potential across the entire corridor.

In this context, it is also worth mentioning the completion of the Betuwe line<sup>1</sup> in the Netherlands, which runs for 160 kilometres from Rotterdam to the Dutch-German border near Emmerich as a new line conceived exclusively for goods traffic and thus increases the pressure on the corridor from the north (University of Münster 2013). To make matters worse, this Dutch high-speed route for goods traffic does not continue beyond the Dutch-German border, as the infrastructure required for this has not yet been extended.

It is undisputed that both the EU (European Commission 2011) and the national authorities (*BMVBS* [Federal Ministry of Transport, Construction and Urban Development] 2010) aim to shift goods traffic from road to rail and waterways to a greater extent in future. However, there are numerous conflicts relating to settlement development, transport emissions, in particular noise, and competing demands for routes, which result from and are compounded by generally inadequate rail capacities for long-distance passenger and goods transport as well as for public rail transport systems.

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1 More information on the Betuwe line can be found at <https://www.uni-muenster.de/NiederlandeNet/nl-wissen/wirtschaft/betuweroute/index.html>.

Hence, the envisaged coordinated regional development of the Rhine-Alpine Corridor is a solution which requires complex planning and coordination tasks with different planning agencies and operating methods in several countries with different legal and technical framework conditions.

It is therefore of crucial importance to involve relevant stakeholders in the planning processes as early as possible. In addition to the transport bodies responsible for network infrastructure and operation, these include the loading industry, the logistics sector and, in particular, local and regional authorities; ultimately, civil society must be involved as well.

The situation is made even more difficult by the fact that the available funding is insufficient to implement competing transport projects, meaning that projects must be prioritised in order to make the best possible use of funds. All of the new and expansion projects along the corridor add up to a total of around €35 billion (Scholl 2012). Given the limited financial possibilities, however, the first priority in the future will be to maintain the existing structures and their availability, as well as to increase capacity, especially in the transport hubs, which provide access to the network and are the main bottlenecks. Increasing speeds can also be beneficial for the overall system in appropriate sections, but they are by no means the only means for optimisation.

For these reasons, it is necessary to look at the overall system. This means that considerations must not only include routes and axes, but also the overall network: not only the railway infrastructure, but also the handling facilities such as freight centres; not only the railways, but also other modes of transport such as inland navigation; and not only freight, but also long-distance and local passenger transport, since there is a risk of limited availability when routes are used for regional and local public transport.

Further general conditions that should be noted are congestion points, gaps in connections and bottlenecks that significantly limit the capacity of the entire corridor and present infrastructural and operational deficits for its functioning – all of which have a negative impact on economic and ecological development as well as on settlement structures.

All of this poses significant challenges for cross-border and transnational regional planning and development, especially along the Rhine-Alpine Corridor, given the density of settlements there and the restrictions on land use, as well as the need to reduce environmental pollution, in particular noise emissions.

What are the possible solutions?

## 2 The CODE24 INTERREG project: Regional-municipal cooperation for coordinated corridor development

In 2007, the regional planning associations along the Upper Rhine called for a coordinated strategy to develop the rail network. This collaboration resulted in a joint position paper (Rhine-Neckar regional association 2008), which addressed the following issues:

- > Harmonisation and coordination of national needs and investment plans
- > Increased planning certainty
- > Securing funding
- > Acceleration of planning times
- > Provision of funding
- > Improving public perception
- > Bundling and coordinating activities
- > Reducing noise emissions from goods traffic
- > Requiring regular and systematic assessments of the situation

It also called for the timely expansion of rail projects along the Upper Rhine, which is urgently needed, particularly in view of the groundwork laid by Switzerland with the construction of the new Alpine base tunnels. In the course these works, the determination grew to address these issues in a jointly supported project and to involve other partners along the Rhine-Alpine Corridor. Eventually, the aim to formulate an application for a project, which was to be financed from EU funds, was confirmed.

Toward this end, regional planning agencies from the Rhine-Alpine Corridor worked together in a bottom-up approach to address the issues they considered to be relevant. The project application, which was coordinated among the then 15 European partners, was submitted in October 2009 as a ‘strategic initiative’ to the secretariat of the EU’s INTERREG IV B Northwest Europe programme and was approved. The acronym ‘CODE24’ chosen as the project title represents the core of the project, namely CORridor DEVELOPMENT for Corridor No. 24, as it was still referred to in EU transport policy at the time.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> More information can be found at: <https://egtc-rhine-alpine.eu/code24/>.

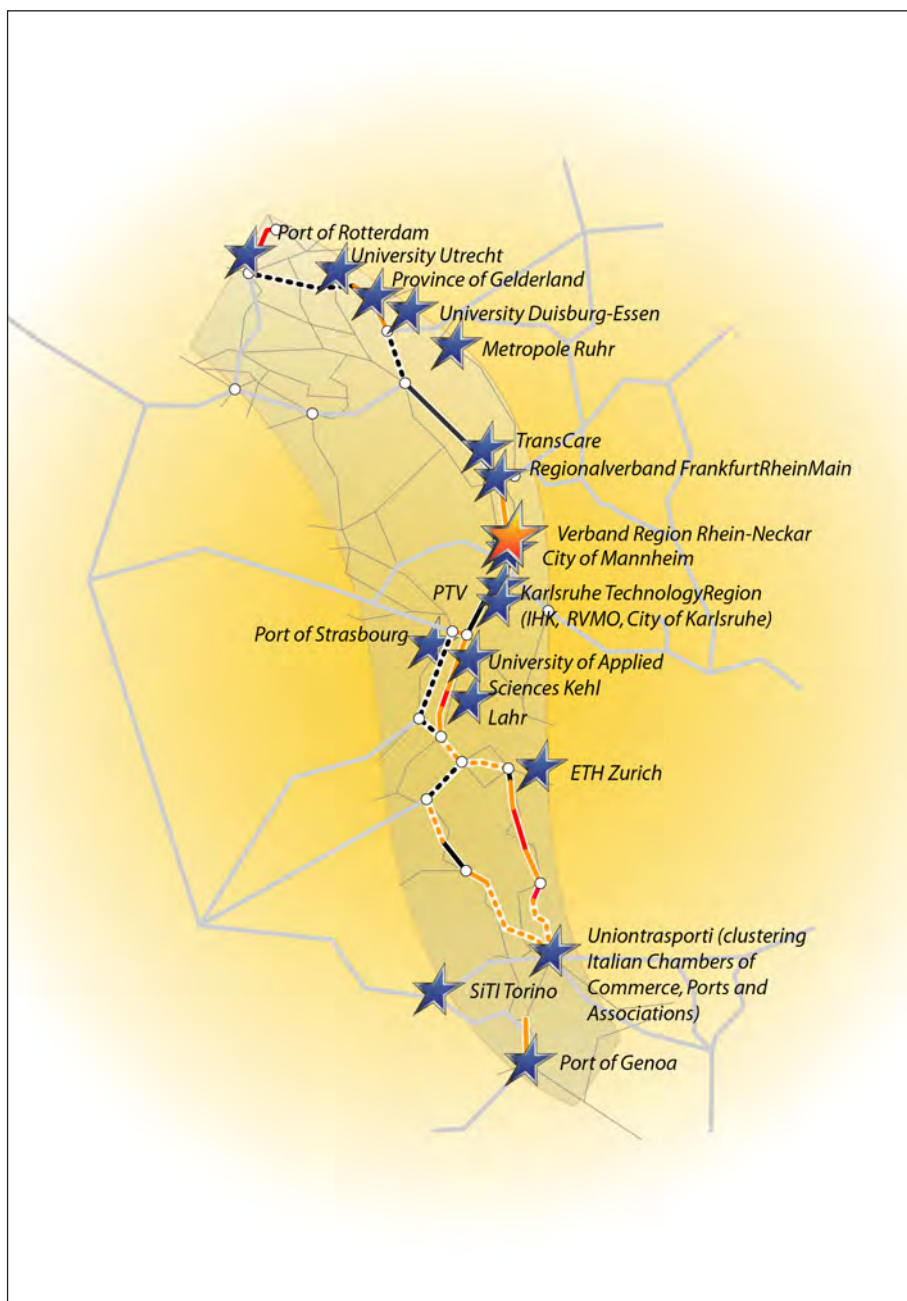


Fig. 1: Registered office of CODE24 project partners /Source: CODE24 Corridor Development Rotterdam-Genoa 2012: 3

Under the auspices of the Rhine-Neckar regional association,<sup>3</sup> a total of 18 project partners (see Fig. 1) from five European countries, consisting of regional planning agencies and local territorial authorities, universities and research institutions, port companies and private engineering firms, joined forces to realise the project.

## 2.1 The project objectives

‘One corridor – one strategy’: this is the main objective of this EU-funded project for the coordinated development of the Rhine-Alpine Corridor (Saalbach 2011: 34 et seq.).

The overall objective is to ensure and, if possible, to accelerate the development of the entire transversal axis, and in particular the northern and southern access routes to the Alpine crossing. It is important to increase economic capacities at all stages, especially in regard to goods traffic and logistics networks, while at the same time minimising the negative impact on the environment and the population. This should lead to the establishment of a rail transport and noise management approach that takes into account both the development of the railway system and sustainable spatial development.

Within the project, cross-border spatial overviews and time frames for expansion and future operation as well as for settlement and spatial development in the intake area of the routes have been elaborated, and the associated correlations and consequences have been identified, as can be seen in the online corridor information system developed within the framework of the project (CODE24 2017). The spatial and operational requirements of the various stakeholders, which are becoming increasingly important in a liberalised railway system, are also of fundamental importance. From the point of view of the regions, this includes the quality and quantity of regional transport deemed necessary; from the point of view of the freight and logistics companies, this includes requirements for the operational quality, volumes and routes of goods traffic and, finally, the relationships and volumes of long-distance transport. The decisive strategic spaces along the route can be identified and the obstacles and benefits illustrated based on these considerations.

The network character of a project of this nature helps to bring the key partners together and to initiate processes and joint initiatives. The project contributes to better networking in economic development, transport and spatial planning. The ground has been laid for concrete investment in innovative solutions for noise protection as well as networking and coordinating logistics facilities and regional transport services. Thanks to the involvement of scientific institutes, problem planning and application planning tools and supporting arguments were elaborated and used.

The consortium structured the project in such a way that a multidisciplinary approach could be pursued over five years in four defined work packages. For each of the four

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3 Information on the Rhine-Neckar regional association can be found at:  
<https://www.m-r-n.com/verband>.



work packages, a responsible partner from the project consortium was appointed (cf. Table 1).

| Work packages |  | Responsible parties   |
|---------------|--|---|
| 1             | Coordinated spatial and infrastructure development | Prof. Dr. Bernd Scholl,<br>ETH Zurich                                     |
| 2             | Environment and noise                              | Birgit Simon, Deputy Director,<br>FrankfurtRheinMain regional association |
| 3             | Goods traffic and logistics                        | Prof. Dr. Drewello,<br>Kehl University                                    |
| 4             | Communications and public acceptance               | Christian Specht,<br>First Mayor of the City of Mannheim                  |

Table 1: Working structure of the CODE24 project /Source: The authors

The Rhine-Neckar regional association assumed the role of the project sponsor ('lead partner') for the overall CODE24 project. This function included assuming responsibility for the correct implementation of the project, including in financial terms; the decision to award the grant and the contract based on it will be between the project sponsor and the programme administrative authority.

The aim of the project was to elaborate a coordinated development strategy for the corridor. The various aspects of this were dealt with in 20 subprojects (CODE24 2017). These ranged from the development of an online corridor information system on the study of compensatory measures for large infrastructure projects, the analysis of logistics clusters, bottlenecks and hinterland connectivity, to public relations and participation measures, as well as the future governance of the corridor. New planning and decision-making methods were also used in the discussion and evaluation of various development scenarios, in particular the computer-aided Analytical Network Process (ANP). The visualisation of the effects of the scenarios under consideration was made possible thanks to a special laboratory at the Swiss Technical University, ETH Zurich.

Last but not least, the special project management challenges and the intercultural skills needed to successfully carry out the project in the context of this cross-border interregional cooperation across a cooperation area spanning a length of 1,300 kilometres with 18 partners from five countries, are particularly noteworthy.

By the time the EU-funded project is completed in March 2015, all the main projects in the work plan will have been implemented.

An overview of the results of the CODE24 project is provided in the Essential Results booklet.<sup>4</sup>

<sup>4</sup> More information can be found at: <https://egtc-rhine-alpine.eu/code24/>.

### **3 The cooperation structure for the future: Institutionalised cooperation within a European Grouping of Territorial Cooperation (EGTC)**

#### **3.1 Creation of a permanent successor organisation**

It is clear that the tasks and challenges ahead in the Rhine-Alpine Corridor cannot be carried out fully and conclusively within the time constraints of a single project. It is assumed, instead, that the close and successful collaboration that has started with the CODE24 project must be expanded and continued on this basis.

The planned creation of a sustainable form of organisation for the future cooperation of interested partners is therefore an important step towards representing these interests, especially of the regional and local level of the Rhine-Alpine Corridor, vis-à-vis national and European authorities. The seamless transition from the CODE24 INTERREG project to the EGTC ensures that the tried and tested cooperation can continue without interruption.

As part of the CODE24 INTERREG project, at the time of the project application the project partners had already planned the establishment of a European Grouping of Territorial Cooperation (EGTC) based on a proposal by the VRRN. The reason for setting up the EGTC was to create a form of cooperation as seamlessly as possible after the end of the project period of CODE24 to ensure that the collaboration within the project could continue in the long term without any time limit. The decisive consideration was the conviction that dealing with corridor development issues was an ongoing task that could not be finalised within a limited project period.

To this end, the European Grouping of Territorial Cooperation (EGTC) was established after comparing various possible legal forms. This European legal form for collaborations between public organisations is based on an EU regulation (Regulation No. 1302/2013/EU). There are currently 53 EGTCs, most of which relate to specific cooperation projects in neighbouring border areas, such as the joint sponsorship of a hospital in a border area.

#### **3.2 Establishment**

The establishment of an EGTC is subject to certain formalities contained in the relevant Regulation (EU) No. 1302/2013 of the European Parliament and the Council of 17 December 2013 amending Regulation (EC) No. 1082/2006 on the European Grouping of Territorial Cooperation (EGTC). In particular, an agreement and statutes must be signed by the founding members. These agreements regulate the objectives and tasks of the EGTC, the envisaged organs (General Assembly of Members, Executive Board, director), how meetings are to be handled, voting, etc., and the anticipated location of the registered office of the EGTC.

As part of its role as lead partner of CODE24 and as the responsible project partner for the subproject to prepare for the establishment of the EGTC, the VRRN prepared drafts for both documents and coordinated them with the potential members from the group of previous project partners. As a result, expressions of interest for membership were collected based on internal decisions about future members, including territorial authorities that were not previously part of the CODE24 project consortium.

In a further step, a joint declaration of intent on the establishment of the EGTC was signed in Mannheim on 20 November 2014 as part of the Second International Corridor Conference, which was also the final event of the CODE24 INTERREG project. This declaration was signed by the following 14 future members which comprised both previous CODE24 project partners and new members who had not participated in the CODE24 project:

- > Port of Rotterdam Authority
- > Provincie Gelderland
- > Hafen Duisburg
- > Region Köln-Bonn e. V.
- > Regionalverband FrankfurtRheinMain
- > Verband Region Rhein-Neckar
- > Stadt Mannheim
- > Regionalverband Mittlerer Oberrhein
- > TechnologieRegion Karlsruhe GbR
- > Stadt Karlsruhe
- > Stadt Lahr
- > Regionalverband Südlicher Oberrhein
- > Regione Piemonte
- > Uniontrasporti

Additional legal procedural steps were necessary before the formal founding meeting could finally take place in Mannheim on 24 April 2015. The EGTC regulation requires each potential member to obtain approval from the relevant national approval authority. Such approvals must then be submitted to the approval authority which is centrally responsible for approvals for establishment in the area of the proposed registered office of the EGTC. In an ordinance of the federal state of Baden-Würt-

temberg to implement the EGTC regulation, the Freiburg regional government was designated as the approval authority, which is thus also responsible for the overall approval for the establishment of an EGTC based in Baden-Württemberg.

It has been shown that the competent authorities used the maximum possible time limit for approval under the EU regulation; as a result, only ten members – partly due to approval applications that had been filed too late – were initially able to satisfy the necessary conditions by the date of incorporation and thus obtained approval to sign up as a founding member. Finally, the new transnational EGTC was launched and the founding agreement was signed with the ten members who had met all the legal requirements by the agreed date of incorporation. Subsequently, the certificate of approval for the newly elected chairs of the EGTC was handed over by the head of the Freiburg regional government.

However, in order for the EGTC to acquire full legal personality, the agreement and statutes had to be published in the Common Official Gazette of Baden-Württemberg, which eventually occurred on 27 May 2015. This means that the EGTC now has full legal personality and is authorised, for example, to sign contracts, open a bank account, arrange the necessary insurance or submit project funding applications.

Shortly after the establishment of the EGTC, three other organisations were able to submit their national approvals: the Port of Rotterdam, Uniontrasporti/Milan and the Piedmont Region. Before these organisations could officially become members, however, the consent of the other national approval authorities was again required. Hence, the establishment of the EGTC proved to be a very cumbersome, lengthy and bureaucratic process, yet shortly after its foundation, the EGTC had 13 members.

### 3.3 Objectives and tasks of the EGTC

The creation of this interregional alliance for the Rhine-Alpine Corridor was primarily intended to ensure that the corridor becomes more visible and that the coordinated interests of its members are represented in future with one voice to the outside world. The EGTC's action space is shown in Fig. 2.

The future objectives and tasks of the Interregional Alliance for the Rhine-Alpine Corridor EGTC, which the EGTC is to carry out for the corridor area, are listed in the approved agreement:<sup>5</sup>

- 1 Consolidating and pooling the common interests of its members in relation to national, European and infrastructural institutions
- 2 Organising and implementing joint lobbying activities for the development of the Rhine-Alpine Corridor
- 3 Representing EGTC members in the EU Rhine-Alpine Corridor Forum

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<sup>5</sup> The signed agreement can be found on the EGTC website [www.egtc-rhine-alpine.eu](http://www.egtc-rhine-alpine.eu).

- 4 Continued work on the joint development strategy for the multimodal Rhine-Alpine Corridor
- 5 Coordinating regional development in the Rhine-Alpine Corridor, taking into account local and regional perspectives
- 6 Considering transport infrastructure projects and land-use conflicts along the Rhine-Alpine Corridor
- 7 Using funding for corridor-related activities and projects
- 8 Informing the EGTC members about funding opportunities for corridor-related projects
- 9 Applying for new EU-funded projects and joint management of EU funding
- 10 Providing a central platform for the mutual exchange of information and experiences and for interacting

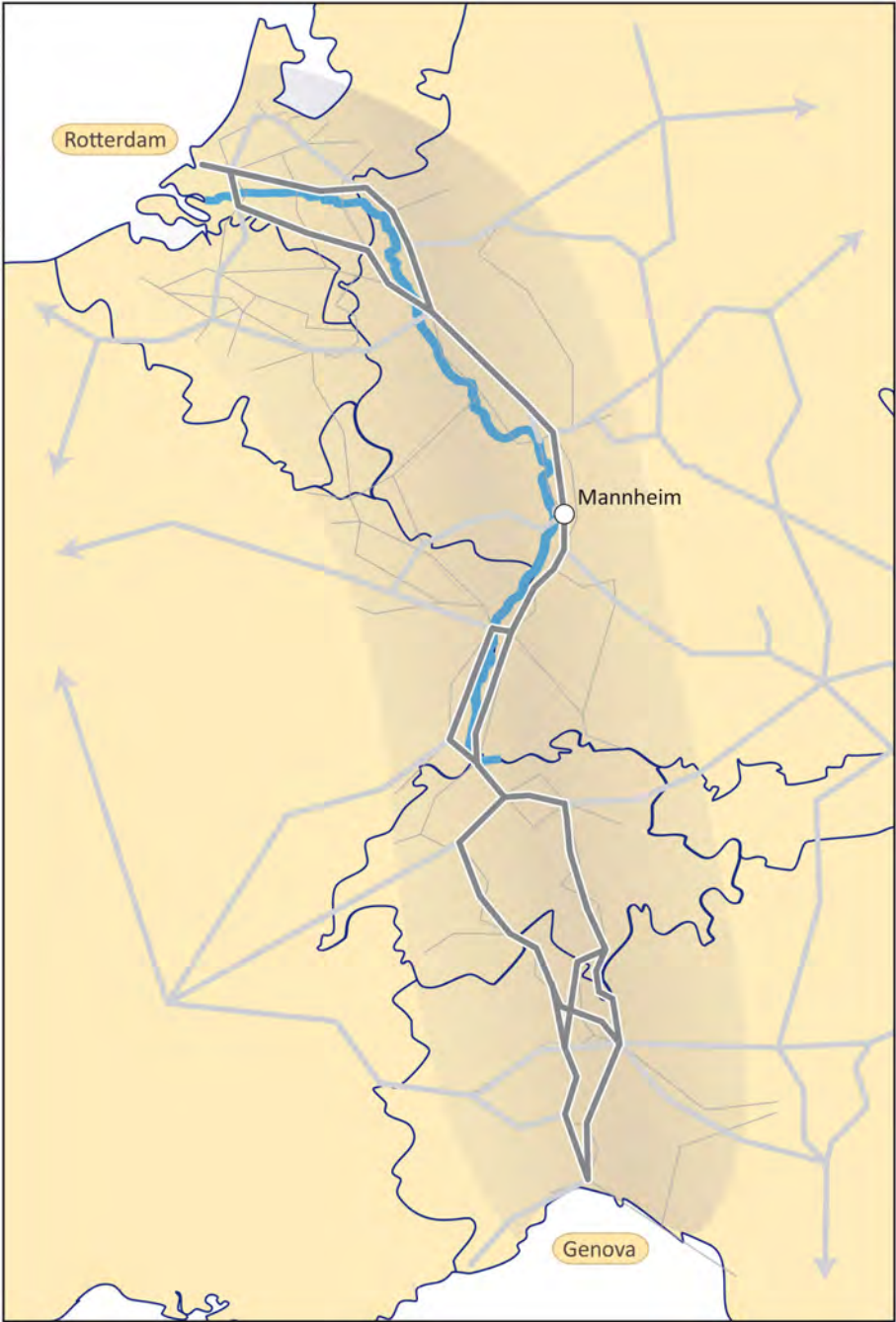


Fig. 2: Action space of the EGTC /Source: Convention of the European Grouping of Territorial Cooperation 'Interregional Alliance for the Rhine-Alpine Corridor EGTC' of 24 April 2015

- 11 Organising meetings of members
- 12 Ensuring the transmission of information
- 13 Continued operation of the corridor information system developed under the CODE24 project
- 14 Maintaining the website developed as part of the CODE24 project:  
<https://egtc-rhine-alpine.eu/code24/>
- 15 Improving the visibility and public perception of the corridor
- 16 Organising corridor events (conferences, workshops, etc.)
- 17 Preparing and disseminating publications (newsletters, leaflets, pamphlets)
- 18 Taking over and continuing the mobile exhibition developed as part of the CODE24 project

### 3.4 Organisational structure and financing of the EGTC

The agreement and the statutes of the new EGTC also stipulate that the registered office of the EGTC and its headquarters in Mannheim are to be located at the premises of the Rhine-Neckar regional association.

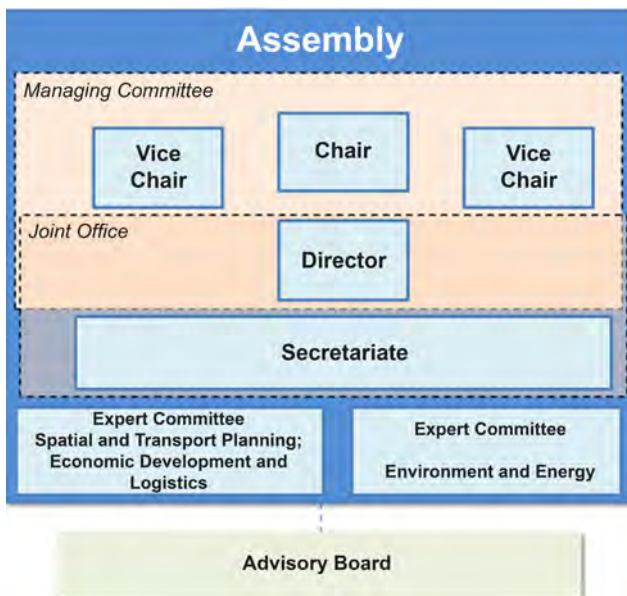


Fig. 3: Organisational chart of the EGTC / Source: The authors

The 2015/2016 Action Plan was discussed at the founding meeting, along with the election of the members of the Executive Board and the appointment of the Director. Furthermore, it was decided at the founding meeting to set up two expert commissions, one for spatial planning, infrastructure, the economy and logistics and another for issues relating to the environment and energy. In addition, it was agreed to establish an advisory board to appoint people who are relevant for the work and achievement of the objectives of the EGTC but who are not actual members of the EGTC. These include representatives of industry and science, as well as representatives of the infrastructure operators (see the organisational chart in Fig. 3).

The running costs, in particular for the headquarters and for public relations, are funded from the membership fees. These are determined annually by the General Assembly of Members and based on the number of members and specific tasks in the financial year in question. The membership fee is not staggered, but is equal for all members.

In addition, funding for EGTC projects will be sought.

### **3.5 Initial activities of the EGTC**

The 2015/2016 Action Plan (unpublished) lists the initial activities of the new EGTC. This particularly includes the continued elaboration of the development strategy jointly established within the framework of CODE24, which is considered to be the basis of the work of the EGTC. Preparing for new EU-funded projects will also be addressed; in particular, the funding programmes for European Territorial Cooperation (ETC; INTERREG) and the 'Connecting Europe' Facility (CEF, see the paper by Caesar/Heilmann/Saalbach/Schreiner in this volume). Before the completing of the CODE24 project, new projects were considered and proposals were discussed. However, applications could only be made after the EGTC had officially acquired legal personality. This is now the case after the agreement and the statutes have been published in the Common Official Gazette of Baden-Württemberg. A first application has now been submitted by the EGTC under CEF; this relates to optimisations in the 'urban nodes' along the corridor, which is one of the priorities identified in the CEF call for projects in 2015.

Last but not least, appropriate measures are to be taken to raise awareness of the EGTC. These include presentations on the EGTC at various conferences and events as well as through targeted events hosted by the EGTC itself, which are to be organised in Brussels, for example.

It is also important for future cooperation within the EGTC that projects, coordination activities and events in this large corridor area should also take place between neighbouring regions, which means that, as with CODE24, the EGTC should sensibly serve as an umbrella for regional and interregional activities at the regional interfaces. However, these will then again need to be coordinated with and integrated in the overall area.



With regard to the corridor forums (cf. the paper by Caesar/Heilmann/Saalbach/Schreiner in this volume), an important concern of the EGTC was also to obtain a seat and a voice in the corridor forum for the Rhine-Alpine Corridor in order to represent the interests of the local and regional level in a bundled manner. Cooperation with the EU-appointed corridor coordinator at the EU level is also of vital interest to the EGTC. Fortunately, this important objective has now been achieved.

### **3.6 New members of the EGTC**

The newly established EGTC has set itself the goal of growing and attracting new members; this aims to increase the weight and significance of the EGTC through expert members. In addition to other regions or provinces, more (large) cities are to be encouraged to become members.

Following the establishment of the EGTC, the Port of Antwerp and the Canton of Basel-City have already submitted an application for admission to the EGTC in accordance with the statutes, which was unanimously approved by the General Assembly of Members. These new members still have to undergo the approval procedure required by the EGTC regulation with the previous national approval authorities in the Netherlands, Italy and Germany, since the two new members are from countries not yet involved in the EGTC, namely Belgium and Switzerland. With regard to Switzerland, however, it should be noted that organisations from this 'third country' cannot directly become members of the EGTC, as it must first be ensured that Switzerland will recognise and proceed according to the EGTC regulation of the European Union when it comes to the examination and approval of memberships; the necessary steps have already been taken to this end.

At the Third General Assembly of Members, which took place in Novara on 11 April 2016, it was decided to accept the following additional members:

- > Liguria Region
- > Lombardy Region
- > South Holland Province
- > Port of Strasbourg.

If the six future members above complete the necessary approval procedures, the EGTC will have 19 members.

There is already intense contact with other potential parties interested in membership of the EGTC, such as organisations in Belgium, France, the Netherlands, Germany, Switzerland and Italy.

## 4 Conclusions

The example of the Rhine-Alpine Corridor has shown that cross-border interregional cooperation can also produce successful results over long distances and for large areas. It has proved advantageous to implement cooperation within the framework of the EU funding programmes offered, as has been done in this case with the INTERREG programme for northwestern Europe. The project duration was also used to prepare a permanent form of collaboration beyond the project duration at an early stage; to this end, a European Grouping for Territorial Cooperation' (EGTC) was chosen as the legal form. The choice of the legal form of an EGTC has since proved to be suitable for the desired objectives and activities. The 'Interregional Alliance for the Rhine-Alpine Corridor', founded by the original project partners of the CODE24 INTERREG project in 2015, is the first EGTC to be based in Germany. The pioneering work involved has not always been easy, but the bureaucratic effort has paid off. The choice of the EGTC legal form has helped to enhance the visibility of the cooperation structure and to increase its acceptance among the relevant stakeholders.

Last but not least, one of the benefits of an EGTC is that it can submit projects for and manage EU funding.

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Kirsten Mangels, Julia Wohland

## SAFEGUARDING THE PROVISION OF PUBLIC SERVICES IN RURAL BORDER AREAS – A CASE STUDY OF THE GREATER REGION

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**Abstract**

In the context of demographic change and the associated shrinking and aging of the population, the safeguarding of public services in rural areas faces great challenges. Rural border areas find themselves in a unique situation due to their location, and must overcome additional challenges if they want to cooperate with their neighbours in the provision of public services.

This paper examines cross-border cooperation in public service provision in rural areas of the Greater Region. The area examined here comprises the German territorial authorities on the German-French border within the Greater Region. An analysis of the responsibilities for and understanding of public services in Germany and France, a concise inventory of education and healthcare services, a written survey of German territorial authorities in the German-French border area, and case studies of projects (e.g. INTERREG A projects) are used to demonstrate the successes, problems and opportunities of cross-border approaches.

**Keywords**

Demographic change – safeguarding public service provision – rural border areas – cross-border approaches and projects – cross-border cooperation – Greater Region

## **1 Introduction**

### **1.1 Introduction to the topic**

In the context of demographic change and the associated shrinking and aging of the population, the safeguarding of public services in rural areas faces great challenges. This results in a change in demand for infrastructure and services, as well as infrastructure sustainability problems. In order to ensure the sustainable development of cities and municipalities, creating, safeguarding and maintaining infrastructures and services and thus ensuring the provision of public services are of crucial importance.

Rural border areas represent a special situation in connection with safeguarding public services. Due to their location, they have to overcome additional challenges if they want to cooperate with their neighbours in providing public services. Differences in public administrative systems, organisations and approaches make the provision of public services across borders more difficult. Existing language barriers also have an impact on cooperation and on voluntary engagement on the part of citizens, which is becoming increasingly important for safeguarding the availability of public services in rural areas. At the same time, however, there are also opportunities and potential for cross-border cooperation. For example, the intake areas for facilities providing public services can be expanded to achieve sustainability levels, or accessibility can be improved. It also does away with the need to duplicate structures on both sides of the border, which is also beneficial from a financial point of view.

Overall, there is a political interest in supporting and expanding this cooperation in the Greater Region (see the paper by Andrea Hartz and Beate Caesar in this volume) – as a grouping of four countries and several regions – in order to exploit common potentials (Greater Region 2017).

### **1.2 Objectives**

The aim of the research is to study how the provision of public services is safeguarded in rural border areas of the Greater Region. The area examined here comprises the German territorial authorities on the German-French border within the Greater Region. Different understandings of public service provision in Germany and France and the responsibilities associated with this will be highlighted and the education and healthcare services areas will be examined with regard to their status quo and future development. The existing and planned strategies and projects for safeguarding public service provision in the area that lies in German territory as well as cross-border cooperation in this regard will also be covered. The successes and obstacles, opportunities and challenges for cross-border approaches will be addressed.

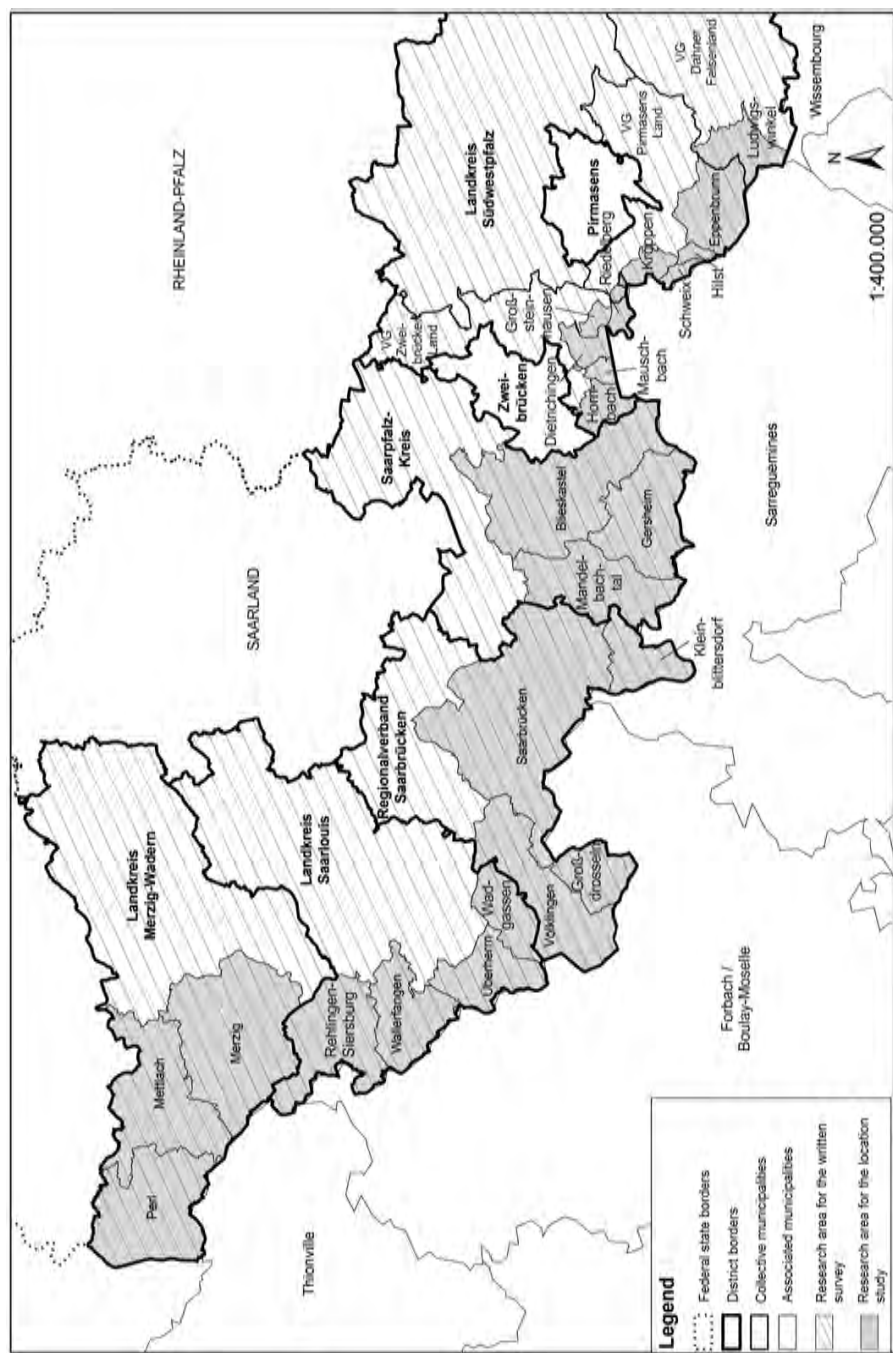


Fig. 1: Research area: German territorial authorities on the German-French border in the Greater Region / Source: The authors

### 1.3 Approach and methodology

By way of introduction, the paper will offer a focused assessment of the current literature on the notion of safeguarding public service provision and the associated responsibilities, and will outline the current challenges at national level in Germany and France. These rather general challenges are elaborated through an analysis of the situation in relation to public service provision in education and healthcare by the German territorial authorities in the German-French border region of the Greater Region and the resulting challenges. The situation in France and potential interdependencies will not be examined in greater detail. This assessment is based on research into the literature as well as online and documentary sources.

In order to assess the problem and to present the existing and planned strategies and projects to safeguard public service provision, a written survey of the German territorial authorities in the German-French border area of the Greater Region was carried out. In addition, the study evaluates selected cross-border projects already carried out to safeguard public service provision in education and health care, as well as INTERREG A projects supported in the Greater Region during the last Structural Funds programme period of 2007–2013.

Building on this, the challenges but also the opportunities for cross-border cooperation projects to safeguard public service provision in border regions will be discussed, including funding opportunities under the Operational Programme for the Greater Region (2014–2020).

## 2 The provision of public services in the German-French border area of the Greater Region

At the European level, public services – also referred to as ‘services of general interest’ – as a concept and term are not so much defined as vaguely described. ‘The term “Services of General Interest” (SGI) is a politico-normative term in the EU and EC context which is generally understood to cover the arrangements, tasks and functions assumed to be of essential importance to citizen welfare, quality of life and participation as well as providing the basic infrastructure requirements for businesses to function successfully’ (ESPON 2013: 11).

This can be attributed to the fact that different countries have different understandings and therefore definitions of the term; moreover, the understanding of public services is dynamic: it changes constantly as technological, social and political conditions change.

However, there is also a consensus at European level that safeguarding the facilities that provide public services in accordance with certain quality standards (in terms of access, availability and affordability) is a public task to ensure the economic, social and territorial development of the sub-regions in line with the objectives of the Europe 2020 Strategy. At the same time, this task is not an attempt to steer the diversity in the interpretations of standards in the member states towards convergence or alignment (European Commission 2016).



## 2.1 Safeguarding public service provision in Germany: interpretations and responsibilities

In Germany, the issue of public service provision is closely linked to the mandate of establishing equivalent living conditions in accordance with Article 72(2) of the Basic Law [*Grundgesetz*]. In this context, the following attempt to define public service provision reflects the definition that is widely used in the current professional discourse: ‘In the context of public service provision, the state and local authorities assume responsibility for comprehensively guaranteeing and/or providing certain goods and services classified as vital by the political officeholders across the entire area at generally bearable (= socially acceptable) costs and at reasonable distances. Technical services such as the supply of energy, water, telecommunications, public local and long-distance transport, postal services, waste removal and sewage systems form part of public service provision as much as the provision of basic social services such as cultural activities, healthcare services, childcare, schooling, care for the elderly, the emergency services, civil protection and fire protection’<sup>1</sup> (BMVBS [Federal Ministry of Transport, Construction and Urban Development] 2011: 6).

The provision of public services is also an essential element of the spatial equivalence of living conditions as established in the Federal Spatial Planning Act (*Raumordnungsgesetz, ROG*), specified in section 2(2) no. 3 as ‘Principles of Spatial Planning’: ‘The provision of public services and infrastructures, in particular the accessibility of facilities and provision of basic services for all population groups, must be adequately secured to ensure the equality of opportunities in the sub-regions; this also applies in sparsely populated regions. The social infrastructure is to be concentrated primarily in central places; the accessibility and sustainability criteria of the central-place theory must be flexibly adapted to regional requirements.’<sup>2</sup>

Spatial planning accordingly addresses the safeguarding of public services within the framework of central-place theories. A graduated system of central places aims to ensure the provision of private services and public services to the population and the economy which are reasonably accessible.

The term ‘reasonable’ has not been transformed into standards at the federal level. It can be generally noted that standards largely apply nationwide in areas where public services are mainly provided by private operators, e.g. postal services, while those that mostly fall within the remit of public service providers, such as schools or public transport services, are largely governed by standards elaborated at the federal state level (BMVBS 2010). Given the different situations in the federal states with regard to the density of settlements, impact of demographic change, the state of the infrastructures and, last but not least, the general financial situation, there are significant differences in the setting of standards.

Finally, as regards the responsibility for public service provision, the principle of subsidiarity plays a key role. This principle is legally embedded in Article 28(2) of the Basic Law, which establishes the foundations of local self-government. Most public services are provided at the municipal level by local authorities or districts. In the majority of rural municipalities, the social and technical infrastructure provided by

the local authority is mainly aimed at the local population. Any changes to this that may be required due to declining or increasing demand are usually dealt with as a local issue. When the critical thresholds for sustaining the services are not met and facilities face the risk of closing, a local problem can easily turn into an inter-municipal distribution problem. Inter-municipal or regional strategies and cooperation projects can help to find solutions for such problems.

Similar to the Basic Law, the constitutions of the federal states, such as the Saarland Constitution, contain an article guaranteeing local self-government. For example, Article 117(2) of the Saarland Constitution states: 'In order to promote the well-being of their inhabitants, the local authorities perform all public tasks for the local community, unless they are assigned by law to other bodies in the public interest.'<sup>3</sup> Public services are not explicitly listed here. The Saarland Local Self-Government Act (*Kommunalselbstverwaltungsgesetz, KSVG*) also states in section 5 that the municipalities are responsible for promoting the health and social, cultural and economic well-being of their inhabitants, as well as sports activities. The Act also states that they should work together with neighbouring territorial authorities in other European regions across borders. However, it does not specify the exact facilities and services that are required for the health and social, cultural and economic well-being of inhabitants. Section 108 of the Saarland Local Self-Government Act grants municipalities the opportunity to operate commercially and defines non-commercial enterprises, which provide an insight into elements of public services: 'For the purposes of this section, non-commercial enterprises are, firstly, facilities of education, healthcare, social welfare, culture, sport, recreation and leisure activities, waste disposal, sewage and facilities of a similar nature; secondly, they are facilities which serve as auxiliary enterprises exclusively to cover the local authorities' own needs'<sup>4</sup> (section 108(2) of the Saarland Local Self-Government Act).

In Germany, the responsibilities for safeguarding the provision of public services differ slightly due to the federal structure. In education and healthcare, the responsibilities are as follows, taking Saarland as an example:

in relation to early child care and education (day care centres and nurseries), the tasks of the federal state government include further developing the nature of such services, financial support for day care as well as the training of educational staff. The requirements planning for this is undertaken by the districts, urban districts and local authorities that have established a youth department in coordination with the federal state government and is updated every three years (section 7(1) of the Ordinance on the Implementation of the Saarland Childcare and Education Act (*Verordnung zur Ausführung des Saarländischen Kinderbetreuungs- und -bildungsgesetzes, SKBBG*) in conjunction with section 8 of the same act and section 1 of the Saarland Act on the Implementation of the Children and Youth Assistance Act (*Gesetz zur Ausführung des Kinder- und Jugendhilfegesetzes, AG KJHG, Saarland*). The facilities may be operated by districts, local territorial authorities or independent agencies.

The situation is somewhat more nuanced in regard to education. Here, too, the federal state government is responsible for the curricula, quality assurance and the

organisational structure of schools in Saarland as well as for the education and further training of teachers, whereby teacher education and training is planned and organised through the Federal State Institute of Education and Media (*Landesinstitut für Pädagogik und Medien, LPM*), which is operated under the auspices of the ministry.

Pursuant to section 37 of the Saarland School Regulation Act (*Schulordnungsgesetz, SchoG*), the federal state government and the school authorities cooperate in the establishment, modification, dissolution and maintenance of state schools. In the context of school development planning, the municipal school authorities at the level of the collective municipalities coordinate the planning basis for the development of a balanced educational service and draw up school development plans for their area. The school authorities responsible for primary schools, other general education secondary schools at the basic and higher level (I and II), vocational schools and special needs schools are usually the collective municipalities. For the purposes of school development planning, municipalities and collective municipalities can form school associations or enter into agreements under public law. Pursuant to section 40 of the Saarland School Regulation Act, the school inspectorate decides on the establishment, modification and dissolution of a state school in agreement with the school authority in the context of school development planning.

The personnel costs for teachers and teaching assistants at state schools which are operated by the federal state, a municipality, a collective municipality or a school association are borne by the federal state.

In the healthcare sector, the districts generally assume the responsibility for safeguarding inpatient medical care, and are often themselves the operators of hospitals and emergency services. Outpatient medical care is planned and secured by the relevant public healthcare insurance associations. The districts are involved in the planning.

In summary, it can be concluded that there is a high level of awareness about the problem of the future safeguarding of public service provision, in particular in rurally structured regions in Germany. This can be seen in the various actions and publications of the responsible federal ministry<sup>1</sup>, while numerous municipalities and districts have developed strategies and action plans for dealing with demographic change and safeguarding public service provision, and have in some cases appointed demographic change officers. At the same time, the discussion about and interpretation of the standards which are used as benchmarks for safeguarding public service provision and which differ greatly from one federal state to the next is largely dependent on political decisions. In addition, the responsibilities for safeguarding public service provision are spread across different administrative levels and to some extent allocated to third parties, as exemplified by the areas of education and healthcare.

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1 The publication by the Federal Ministry of Transport, Construction and Urban Development (ed.) (2011): *Regionalstrategie Daseinsvorsorge – Denkanstöße für die Praxis* (Regional strategy for the provision of public services – Practical considerations), Berlin, as well as the Model Project for Spatial Planning titled *Aktionsprogramm regionale Daseinsvorsorge* (Action Programme for Regional Public Services) with its numerous publications (cf. <http://www.regionale-daseinsvorsorge.de/veroeffentlichungen/>) are just two of many examples.

## 2.2 Safeguarding public service provision in France: interpretations and responsibilities

There is no comparable equivalent to the German notion of public service provision in France. The literature offers only roughly comparable terms, such as *service d'intérêt général* or *service public* (BMVBS 2013: 21 et seq.). The latter term has been used since the end of the 18th century, but its meaning has changed over the centuries. The term *services publics*, which is also enshrined in the preamble to the French Constitution, is based on the definition of the Bordeaux school, in particular that of Léon Duguit from 1923. Aubin describes it as tasks carried out under the control of the state, which is governed by the obligation to serve the common good as defined at least in part by the application of public law, and which cannot be discharged without the participation of the state (2013: 51). This notion emphasises the importance of the French state apparatus in the provision of *services publics*. In addition, similar to the German context, the public interest in providing a service is an indispensable element (Uplegger 2005).

In a narrower sense, five core areas of public service provision can be identified in France: communication and transport, the energy supply, economic activity, environmental protection and sanitation. The latter two include the water supply, sewage disposal, waste collection and burial (Püttner 2000: 51 et seq.). This shows that social and particularly cultural aspects of public services play a comparatively minor role in France, since the 'economic element' (Püttner 2000: 51 et seq.) is predominant.

The design of the services provided as part of the *services publics* is based on three principles (French-German Forum 2003):

- > Principle of continuity (*continuité*): the French State warrants the functioning of the *services publics*.
- > Principle of variability (*mutabilité*): adaptability of the service to changing circumstances; there is no entitlement to the provision of the services.
- > Principle of equality (*égalité*): equality of all users in their access to services.

Although France is less affected by ageing processes in the context of demographic change than Germany, the centralised French state is pursuing a strategy of territorial cohesion (*cohésion territoriale*) to ensure a balanced development of the country's territorial structure. The focus is on reactivating regional economic activities, stimulating business, encouraging people to move into certain areas, and improving the quality of life and the quality of the environment, especially in rural areas.

At the national level, the activities and strategies are formulated, coordinated and directed by the Interministerial Delegation for Spatial Planning and Regional Attractiveness (*Délégation interministérielle à l'Aménagement du Territoire et à l'Attractivité Régionale* (DATAR)). These are concretised and implemented by the Regional Directorate for the Environment and Housing (*Direction régionale de l'environnement de l'aménagement et du logement*, DREAL) in the 32 French regions. The regional areas

of competence include the financing of activities relating to public service provision in rural regions, the provision of suitable infrastructure or the organisation of the regional (public) transport system (*BMVBS* 2013: 53 et seq.). The 101 *départements* have their own competences with regard to shaping public service provision. This administrative level organises the provision of medical and social services for the population, waste management, the distribution of benefits or school transport in non-urban areas. The merger of *régions* in the course of the French territorial reform, which has been in force since 2016, reduced the number of *régions* and thus increased their territory (see the paper by Andrea Hartz/Beate Caesar in this volume). This will also have an impact on the provision of public services. The *Conseil Municipal* (local council) regulates local mobility services, land use and the heating and water supply at the municipal level.

The education sector offers an example of how the provision of public services is organised based on the subsidiarity principle in France: while the regions are responsible for the *lycées* (senior secondary school), the *collèges* (lower secondary schools) are managed by the *départements*. *Ecoles* (primary schools) fall within the remit of the local authorities.

Further examples of bodies entrusted with the task of safeguarding the provision of public services are the *communauté commune* (a type of inter-municipal cooperation) and the *pays* (informal association of several municipalities). The former carries out joint spatial planning projects running for limited periods, while the *pays* often serve as project areas, although the associations follow functional rather than administrative boundaries. As a rule, several *communautés communes* join forces to ensure the funding of regional projects.

In France, too, the provision of public services, particularly in sparsely populated areas, is reaching its technical and financial limits. As a result, new forms of organisation are being created by both the state and the private sector. In addition to public-private partnership initiatives, the resource centres for territorial development (*Centres de Ressources du Développement Territorial, ETD*) are a newly established interregional form of cooperation and exchange platform designed to meet the current challenges in rural areas. As an interface between local and supra-regional (political) actors, their core task is to develop specific recommendations for implementing adapted development projects (*APIE* 2012). In addition, the likewise newly established rural centres for excellence (*Pôles d'excellence rurales*) (a type of rural development company) aim to adapt the provision of public services in order to attract more people into certain areas. In particular, the aim is to create new jobs in peripheral areas, which are subsidised by the French state through subsidy programmes. In addition, there is an increase in private initiatives that create alternative possibilities for residents in order to respond to the depopulation resulting from structural weakness and the associated decline in services publics (*BMVBS* 2013: 30 et seq.).

## 2.2 A shrinking, ageing population – Challenges for safeguarding the provision of public services in the German-French border area of the Greater Region

Challenges in safeguarding the provision of public services generally result from demographic and economic structural change. Declining population figures threaten the economic viability of public services, and the ageing population creates new needs, for which facilities must be adapted. The bundling of public services in central places is a principle that strives to ensure both the capacity of the facilities and adequate accessibility by private and public transport. The following section provides an overview of demographic trends as well as of the higher-order and middle-order centres in the German-French border area of the Greater Region.

Between 2000 and 2013, the Greater Region of Saar-Lor-Lux-Rhineland-Palatinate-Wallonia recorded a population increase of 2.2% to a total of about 11.4 million (see Fig. 2). However, the situation varies widely from region to region. Wallonia, in particular, has seen a growth rate of 6.7% over this period, bringing the population to just under 3.5 million, and Luxembourg now has a population of 537,039, representing a growth of 23.3%. The population in the Lorraine region of France remains generally stable at around 2.35 million. In the immediate German-French border area, the *arrondissements* on the French side recorded a slight growth rate of 1.4%. The German part of the Greater Region is the most populous with almost 1 million inhabitants in Saarland and almost 4 million in Rhineland-Palatinate, and is particularly affected by declining population numbers. Only a few districts have seen an increase in their population. In the immediate German-French border area of the Greater Region, all German districts are affected by declining population figures (Geoportal of the Greater Region 2017). The Saarpfalz district recorded the largest decline of up to -8.6% (DESTATIS 2015).

All regions, except the German regions, show a positive natural population growth. Lorraine had the highest population of 39,447 between 2006 and 2012. Migration also plays a role in the Greater Region. From 2006 to 2013, Rhineland-Palatinate recorded a positive net migration (+37,652), despite an overall population loss. Saarland and Lorraine both lost population through migration (-1,491 and -24,539 respectively), between 2006 and 2012 (Statistical Offices of the Greater Region 2014: 10 et seq.).

The average population density in the Greater Region as of 1 January 2013 was 174.9 inhabitants per km<sup>2</sup>, but this varies greatly from region to region. On the German-French border of the Greater Region, the situation is more differentiated. For example, a relatively low population density on the French side (80 to 150 inhabitants per km<sup>2</sup> in Sarreguemines, 150 to 300 inhabitants per km<sup>2</sup> in Forbach-Boulay-Moselle and Thionville) is juxtaposed with a higher population density on the German side, especially in Saarbrücken, which has at least 500 inhabitants per km<sup>2</sup>, and in the districts of Saarlouis and Saarpfalz (300–500 inhabitants per km<sup>2</sup>) (IBA [Interregional Labour Market Observatory] 2014: 8).

Population forecasts show that France, too, will experience declining population figures in the future. However, the German and French border areas in the Greater Region are expected to differ in their future population trends (see Fig. 3): While French territorial authorities will lose only 2.5% of their population by 2030, the population losses on the German side are significantly higher, at even -9.7% in the Southwest Palatinate district.

Far more significant than the general population trends are the shifts in the age structure. The increase in life expectancy and the decline in births are leading to a severe change in the population structure in the Greater Region towards an ageing society (see Fig. 4).

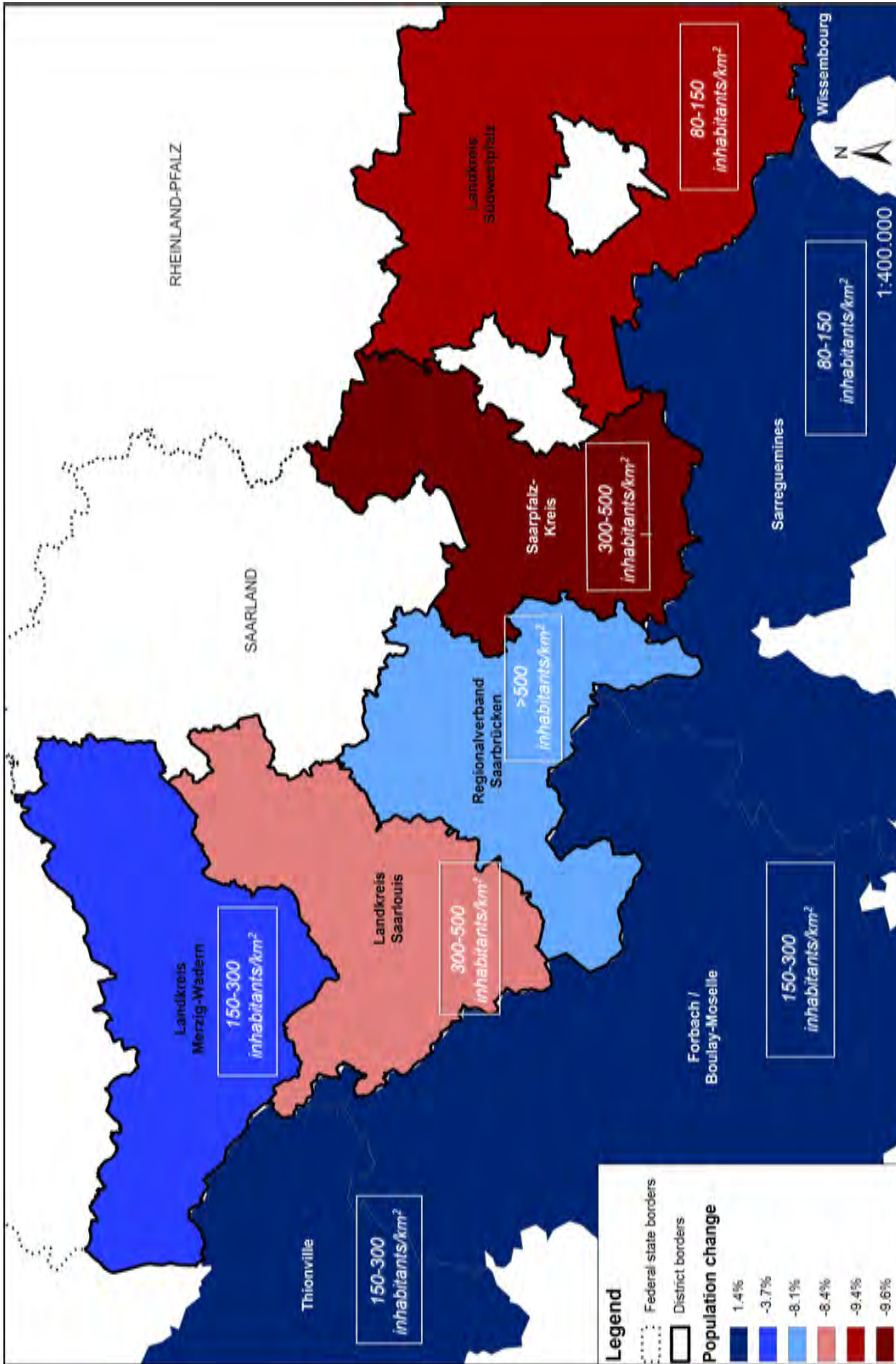
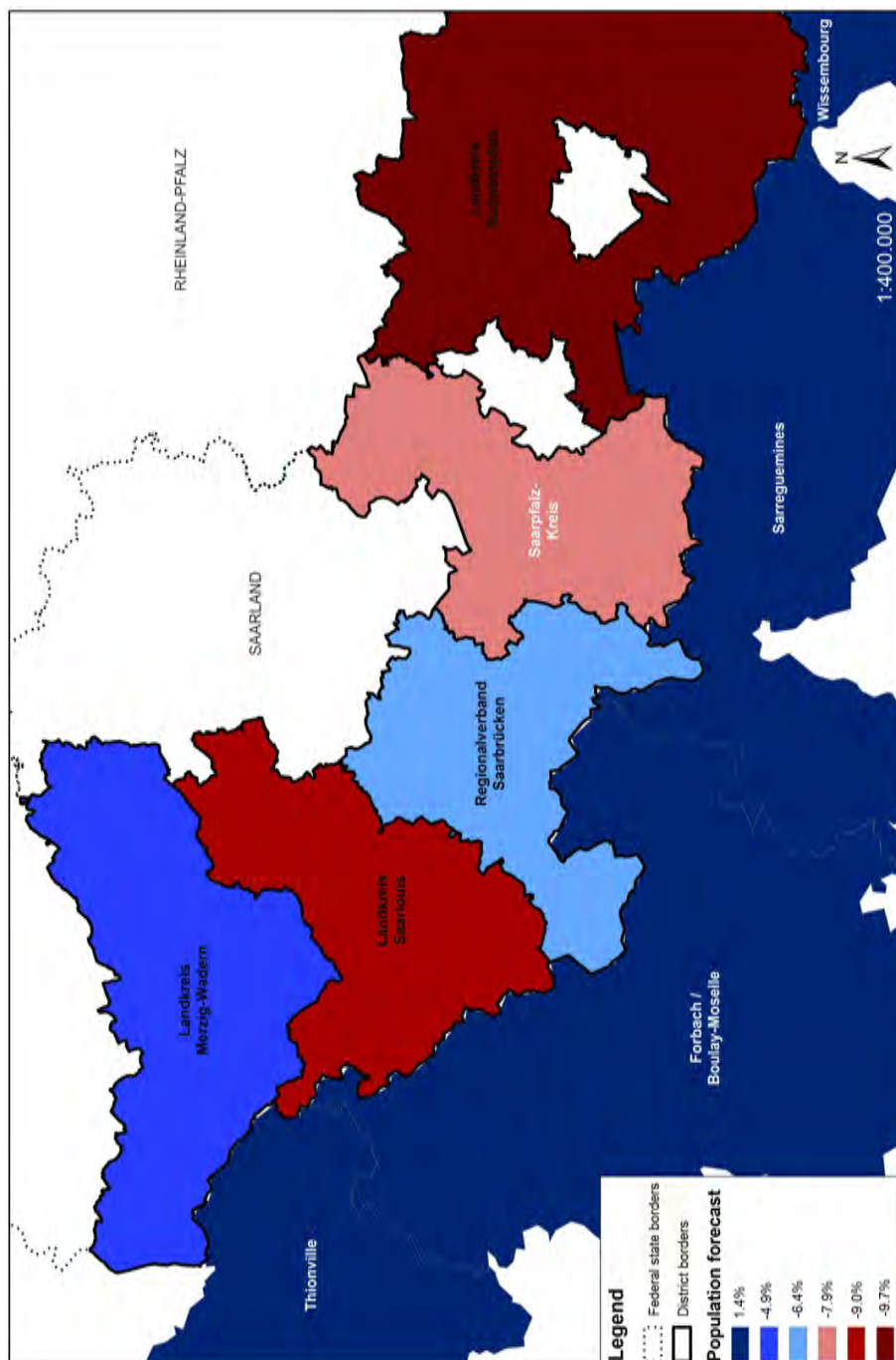


Fig. 2: Population trends and population density in the German-French border regions of the Greater Region 2000–2013 /Source: The authors, based on DESTATIS 2015 and Eurostat 2017





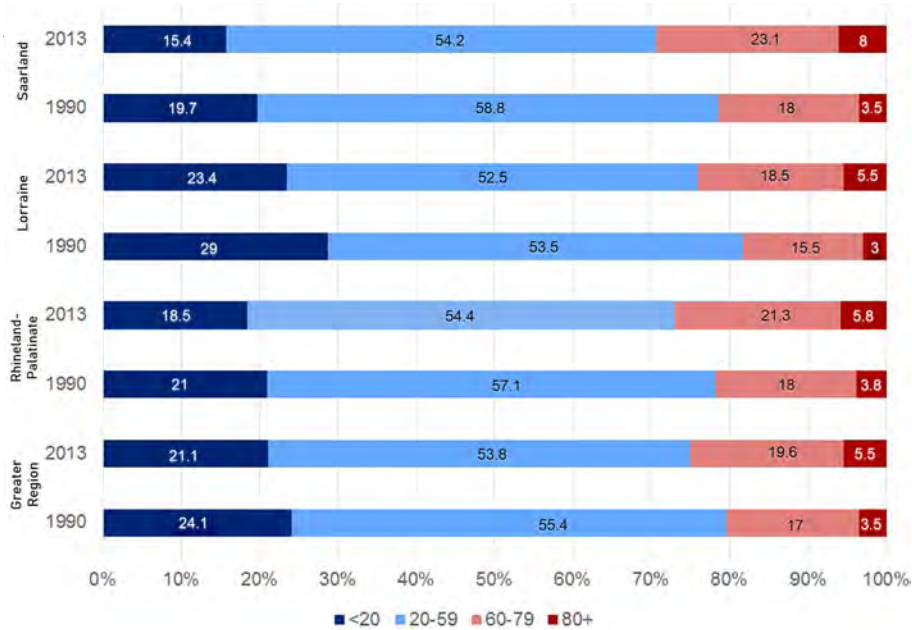


Fig. 4: Population by age group in 1990 and 2013 /Source: The authors, based on IBA 2014

In future, a further increase in the number of 60 to 79-year-olds and over 80s in the Greater Region is expected (25% of people will be aged 60-79 and 7% will be over 80 in 2030), while the decline in the number of under 20s is expected to continue (20% in 2030) (IBA 2014: 26).

As illustrated in Figure 5, a consideration of the central places in the research area shows that Germany has a more tightly-knit network of middle-order centres along the border and a higher-order centre with the federal state capital of Saarbrücken close to the border. However, it should be noted that the population density in the French border area is lower than in the German border area, and that France as a whole has fewer central places. The Saarland's Federal State Development Plan of 2006 states in the Settlement section that the facilities in middle-order centres should include schools leading up to the university entrance qualification, medical specialists and a hospital (Saarland Ministry of the Environment 2007). The Rhineland-Palatinate Federal State Development Programme (LEP IV) of 2008 identifies middle-order centres and middle-order areas. It stipulates that middle-order centres provide a comprehensive middle-order centre function for their middle-order areas (ISM RLP [Ministry of the Interior and Sport in Rhineland-Palatinate] 2008: 86) and that they strengthen and secure this function, especially in rural areas (ISM RLP 2008: 86). According to the Rhineland-Palatinate Federal State Development Programme (LEP IV), primary care hospitals are part of the necessary facilities in middle-order centres, and are desirable in middle-order areas. A specialist medical centre is desirable in middle-order centres. Higher secondary schools/integrated comprehensive schools offering a university entrance qualification must

be provided for in middle-order areas; in middle-order centres, they are an obligatory provision which must be aimed for. Vocational schools are necessary facilities in both the middle-order areas and the middle-order centres (*ISM RLP* 2008: 89).

In summary, the situation on the German-French border in the Greater Region is as follows.

- > In principle, two different categories can be distinguished: regions which are expected to experience a decline in their population and are increasingly affected by a declining working-age population (Saarland and Rhineland-Palatinate), and regions which experience population growth with a simultaneous decline in the working-age population (Lorraine).
- > While the population development on the French side remained relatively stable between 2000 and 2013, with a slight growth of 1.4%, the population on the German side shrank by up to -9.6% during this period, despite migration gains on the Rhineland-Palatinate side. By 2030, a population decline of -2.5% is forecast in the French border areas, and of up to -9.7% in the German border regions.
- > The decline in population density will cause problems with regard to the sustainability of facilities providing public services, especially in areas with already low population densities (the districts of Merzig-Wadern and Southwest Palatinate and the French *arrondissements*, in particular Saareguemines).
- > The ageing population will necessitate adjustments to the facilities providing public services on both the French and German sides.
- > The network of higher-order and middle-order centres as priority areas for the provision of services for the population and as locations of facilities providing public services in the immediate vicinity of the border is much denser on the German side than on the French side.
- > These developments present challenges for various public services, e.g. mobility, education, primary healthcare and care for the elderly, local services and the retail trade.
- > Demographic trends and forecasts pose particular risks to the provision of educational facilities in the border area due to declining numbers of pupils; maintaining all types of school at reasonable distances will present a particular challenge.
- > Demographic trends and forecasts will also have an impact on the planning of medical services and on the medical services available to inhabitants.



## **2.4 The situation regarding the provision of public services in education and healthcare by the German territorial authorities in the German-French border area and the resulting challenges**

To analyse the situation on the German side in the border area, selected facilities providing public education and healthcare services are described below in terms of their numbers and locations, and the existing and future gaps in the provision of these services will be addressed. The facilities examined were:

- > Kindergartens and day care centres
- > Primary schools and level I (basic level) and level II (higher level) secondary schools
- > General practitioners
- > Primary care hospitals

These facilities were chosen on the basis that they should be available close to home and throughout the area in order to preserve the areas as attractive places to live and work. For facilities such as tertiary education facilities and hospitals with maximum care, on the other hand, people are willing to travel longer distances.

Pursuant to section 24 of Book VIII of the Social Law Code / Children and Youth Assistance Act [*SGB VIII – Kinder- und Jugendhilfegesetz*], children in Germany aged one to three years are entitled to early childhood support in a day care facility or nursery (section 24(2) of Book VIII of the Social Law Code / Children and Youth Assistance Act), and children aged three to six years have a statutory right to a half-day place in a kindergarten until they enrol in school (section 24(3) of Book VIII of the Social Law Code / Children and Youth Assistance Act). Based on this legal requirement, the municipalities are obliged to maintain the appropriate facilities. In addition, early childhood education facilities are an important factor when families, couples with children or single parents are choosing where to live. The rate of children under 3 being cared for in day facilities is steadily increasing (German Authoring Group for National Education Reports 2014: 55 et seq.). Scientific studies have shown that a visit to day care and kindergarten has a positive effect on a child's language development.

Figure 6 shows that the overall level of provision of childcare facilities by the German territorial authorities in the border area is still quite good, although some smaller towns do not have a facility.

However, the population trend, which is consistently forecast to severely decline in some areas, raises fears that safeguarding the provision of services close to home will present a future challenge for the municipalities.

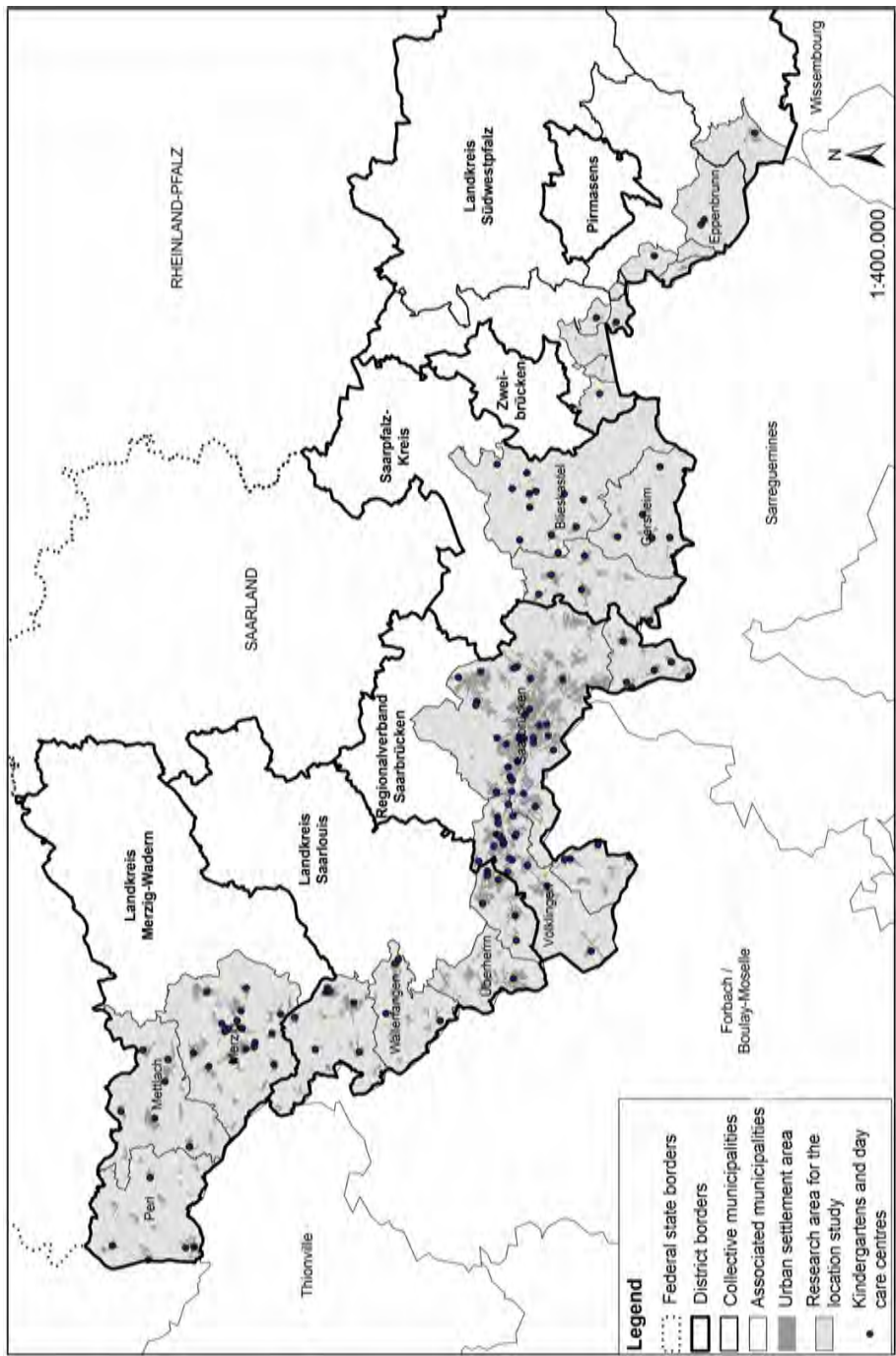


Fig. 6: Locations of kindergartens and day care centres for children within the areas of the German territorial authorities in the German-French border area of the Greater Region /Source: The authors, based on the websites of the German territorial authorities



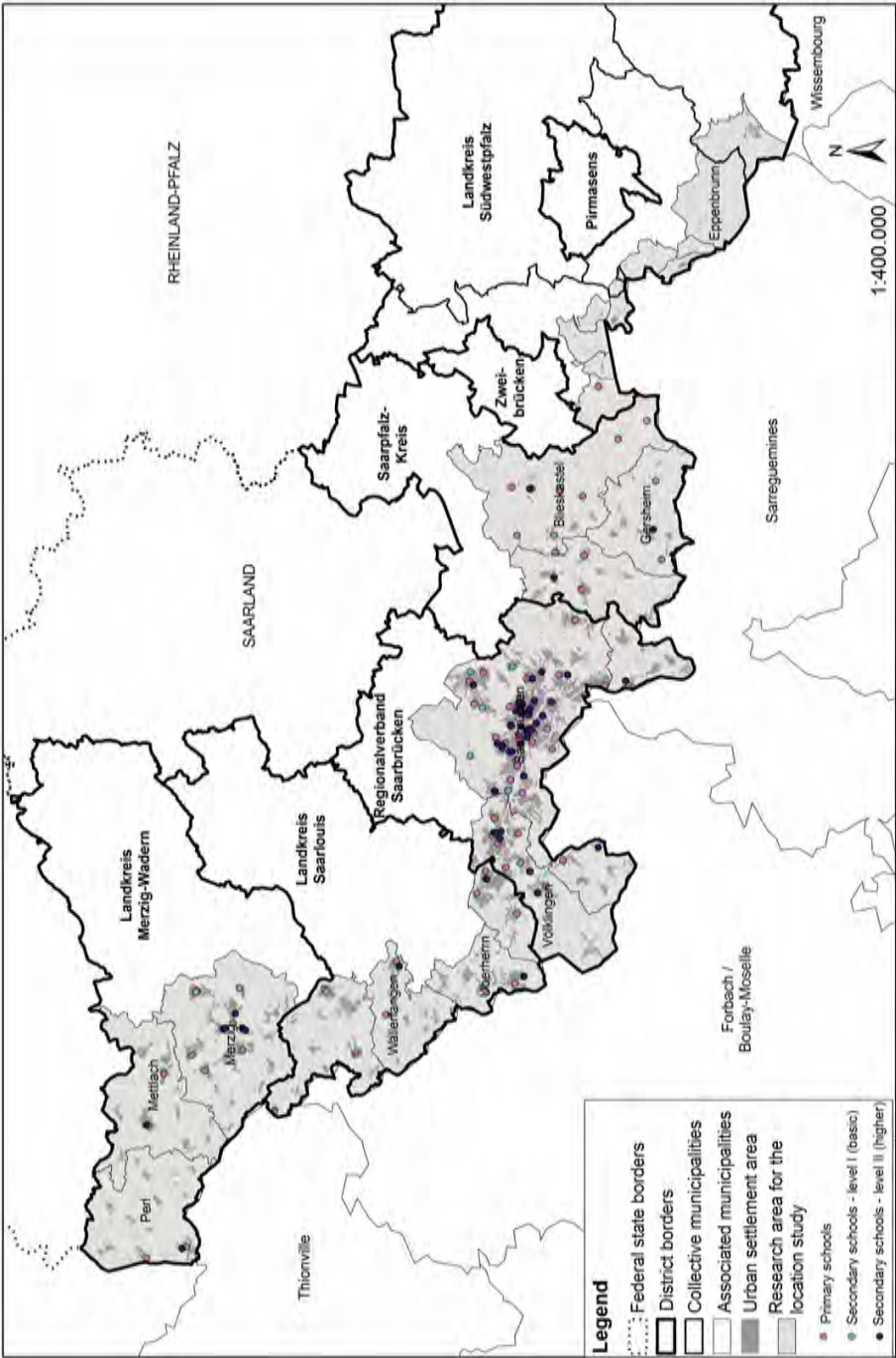


Fig. 7: Locations of the primary schools and level I (basic) and level II (higher secondary) schools in the areas of the German territorial authorities in the German-French border area of the Greater Region / Source: The authors, based on the websites of the German territorial authorities

The situation is somewhat more controversial in regard to safeguarding the provision of primary as well as basic and higher-level secondary schools close to home. Figure 7 clearly shows that, in the areas of some territorial authorities along the border, pupils already have to travel considerable distances to attend primary school and increasingly also secondary school. In particular, there is evidence of this in the immediate border regions in Perl, Mettlach, Merzig, Wallerfangen, Völklingen, Großrusseln, Kleinblittersdorf, Mangelsbachtal as well as in all municipalities of the district of Southwest Palatinate. Against the background of the declining population and in particular the declining numbers of children and teenagers of school age, it is to be expected that in future new forms for providing these services, both in terms of the schools and facilities themselves and their accessibility, will be tested and implemented in inter-municipal cooperation.

The availability of medical services (by general practitioners or specialists in internal medicine) as well as the accessibility of primary care hospitals is another essential consideration in the choice of a residential location. Figure 8 shows that the availability of GP surgeries and hospitals in the border area is quite disparate. Again, with the exception of the Saarbrücken City Association, doctors' surgeries and hospitals are sometimes spread very thinly, especially in the eastern part of the research area. According to the Association of Statutory Health Insurance Physicians Rhineland-Palatinate (*Kassenärztliche Vereinigung Rheinland-Pfalz, KV RLP*), ensuring universal and local outpatient care by general practitioners is a key objective of policymakers and the contracting parties in the healthcare sector as well as the explicit expectation of the population (*KV RLP* 2015: 42). To assess the current situation and the future challenges for safeguarding GP services, important factors are the accessibility of the practices as well as the impact of demographic developments on the population and the age structure of the practising doctors.

There are no set targets for the accessibility of the practices. Although the current Rhineland-Palatinate Federal State Development Programme stipulates that middle-order centres, whose facilities include primary care hospitals, should be accessible within 30 to 45 minutes, no time or distance target is set with regard to the accessibility of GP practices (a lower-order centre facility) (*ISM RLP* 2008: 89). The Association of Statutory Health Insurance Physicians assesses the accessibility of GP practices only as a relative value. For example, the driving distance is an average of 1.5 km in Rhineland-Palatinate and 1.8 km in the district of Southwest Palatinate, i.e. in the border area, although around 29% of the district's inhabitants have to drive between 2.5 and 10 km to the nearest GP practice (*KV RLP* 2015: 42). The population forecast for the German territorial authorities in the border area shows a consistently declining population and an increasing percentage of over 65s. However, given that 93.4% to 96.6% of this age group require GP services every quarter, compared to 54.1% of 18- to 44-year-olds, a linearly decreasing demand for GP services consistent with the declining population cannot be expected (*KV RLP* 2015: 46).

In the district of Southwest Palatinate, the age structure of GPs is characterised by a high percentage of practising physicians over the age of 59, with the average retirement age currently being 62. This means in percentage terms that the district of Southwest Palatinate must increase the number of GPs by 53% by 2020 (*KV RLP* 2015: 40).



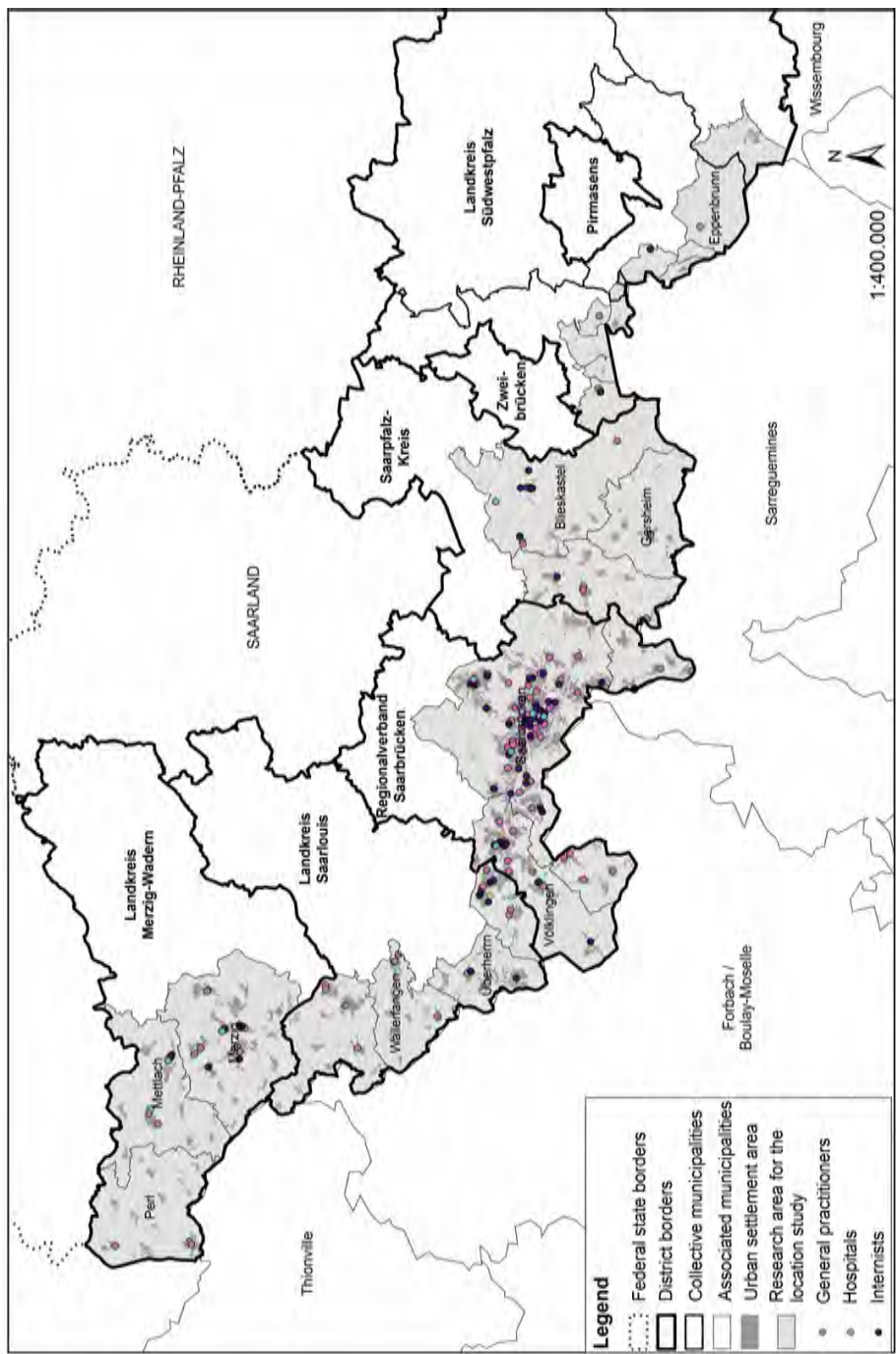


Fig. 8: Locations of general practitioners, hospitals and internists in the areas of the German territorial authorities in the German-French border area of the Greater Region /Source: The authors, based on the websites of the German territorial authorities

In this context, it would be very interesting to continue this research to obtain more detail. In addition to accessibility models, taking demographic trends into account to illustrate the shifts and a simulation of the settlement areas and population figures in the intake areas of these facilities would be instructive to analyse the situation in the areas of the French territorial authorities along the border.

### **3 Existing strategies and (cross-border) projects to safeguard the provision of public services in the German-French border area of the Greater Region**

A written survey was carried out in July–August 2015 to assess the existing and future situation in relation to safeguarding public service provision in the areas of German territorial authorities and to scope out existing and planned strategies, concepts and projects by the German territorial authorities on the German-French border of the Greater Region. The territorial authorities identified in Figure 1 along the German-French border of the Greater Region were surveyed. A total of 32 German territorial authorities at different levels of government (districts, collective municipalities and associated municipalities) were surveyed along the border. The response rate was 43.75%. Of all the entities surveyed, three out of four districts, one regional association, two out of three collective municipalities and seven out of 24 associated municipalities/cities completed and returned the questionnaire, and one questionnaire was returned without the respondent specifying the nature of their territorial authority. The highest return rate was thus achieved at the level of the districts and the regional association. The survey is not representative.

The responses to the written survey were assessed to determine whether they reflect the impressions gained in section 2.4.

Furthermore, the projects funded by the INTERREG VI A programme of the Greater Region (2007–2013) will be evaluated to analyse whether there have already been cooperation projects with German and French participation in education and health-care services and their specific thematic focal points.

#### **3.1 Assessment of the German territorial authorities surveyed here on safeguarding the provision of public services**

More than three-quarters of territorial authorities already have problems in safeguarding public service provision, mainly in relation to mobility; these problems were mentioned by all levels. The districts that took part in the survey also face problems with the provision of local services and the retail trade, as well as basic health care and care for the elderly. The collective municipalities which participated share this assessment, especially in the areas of primary health care and care for the elderly. Other problematic areas include the housing sector in connection with empty dwellings and ageing building fabric, the challenge of balancing infrastructure in rural areas, swimming pool infrastructure and broadband coverage. The

territorial authorities surveyed do not yet see any difficulties in relation to education. Three territorial authorities do not currently face problems in the provision of public services.

The current problems are expected to increase in the future. Future problems in providing public services are mostly anticipated in regard to mobility (just under 86% of the territorial authorities surveyed), whereby the problems for people with reduced mobility in particular and a lack of access to public transport are emphasised. Associated municipalities in particular see a significant increase in the problem. Half of the territorial authorities surveyed predict problems with providing basic healthcare and care for the elderly in the future. The associated municipalities also see the greatest intensification of problems in this regard. Lesser problems (43%) in future are anticipated in connection with the provision of local services and the retail trade. Three territorial authorities (two mentions by districts, one mention by an associated municipality) believe that education will become a problem in future. Broadband expansion and a declining range of cultural activities are among the points mentioned under the 'miscellaneous' category. Only one territorial authority expects no problems in the future in securing the provision of public services.

Figure 9 shows the distribution of responses between the territorial authorities. It is clear that for most territorial authorities the current and future problems will remain on the agenda, and they expect that other issues will be added in the future.

This assessment of the municipalities is only partly in line with the analysis in section 2.4. Firstly, due to the projected population trends and the current locations of schools, it was pointed out that ensuring the availability of primary schools and schools offering basic secondary education will be a challenge for a number of municipalities in the future. On the other hand, the optimistic assessment of future challenges in terms of securing outpatient medical care in the municipalities and collective municipalities of the district of Southwest Palatinate is also astonishing.

In principle, it can be stated that there is a strong awareness of the problem among German territorial authorities and that action is needed in the area of mobility and increasingly in education and healthcare. This assessment is in line with the results of the statistical analysis of the locations of the facilities.

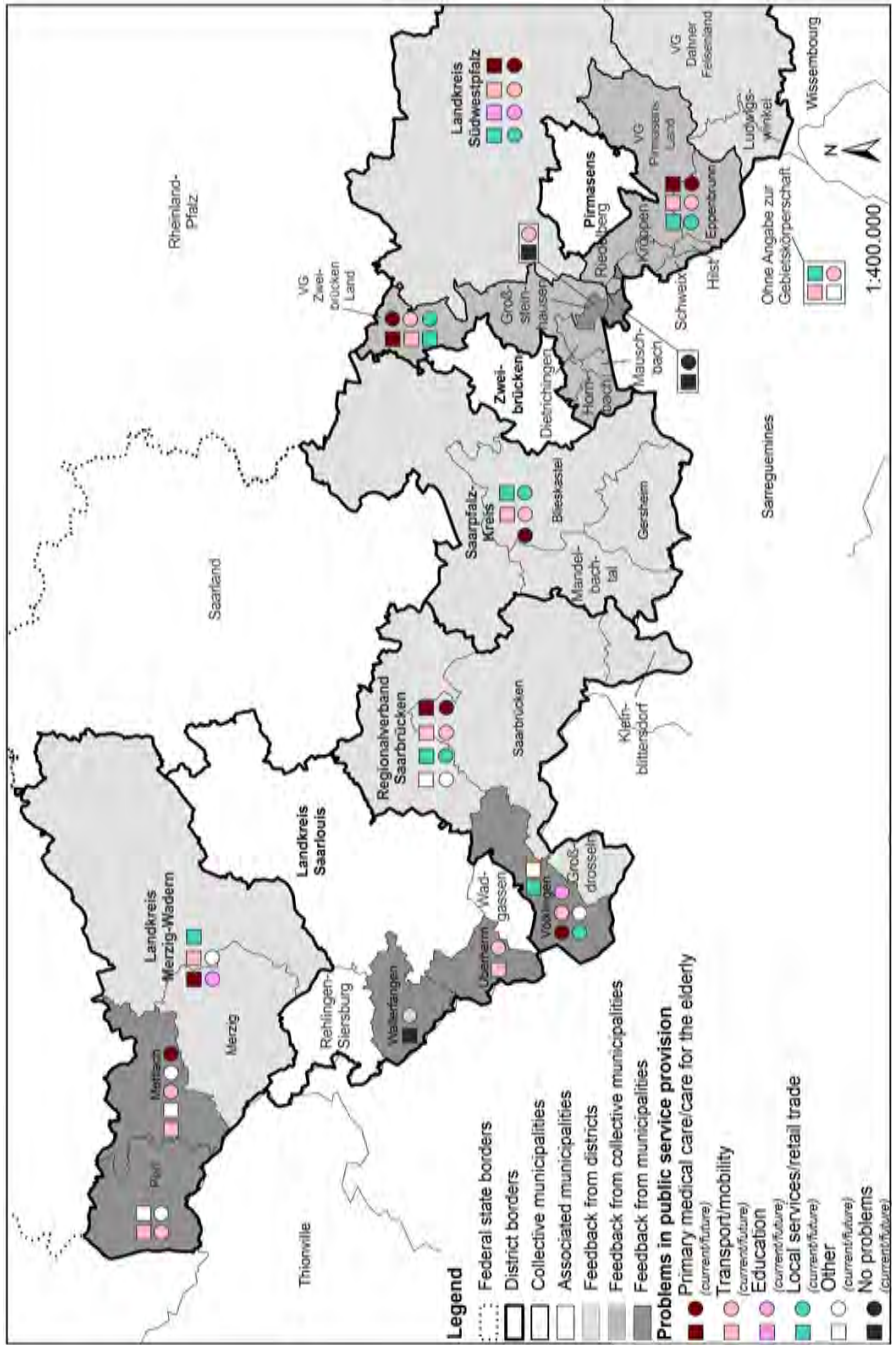


Fig. 9: Existing and probable future problems in public services within the remits of territorial authorities (multiple answers possible) /Source: The authors; written survey of the German territorial authorities at the German-French border within the Greater Region

### **3.2 Existing and future strategies and projects of the German territorial authorities in the German-French border area of the Greater Region**

More than three-quarters of territorial authorities have already elaborated strategies to safeguard the provision of public services. Districts and associated municipalities, in particular, report that they have developed strategies, mainly in the form of integrated or sectoral development strategies, e.g. municipal development strategies or sectoral strategies for the retail trade, climate protection, transport planning and urban design. Strategies were also developed as part of LEADER, which contribute to safeguarding the provision of public services. In one case, a political resolution was also drawn up within the framework of the Regional Public Service Provision Action Programme as a Model Project of Spatial Planning (District of Merzig-Wadern 2014). Except for this resolution, these documents do not relate exclusively to the problem of demographic change and the safeguarding of public service provision. Three out of fourteen territorial authorities have not elaborated any concepts or strategies. Hardly any strategies are planned for the future.

More than half of the territorial authorities already have projects to safeguard public service provision, and they are planned in a further three territorial authorities. Districts and associated municipalities, in particular, provided information about projects. Two territorial authorities do not have any projects in this regard. The projects are diverse and relate to all types of public services. For example, there are projects for the retail trade and the supply of local goods and services (five mentions, e.g. for the marketing of regional products, initiatives to set up a village shop), on medical care in rural areas (three mentions), various housing projects (e.g. assisted living projects) and the management of vacant lots and empty dwellings, securing education (by merging primary schools and community schools to safeguard the remaining facilities), as well as to expand broadband or alternative mobility services, such as market buses, driving services and on-call shared taxis.

In contrast to the plethora of projects within the territorial authorities, cross-border projects to safeguard public service provision are mentioned by only four territorial authorities. These include the following examples:

- > a cross-border water supply and a cross-border flood partnership for the Moselle;
- > public transport links to France, the establishment and maintenance of cross-border bus routes as well as carpool parking and park-and-ride spaces;
- > an agreement between clinics on emergency medical care;

- > the Action Programme of the SaarMoselle Eurodistrict with various themed cross-border projects and studies, e.g. in transport, education and healthcare (such as a study on cross-border healthcare training and the cooperation agreement between Völklingen clinics in certain areas and the Hôtel du Parc in Saareguemines; various agreements between Lorraine and Saarland on cooperating on cardiology and emergency medical care). This also includes future goals and challenges as well as planned projects for these areas. (EGTC SaarMoselle 2016)

A cross-border project is being planned in the remit of one territorial authority.

Figure 10 shows the spatial distribution of strategies and projects.



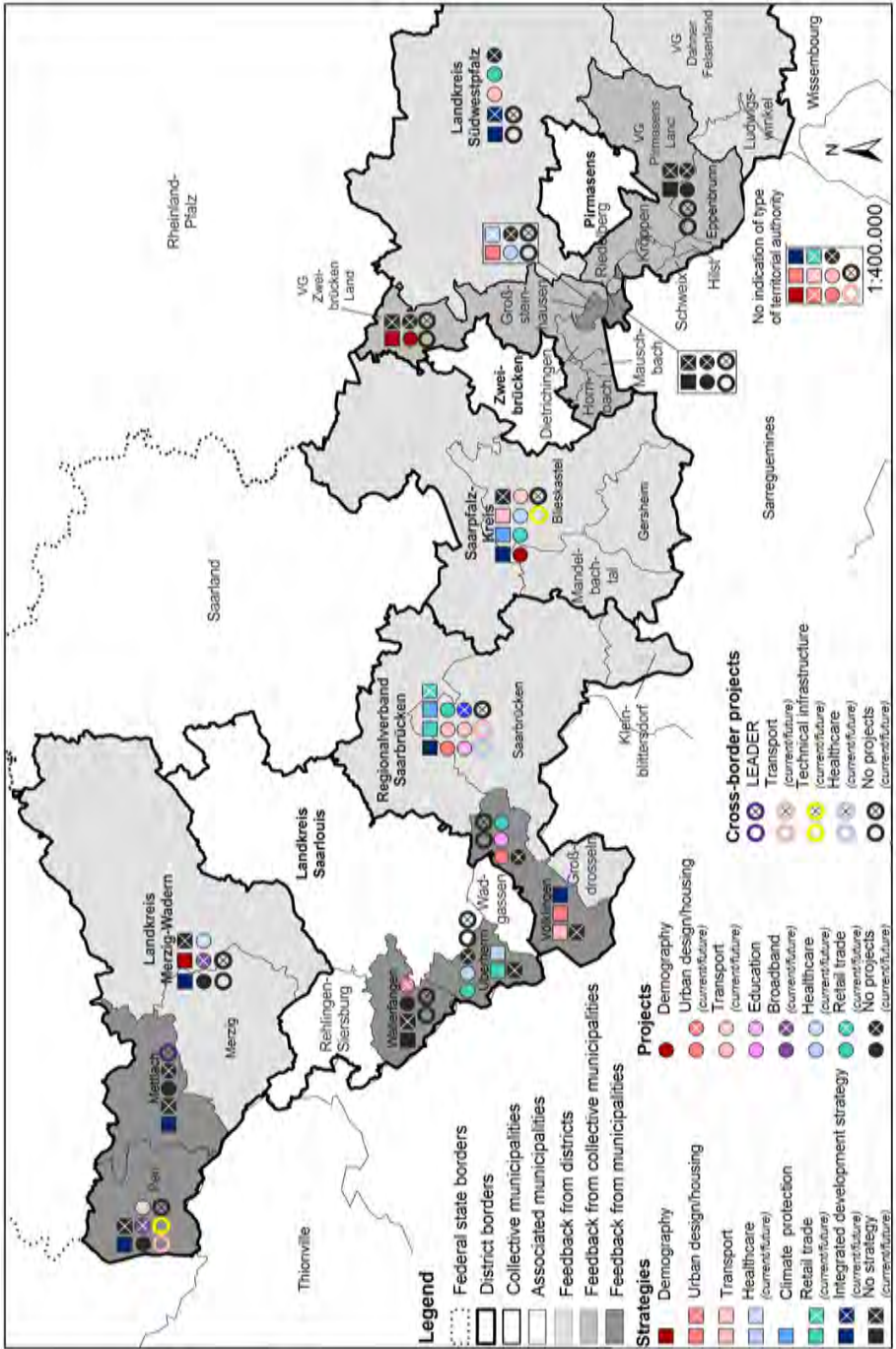


Fig. 10: Existing and planned strategies and projects as well as cross-border projects to safeguard the provision of public services by type of public service (multiple answers possible) /Source: The authors; written survey of the German territorial authorities at the German-French border within the Greater Region

Fundamentally, it can be noted that strategies and projects for the (future) safeguarding of public service provision are being elaborated by most of the territorial authorities surveyed. Despite the anticipated exacerbation of the problems, comparatively few further strategies and projects are being planned for the future.

Strategies and projects in relation to healthcare services are already in place and are also planned for the future; there is also a cross-border project for this. As the problems in regard to education are considered to be minor, there is no strategy in place or in planning, and there are only a few (planned) projects in this context; no existing or planned projects on a cross-border level are reported.

Further research would be useful here; for example, a more detailed survey of the German territorial authorities regarding the implementation of strategies and projects as well as the basis on which they make their assessments of future problem areas, etc. could lead to interesting insights. It would also be instructive to carry out a survey of the French territorial authorities along the border.

**3.3 Cross-border projects in education and healthcare in the Greater Region in the previous INTERREG IV A programme period and their assessment**

Based on the Operational Programme (OP for the Greater Region (INTERREG A), the 2007–2013 programme period offered opportunities to submit projects for funding relating to cross-border cooperation in the fields of education/training and healthcare as part of European Territorial Cooperation (ETC) (cf. the paper by Andrea Hartz/Beate Caesar in this volume). The programme included a special focus on ‘People’, in which measures for collaboration in the fields of education, training and healthcare were funded.

| Funding priorities in the INTERREG IV A Operational Programme in the Greater Region | Number of accepted projects | Total cost in € million | ERDF – Funding in € million |
|---|-----------------------------|-------------------------|-----------------------------|
| Focus 3: People   | 87                          | 68.36                   | 33.36                       |
| Measure 3.1: Collaboration in the fields of education/continuing education          | 12                          | 20.64                   | 10.06                       |
| Measure 3.3 Funding collaborations in the field of healthcare                       | 8                           | 13.7                    | 6.68                        |

*Table 1: Accepted projects in the Greater Region Operational Programme IV A with a focus on ‘People’ 2007–2013 (as of 23 June 2015) /Source: INTERREG IV A Greater Region (2017)*

The twelve collaboration projects in the field of education/training involved German and French partners in a total of five projects. A look at the projects provides an indication of the fields in which the German and French sides have cooperated thus far:



- > Trilingua: Funding of language skills in the Moselle region and in Saarland and setting up a network for communication and interaction between native-speaking educators from the *écoles élémentaires* (primary schools) and the voluntary all-day schools
- > EDUNET – Education Network Schools & the Economy
- > INTERDOC – Funding agency for cross-border research and postgraduate students in the natural sciences
- > FCU – Network for tertiary education in the Greater Region
- > Interreg-Judo-Randor (martial arts)

The study shows that cooperation took place in the area of education/training with a focus on bilingualism, preventing a shortage of skilled workers and preventing the brain drain from the Greater Region, as well as raising the profile of the Greater Region as a scientific location in the border area in the 2007–2013 programme period. Improving bilingualism can be seen as a basis for further cooperation in the fields of secondary schools, universities, education and training institutions as well as in other areas, e.g. in healthcare. However, no project has been funded which has dealt directly with the future safeguarding of public service provision in education, or which has taken stock of the situation and future developments within the remit of the local territorial authorities along the border, or which has shed light on the potential for cooperation with regard to better accessibility or meeting sustainability thresholds for facilities, etc. This may be partly due to the fact that no such project has been proposed.

Of the eight projects that have been funded as part of the measure to ‘Promote collaboration in the field of healthcare’, four can be identified as having been carried out with German and French participation:

- > PPSM – Public healthcare pilot project: studies and campaigns aimed at prevention and strengthening mental health services
- > NESCAV – Nutrition, environment and cardiovascular health
- > MAG-Net 2 – The aim of the project is to minimise the risk for the target group of recreational users of drugs in the Greater Region and to raise awareness among healthcare professionals
- > SANTRANSFOR – Milestones for developing access to healthcare in the Greater Region through training campaigns

In summary, in the last programme period in the border area researched here, cooperation took place in the area of healthcare, particularly in the training of medical professionals and the development of joint programmes and strategies for prevention. The SANTRANSFOR project, which aimed to improve access to high-quality

healthcare for people living in the border regions of Wallonia-Lorraine-Luxembourg, the Saar-Moselle region and the border region of Bitburg-Prüm—the German-speaking Community of Belgium, was rather more specific and practical. It also laid the ground-work for the establishment of a zone with cross-border access to healthcare services (*Zone Organisée d'Accès aux Soins Transfrontaliers, ZOAST*) for the SaarMoselle Eurodistrict, and a resolution was adopted to this end (EGTC 2011). One result was a specific agreement between two hospitals, albeit in the German-Belgian border area, to serve the population in rural areas. Here too, however, it must be noted that no project has been funded and/or submitted that has addressed the safeguarding of the provision of primary medical services.

The analysis of the project partners in these INTERREG A projects makes it clear that the majority of the public administration stakeholders involved were Saarland and Rhineland-Palatinate ministries; districts participated as partners in only two cases, and the city of Saarbrücken was a partner in one project. No other municipal partners were involved. The local territorial authorities did not make use of the opportunities for cross-border cooperation supported by the INTERREG A programme in the areas of healthcare and education in the 2007–2013 period to develop innovative solutions to safeguard the provision of services in future.

In contrast to the largely overlapping results of the statistical analysis of the locations of the facilities and the results of the survey, the projects supported under the INTERREG IV A programme in the Greater Region were more likely to address issues which do not relate directly to the immediate safeguarding of public service provision. With the exception of the SANTRANSFOR project, which directly aimed at improving the provision of healthcare services for the population in the border region, the other projects aimed at prevention. In the field of education, the focus was on projects that addressed continuing education issues or focused on specific problems (school drop-outs). This assessment is confirmed by the statements of the participants in the survey regarding the extremely sparse cross-border cooperation projects.

It is understandable that the projects are geared towards vocational and continued training issues in education in the light of the fact that the majority of ministries, i.e. the federal state level, were partners in INTERREG projects, combined with their responsibilities in the education sector (see section 2.1). Districts and territorial authorities, which are responsible for the 'physical' safeguarding of public service provision as the bodies and responsible parties for school development planning, have hardly been involved as partners in INTERREG projects at all.

This may be due to the fact that INTERREG projects are time-limited and the partnerships are constantly being regrouped, while partnerships for safeguarding public service provision rather require medium- to long-term solutions in stable partnerships and thus provider structures. It is also conceivable that national formats, e.g. national inter-municipal cooperation or Model Projects for Spatial Planning, are currently still the preferred platforms for interaction and innovation, as they can rely on the same or similar legal bases, standards, instruments, etc. Another reason for the low rate of participation in cross-border cooperation projects may also be the staffing of municipalities, collective municipalities and districts.

## **4 Obstacles and opportunities for cross-border projects to safeguard the provision of public services in rural border areas**

### **4.1 Obstacles to cross-border cooperation to safeguard the provision of public services**

In most cases, language barriers and different laws and responsibilities present a particular challenge for cross-border cooperation in Europe. These factors were also identified by the German territorial authorities taking part in the survey on the German-French border of the Greater Region as an obstacle to cooperation in the fields of education and health: the German and French education systems and the healthcare systems are organised differently and the responsibilities of public administrations differ.

In outpatient healthcare, as well as in most inpatient situations, communication between patients and doctors or healthcare professionals absolutely must be able to function without restrictions; cross-border care in this area often fails because of the low level of bilingualism among both patients and specialists. In addition, in the field of medical care and care for the elderly, the territorial authorities surveyed consider the legal structures, especially when it comes to covering costs by health insurance funds, to be an obstacle to cross-border cooperation. The shortage of skilled workers in nursing and the shortage of doctors were also raised. Even the cross-border networking and coordination of rescue workers and operations is seen as problematic.

The recognition of professional qualifications was mentioned as another obstacle in relation to education as a public service, in addition to linguistic barriers and the different (legal) regimes.

In principle, entering into cooperation projects – and to an even greater extent in cross-border cooperation – requires renouncing familiar routines and approaches in favour of adopting new thought patterns, work steps, etc., and cooperating with new participants in order to fulfil tasks or resolve problems. The willingness to do so only grows when the pressure resulting from the problems increases. As long as the situation is still considered to be tenable or resolvable, e.g. through cooperation with neighbouring municipalities that are integrated into the same system, cross-border cooperation will certainly not be pursued purely for reasons of streamlining work processes.

The quality of education and healthcare services are seen as important location factors both for the resident population and as soft location factors for the economy. For political reasons and in the context of competition between locations, maintaining local facilities for as long as possible is the favoured solution.

Cross-border cooperation requires a high level of personal commitment between the cooperation partners, as well as perseverance in many cases and stable relationships between the responsible contact persons. Safeguarding public service provision is not about short-term solutions, but about sustainable concepts for maintaining quality of life – this sometimes seems to reduce the willingness to come up with experimental solutions.

In addition to the various challenges of cross-border projects to safeguard public services, there are also opportunities.

In general, the survey shows that there are considerable differences in attitudes towards cross-border projects. Thus, two territorial authorities were critical about the lack of project partners and the failure of a project, while other territorial authorities provided positive feedback about successful cooperation. If these problems are resolved, the chances of rectifying local deficits are good. Other opportunities include communication, addressing problems in joint projects, the funding that can be obtained from the ERDF, and a focus on the long-term, sustainable provision of services.

#### **4.2 Opportunities for cross-border cooperation to safeguard the provision of public services**

Above all, there are opportunities to exceed the critical sustainability thresholds for the (economic) operation of facilities by increasing the intake area beyond the border. In this regard the bilingual orientation of educational facilities and easy recognition of educational qualifications in two countries can even be viewed as a special quality feature, opportunity or locational advantage.

In the field of medical care and care for the elderly, the main aim is to optimise and expand the range of services by better coordinating available capacities and facilities. It is also possible to shorten the distances between inhabitants and the facilities. Other opportunities include:

- > Organising emergency care in a cooperative manner and having accident victims in the vicinity of the border cared for by the ambulance service that can reach the site of the accident quickest and transport injured persons to the facility which the patient needs the most. The equipment of the regional hospitals could then be organised to a certain extent by a 'division of labour'. An initial agreement within the Greater Region is already in place: Krumm points out that rescue helicopters can now cross the borders if necessary and transport patients with severe burns from throughout the Greater Region to a specialist clinic for burn injuries in Ludwigshafen (Rhineland-Palatinate) (Krumm 2010).
- > Using large medical devices across borders.
- > Supporting the focus and scope of the establishment of a zone with cross-border access to healthcare services, as planned by the Saar-Moselle Eurodistrict (EGTC 2011), and systematically evaluating the experience in terms of opportunities, acceptance, scope of services, etc.
- > Developing common strategies to counter the shortage of skilled workers in the health sector in the border region.

Several cooperation projects are already in place in the health sector in the Greater Region (Krumm 2017), which relate in most cases to the cross-border use of ambulances, helicopters and emergency doctors, vocational training in the healthcare sector, scientific cooperation, agreements on the bilateral use of large technical devices, but also studies analysing the situation and drawing comparisons in the border areas. These cooperation projects and the experience gained in them may inspire and benefit stakeholders who have not yet participated in such projects.

In the area of education, there are already approaches to cooperation that can be considered exemplary for the region, such as the cross-border German-Luxembourg Schengen Lyceum in Perl, which combines elements of both school systems. Established on a common foundation, it offers the possibility of acquiring the *allgemeine Hochschulreife* (German general university entrance qualification) in a higher secondary education branch or the *Diplôme de fin d'études secondaires techniques, administratif et commercial* in a technical/vocational branch (German-Luxembourgian Schengen-Lyzeum Perl 2009).

In principle, there is certainly increased potential for cooperation in basic secondary education level I and, above all, the higher secondary level II, which can then also have a positive effect on overcoming linguistic problems in other areas. Cross-border cooperation to safeguard the provision of childcare services for early childhood education close to home is certainly more difficult to organise across borders, to the extent that 'close to home' is understood as within walking distance in accordance with the maxim 'short legs, short distances'. A meaningful combination of cross-border childcare solutions within the existing cross-border labour market (company childcare services) is more effective in this regard.

The evaluation of projects already implemented in other, similarly structured border areas also provides an opportunity to learn from good and bad examples, to benefit from exchanging experiences and the integration into cross-border projects with their own specific problems or issues.

Actively contributing and following the activities of the Association of European Border Regions (AEBR), which has set itself the task of initiating and supporting enhanced cooperation across Europe and exchanging experiences and information, can also provide a new impetus to address the current challenges. Among other things, a 'Cross-border Health' task force was set up within the framework of the working group (AEBR 2017).

Similarly, setting up a cross-border Model Project for Spatial Planning can encourage territorial authorities to play an active role in cross-border cooperation and to develop cross-border strategies and projects. This can also produce good examples of cross-border cooperation in connection with the provision of public services.

Opportunities can also arise from the use of the available funding possibilities, as shown in the example of INTERREG V A below.

#### 4.3 Funding opportunities for cross-border projects in education and healthcare services as part of the Operational Programme of the Greater Region (INTERREG V A) 2014–2020

The Operational Programme for the INTERREG V A – Greater Region Cooperation Area sets out the funding priorities, intervention priorities, the specific objectives for funding and the envisaged measures for the 2014–2020 programme period. A total of €139.8 million in European funding (ERDF) is available for this programme period for cross-border cooperation projects in the Greater Region (INTERREG Greater Region European Union 2015: 96; see also the paper by Andrea Hartz/Beate Caesar in this volume).

Guidance on the promotion of cross-border cooperation projects to safeguard the provision of public education and healthcare services includes Priority 3: ‘Improving living conditions’, and to a lesser extent, Priority 1: ‘Promoting the development of an integrated labour market by funding education, training and mobility’ in the form of investment priorities, objectives and measures. For Priority 3, the intervention priority of ‘Investing in a healthcare and social infrastructure contributing to national, regional and local development [...]’ has been selected (INTERREG Greater Region European Union 2015: 65). The specific objectives of Priority 3 are an ‘improved, coordinated range of healthcare and prevention services’ and an ‘improved cross-border range of socially inclusive services and facilities’. The reasons for these objectives are firstly the unequal access of the population to healthcare facilities and services for treatment and prevention measures, especially in a comparison between urban areas and rural areas, as well as the low level of cross-border cooperation in the health sector, and secondly, new daily requirements for individual services arising from the cross-border realities of life, e.g. childcare in the context of cross-border employment.

The following measures are to be supported within the framework of the priority:

- > Strengthening cooperation between healthcare actors to optimise the use of infrastructure, improve treatments and enable balanced, cross-border planning for the provision of services
- > Improving the coordination of care and assistance facilities through a joint observatory to identify needs and the provision of care facilities for persons in need of care and assistance
- > Support for shared use and access to social facilities and services, in particular the coordinated cross-border provision of childcare, but also legal and administrative studies on social security and social support, as well as pilot projects on cross-border prevention
- > Shared use and access to services, especially in the cultural and leisure sector (INTERREG Greater Region European Union 2015: 64 et seq.).

Beneficiaries of the subsidies and therefore applicants may be public administrations and facilities of public interest, hospitals, health insurance funds, companies, in particular public ones, as well as associations of healthcare professionals or social associations.

Although the target area is the entire cooperation area, there is a focus on areas facing particular demographic or economic challenges. Projects are submitted by cross-border partnerships after calls for projects in a tender process and if selected are co-financed by ERDF funds for up to 60% of the project costs that are eligible for funding.

Priority 1 lists examples of education and healthcare measures eligible for funding such as the funding of multilingualism for all age categories and the cross-border networking of schools.

The measures listed here that are eligible for funding from EU ERDF funds are not exhaustive, but are rather intended to serve as examples. There are other approaches to the safeguarding of public service provision in other areas such as mobility.

However, this brief excursus shows that the INTERREG V A cooperation programme offers the Greater Region a wide range of opportunities to initiate cross-border projects with the aim of safeguarding public service provision in education and, above all, health care, to connect and link stakeholders across borders and to provide financial support for the implementation of these projects.

## **5 Outlook and summary**

In the German-French border area of the Greater Region, safeguarding the provision of public services is made more difficult by the border situation, as the interpretations of and responsibilities for public services differ in Germany and France, and there are also language barriers. The impact of the French territorial reform on the provision of public services and cross-border cooperation cannot yet be assessed in full. The current situation in regard to the provision of education and primary healthcare services in the German border area is still quite good, although gaps are already apparent in individual areas. These are expected to worsen due to a shrinking population, which is caused by the declining percentage of children and adolescents and by the ageing of the population.

The German stakeholders in the research area are aware of this problem. There are numerous strategies and projects to safeguard and improve the provision of public services. However, there are currently very few cross-border projects in relation to public services, partly due to the problems identified in this paper. Even in the previous funding period of the INTERREG programme, few projects addressed this challenge. The aim is to promote more cross-border projects, as these can create numerous opportunities for safeguarding public service provision. The following research areas could make a decisive contribution to this, following the studies set out in this paper:

- > Expansion of spatial observation: the availability of comparable data on both sides of the border is of considerable importance for safeguarding the provision of public services. Thus, (duplicated) structures, interdependencies and deficits can be identified and compared on both sides of the border, and relevant conclusions for cross-border cooperation in providing public services can be drawn. The relevant data (e.g. on population trends and forecasting, the population density, the age structure, settlement structures (land for housing, empty dwellings), migration, commuter networks, infrastructures and accessibility) should be collected, processed and made available at various spatial levels. This task could be carried out by existing institutions such as ESPON, EUROSTAT or the statistical offices of the Greater Region (see the paper by Patrice Harster/Kristine Klev in this volume).
- > Impact of the territorial reform in France: the implementation and impact of the territorial reform should also be monitored and examined in order to draw conclusions for safeguarding the provision of public services.
- > Deeper location research: this should be continued in greater detail. In addition, accessibility models could be formulated and the situation in the French territorial authorities along the border could be examined. Thus, the situation in relation to safeguarding the provision of public services could be subjected to a better assessment, and duplicated structures, potential interdependencies and deficits can be identified.
- > Expanded survey of stakeholders: a more detailed survey of the German territorial authorities on the implementation of strategies and projects as well as on the basis for their assessments of future problem areas, etc. could lead to interesting insights. It would also be instructive to carry out a survey of the French territorial authorities along the border. In this respect, other formal problems of cross-border cooperation could also be identified, particularly in safeguarding the provision of public services, and solutions could be developed.
- > Cross-border Model Project for Spatial Planning: A cross-border Model Project for Spatial Planning would be useful in order to further examine the development of cross-border strategies and projects to safeguard the provision of public services and to develop strategies for solutions that could also be taken up by other border areas.

Issues could also be taken up and addressed within the framework of the 'Region & City' priority area at the TU Kaiserslautern, which will deal with current issues of spatial structural development as well as Border Studies (TU Kaiserslautern 2017). The topic could also be included to a greater degree in the research undertaken by the Academy for Territorial Development (ARL).



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H. Peter Dörrenbächer

## THE GREATER REGION: A CROSS-BORDER VOCATIONAL EDUCATION AND TRAINING AREA?

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### Abstract

In recent years cross-border vocational education and training has become increasingly significant due to the intensification of European integration and increased cross-border relations, as well as demographic and economic disparities between neighbouring border regions. This paper reviews past and present forms of cross-border cooperation in vocational education and training in the Greater Region. The most recent framework agreements on vocational education and training form the focus of discussion. The question of whether the Greater Region can be described as a cross-border vocational education and training area is also addressed.

### Keywords

Cross-border vocational education and training – cross-border labour market – knowledge society – Europeanisation – learning regions – Greater Region

## 1 Introduction

With more than 220,000 daily cross-border commuters (Statistical Offices of the Greater Region 2013: 19), the Greater Region comprising Saarland, Lorraine, Luxembourg, Rhineland-Palatinate, the Walloon Region (*Région Wallonne*), the French Community of Belgium (*Communauté Française de Belgique*) and the German-speaking Community of Belgium (*Deutschsprachige Gemeinschaft Belgiens*) (hereinafter: the Greater Region) is one of the most interlinked labour market regions in the world (cf. Dörrenbächer 2015: 34). The Greater Region accounts for one-quarter of all cross-border workers in the EU27. Only Switzerland has more commuters, mainly from the neighbouring countries of France, Germany and Italy (*IBA* [Interregional Labour Market Observatory] 2012: 81). Thanks to the regular reports of the Interregional Labour Market Observatory (*IBA*) submitted to the Summit of the Greater Region, the labour market in the Greater Region is probably the best documented and researched cross-border labour market in the world.

In recent years, cross-border vocational education and training have played an increasingly important role in the reports submitted by the *IBA* to the Summit of the Greater Region and to the Economic and Social Committee of the Greater Region (*Wirtschafts- und Sozialausschuss der Großregion, WSAGR*). It is now a key issue in cross-border cooperation not only in the Greater Region, but in all European cross-border cooperation areas. The main reasons for this are firstly the increasing significance of education and knowledge in the knowledge and information society and secondly the social (particularly demographic) and economic disparities between the sub-regions of the Greater Region. In recent years, several (framework) agreements on cross-border vocational education and training have been entered into in the Greater Region (*RVGR* [Framework Agreement on Cooperation in Cross-border Vocational Education and Training] 2014; *AGBSL* [Agreement on Cross-border Vocational Training in Saarland–Lorraine] 2014), raising the question of whether the Greater Region can already be described as a cross-border vocational education and training area.

## 2 The increased significance of cross-border vocational education and training

### 2.1 Europeanisation and the knowledge society

Knowledge and education play an increasingly important role in the economy, which is characterised by increasing liberalisation and internationalisation. This was taken into account by the European Union's Lisbon Strategy (European Council 2000; cf. Bartsch 2013b) and the Europe 2020 Strategy (European Commission 2015; cf. Becker 2013) by seeking to increase competitiveness within the global economy through economic, social and environmental renewal, and by promoting innovation as a driver of economic growth and the development of the knowledge society. Wholly in line with the Lisbon Strategy, the Belgian Presidency of the European Council launched the so-called Bruges-Copenhagen process in 2001. The aim was to 'Europeanise' vocational education and training, comparable to the Bologna process for university

education, and to increase mobility in vocational education and training. The process was adopted by 31 European education ministers of the EU and EEA countries in 2002 (Bartsch 2013b).

The amendment to the German Vocational Education and Training Act (*Berufsbildungsgesetz, BBiG*) of 2005 must be viewed in this light. Pursuant to section 2(3) of the amended German Vocational Education and Training Act, trainees in Germany can complete up to a quarter of their training abroad (Vocational Education and Training Act of 23 March 2005), and in France, trainees can even complete up to half of their in-company training abroad since February 2009 (*Netzwerk der Fachinstitute der Interregionalen Arbeitsmarktbeobachtungsstelle* [Network of Specialised Institutes of the Interregional Labour Market Observatory] 2014: 106). With regard to cross-border vocational education and training, the Innovation Circle on Vocational Education and Training of the German Federal Ministry for Education and Research [*Bundesministerium für Bildung und Forschung, BMBF*] (2007) formulated ten guidelines. The main principles and objectives were to strengthen the principle of regulated professions (*Berufsprinzip*), to make vocational education and training more flexible, improve mobility and the recognition of training qualifications, strengthen the duality of education and training and safeguard the potential of the international education and training market. However, these principles and objectives were contingent on more transparent national training systems, which had been very diverse up to that point. Accordingly, in 2009, the European Parliament and the Council adopted a European Credit System for Vocational Education and Training (Recommendation of the European Parliament and the Council of 18 June 2009; cf. also Frommberger 2011; Frommberger/Milolaza 2010; Fietz/Reglin/Schöpf 2008; BMBF 2017a), which is similar to that of the Bologna process in higher education. This European Credit System for Vocational Education and Training (ECVET) was designed to facilitate training mobility and the recognition of training qualifications. However, this was only possible if vocational education and training was documented as skills-based rather than qualification-based. Accordingly, the *Deutsches Institut für Erwachsenenbildung – Leibniz-Zentrum für Lebenslanges Lernen e.V.* [German Institute for Adult Education – Leibniz Centre for Lifelong Learning] developed a skills-oriented profile pass (<http://www.profilpass-online.de>). The visibility of skills was seen as an essential component in assessing the importance of education and training and the recognition of qualifications for a successful placement process (IBA 2010: XXVI). With regard to the recognition of qualifications and the approaches subsequently developed to create a cross-border cooperation area for vocational education, the most important assessment criterion should no longer be the formal development of vocational education and training in neighbouring countries, but the skills taught. ‘In the everyday life of the cross-border labour market, employers counter the [...] problems [of the comparability of occupations and qualifications – author’s note] by focusing increasingly on the applicants’ actual skills and less on certificates and diplomas. The question of whether these skills have been formally acquired, for example as part of training or studies, or informally, e.g. as the product of many years of professional experience or personal interest, is increasingly of secondary importance’ (IBA 2010: 148).

This paradigm shift in the recognition of qualifications from more formal to skills-related criteria, which until recently has taken place mainly in cross-border placements, played an important role in the subsequent development of cross-border vocational education and training programmes. This is because only the recognition of the cultural and historical differences and the diversity of vocational training systems will eventually enable flexible and pragmatic cooperation in cross-border vocational education and training.

## 2.2 Economic and demographic disparities

The trends presented thus far do not primarily relate to the neighbourly, cross-border level, i.e. the *interregional* level, but rather to the interstate or international recognition of vocational qualifications, and sometimes to cooperation in vocational education and training. They were a response to the challenges presented by increasing globalisation, international competition and the demands of the knowledge and information society. These challenges naturally also affected cross-border regions such as the Greater Region. In the case of the Greater Region, however, interregional economic and demographic disparities have become an increasingly powerful motivation for the development of integrated cross-border vocational education and training activities. For example, the age structure of the population varies widely from one sub-region of the Greater Region to another. While the population in Luxembourg is comparatively young due to the influx of the labour force, the old-age dependency ratio is higher in the two German sub-regions than in the other regions (cf. IBA 2006: VII f; IBA 2012: 17 et seq.). Unlike in the neighbouring regions, the populous age groups of those born in the 1950s and 1960s, who will leave the labour force in the next few years, cannot be completely replaced due to the lower birth rates. This means that massive recruitment bottlenecks will occur, especially in the crafts sector, in technical occupations and in healthcare and nursing services, which can be automated only to a limited extent.

The sub-regions of the Greater Region differed (and still differ today) very clearly in parts in relation to the extent of youth unemployment and its likely future development; for example, between 2008 and 2011, the rate was significantly lower in the two German sub-regions (cf. Fig. 1).

These interregional demographic and economic disparities, together with the growing importance of cross-border relations and cross-border regional associations (e.g. Euroregions, EGTCs) in the context of the European integration process and the previously addressed challenges of the knowledge and information society (keywords: 'Europe 2020' and 'lifelong learning') were strong drivers for the development of integrated, comprehensive strategies for cross-border vocational education and training.



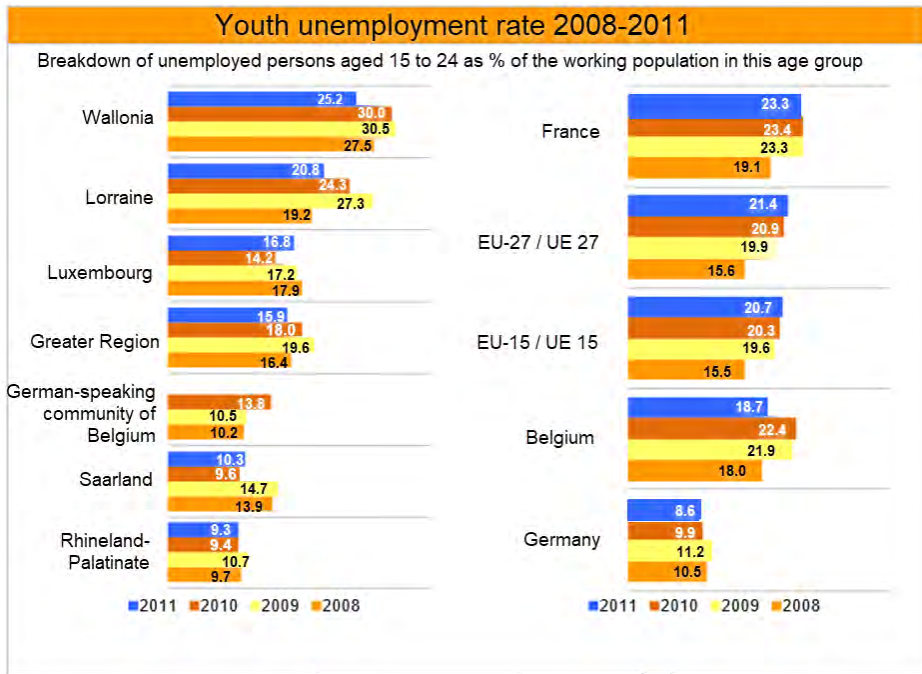


Fig. 1: Youth unemployment rate in the sub-regions of the Greater Region and in der EU / Source: IBA 2012: 40

### 3 Towards a cross-border cooperation area for vocational education and training

As part of this increased significance of vocational education and training in general and cross-border vocational education and training in particular, activities in this area have intensified in the Greater Region. Milestones towards an integrated cross-border vocational education and training area include the following agreements, which were signed in 2014:

- 1 Framework Agreement on Cooperation in Cross-border Vocational Education and Training in Saarland-Lorraine (*Rahmenvereinbarung für die Kooperation in der grenzüberschreitenden beruflichen Aus- und Weiterbildung Saarland – Lothringen*, RVSL 2014)
- 2 Framework Agreement on Cross-border Vocational Education and Training in the Greater Region (*Rahmenvereinbarung für die Kooperation in der grenzüberschreitenden beruflichen Aus- und Weiterbildung*, RVGR 2014)

While the Saarland-Lorraine framework agreement can be seen as a prototype for the agreements concluded subsequently and for those which are yet to be concluded between other sub-regions of the Greater Region, the Greater Region framework agreement is intended to 'structure the many activities of different stakeholders at the



local, regional, national and bilateral level, to increase their public visibility and acceptance among the population and to develop the Greater Region into a common living, working and economic area' (RVGR 2014: 5).

Before the negotiation and content of both framework agreements are described in more detail, previous forms of cross-border cooperation in the Greater Region in vocational education and training should first be typologised and summarised.

### 3.1 Cross-border cooperation in vocational education and training to date

Given the long-standing, intense economic interactions and cross-border commuter relations (cf. Dörrenbächer 2015), it is hardly surprising that there were already several different forms of cross-border cooperation in vocational education and training before the two framework agreements for the Greater Region were negotiated and signed. The report on the economic and social situation in the Greater Region of 2013/2014 for the Economic and Social Committee of the Greater Region provides an overview in this regard (Network of Specialised Institutes of the Interregional Labour Market Observatory 2014: 173 et seq.), as does the 'Task Force on Cross-border Workers' (*Task Force Grenzgänger*) survey (2012). Without claiming to be exhaustive, the report on the economic and social situation in the Greater Region lists more than 50 different measures and projects. Of these, around 20 relate to 'education and training', 18 to 'placements/consulting/recruitment', seven to 'continuing education/exchange programmes' and three to the 'recognition of foreign vocational qualifications'.

It should be stressed that most cross-border cooperation and projects in regard to education and training do not amount to regular basic and/or integrated vocational education and training programmes leading to a national, let alone a joint bi-national, qualification.

In one case (automotive sector, German-speaking Community of Belgium), from 2005 to 2011, all of the practical and theoretical training took place in Germany, while the final exam was taken before a trinational exams board, which allowed the candidates to obtain a trinational qualification. However, this programme no longer exists in this format. In another programme, supported by the professional chambers in Luxembourg, Rhineland-Palatinate and Saarland, Luxembourgers can qualify as professional bookbinders. They attend school in their home country, while practical, in-company training is provided in Rhineland-Palatinate or Saarland.

Yet most of the programmes and projects are short-term offers, such as vocational traineeships at German companies provided by *Formation SaarLor FSL*. FSL is the French subsidiary of *TÜV Nord Bildung Saar*, which evolved from the Service Centre for Vocational Training of *Deutsche Steinkohle AG*. FSL cooperates with the French vocational training institutions *Greta de Sarreguemines – Education Nationale*, the *Association nationale pour la formation professionnelle des adultes (AFPA)* as well as with companies in the region; it also arranges placements for vocational traineeships in companies and offers bilingual programmes for initial vocational education and training in the Völklingen training centre of *TÜV Nord Bildung Saar* (FSL 2017).

The creation of a cross-border cooperation area for vocational education and training crucially depended, as mentioned above, on German and French legislation creating the necessary structures, which happened in 2005 and 2009 respectively; this allowed students to serve part of their vocational education and training abroad, for example in the form of vocational traineeships.

The most important player in this field is the joint training centre *Verbundausbildung Untere Saar e.V. (VAUS)*. This institution, which is supported by the IHK Saarland (Chamber of Industry and Commerce) and Industry and the Saarland Association of the Metal and Electrical Industry, provides vocational students from Saarland and Lorraine with vocational traineeships at companies in the neighbouring country. Vocational traineeships play a major role in the French vocational education and training system (Fig. 2) in particular, where the dual vocational training, which is typical of Germany, is not very common. As part of their three-year senior (vocational) high school diploma (*Baccalauréat professionnel*), students at the vocational high school (*Lycée professionnel*) have to complete several in-company traineeships for a total of 22 weeks (VAUS 2012: 8).

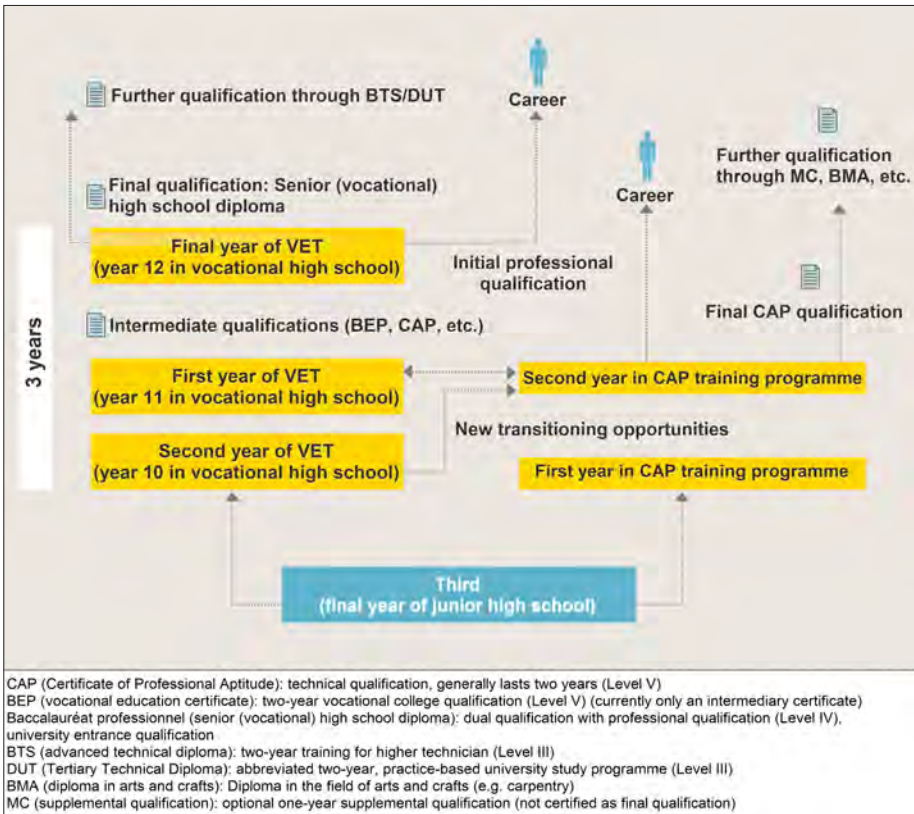


Fig. 2: Various training pathways in the French vocational education and training system after school year 9/Source: Robert Bosch Stiftung 2010: 15, expanded by the author

From 2009 to 2012, VAUS placed more than 150 French and four German trainees as part of the JOB-STARTER programme of the German Federal Ministry for Education and Research (cf. *BMBF* 2017b; *VAUS* 2013) and the European Social Fund's PontSaarLor project (Robichon/Schwarz 2011; *VAUS* 2012) with the help of the cross-border training department established in January 2013 (Saarland 2013; interview with Alexandra Schwarz (*VAUS*), 26 July 2015). The training department was financed by the federal state government of Saarland, the *IHK Saarland*, the Saarland Association of the Metal and Electrical Industry and (since July 2014) by the Employment Agency by means of an 18-month pilot phase.

Thanks to the high number of trainees placed, the PontSaarLor project and the training department have made an important contribution to supporting many young people in neighbouring Lorraine to take advantage of the opportunities offered by cross-border vocational education and training and to public awareness of those opportunities. This also applies to the cross-border vocational education and training made possible by the Saarland–Lorraine Framework Agreement, as explained in the following section, as well as the employment of French trainees by the Saarland company Möbel Martin since 2010 and their training for management assistant positions in the retail trade [*Kaufmann/Kauffrau im Einzelhandel*] (*IHK*, internal: interior design consultant) (*Demografie Netzwerk Saar* [Saar Demography Network] 2014).

Companies such as Möbel Martin, which have been employing French trainees for a number of years thanks to their high proportion of French customers, and *VAUS*, with its department for cross-border training, have established important contacts with French vocational schools along the border and have acquired comprehensive knowledge of the organisation and culture of the French vocational training system and the needs of French trainees. This is essential for the implementation of integrated cross-border vocational education and training programmes.

### **3.2 Framework Agreement on Cooperation in Cross-border Vocational Education and Training in Saarland-Lorraine**

A milestone for the development of the Greater Region as a cross-border cooperation area for vocational education and training is the Framework Agreement on Cooperation in Cross-border Vocational Education and Training in Saarland-Lorraine signed in 2014 (*RVSL* 2014), including the Agreement on Cross-border Vocational Education and Training in Saarland-Lorraine (*AGBSL* 2014) which is based on it.

#### ***History of the Framework Agreement***

Referring to a declaration already adopted by the education ministers of the Greater Region at a Conference of the Ministers on 6 May 2010, the 12th Summit of the Greater Region on 24 January 2011 recommended 'further intensive cooperation in vocational education and training as an important competitive factor for the regions close to the border, with a particular view to improving language skills' (Joint Declaration, 12th Summit of the Greater Region:13).

The same Summit of the Greater Region had also decided at the time to set up a ‘Task Force on Cross-border Workers’. The task force set up in September 2011 was composed of lawyers from both countries familiar with French and German labour law, who examined in particular the legal hurdles and obstacles that cross-border commuters face on a daily basis, from the recognition of vocational qualifications to labour and social security issues. The task force submitted legal proposals to the ministries and administrative bodies responsible for the labour market and vocational education and training to resolve or remove these obstacles. A separate area of the task force’s work concerned the legal and administrative problems of cross-border vocational education and training in the Greater Region. In a survey on ‘Cross-border vocational education and training in the Greater Region’ (Task Force 2012), published in November 2012, the Task Force summarised the measures already adopted in the Greater Region for cross-border vocational education and training between the various sub-regions, including their potential for development and shortcomings. In this respect, it was of no small relevance to the development of the Framework Agreement.

Of even greater significance for the elaboration of the framework agreement were the already advanced negotiations for the Framework Agreement on Cross-border Vocational Education and Training in the Upper Rhine (*Rahmenvereinbarung über die grenzüberschreitende Berufsausbildung am Oberrhein*, RVOR 2013), which France, the federal states of Baden-Württemberg and Rhineland-Palatinate and the German and French vocational education and training stakeholders in the Upper Rhine region had undertaken at the initiative of the Upper Rhine Conference. This agreement, which was based on many years of experience of cross-border cooperation in vocational education and training in the Upper Rhine region (cf. the paper by Patrice Harster and Frédéric Siebenhaar in this volume), was signed on 12 September 2013. It served as a model for the framework agreement negotiated between Saarland and the Lorraine region.

However, the fact that the Saarland–Lorraine framework agreement was negotiated at an accelerated pace must also be seen in the context of the 2013 celebrations which marked the 50th anniversary of the Elysée Treaty. For example, the 15th German-French Council of Ministers, which was held on 22 January 2013 in Berlin on the occasion of this anniversary, had ‘given full importance to cross-border cooperation and regional integration’ in a joint declaration, stressing that the two countries, ‘coordinated by the representatives for German-French cooperation [...] would strive to bring the German-French border regions closer together, in particular in the fields of the economy, labour market, healthcare, education, training and security’ (Saarbrücken Declaration on German-French cooperation in the border regions of 15 July 2013, 2013: 1). In this respect, the German-French Council of Ministers also proposed a meeting of the government representatives responsible for German-French cooperation, which took place in Saarbrücken in July 2013 at the invitation of the Minister-President of Saarland and the Representative of the Federal Republic of Germany for German-French cultural relations, Annegret Kramp-Karrenbauer. In the Saarbrücken Declaration of 15 July 2013 which was adopted on that occasion, the responsible authorities in other border regions were encouraged to ‘follow the example of the Strasbourg/Ortenau Eurodistrict and to develop similar dual vocational

education and training programmes by the end of 2014' (Saarbrücken Declaration on German-French cooperation in the border regions of 15 July 2013: 2 et seq.).

Shortly thereafter, on 25 September 2013, the President of the Lorraine Regional Council, Jean-Pierre Masseret, and the Minister-President of Saarland, Annegret Kramp-Karrenbauer, signed a political memorandum of understanding on the development of cross-border cooperation in vocational education and training at a strategy meeting on cross-border vocational training organised by the federal state government of Saarland. At this conference, which was marked by the 50th anniversary of the Elysée Treaty, German and French companies discussed their experiences of cross-border education and training. At the same time, on 15 November 2013, the Employment Agency of Saarland and Kaiserslautern-Pirmasens signed a local agreement to set up a German-French placement service to improve recruitment for cross-border employment and training (*Bundesagentur für Arbeit* [German Federal Employment Agency] 2014). In the meantime, the negotiations for a Framework Agreement on Cross-border Vocational Education and Training (*RVOR*) conducted within the area of the Upper Rhine Conference were finalised and the framework agreement was signed on 12 September 2013.

In accordance with the call formulated in the Saarbrücken Declaration of July 2013, the Saarland and the Lorraine region negotiated the strategic objectives for the Framework Agreement on Cooperation in Cross-border Vocational Education and Training in Saarland-Lorraine, following the model for negotiating the framework agreement established by the Upper Rhine (*RVSL* 2014). This agreement was eventually signed on 2 June 2014.

### ***Object of the Framework Agreement and the Agreement on Cross-border Vocational Education and Training in Saarland-Lorraine***

The central objective of the framework agreement was the launch of a cross-border training and labour market as of the new 2014/2015 school and training year 'by promoting vocational exchanges between the two areas' and 'strengthening cross-border vocational training between Saarland and Lorraine' (*RVSL* 2014: 3). The agreement was intended to give young German and French people the opportunity to 'complete the practical part of their training on the basis of a training contract in a company in the neighbouring country' (*RVSL* 2014). An essential objective was to contribute to the interlinking of the different training systems, with a special role for the principle of dual vocational education and training practised in Germany, in the form of giving trainees the opportunity to complete their theoretical training in their home country and practical (in-company) training in the neighbouring country. This was intended to address both the problem of the incompatibility of the German and French training systems and the problem of the trainees' insufficient language skills for completing their theoretical training in the neighbouring country.

As indicated by the fact that the document is specifically a framework agreement embodying strategic objectives, the agreement is a flexible framework in which long-term objectives are formulated, leaving room for different forms of cooperation: for example, the partners concurred in the agreement that 'a diverse range of cooperation formats is desirable and worthwhile' (*RVSL* 2014: 4). The framework agreement

thus pursued a diversity-driven approach to the Europeanisation of vocational education and training, which is more focused on gaining skills than on having equal vocational qualifications. It accordingly opened up an area of experimentation for different forms of cross-border cooperation in vocational education and training.

The agreement does not focus solely on Saarland-Lorraine cooperation: the initiatives made possible by the agreement are to be developed ‘in close coordination with the partner regions of the Greater Region, Luxembourg, the Walloon region and Rhineland-Palatinate’ (RVSL 2014; cf. also sections 3.3 and 3.4).

Parallel to the framework agreement, the Agreement on Cross-border Vocational Education and Training in Saarland–Lorraine according to Article 5 of the Framework Agreement on Cooperation in Cross-border Vocational Education and Training (AGBSL 2014) was signed on the same day. The signatories were the French state, the Lorraine Region, the *Académie de Metz-Nancy*, the *Direction régionale de l'alimentation, de l'agriculture et de la forêt*, the Lorraine Chamber of Trades, the Chamber of Commerce and Industry of the Lorraine Region, the Saarland Chamber of Industry and Commerce, the Saarland Chamber of Trades, the Saarland Chamber of Agriculture and the Regional Directorate for Rhineland-Palatinate of the German Federal Employment Agency.

‘The agreements will enable young people from Lorraine and Saarland to enter into a training contract with a company in the neighbouring country and complete the practical part of their training there. The theoretical component takes place at the vocational school in the home country. At the end of the training, the young people then take the final exam and acquire their vocational qualification in their home country, where they have completed their vocational schooling. In addition, provided that the conditions are met, they have the option of additionally taking the final exam in the partner country. Vocational education and training for a total of 15 occupations can be provided across borders’ (Network of Specialised Institutes of the Interregional Labour Market Observatory 2014: 102).

### ***Implementation of the Framework Agreement and the Agreement on Cross-border Vocational Education and Training in Saarland-Lorraine to date***

The training provided for by the Framework Agreement and the Agreement on Cross-border Vocational Education and Training is particularly important for those Saarland companies which, because of their high proportion of French customers, have great interest in attracting French employees and are already retaining them through the company’s own vocational education and training programmes. As the example of Möbel Martin shows, these companies have had recruitment problems hitherto because most trainees have not been able to complete the theoretical part of their training in Germany due to a lack of language skills. The framework agreement was able to remedy this impediment.

Immediately after the framework agreement and the agreement based on it were signed, the two Saarland companies Möbel Martin and Globus (operators of consumer and DIY markets) together with the *Lycée professionnel Henri-Nominé* in Sarreguemines (Lorraine) launched an alternating academic and in-house company train-

ing programme [*formation en alternance*], which ends with the qualification of Advanced Technical Diploma in Client negotiations and relations (*Brevet de technicien supérieur – Négociation et relation client* - *BTS-NRC*). The certificate is similar to that of the German ‘Management Assistant in the Retail Trade’ qualification. The trainees enter into a training contract with the German companies Möbel Martin and Globus and complete their practical training there. The theoretical training and the final exam take place at the vocational training centres of the CFA (*Centre de formation d’apprentis*) in Sarreguemines (*Lycée professionnel Henri-Nominé*) in their own ‘alternating’ Advanced Technical Diploma (*BTS en alternance*) project class. The trainees obtain the French vocational qualification of an Advanced Technical Diploma in Client Negotiations and Relations (*BTS-NRC*). Optionally, if they have the appropriate language skills, they can also obtain the German *IHK* qualification after completing the two-year training programme.

In addition to this Möbel Martin / Globus project for commercial training, the Michelin model for commercial training was launched in the 2015/16 academic year: currently, two French trainees attend vocational school in Sarreguemines and are completing the required vocational traineeships at Michelin in Homburg in order to obtain a French electrician’s qualification. The *IHK* and the corresponding French authorities align the content of the programme with the regulated occupation of energy electronics technicians. The three-year training course in France is followed by a six-month vocational traineeship with the option of taking the practical exam for the German certification system for this occupation (Nagel 2015: 18). In addition, Michelin Homburg has concluded an agreement with the industry training institution CFAI (*Centre de formation d’apprentis de l’industrie*) in Yutz (Lorraine) for other skilled occupations.

In contrast to these two models, where employment is based in Germany under German law and the (theoretical) training is under French law (in France), the car manufacturer SMART is training an apprentice in Hambach (Lorraine) under German law.

A total of 13 trainees started a cross-border ‘*formation en alternance*’ in the 2015/16 academic year based on the Framework Agreement and the Agreement on Cross-border Vocational Education and Training in Saarland-Lorraine, of whom 11 are currently (March 2016) still in training (cf. Schneider/Otto/Dauenhauer 2016); Dorka/Frisch 2015).

### 3.3 Framework Agreement on Cross-border Vocational Training in the Greater Region

While the framework agreement between Saarland and Lorraine and the agreement based on it provide a basis for the operational implementation of cross-border vocational training courses, the Greater Region Framework Agreement, which entered into force on 5 November 2014, serves to structure the different cross-border vocational education and training activities, defining common objectives for cross-border vocational training policy and identifying suitable approaches to action



to achieve these objectives. ‘It also describes information and communication measures aimed at raising awareness among citizens and businesses in the Greater Region about the existing opportunities for cross-border vocational education and training and increasing their public visibility and acceptance. In order to document the progress in implementing the framework agreement and to derive recommendations for further steps [...] a structured reporting procedure is provided for, which institutionalises a new quality of cooperation in the Greater Region’ (RVGR: 5).

In accordance with Article 2 of the Framework Agreement, the partners support and strengthen different forms of cross-border vocational education and training, such as practical training in the neighbouring country and theoretical training in their home country or in several countries or domestic training in their home country and several traineeships in the neighbouring country. Accordingly, various models of cross-border continuing vocational training are listed.

In line with the legal, cultural and organisational diversity of national vocational education and training systems referred to in a previous section and the associated need to transparently document vocational training courses and to recognise achievements in a skills-based, flexible manner, Article 3 cites, among other things, ‘bi- and multilateral agreements and experimental clauses [...] [and] the use and improvement of the possibilities for determining equivalence or recognising vocational qualifications and vocational and continuing training degrees acquired abroad’ (RVGR: 9) as important approaches to action to realise the joint objectives. The significance of the fact that the Framework Agreement explicitly addresses and communicates this open, flexible approach to cross-border cooperation in continuing vocational training as a pragmatic possibility should not be underestimated.

### 3.4 Other agreements concluded in preparation for the implementation of the Framework Agreement

Based on the example of the Framework Agreement for the Greater Region (and in line with the Saarland-Lorraine Framework Agreement), Lorraine and the Grand Duchy of Luxembourg declared their intention to cooperate on vocational education and training in May 2015 (Hasser, C. 2015: Slide 1). Similar to the Saarland-Lorraine examples of cross-border cooperation, the IUT (*Institut Universitaire de Technologie*) Henri Poincaré in Longwy and the Chamber of Labour of Luxembourg (*Chambre des Salariés Luxembourg, CSL*) have, among other things, launched a training programme for accounting and financial management, which is offered as an alternating education and training programme. The trainees are employed in a Luxembourg company and pursue their studies in evening and weekend courses. They complete their training with a ‘*Licence professionnelle de gestion comptable*’, an accountancy qualification similar to a bachelor’s degree (Kubler 2015). The programme offers very good employment prospects in the region for Lorraine professionals, who already have a relationship with a company. In addition, the recruitment problems of Luxembourg companies affected by staff shortages and ageing can be reduced.



For their part, the Lorraine region and the Federal State of Rhineland-Palatinate have carried out a survey in order to formulate common objectives for a framework agreement planned between the two regions. An exchange of information and experience is currently underway with the Walloon region in preparation for negotiations for an agreement to be defined (Hasser, C. 2015: Slide 1). Finally, on 29 February 2016, the German-speaking Community of Belgium and the Federal State of Rhineland-Palatinate, as well as key players in vocational education and training in both regions, signed an agreement to implement the Framework Agreement on Cross-border Vocational Education and Training in the Greater Region (*Verinbarung zur Umsetzung der Rahmenvereinbarung über grenzüberschreitende Berufsbildung in der Großregion, VDGBRLP*).

#### 4 Challenges and outlook

Cross-border vocational education and training have gained substantial importance given the intensification of the European integration process, the resulting increase in cross-border relations and the enhanced importance of education, training and know-how in today's knowledge society, as well as in the light of socio-demographic and economic disparities between neighbouring border regions. The number of measures and programmes has increased sharply over the last 10 to 15 years. A paradigm shift in cross-border cooperation in vocational education and training is also noticeable; this is characterised by a pragmatic, flexible approach based on skills. In the context of the exchange of experience and the common learning processes of the regional stakeholders involved, a wide variety of forms of cross-border vocational education and training, which had not previously been considered possible, are being tested. The framework agreement negotiated between Saarland and Lorraine and the Framework Agreement on Vocational Training in the Greater Region, as well as the other agreements signed in preparation in the Greater Region, support these new pragmatic forms of cooperation. At the same time, they themselves are also an expression of this process of transformation towards an integrated cross-border vocational education and training market.

Yet this market is still hampered by various obstacles and hurdles; the lack of language skills is still one of the biggest challenges. A lack of interest in cross-border vocational education and training, coupled with a lack of knowledge, and sometimes even prejudices and unrealistic expectations on the part of both companies and potential/prospective trainees, continue to present significant hurdles. It is to be hoped that the process (e.g. framework agreements) described in this paper will help to reduce them.

In addition to mental reservations, there are a number of 'hard' (legal, financial, infrastructural) hurdles and challenges for cross-border vocational education and training: the financing of vocational education and training for German training companies is a problem in that the theoretical training in France is usually subject to academic fees and thus an additional burden for companies that already pay their trainees a salary in Germany, unless compensation is provided through complicated political agreements. Furthermore, the framework agreements ultimately do not

provide a solution for the issue of direct dual diplomas in cross-border training programmes. Another problem for the young trainees, who usually do not have their own car, is the poor accessibility of the training companies by cross-border public transport (cf. the paper by Caesar/Heilmann/Saalbach/Schreiner in this volume).

In view of the remaining enormous hurdles to cross-border vocational education and training and the very small number of cross-border trainees, the Greater Region can only be described to a limited extent as an integrated vocational training market and a training education and region, as posited in the title of this paper.

And for very different reasons, it is doubtful that the Greater Region can ever become one. As has been pointed out above, the framework agreements that have been entered into and which are yet to be entered into in this regard, as well as the individual measures and programmes for cross-border vocational education and training, reflect and are at the same time the result of contingent intersectoral and interregional learning and adaptation processes, which must navigate between the institutional framework conditions (top-down) and situational conditions using local/regional and person-to-person knowledge ('tacit knowledge'). In other words, a cross-border vocational education and training region will, by its very nature, remain at best an open-ended process.

The recent territorial reform in France, which has combined the regions of Alsace, Lorraine and Champagne-Ardenne into the 'Grand Est' region (cf. the paper by Patrice Harster/Kristine Clev in this volume), creates a regional setting in which processes, which have previously been running more or less independently of each other, can potentially be linked more quickly and brought together into joint regional learning processes. This may open up new potentials and opportunities for cross-border vocational education and training in today's Greater Region. As a result, the Greater Region in its current format will receive a further important developmental boost as a cross-border vocational education and training region.

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Patrice Harster, Frédéric Siebenhaar

## THE CROSS-BORDER LABOUR MARKET: A PRIORITY IN THE EURODISTRICT PAMINA

### Contents

- 1 Introduction
- 2 The PAMINA labour market
- 3 Excursus: INTERREG V A projects for vocational education/training and employment in the Upper Rhine region
- 4 Conclusions: No successful development of the cross-border labour market without functioning multi-level governance

References

### Abstract

The paper focuses on the activities of the Eurodistrict PAMINA in the cross-border labour market, including the associated training measures. Here the concrete needs and practice-oriented approaches of a dynamic labour market region meet the complex challenges of a multi-level system, the governance of which is not fully developed. This is a constellation that has obstructed the implementation of a number of promising ideas. The Eurodistrict PAMINA lies at the interface between national and cross-border metropolitan regions and within the area of the greatest commuter flows in Europe (Upper Rhine and Greater Region), where PAMINA is testing a local strategy based primarily on bringing together the qualified actors and improving coherence between measures and funding policies.

### Keywords

Cross-border labour market – joint action plan – multi-level governance system – governance – INTERREG Upper Rhine – Eurodistrict PAMINA

## 1 Introduction?

The Eurodistrict PAMINA is a cooperation area consisting of three sub-regions: southern Palatinate, the Middle Upper Rhine and North Alsace (France). It was founded in 1988 with the signing of the Weißenburg Declaration of Intent, after which the cross-border partnership continued to develop, resulting in 2003 in the establishment of a cross-border local special purpose association under the Karlsruhe Convention (*Karlsruher Übereinkommen/Accord de Karlsruhe* 1996) based in Lauterbourg; the original entity, REGIO PAMINA, was renamed Eurodistrict PAMINA in 2008. The cross-border local special purpose association was finally transformed into the legal form of a European Grouping of Territorial Cooperation (EGTC) (EU Regulation No. 1302/2013) on 15 December 2016 – a hitherto unique process in Europe. The Eurodistrict PAMINA EGTC aims to promote cross-border cooperation for the benefit of the 1.7 million citizens in its territory.

The cross-border region is characterised by rising unemployment on the French side and a shortage of skilled workers on the German side; the Eurodistrict PAMINA has been actively engaged in improving the employment and labour market situation since the INTERREG III programme phase (2000–2006). As early as 1991, the cooperation area offered an innovative instrument for the labour market with the launch of an information and advisory office for cross-border workers (INFOBEST), which was subsequently copied in the following years by numerous other cooperation areas (INTERACT 2015). The questions submitted by cross-border workers to INFOBEST PAMINA are mostly of a practical nature and concern the move to the neighbouring country, child benefits, social security, pension taxation or similar matters. With more than 2,000 enquiries per year, the figures have been stable since the founding of INFOBEST PAMINA, although a slight increase was noted in recent years (Eurodistrict PAMINA 2010–2015).<sup>1</sup> The information and advisory office has been an integral part of the special purpose association and EGTC since 2003.

Furthermore, in 2009 the Eurodistrict PAMINA contributed to the Green Paper on ‘Promoting the learning mobility of young people’ (European Commission 2009). In their opinion, the Eurodistrict proposed to establish a cross-border plan to develop mobility in the Upper Rhine region (support as needed for mobility projects offered by companies providing vocational training, development of bilateral cross-border partnerships for education, training and mobility, coordination of cross-border mobility networks with the aim of concerted action) (Eurodistrict PAMINA 2009).

In the coming years, the promotion of employment and labour mobility will be two priority issues at the European level, be it for the European Commission as part of the EUROPE 2020 Strategy (European Commission 2010) and the Regulation in support of European Territorial Cooperation (EU Regulation No. 1299/2013), or for the Committee of the Regions (CoR 2013) – and the same applies to the Upper Rhine. Within the framework of the INTERREG IV A programme in the Upper Rhine region (2007–2013), two projects have already been devoted to cross-border training

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<sup>1</sup> This is also proven by internal surveys conducted by INFOBEST PAMINA, which collects all enquiries and presents the figures in their annual reports to the relevant committees and financing partners.

(focusing on the period before and after individuals achieve their German university entrance qualification [*Abitur*]).<sup>2</sup> Both mobility and bilingualism must be emphasised for both projects, as they are representative of the obstacles encountered at the territorial level. The results of the project led to a German-French framework agreement, which will be discussed in more detail at a later point.

With its 2020 Strategy, the Trinational Metropolitan Region of the Upper Rhine (TMO)<sup>3</sup> also pursues the objective of a permeable labour market and proposes measures aimed at gradually removing the remaining obstacles and developing common structures and processes for facilitating cross-border occupational mobility (TMO 2013: 10).

In line with the EUROPE 2020 Strategy, the Upper Rhine Conference (*Oberrhein-konferenz, ORK*) has made promoting inclusive growth a priority in order to create the necessary framework conditions for high employment in the economy at cross-border level, as stated in the Bonn Agreement (*BGBI. [Federal Law Gazette] 1976 II: 194 et seq.*). Together with the TMO, the Upper Rhine Conference has identified the current state of education, training and employment (*ORK/TMO 2013*). This document, in turn, served as an orientation for the preparation of the INTERREG V A Upper Rhine Operational Programme, in particular for the comments on employment therein (*INTERREG Upper Rhine 2014*). Priority axis C of the programme entitled 'Integrative growth in the Upper Rhine region – Promoting employment across borders' and, in particular, investment priority (i) 'Promoting sustainable and high-quality employment and supporting labour mobility through the integration of cross-border labour markets, including cross-border mobility, joint local employment initiatives, information and advisory services and joint training' (*INTERREG 2014: 78*) pursue a dual strategy based on the specific challenges of the Upper Rhine region identified in the evaluation of the programme area. These relate to increasing the number of cross-border employment relationships, for example by reducing barriers to employment in the neighbouring country or by enhancing the qualification of the relevant target groups along the Upper Rhine, as well as to expanding employment opportunities throughout the border region, both qualitatively and quantitatively (*INTERREG Upper Rhine 2014: 68*). Against this background, the priorities focus on specific economic sectors and locations, which were identified based on studies already carried out and existing strategies.

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2 The INTERREG IV A projects B45 on 'The Upper Rhine: from education and training to a joint labour market' and B26 on 'Binational and dual studies integrated with practice in Alsace and in Baden-Württemberg'.

3 The Trinational Metropolitan Region of the Upper Rhine (TMO) was founded on 10 December 2010 as part of the Offenburg Declaration. It is not a new cooperation structure, but a project to bundle the existing networks in the Upper Rhine region.



Thanks to the EURES-T partnership along the Upper Rhine,<sup>4</sup> the Labour Ministers of France and Germany, Michel Sapin and Ursula von der Leyen, signed a cooperation agreement on job placements for French and German jobseekers in Kehl, Baden-Württemberg, on 26 February 2013. This agreement was part of the celebrations for the 50th anniversary of the Treaty of Elysée, also known as the German-French Treaty of Friendship (see the paper by H. Peter Dörrenbächer in Part 4 of this volume). The German-French commuter figures from the cooperation areas of the Greater Region and the Upper Rhine show that there is a need for such an organisation: 46,000 workers from the *Région Grand Est* (Grand Est région) work in Germany,<sup>5</sup> of which around 17,500 are from the Sarreguemines and Forbach areas and around 6,800 are from the Wissembourg area (INSEE [National Institute of Statistics and Economic Studies] Alsace-Champagne-Ardenne-Lorraine 2016).<sup>6</sup> In the other direction, the flows are much smaller, due to the labour market situation and the pay gap: in the Upper Rhine region, just under 4,000 workers commuted to France in 2012, for example (Hochstetter 2013).

Based on this agreement, the Landau and Karlsruhe-Rastatt employment agencies, as well as their French counterparts, the employment agencies of Haguenau and Wissembourg, signed a local cooperation agreement on 20 September 2013 in Landau on the German-French employment service to create a corresponding service office, which, unlike the Kehl office, is not structured in a centralised fashion but set up as a network.

EURES-T Upper Rhine also implements numerous measures and projects related to employment in the Upper Rhine region, in particular for networking stakeholders (organising workshops on the comparability and recognition of qualifications in the Upper Rhine region, implementing a best practice comparison with specific target groups and organising an annual conference on current cross-border employment issues), for placing jobseekers (meetings with EURES advisors, workshops to support job searches, internships at companies in the neighbouring country, attending EURES-T employment exchanges and fairs, 'job matching' events along the Upper Rhine, organising the 'European Job Days'), for advice and information (creating 'mobility packs' for employers and employees as well as organising expert seminars on labour, social and tax law and seminars for companies), for cross-border training (promoting the Euroregion certificate by the ProMOA project and a cooperation

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4 The EURES-T partnership in the Upper Rhine region, which was established in 1999, brings together public labour market organisations, trade union and employer organisations and the territorial authorities in the region and thus constitutes an important networking structure. A steering committee with representatives of the 22 partner organisations meets three times a year to outline common strategies and activities for the development of cross-border employment services and for improving the permeability and transparency of the labour market. All partner organisations and all countries are represented in a balanced manner in the steering committee, which is the central decision-making committee.

5 This refers in particular to the directly adjacent federal states of Saarland, Rhineland-Palatinate and Baden-Württemberg.

6 Workers from the Sarreguemines and Forbach areas commute in particular using the services of the Saarbrücken regional association, while no geographic polarisation is apparent for commuters from the Wissembourg labour market area towards Rhineland-Palatinate or Baden-Württemberg (INSEE Alsace-Champagne-Ardenne-Lorraine 2016).

project between the Upper Rhine Conference, the Alsace région and the Regional Directorate for Companies, Fair Trade, Consumer Affairs, Labour and Employment of Alsace [*Direction régionale des entreprises, de la concurrence, de la consommation, du travail et de l'emploi d'Alsace*] for the further development of cross-border training) and for a better understanding of the territorial context (development of labour market monitoring) (Eures-T 2013).

The Framework Agreement on Cross-border Vocational Training in the Upper Rhine Region, which was signed on 12 September 2013 by 28 representatives from politics and business, allows applicants to pursue a type of cross-border training in which the theoretical component is completed in the home country and the practical component in the neighbouring country (Framework Agreement on Cross-border Vocational Training in the Upper Rhine Region 2013). This arrangement was adopted and extended by the Lorraine region and introduced in the form of a similar agreement with Saarland in June 2014. On this basis, a framework agreement on cross-border vocational education and training in the Greater Region (see the paper by H. Peter Dörrenbächer in this volume) was signed in Trier on 5 November 2014. This event was attended by politicians from the partner regions responsible for employment and vocational education and training, coordinators of public employment agencies and professional chambers, regional trade unions and municipalities, the latter represented by the interregional and parliamentary institutions.<sup>7</sup>

## 2 The PAMINA labour market

The in-depth work on the PAMINA labour market began a few years ago with the launch of a cross-border, forward-looking jobs and skills management scheme (*Gestion Prévisionnelle des Emplois et des Compétences Territoriale – Transfrontalière*, GPEC-T) – an extension of the regular GPEC-T which was previously limited to France (Michun 2012).<sup>8</sup> The analyses and studies carried out at the time enabled the tools and instruments needed to make progress on these tasks to be identified and put in place. It was noted, for example, that the measures taken in connection with cross-border employment since 1999 and the establishment of the EURES-T Upper Rhine had been limited almost exclusively to improving advisory and information services for beneficiaries. The Eurodistrict PAMINA has also drawn attention to the problem of the

<sup>7</sup> The agreement focuses on the following issues in the Greater Region: integration of the labour market; occupational mobility, especially for young people; combating youth unemployment, especially as part of the Youth Guarantee; qualification of employees; information on cross-border vocational education and training; elimination of legal barriers (Framework Agreement on Cross-border Vocational Training in the Greater Region 2014).

<sup>8</sup> GPEC-T in the classic, non-cross-border sense is a French instrument for securing careers and improving employment opportunities in areas affected by change. Both bodies under private law (business associations) and public bodies (territorial authorities, employment agencies, etc.) can sign the corresponding partnership agreements with the French authorities (Michun 2012). The GPEC-T in the Eurodistrict PAMINA comprises various partners from all three sub-regions, including the French state, education and training institutions, EURES-T, schools, local and regional territorial authorities, the employment agencies, chambers of industry and commerce, chambers of the trades, and social enterprises and associations.

fragmentation of public funds<sup>9</sup> and the risk of duplicating funding in the sense of how the funds are used. This also applies to European funding, as both ESF and INTERREG funds are available for employment-related issues within the Eurodistrict (Baden-Württemberg, Alsace, Rhineland-Palatinate).

In view of these findings and the existing labour market situation, with a high level of unemployment on the French side and a shortage of skilled workers in the German sub-regions, the Eurodistrict initiated a process to consider the creation of a 'platform for bringing together the qualified actors' (author's note) in this area.

Political representatives and the administration of the Eurodistrict have also met several times with the programme authorities of the various EU funds active in the PAMINA area in order to achieve a coordinated use of funds for their territory, in particular through centralised calls for projects. The pilot project planned in 2013 was based on an instrument from the new text of the regulation for a common strategic framework called the Joint Action Plan (Chapter III EU Regulation No. 1303/2013) and was presented at the OPEN DAYS 2012 (INTERACT Newsletter 2013: 25)<sup>10</sup> and 2013 (CECICN [Conference of European Cross-border and Interregional City Networks] 2013: 11 et seq.) in Brussels. The project was rejected in 2014 because the 'multi-fund management' (ESF/ERDF) approach would have presented both programme authorities and the Eurodistrict with many problems that would be extremely difficult to solve.

The very constructive contacts with the Commission and with the four programme authorities (INTERREG Upper Rhine; ESF Alsace région, Baden-Württemberg and Rhineland-Palatinate), which were established in the course of the work, led to a new strategy based on two building blocks (Eurodistrict PAMINA 2014a):

- > Implementation of a territorial call for projects under the INTERREG V A Upper Rhine programme aimed at employment, education and training, which relates to the PAMINA area.<sup>11</sup>
- > Coordination and monitoring of the projects selected through a call for projects by the Eurodistrict with simultaneous coordination with the programme authorities (INTERREG V A Upper Rhine, ESF Baden-Württemberg, ESF Rhineland-Palatinate, ESF Alsace) to generate complementary measures, in particular cross-border/transnational ESF projects.

9 In some places, funds are distributed according to the 'watering can principle' based on a non-prioritised, blanket distribution of funds, instead of being specifically bundled for important concerns.

10 'An interesting example is supplied by the EURODISTRICT PAMINA, who set up on the border between France and Germany, in the programme area of a cross-border ETC programme. This territory is planning to submit a JAP to the Commission where they will bundle the ERDF of the cooperation programme with the regional ESF of the participating regions to jointly tackle the challenges of cross-border mobility and employment. We shall see if the Commission considers this proposal regular and effective and gives the green light.' (INTERACT Newsletter 2013: 25).

11 Following the themed call for 'Science Offensive' projects within the framework of the INTERREG IV A Upper Rhine programme and building on the integrated approach to territorial development in Chapter 4 of the INTERREG V A Upper Rhine Operational Programme (INTERREG Upper Rhine 2014).

This comprehensive strategic approach, if successful, was to be transferred to a joint action plan at a later stage, possibly as a pilot project with less public funding, as envisaged in the text of the regulation.<sup>12</sup> Yet this approach also had to be abandoned after the programme authorities expressed further concerns and were unable to provide the necessary funding outside of the project-based funding. Nevertheless, the preliminary considerations and the work that had already been carried out provided a sound basis for the further development of the platform aimed at bringing together qualified actors.

These, in turn, were enriched by the activities of GPEC-T, which included an assessment of the current conditions, a SWOT analysis and the definition of the territorial challenges in the PAMINA labour market. In 2014, the Eurodistrict PAMINA identified around 50 actions to promote employment and cross-border mobility in its territory (Eurodistrict PAMINA 2014b). These cross-border measures, which are devoted to the training of young people, the vocational reintegration of people over 45, mobility and access to the labour market, have been subdivided at the internal work level into four groups:

- > Information, advice and exchange – Vocational guidance for young people
- > Discovering, trying out and experiencing – Raising young people's awareness of different occupations
- > Cross-border vocational education and training – Cross-border, dual training courses and cooperation to promote cross-border cooperation and to implement the Framework Agreement on Cross-border Vocational Education and Training in the Upper Rhine region
- > Reintegration into the labour market – Projects beyond the vocational education and training of young people

The measures covered by the four categories will be implemented in complementary ways on the basis of existing possibilities. The large number of actions, which are often independent of each other, must be taken into account within a relatively small space, which underlines the need for meaningful selection and bundling.

In parallel with this work, the Eurodistrict has implemented a transnational ESF project (ESF Baden-Württemberg) for the reintegration of people over the age of 45 into the PAMINA labour market in partnership with the *Neue Arbeit* social enterprise.<sup>13</sup> The project and its results were presented to the public on 27 November 2014. This was also an opportunity to discuss the future challenges of cross-border employment and

12 'For the implementation of a pilot project, the minimum public expenditure allocated to a joint action plan for each operational programme may be reduced to €5,000,000.' (Article 104(2) EU Regulation No. 1303/2013).

13 The PAMI45+NA project was implemented by the social enterprise *Neue Arbeit gGmbH* in 2010–2014. The Eurodistrict PAMINA was a project partner and informally supported the project in terms of content and organisation. The funding was based on a transnational call for projects from the Baden-Württemberg ESF programme.

education/training in public with political representatives.<sup>14</sup> This public discussion raised awareness of the internal considerations and strengthened the negotiating position with regard to those organisations and bodies that still needed to be convinced of the course of action. In general, transparency and regular communication with the qualified actors proved to be crucial, as employment and education/training are extremely sensitive areas of activity in which political sensitivities and potential competitive situations must be taken into account.

The broad support provided by the strategic approach of a platform for pooling and bringing together qualified actors can thus be attributed not only to the considerable preparatory work, which was also associated setbacks that did however prove enlightening. It is also based on the fact that the Eurodistrict PAMINA does not seek to replace established structures or institutions or to seize powers. The aim is rather to provide the qualified actors in Germany and France with the ideal framework for coordination and cooperation in the sense of tangible cross-border added value. In this way, existing resources and instruments can be used more efficiently and synergy effects can be created through complementarity.

Under the title ‘Bringing together the qualified actors for a cross-border labour market – Lifelong learning and employment in the Eurodistrict PAMINA’, the strategic approach described here was presented to the Committee of the Regions in Brussels on 3 March 2015.<sup>15</sup> Compared to the labour market activities of other cross-border regions, it is again apparent that the focus in other areas is still very much on informing and advising cross-border workers and relatively simple ‘matching’ measures, e.g. cross-border ‘job dating’, while strategies beyond that are scarcely pursued due to their complexity or the absence of a dedicated cross-border employment area. Such measures have been common practice in the Upper Rhine region and in the PAMINA area for many years and are scarcely perceived as an innovation, but this does not change their fundamental usefulness or necessity.

### **3 Excursus: INTERREG V A projects for vocational education/training and employment in the Upper Rhine region**

European funding from the INTERREG A programmes continues to be an important mechanism for implementing cross-border measures. INTERREG A funding has also proved to be a true driver of cross-border regional development in the Upper Rhine region; it is in its fifth programme phase since 2015 and, like many other programme areas, it has seen a steady increase in funding over the years (INTERREG Upper Rhine 2007: 115; INTERREG Upper Rhine 2014: 101-102). For example, around 63% more funding is available in the Upper Rhine region for the 2014–2020 programming peri-

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<sup>14</sup> In addition to representatives of the chambers and the relevant ministries, the panel discussion was attended by Martine Calderoli-Lotz, Vice President and Chair of the Committee for Occupational Reintegration at the Alsatian Regional Council, and Karl-Heinz Lambertz, Chair of the Association of European Border Regions (AEBR) and Vice-President of the Committee of the Regions.

<sup>15</sup> 5th Annual Meeting of the EGTC Platform of the Committee of the Regions: The EGTCs and the Employment.

od compared to the INTERREG IV A programme (2007–2013).<sup>16</sup> Against this background, there are new opportunities for support, particularly in the area of cost-intensive projects, which may also concern employment and education/training measures under priority axis C. In view of these new, comprehensive funding opportunities and the political and social context, the Alsace région, as the largest French territorial authority in the Upper Rhine region, decided in 2015 to launch an INTERREG V A project for cross-border employment.<sup>17</sup>

The main co-financing partners of this project are the federal states of Baden-Württemberg and Rhineland-Palatinate, in addition to other structures and institutions that take part and account for smaller amounts and/or act as associated partners. The project budget for the ‘Success without Borders’ INTERREG application amounts to a total of €4 million (INTERREG Upper Rhine 2016).

The INTERREG V A project ‘Success without Borders’ is dedicated to vocational education and training for three core target groups (students, trainees, unemployed) and will be divided into four priority areas, which ensure a comprehensive approach to the cross-border labour market in the Upper Rhine region based on past experience and actions:

- > Raising awareness about cross-border education and training opportunities
- > Ensuring that applicants are given the right assistance for their individual situation
- > Coordinating and better correlating education services with companies’ needs for skilled workers
- > Improving the coordination and development of cross-border education and training services

Various aspects such as language skills (intensive courses, subject-specific language courses), individual support for applicants and trainees (classification of skills, workshops and trial internships, support before, during and after training, sponsorships in companies), continuing training and qualifications (tailored options, recognition of qualifications) or raising awareness among young people (communication campaigns, company visits, trade fair appearances) are taken into account and imple-

<sup>16</sup> For the period 2007–2013, the available ERDF funds amounted to around €67 million, which at a co-financing rate of 50%, means that the programme provided opportunities to invest around €134 million in the Upper Rhine region (INTERREG Upper Rhine 2007: 115). More than €109 million is available under the INTERREG V A programme until 2020, with the co-financing rate remaining at 50%; the only exception being priority axis D of the Operational Programme, which has a funding rate of 60% (INTERREG Upper Rhine 2014: 101–102).

<sup>17</sup> In this context, it should be noted that the geographic and political situation has changed considerably since 1 January 2016 due to the French territorial reform and the resulting merger of the Alsace région with the Lorraine région and the Champagne-Ardenne région into the Grand Est région (see the paper by Patrice Harster and Kristine Clev in the appendix to this volume). It remains to be seen to what extent these developments will have an impact on how the cross-border labour market is viewed and steered politically. The INTERREG funding requirements for the Upper Rhine region and the Greater Region remain unaffected by the changes for the time being.

mented through concrete measures. In addition, a joint fund for the financing of occupational mobility is being set up in cooperation with the Franco-German Youth Office (Grand Est région 2016).

The Eurodistrict PAMINA participates in the project as an associate partner and is thus involved in various measures which concern the territorial dimension of its area. The Eurodistrict has access to the local network of employment and education/training stakeholders and has an important cross-border interchange function between the Upper Rhine and the local level. Originally, an even closer involvement of the Eurodistrict was envisaged, which would have also included the responsibility for implementing measures, but this would have further increased the already considerable complexity of the project and thus would have made managing the project in a focused manner in accordance with the INTERREG requirements more difficult.

Nevertheless, the large number of project partners – 20 partners prior to the start of the project – could also present problems in connection with the ever more complex requirements of the INTERREG programme. The innovative, comprehensive approach of the project could fail due to the formal requirements of the programme. It remains to be seen to what extent the tightened rules in the area of targets (outputs) and project indicators<sup>18</sup> will further complicate the implementation of the project. This is, moreover, a development which contradicts the requirements and official announcements of the European Union: the latter explicitly calls for simplifications of an administrative and financial nature (European Commission 2012; European Commission 2013). It should come as no surprise, then, that none of the levels involved in programming – whether at the European, national or regional level – wants to take responsibility for this increasing complexity. A simpler analysis of this problem would not do justice to the multiple, diverse layers of interests that are affected, but to elaborate these any further would exceed what is possible here.

In order to compensate for the more difficult application and additional challenges in relation to project management, the INTERREG V A programme authority in the Upper Rhine region has introduced the use of simplified cost options in the form of flat rates for personnel costs and indirect project costs (electricity, telephone, heating costs, etc.).<sup>19</sup> This approach promises a remedy, at least for expenditure accounting, and should make project realisation easier in this regard; in addition, compliance with European requirements provides the corresponding legal certainty (Article 67 EU Regulation No. 1303/2013).

Given that the Eurodistrict PAMINA or the territorial level as a whole does not play an active steering role in the ‘Success without Borders’ INTERREG project, an alternative has been developed to pursue the integrated territorial approach set out in the

18 These include both common indicators set out in the regulatory framework and specific indicators defined at programme level.

19 The application of the flat rate for personnel costs is optional (there are other options); it represents up to 20% of the other direct costs that are eligible for funding. The flat rate for indirect project costs or office and administrative expenses is also calculated on the basis of direct, eligible personnel costs and amounts to 15%.

Operational Programme: the territorial level implements its own INTERREG projects for locally limited and cross-border labour markets, thus serving the employment sector in addition to the training sector. With the ‘Eurodistrict Strasbourg-Ortenau: a 360° open labour market’ project, the employment and training centre for the Strasbourg Basin (*Maison de l’Emploi et de la Formation du bassin de Strasbourg*), in cooperation with the Eurodistrict Strasbourg-Ortenau, has already launched such a project (Eurodistrict Strasbourg-Ortenau 2017). It aims to implement an employment strategy. This includes measures to inform jobseekers from Strasbourg about employment opportunities in Ortenau, the establishment of a territorial network of experts to mobilise Strasbourg residents, especially young people from priority neighbourhoods, as well as actions to mobilise employers from Ortenau to better integrate cross-border workers (Eurodistrict Strasbourg-Ortenau 2017).

Such an integrated territorial approach to promoting employment in the cross-border labour market in the PAMINA area was also launched by the Eurodistrict PAMINA, now converted into an EGTC, in the form of another INTERREG project entitled ‘Skills Alliance PAMINA’. In this case, the focus is on the professional reintegration of over 45s,<sup>20</sup> the targeted matching of companies and candidates and cross-border occupational reintegration in sectors with increased demand for personnel, in particular nursing (Eurodistrict PAMINA 2016). These focal points are based on both the policy priorities and the specific practical challenges of the PAMINA labour market, with the platform for pooling or bringing together qualified actors playing an important role in defining them. The corresponding application for funding from the INTERREG V A Upper Rhine programme was approved on 8 December 2016.

The INTERREG V A Upper Rhine programme in general, as well as the vocational education and training project for the Alsace région and the Grand Est région in particular, are important building blocks and general factors in the labour market strategy for the Eurodistrict PAMINA; hence, it is all the more important that the measures are tailored to complement each other and do not compete with each other. At the same time, this will involve an increased coordination effort to ensure maximum coherence.

#### **4 Conclusions: No successful development of the cross-border labour market without functioning multi-level governance**

When coordinating or agreeing on measures at the Upper Rhine level and in the Eurodistrict PAMINA, it will be important to not only interpret the aforementioned subsidiarity vertically, i.e. from top to bottom, but also to intensify the horizontal coordination processes between equal levels. This is the only way due account can be taken of the diversity of stakeholders and institutions involved. In fact, the competences and policies at the European and Upper Rhine level, as well as at the level of the Eurodistrict PAMINA, are complementary in many places. It is important to adopt a unique approach to governance in this regard based on multi-level governance and looking at cross-border cooperation from a 360° perspective.

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<sup>20</sup> This is a continuation, intensification and geographical extension of the former ‘PAMI45+NA’ ESF project.



The Eurodistrict PAMINA is actively committed to this approach and formally confirmed this on 19 September 2014 with its declaration of accession to the Charter of Multi-Level Governance in Europe.<sup>21</sup>

Beyond the question of determining the best level of implementation with the greatest proximity to citizens, it is also a question of the equal involvement of partners at all levels of administration or governance, who must meet on an equal footing in strategic matters and take joint decisions. In view of the considerable diversity of the actors involved, these strategies and plans are at the heart of the path to territorial cohesion. This is true both for the labour market and for many other aspects of cross-border cooperation.

Wherever dynamic network structures meet, the usual hierarchical control and policy mechanisms can only fall short. In this sense, the cross-border labour market strategy, with its platform for bringing together qualified actors, provides a significant opportunity to test and implement better multi-level governance.

This strategy for the PAMINA labour and training market will also include activities aimed at ‘stimulating’ employment on the French side, in particular by encouraging the establishment of German enterprises. Examples include the German companies SEW-Usocome and SIEMENS, which are both based in the French city of Haguenau. In this respect, the Eurodistrict PAMINA relies primarily on cooperation with the PAMINA Business Club, an association of different business promoters from Baden, Alsace and the Palatinate.<sup>22</sup> The long-term objective is and remains to balance the three sub-regions of the Eurodistrict PAMINA, which does not mean that all three should have the same level of development in the future, but that they complement each other in a meaningful way and thus offer a cross-border living space which is able to enrich the lives of its citizens.

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21 This states: ‘Aware of our INTERDEPENDENCE and ever seeking greater EFFICIENCY, we believe that there is significant potential to further strengthen innovative and efficient political and administrative cooperation between our authorities based on their competences and responsibilities. This Charter, drawn up by the Committee of the Regions of the European Union, aims at connecting regions and cities across Europe, whilst at the same time promoting ACTION AT ALL LEVELS with actors from society such as social partners, universities, NGOs and representative groups from civil society (CoR 2014: 1).

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Franz Schafranski

## THE USE OF CULTURAL HERITAGE AS A RESOURCE FOR DEVELOPING TOURISM IN THE BORDER AREAS OF THE GREATER REGION AND THE UPPER RHINE REGION

### Contents

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  - 3 Cultural heritage and cultural tourism in cross-border cooperation in the Greater Region
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### Abstract

Cultural tourism is one of the most quickly growing tourism segments. Cultural heritage is an important resource for developing cultural tourism. In rural areas, tourism plays an important role in safeguarding employment, income and supply structures, but in contrast to the situation in urban regions, resources for developing cultural tourism are scarcely used. As the border regions are largely rural in character, the question arises as to the role cultural tourism and cultural heritage currently play there. This paper investigates the use of cultural heritage in the tourism sector in the border areas of the Greater Region and the Trinational Metropolitan Region of the Upper Rhine and uses this as a basis for proposals concerning the further utilisation of cultural heritage as a resource for developing tourism.

### Keywords

Cultural heritage – cultural tourism – strategy development – inventories – network creation – touristic value – new information and communication technologies

## 1 Introduction

Under UNESCO's 1972 Convention for the Protection of the World's Cultural and Natural Heritage, the protection and preservation of cultural heritage has become more important in recent decades, including in spatial development. The World Heritage Convention focuses on cultural heritage sites such as monuments, ensembles and sites, including cultural landscapes, which are of exceptional importance and are to be preserved as part of the world heritage of all humankind.<sup>1</sup>

Since the adoption of the World Heritage Convention, 1,031 sites around the world have been added to the UNESCO World Heritage List. In Germany alone, there are currently (March 2017) 41 World Heritage Sites (German UNESCO Commission 2017). The interest in recognising cultural heritage sites as a World Heritage Site seems unbroken. One reason is certainly that obtaining World Heritage status is expected to not only improve the protection of cultural heritage, but also to have economic effects, in particular on the promotion of tourism.<sup>2</sup>

World Heritage Sites are a considerable tourist attraction, especially for international visitors. According to the German National Tourist Board (GNTB), the UNESCO World Heritage designation is an international quality seal in the cultural tourism segment. Given the outstanding significance of World Heritage sites for tourism and for positioning Germany as an attractive cultural travel destination, the German National Tourist Board, together with the German UNESCO Commission and the German UNESCO World Heritage Sites Association (*UNESCO Welterbestätten Deutschland e.V.*) even devoted an entire themed year to the World Heritage sites under the motto 'UNESCO World Heritage – Sustainable Cultural and Nature Tourism' in 2014 (GNTB 2015).

Yet World Heritage sites represent only a small part of the rich cultural heritage of Germany and Europe. The inventories of elements that have been compiled for the creation of cultural landscape registers give an impression of the diversity of cultural heritage in Germany (see e.g. Schmidt/Meyer/Schottke et al. 2006; Wöbse 1994).

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1 With the Convention for the Preservation of Intangible Cultural Heritage of 20 April 2006, UNESCO extended the protection and preservation of World Heritage Sites to include intangible cultural heritage (cultural and social practices, techniques, knowledge and oral traditions, e.g. folk dances, fairy tales, legends, customs, culinary customs).

2 The inclusion of cultural heritage sites in the UNESCO World Heritage List is always based on values. The decision is taken based on various selection criteria (outstanding universal significance, uniqueness, authenticity, integrity, representative nature, etc.). These selection criteria are objective criteria in appearance only. Tauschek (2013) rightly describes the definition of cultural heritage underlying the selection as normative and essentialising; in his opinion, this also applies at national and local levels. What UNESCO holds to be the interest of the entire world corresponds to the public interest at national and local levels. A determination of what constitutes cultural heritage or not, based on the selection criteria, is only possible through a negotiation process among the parties involved. Tauschek contrasts the normative and essentialising definitions to definitions based on a cultural studies approach, according to which cultural heritage is a 'broad and slippery term' and a theoretical construct. It is not necessary to go into the conceptualisation of cultural heritage in cultural studies any further here; it can simply be stated in this context that the process of identifying and selecting cultural heritage sites should be comprehensible and transparent, and the values which form the basis for the decision should be disclosed.

Depending on the perspective (global level, European level, national and regional level), alternative or additional features of cultural heritage may be emphasised. From a touristic point of view, not all cultural heritage sites listed in the above-mentioned inventories of elements are equally suitable to serve as focal points for tourism and the associated marketing. However, the overviews form a basis for a systematic survey of potential sites which are culturally relevant.

As cultural tourism is considered to be one of the largest and fastest growing global tourism markets (Council of European Union 2011), the question arises as to how cultural heritage as a whole can be better exploited as a resource to develop tourism. This is all the more important in rural regions, where awareness of the importance of cultural heritage as a development resource and of the opportunities offered by the promotion of cultural tourism appears to be rudimentary (Drda-Kühn 2015). According to research by the German National Tourist Board, cities benefit more from culture-oriented travel than do rural areas (GNTB 2015). The initiatives ‘Altenkirchen Cultural Tourism Network’ (Drda-Kühn/Wiegand 2009; Seuser 2015), ‘KIRA – Cultural Tourism for Heilbronn-Franken’ (*Kultur und Arbeit* e.V. 2016) and ‘HISTCAPE’ (Directorate-General Cultural Heritage of Rhineland-Palatinate 2014) are striving to change this trend.

The largely rural character of border regions gives cause to examine the role and significance of cultural tourism and cultural heritage in current cross-border cooperation. To this end, this paper addresses the exploitation of cultural heritage in the cross-border development of tourism in the border regions of the Greater Region and Trinational Metropolitan Region of the Upper Rhine.<sup>3</sup> The aim is to illustrate the status quo of the exploitation of cultural heritage as a resource for the development of tourism and to provide recommended actions on this basis. This paper explores the following issues in particular:

- > Which European programmes and activities set up a framework for the exploitation of cultural heritage as a development resource?
- > What importance is attached to cultural heritage and cultural tourism in the programmes and strategies for the development of border regions?
- > What are the institutional prerequisites for the development of cultural tourism?
- > How is cultural heritage marketed by the tourism industry?
- > How can cultural heritage be used even more effectively as a resource for the development of tourism?

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3 The cultural and creative sector, which can make a significant contribution to promoting cultural tourism through its activities, remains outside the scope of this paper in full knowledge of the fact that the boundaries between the development of cultural heritage for tourism purposes and the cultural and creative sector are fluid.

## **2 European programmes and activities addressing the use of cultural heritage as a development resource**

At the European level, a number of programmes and activities address the protection, conservation and use of cultural heritage as a development resource. These include the EU's European Spatial Development Perspective (ESDP) of 1999 (BBR [Federal Office for Building and Regional Planning] 2001), the Council of Europe Framework Convention on the Value of Cultural Heritage for Society of 2005 (Council of Europe 2005) and the Territorial Agenda of the European Union 2020 (European Union 2011). Like the ESDP, the Territorial Agenda of the European Union emphasises the importance of cultural heritage as a development resource and supports a careful, cautious approach to cultural heritage. The Territorial Agenda of the European Union 2020 states in Chapter II on 'Challenges and potentials for territorial development: Driving forces and their territorial aspects' under No. 23: 'Natural and cultural heritage are parts of territorial capital and identity. Ecological values, environmental quality and cultural assets are crucial to well-being and to economic prospects and offer unique development opportunities' (European Union 2011: 7).

The European Commission presented a report in 2014 outlining and explaining the European Union's many programmes and activities related to cultural heritage (European Commission 2014). For example, in point 7.1 on 'Tourism, enterprise and industry' of the report, the following activities are listed:

- > Statement by the European Commission on 'Europe, the world's no. 1 tourist destination – a new political framework for tourism in Europe'
- > Agreement between the European Union and the Council of Europe on the joint management of the development of European cultural routes
- > Testing new approaches to support sustainable tourism in rural areas and to provide access to cultural heritage through the European Mobile and Mobility Industries Alliance and the European Creative Industries Alliance.

The report aims to contribute to the development of a strategic approach to the preservation and promotion of Europe's heritage. It provides a wide range of information on the European Union's policies, legislation, programmes and funding opportunities, which are important for the development of cultural heritage. It also seeks to offer a response to the conclusions of the Council of the European Union on Education, Youth, Culture and Sport on 'Cultural Heritage as a Strategic Resource for a Sustainable Europe' (Council of the European Union 2014).

The conclusions of the Council of the European Union on Education, Youth, Culture and Sport recognise, among other things, that cultural heritage

- > plays an important role in creating and enhancing social capital because it has the capacity to offer possibilities to develop skills, knowledge, creativity and innovation;

- > has an important economic impact because, among other things, it constitutes a powerful driving force of inclusive local and regional development and creates considerable externalities, in particular through the enhancement of sustainable cultural tourism;
- > plays a specific role in achieving the EU's Europe 2020 Strategy goals because it has social and economic impact and contributes to environmental sustainability;
- > cuts across several public policies, such as those related to regional development, social cohesion, agriculture, environment, tourism, education, the digital agenda, research and innovation.

The Council calls on the EU member states and the European Commission to contribute to the preservation and promotion of Europe's cultural heritage. In summary, this shows that, from the point of view of European policy and institutions, cultural heritage is an important resource for the development of Europe and should be used accordingly, including in cross-border cooperation.

The following analyses explore whether and to what extent cultural heritage is used as a resource for developing tourism in the Greater Region and in the Trinational Metropolitan Region of the Upper Rhine (TMO) in the areas close to the border. To render the results comparable, the analyses of the border regions were carried out on the basis of the same work steps. Firstly, the existing policy programmes and strategies in the border regions were analysed with regard to their statements on cultural tourism and cultural heritage to flesh out the political importance attached to these aspects in the sense of an existing framework for objectives and action. In the second step, the institutions responsible for developing cross-border tourism were identified. The third step was to analyse the websites of those institutions with a view to determining whether and how cultural heritage is marketed for tourism.<sup>4</sup>

### **3 Cultural heritage and cultural tourism in cross-border cooperation in the Greater Region**

#### **a Programmes and strategies**

The following programmes and strategies address issues relating to the development of the Greater Region which are relevant to the use of cultural heritage as a development resource:

- > The Charter for Cultural Cooperation in the Saar-Lor-Lux-Trier/Western Palatinate Region (1998)

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<sup>4</sup> In the case of the Greater Region, this concerns the website of the project office of the INTERREG IV A project on developing a transnational marketing strategy for tourism in the Greater Region (*Aufbau eines transnationalen Marketingkonzepts für den Tourismus in der Großregion*) and, in the case of the Trinational Metropolitan Region of the Upper Rhine, the website of the project office for the INTERREG IV A project on the Upper Rhine Valley.



- > Recommendations of the Interregional Parliamentary Council (IPC) on the development of tourism from 2003 (Interregional Parliamentary Council 2003)
- > Vision for the future in 2020, prepared by the Zukunftsbild 2020 Political Commission 2003 (*Zukunftsbild 2020 Political Commission 2003*)

The Charter for Cultural Cooperation aims to intensify cultural dialogue and cross-border cooperation in all areas of cultural life. Cultural exchanges in the Greater Region should be promoted with particular attention to regional or national cultural diversity. The development of cultural initiatives and the agreement of future projects should, where possible, take into account factors contributing to economic and tourist benefits for the region as a whole and for enterprises engaged in the cultural sector in particular. These objectives are to be achieved by

- > developing and linking cultural databases for the creation of a cross-border information system, and
- > developing cross-border cultural hiking trails to familiarise visitors with an appreciation of the common historical heritage, in particular the industrial heritage in the Greater Region.

As part of its recommendations on the development of tourism in the Greater Region, the Interregional Parliamentary Council welcomes the expansion of tourism as a location factor for the Greater Region. The Council considers the coordinated, target-group-specific marketing of potential tourism focal points to be an important cultural and economic stimulus for the future of the Greater Region. The relevant tourism administrations are invited to take the steps proposed in the 2003 tourism study to interlink the tourism products of the sub-regions in overarching marketing strategies and to jointly market the focal points identified as promising (including culture and enjoyment, and tangible world history (bringing cultural heritage to life)) in a target group-oriented manner. It also recommends setting up a central agency for tourism marketing.

The *Zukunftsbild 2020* strategy postulates the vision of a cultural community of diversity in the heart of Europe for 2020. The Greater Region is to grow together into a common cultural area, and cultural tourism is to play a role in enhancing the image of the Greater Region in this regard.

## **b Institutional prerequisites**

In April 2008, the Ministers of Culture of the Greater Region established the *Espace Culturel Grande Région* association, which is based in Luxembourg. The association aims to:

- > facilitate dialogue on the regional approaches to cross-border cooperation;

- > highlight the wealth, diversity and specific characteristics of culture and cultural heritage;
- > present the Greater Region as a new, unique and cohesive cultural area (*Espace Culturel Grande Région* 2017).

The purview of this association includes the development of common strategies for cultural policy in the Greater Region, the development of common action areas between the fields of culture, education and related areas of work, the stimulation and monitoring of cross-border cultural projects, and the formation and professionalisation of competence networks.

At their third conference in December 2010, the Ministers of Culture of the Greater Region decided to financially secure the work of the association in order to guarantee its continued existence and ability to act. The aim is to enable the association to fulfil its tasks, which include making use of all relevant regional, national and European funding opportunities for its work.

Cultural heritage and its touristic value play a rather minor role in the completed and ongoing cross-border projects to promote culture in the Greater Region. Nevertheless, the projects presented on the website are to a considerable extent important for the tourism marketing of the Greater Region. Yet, the marketing of the cultural highlights in the sense of promoting cultural tourism is clearly not one of the tasks of the association.

The marketing of tourism of the Greater Region started with the INTERREG IV A project ‘Building a transnational marketing strategy for tourism in the Greater Region’ with tourism organisations from Belgium, France, Luxembourg, Rhineland-Palatinate and Saarland (*Tourismus Zentrale Saarland GmbH* 2017). The project is based on the idea of developing a joint tourism marketing strategy for the Greater Region as a destination as part of the *Zukunftsbild 2020* perspective of the Summit Commission, which identifies the ‘need for the joint marketing of tourism’, among other things. The objectives of the project include engaging in common strategic tourism marketing for the Greater Region, the development of innovative communication measures, for example with modern information and communication technologies, the exploitation of endogenous potential and existing offerings, and the creation of regional effects (additional creation of value), especially in the tertiary sector.

### **c      Tourism marketing of cultural heritage**

Cultural heritage is marketed in various publications (e.g. supplements in major daily newspapers on the topic of city breaks, brochures on various cultural themes such as ‘Architecture and modern art’, ‘Parks, gardens, castles and palaces’, ‘Europe in the Greater Region’, ‘Industrial culture’, ‘Music’) as well as on the website of the project office. The website highlights suggestions for cultural trips in the Greater Region, which are organised by theme with the corresponding cultural heritage sites (see Table 1).

The cultural heritage sites listed in Table 1 are briefly described on the *Tourism in the Greater Region* website and in each case links are provided for more detailed information. In the ‘Service’ category, brochures can also be viewed or ordered via the website on cultural attractions in the Greater Region (e.g. ‘Parks, gardens, castles and palaces’, ‘Culture’, ‘Experience the Greater Region’, ‘Industrial culture’). As an additional service, links are provided to the ‘Plurio’ cultural portal and the ‘Fortress Cities in the Greater Region’ network.

| Themes for cultural trips    | Number and nature of the cultural heritage sites presented  |
|------------------------------|---|
| Romans and Celts             | 18 cultural heritage sites, including the Roman Villa Borg archaeological park and the Roman road network   |
| Castles, palaces, fortresses | 50 cultural heritage sites, including Fels Castle near Fiels, Verdun, Maginot Line, Château de Lunéville, Hambach Castle, Battle of Waterloo                        |
| Industrial culture           | 18 cultural heritage sites, including Parc du Haut-Fourneau U4, Meurin Roman mine, the industrial park and railway station at Fond-de-Gras                          |
| UNESCO World Heritage        | 16 UNESCO World Heritage Sites and 13 other sites, including Völklingen ironworks, Roman monuments, boat lifts on the Canal du Centre                               |
| Religion & spirituality      | 21 cultural heritage sites, including Notre Dame Cathedral in Tournai, Maria Laach Benedictine Abbey, the Jewish Museum in Rashi House                              |
| Local customs & festivals    | 9 sites and events, including Mainz Carnival Museum, Saar Spectacle, Christmas markets in the Greater Region  |
| Museums                      | 34 museums, including Saar Historical Museum, Historical Museum on the River – Hildegard von Bingen, ‘Cultur Boulevard’ Ardennes, Grand Curtius                     |
| Art                          | 17 sites, including IKOB – Museum for Contemporary Art, Centre Pompidou-Metz, Arp Museum Bahnhof Rolandseck   |
| Music & theatre              | 10 sites and events, including Chateau de Haroué – the Open Air Opera, Saarland State Theatre, Luxembourg Philharmonic  |
| Architectural monuments      | 6 cultural heritage sites, including Place Royale architecture in Saarbrücken, Porta Nigra in Trier, the Imperial Quarter of Metz, Liege-Guillemins Central Station |
| Nature, science & technology | 20 cultural heritage sites, including lava domes and lava cellars in Mendig, La Pendule clock museum in Blieskastel, Musée Tudor in Rosport                         |
| Tradition                    | 14 cultural heritage sites, including Maison Garnier Thiébaud, Raeren Pottery Museum, Villeroy & Boch adventure centre  |

Table 1: Tourism marketing of cultural heritage sites in the Greater Region / Source: The author, based on the *Tourism in the Greater Region* website (Tourismus Zentrale Saarland GmbH 2017)<sup>5</sup>

<sup>5</sup> Tourism in the Greater Region website: <http://www.tourismus-grossregion.eu/> (14 March 2017).

#### **d Other cultural heritage sites and cultural features relevant for the tourism marketing of the Greater Region**

The cultural heritage of the Greater Region is unquestionably rich and varied. The website for tourism marketing of the Greater Region lists many cultural heritage sites, which are deemed important by the participants for the development of cultural tourism throughout the entire region. With the exception of the cultural landscapes included in the UNESCO World Heritage List, the tourism marketing of the Greater Region has largely ignored cultural landscapes.

Cultural landscapes, especially historical cultural landscapes, are an important aspect of cultural heritage and are thus of exceptional importance from a tourist point of view. Wöbse aptly describes the impact of experiencing cultural landscapes as follows: 'Historical cultural landscapes bear witness to the way previous generations treated nature and the landscape and convey a picture of the state of science and technology at that time. They permit conclusions to be drawn about the way our ancestors related to and interacted with nature and express their lifestyle, needs and opportunities. They provide vivid examples of culture and history, convey impressions of former lifestyles, former human environments, and to the extent that they continue to be tangible, are an important aspect of our contemporary experience of home' (Wöbse 1994: 8 et seq.). According to the German National Tourist Board, landscape and culture are among the most important quality criteria for Germany as a tourist destination (GNTB 2015: 70).

In order to promote cultural tourism in the Greater Region, historical cultural landscapes are of particular importance. It therefore stands to reason that cultural landscapes would also be highlighted in the cross-border development of tourism (Leibenath/Darbi 2007; Resin/Peters 2008). The Federal State Development Programme of Rhineland-Palatinate (LEP IV) identifies 17 historical cultural landscapes of national importance, of which the following are close to the border: Bitburger Gutland/Ferschweiler Plateau, Moselle Valley, Saar Valley, Upper Nahe Valley, Haardrand, Upper Rhine Valley (Ministry of the Interior and Sport 2008: 182 et seq.).

In addition to historical cultural landscapes, nature parks in Germany have also thus far been omitted from the marketing. Nature parks are particularly suitable for recreation because of their scenic qualities. The objectives of nature parks include the development of sustainable tourism and the protection and preservation of cultural landscapes with their biotopes and biodiversity. Figure 1 shows the nature parks in the Greater Region, some of which are cross-border.

The marketing of cultural heritage sites in the Greater Region (see Table 1) also omits the *Gärten ohne Grenzen* (Gardens without Borders) network, which is promising from the perspective of cultural tourism, and the cultural routes designated by the Council of Europe.

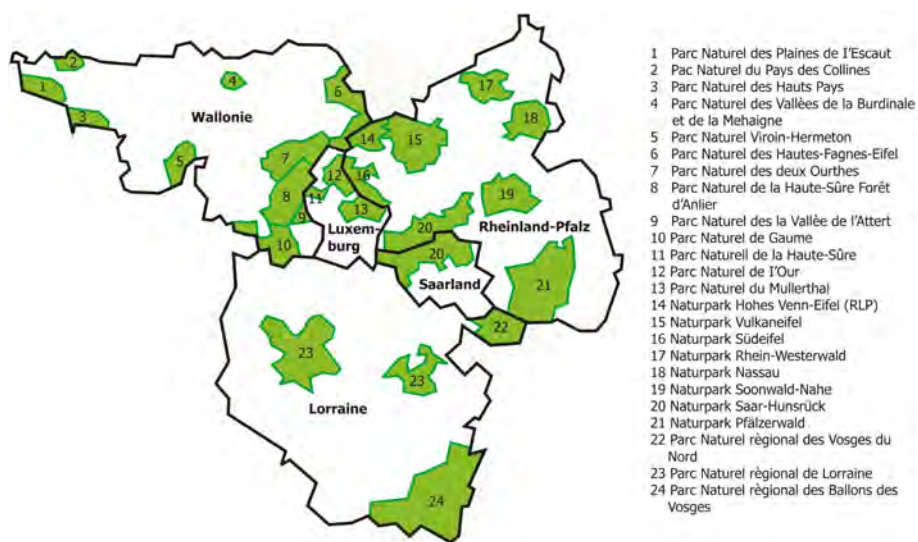


Fig. 1: Nature parks in the Greater Region (as of 2017) /Source: The author, based on the website of the steering committee of the geographic information system for the Greater Region (GIS-GR)<sup>6</sup> and of the Mullerthal<sup>7</sup> and Vulkaneifel nature parks<sup>8</sup>

The Gardens without Borders network consists of 23 gardens from different eras and with different themes in Germany, France and Luxembourg. The aim is to revive the garden tradition of eastern France, Saarland and Rhineland-Palatinate. It evolved from the cross-border cooperation between the Saarland, the Moselle *Département* and Luxembourg. Project funding from the European Union made it possible to revive existing gardens and create new gardens. Many gardens are located near cultural heritage sites or have strong cultural and historical links (e.g. Roman gardens, Baroque gardens) (Saarschleifenland Tourismus GmbH/Moselle Tourisme 2017).

The cultural routes of the Council of Europe that pass through the Greater Region are the Way of St. James, the circular trails of Wenceslas and Vauban (Route of the Fortified Towns of the Greater Region), the Mozart Ways, the St. Martin of Tours route, the Via Regia, the Iter Vitis Route and the European Route of Ceramics (Council of Europe 2016).

6 GIS-GR Steering Committee website:  
<http://www.gis-gr.eu/portal/themen-und-karten/umwelt/naturparke.html> (31 March 2017).

7 Mullerpark nature park website:  
<https://www.naturpark-mellerdall.lu/en/the-nature-parc/> (8 April 2021).

8 Vulkaneifel nature park website:  
<https://www.geopark-vulkaneifel.de/en/> (8 April 2021).

## 4 Cultural heritage and cultural tourism in cross-border cooperation in the Trinational Metropolitan Region of the Upper Rhine

### a Programmes and strategies

Of particular importance for the development of the Trinational Metropolitan Region of the Upper Rhine are:

- > the founding declaration on the Trinational Metropolitan Region of the Upper Rhine of 2010 and
- > the Strategy 2020 for the Trinational Metropolitan Region of the Upper Rhine.

The founding declaration, which launched the Trinational Metropolitan Region of the Upper Rhine, postulates that the Upper Rhine must expand its strengths, fully exploit all the potential of its territory and also support the development of new cooperation dynamics. Platforms and networks are to be established, the existing potentials are to be fully exploited and the available resources are to be pooled (Ministry of the Interior and Sport in Rhineland-Palatinate 2017).

The development strategy of the Trinational Metropolitan Region of the Upper Rhine rests on the four pillars of science, the economy, civil society and politics. The relevant publications on the development strategy include statements on culture, but not on cultural tourism (Trinational Metropolitan Region of the Upper Rhine 2013; Trinational Metropolitan Region of the Upper Rhine, undated). The involvement of civil society in the development of the Trinational Metropolitan Region of the Upper Rhine is to be achieved through:

- > the (re)discovery of the common identity of the region's inhabitants with reference to the common historical, cultural and linguistic heritage of the region
- > the promotion of culture as a unifying link which supports the dynamics of the Upper Rhine.<sup>9</sup>

It can be concluded that cultural tourism and cultural heritage do not play as important a role in these programmes and strategies as they do in the Greater Region. They are not explicitly thematised. However, the objective stated in the founding declaration of making full use of the existing potential can be interpreted as meaning that cultural heritage should also be used as a resource for developing tourism in the Trinational Metropolitan Region of the Upper Rhine.

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<sup>9</sup> Trinational Metropolitan Region website: Strategy.  
<http://www.rmtmo.eu/de/zivilgesellschaft/strategie.html> (31 March 2017).

## **b Institutional prerequisites**

The joint development of tourism in the Trinational Metropolitan Region of the Upper Rhine is pursued through the Upper Rhine Valley project supported by the European Union within the framework of INTERREG IV A Upper Rhine. The objective of the project is to market the Upper Rhine as a tourist destination abroad; it also addresses education and training as well as innovation within the region. The project office is based in Freiburg at the offices of Wirtschaft Touristik und Messe GmbH & Co. KG.

The motto of the Upper Rhine Valley is: 'Three countries – one destination: Experiencing Europe'.<sup>10</sup> Under this motto, regional, institutional and tourism organisations and facilities from the Trinational Metropolitan Region of the Upper Rhine market the region jointly on an international level (target markets: USA, Canada, Brazil, Russia, China, India, Japan and South Korea). They all have a common goal: to increase awareness of and enhance the attractiveness of the region. Through joint actions, they strive to exploit synergies and to link marketing measures across countries.

In addition to the Upper Rhine Valley, there are two regional cross-border tourism cooperation areas:

- > Regio TriRhena (trinational cultural, economic and living environment along the southern Upper Rhine between South Baden, Upper Alsace and northwestern Switzerland)
- > Touristik-Gemeinschaft Baden-Elsass-Pfalz e.V.

The website of the Regio TriRhena<sup>11</sup> does not provide any information about the joint tourism marketing activities desired in the area, only links to the participating tourism organisations.

The tourism association of the Baden-Alsace-Palatinate region, Touristik-Gemeinschaft Baden-Elsass-Pfalz e.V., was founded in 1990. The members of the tourism associations are cities and municipalities, tourist information offices, accommodation establishments and some companies in the three sub-regions. As a partner of the EURO-DISTRICT, the association is responsible for the development and marketing of tourism in the PAMINA area. Its website<sup>12</sup> provides information the association's objectives, activities and offerings. Potentials and attractions from a cultural history perspective are not evident.

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10 Upper Rhine Valley website:  
<http://www.upperrhinevalley.com/de> (31 March 2017).

11 Regio TriRhena website:  
<http://www.regiotrirhena.org/> (31 March 2017).

12 Touristik-Gemeinschaft Baden-Elsass-Pfalz e.V. website:  
<http://www.vis-a-vis-pamina.eu/spip.php?article576> (31 March 2017).

### c Tourism marketing of cultural heritage

In the Upper Rhine Valley project, 33 partners from the three countries cooperate with the main objective of raising awareness of the area as a tourist destination in eight defined long-distance markets. As a geographically uniform space with a shared culture that has grown and shaped the area historically, the following themes were chosen for the cooperation: ‘Wine and dine’, ‘Art and culture’, ‘Cities and architecture’, ‘Traditions and events’ as well as ‘Nature and leisure’. The themes were emphasised through various means, e.g. a sales guide for tour operators (overview of attractions in the entire region for each theme), the *Art Valley* website (overview of museums/collections of contemporary art, highlights, dining, accommodation, suggestions for cross-border itineraries), a brochure on excursions (suggestions for cross-border trips/adventure excursions) and a commemorative flyer on the theme of ‘World War I –100 years’ (information on memorials) (Communication from the project office of 17 November 2014).

The Upper Rhine Valley website lists and markets the cultural heritage sites in the context of the themes listed in Table 2:

| Themes for cultural trips   | Number and nature of the cultural heritage sites presented  |
|---|---|
| Adventure experience  | 5 cultural heritage sites: Strasbourg Cathedral, European City Breisach on the Rhine, Ribeauvillé, the Roman ship Lusoria Rhenana, Speyer Cathedral   |
| Art & culture<br>> Castles & palaces category<br>> Museums & galleries category<br>> Music & theatre category | 4 cultural heritage sites: Fleckenstein Castle, Trifels Castle, Château du Haut-Kœnigsbourg, the medieval castle of Yburg<br>18 cultural heritage sites, including the Roman settlement of Augusta Raurica near Basel, Augustinermuseum, Ecomusée d’Alsace<br>Cultural heritage site: Royal Palace International Music Hall |
| Palaces & castles   | 24 cultural sites, including Lichtenberg Castle, Reichenstein Castle, Hambach Castle  |
| Cycling tours against a cultural backdrop   | Themes for cycling tours include ‘Romanticism and wine’ ‘Medieval treasures’, ‘Churches, kings & traditions’  |

Table 2: Tourism marketing of cultural heritage sites in the Trinational Metropolitan Region of the Upper Rhine /Source: The author, based on the Upper Rhine Valley website<sup>13</sup>

<sup>13</sup> Upper Rhine Valley website:  
<http://www.upperrhinevalley.com/de> (31 March 2017).



**d Other cultural heritage sites and cultural features relevant to the tourism marketing of the Trinational Metropolitan Region of the Upper Rhine**

Just like the Greater Region, the Trinational Metropolitan Region of the Upper Rhine is unquestionably blessed with a rich cultural heritage. No systematic survey of its cultural heritage appears to have been performed here either, meaning that the cultural heritage sites listed on the website clearly reflect the personal knowledge of those involved.

There is no mention of important European cultural routes, historical cultural landscapes or cultural landscapes that are particularly suitable for recreational purposes (e.g. nature parks) with their diversity of cultural heritage.

The cultural routes of the Council of Europe, which pass through the Trinational Metropolitan Region of the Upper Rhine, are the Way of St. James, the Schickhardt Route, the European Mozart Ways, the Iter Vitis Route, the European Route of Historic Thermal Cities (Council of Europe 2016). The cross-border Roman cultural route is also worth mentioning in this regard.<sup>14</sup> Figure 2 shows the nature parks, which are part of the cultural tourism potential of a region, in the Trinational Metropolitan Region of the Upper Rhine.

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<sup>14</sup> Southern Palatinate Tourism Office website:  
[https://www.suedpfalz-tourismus.de/en/topnavigation/home.html?no\\_cache=1](https://www.suedpfalz-tourismus.de/en/topnavigation/home.html?no_cache=1) (8 April 2021).

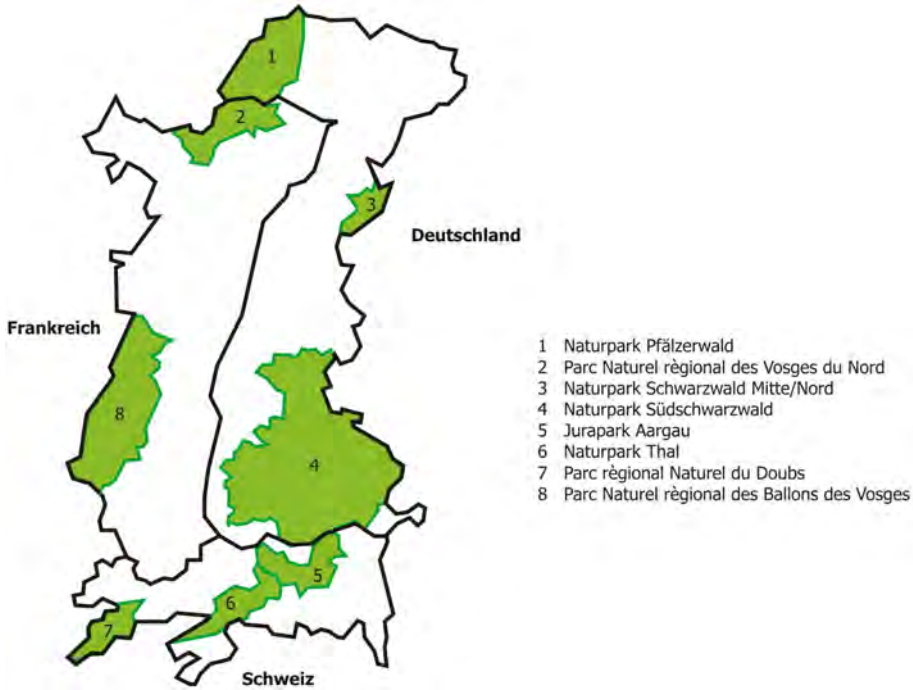


Fig. 2: Nature parks in the Trinational Metropolitan Region of the Upper Rhine (as of 2014) / Source: The author, based on the websites of the nature parks<sup>15</sup>

<sup>15</sup> Pfälzerwald nature park website:

<http://www.pfaelzerwald.de/> (31 March 2017).

Vosges du Nord regional natural park website:

<http://www.parc-vosges-nord.fr/> (31 March 2017).

Central/Northern Black Forest nature park website:

<https://www.naturparkschwarzwald.de/> (31 March 2017).

Southern Black Forest nature park website:

<http://www.naturpark-suedschwarzwald.de/> (31 March 2017).

Aargau Jura nature park website:

<http://www.jurapark-aargau.ch/> (31 March 2017).

Thal nature park website:

<http://www.naturparkthal.ch/park/der-naturpark-thal> (31 March 2017).

Doubs regional natural park website:

<http://www.parcdoubs.ch/> (31 March 2017).

Ballons des Vosges regional natural park website:

<https://www.parc-ballons-vosges.fr/en/> (8 April 2021)

## **5 Summary of the results of the analysis and recommended actions**

### **a Discussion of the results of the analysis**

#### **European programmes and activities that set a framework for the exploitation of cultural heritage as a development resource**

In line with its programmatic statements, the European Union considers cultural heritage to be an important resource for European development and thus also for the development of border regions. The EU considers cultural heritage to be relevant not only in terms of tourism: it attaches so much importance to the planned management of cultural heritage that it calls on member states to preserve their cultural heritage and to take due account of it in their spatially-relevant activities. A number of European funding programmes are available to exploit cultural heritage as a resource for the development of tourism in cross-border cooperation.

#### **The significance of cultural heritage and cultural tourism in the programmes and strategies of the border regions**

The Greater Region, to a greater extent than the Trinational Metropolitan Region of the Upper Rhine, addresses issues of cultural heritage management and the development of cultural tourism in its programmes and strategies. It attaches much greater importance to cultural heritage and cultural tourism. The comprehensive engagement with issues relating to the protection and use of cultural heritage postulated by the European Union should be the benchmark for both border regions.

#### **Institutional prerequisites for the development of cultural tourism**

The development of cross-border tourism has been institutionally organised in both border regions through INTERREG projects. It is to be hoped that the two tourism organisations will receive sustained support so that cross-border cultural tourism can continue to be developed more extensively, thereby also making use of and sustainably safeguarding cultural heritage.

#### **Tourism marketing of cultural heritage**

Cultural tourism plays a role in the tourism marketing strategies of both border regions. However, only a rudimentary consideration of cultural heritage is discernible at best. This is apparent from the fact that clearly relevant cultural heritage sites, which include the historical cultural landscapes, have generally not yet been taken into account. The potential of cultural heritage sites is not being used in a recognisable, comprehensive and goal-oriented way. The marketing concepts include cultural heritage sites that have been registered and contributed by the cooperation partners in a way that is not apparent to third parties. This type of approach makes sense if there are no comprehensive inventories, so that at least the cultural heritage sites known to the partners can be taken into account in the marketing concept. However, a more deliberate approach would be more effective to exploit cultural heritage more comprehensively. The following recommended actions may offer some starting points.

## **b Recommended actions for enhanced exploitation of cultural heritage as a tourist development resource**

### **Registration of cultural heritage**

The first, fundamental step of a planned approach is to identify the existing cultural heritage. Cultural heritage can only be valued and exploited for tourism if the parties involved know about it in the first place.

Among the best-known methods for systematically recording cultural landscape elements are the methods for creating inventories of cultural landscape elements in North Rhine-Westphalia (Knöchel 2011), Thuringia (Schmidt/Meyer/Schottke et al. 2006) and Rhineland-Palatinate (Boos/Müller/Würriehausen 2012).

The creation of a comprehensive inventory of cultural heritage for the purposes of these processes will probably not be achieved in the near future, either in the Greater Region or in the Trinational Metropolitan Region of the Upper Rhine. From a tourism perspective, however, such a comprehensive inventory of cultural heritage is not necessary either, as not every example of cultural heritage is commercially viable; thus, depending on the level of action, those cultural heritage sites that are relevant for tourism purposes must be selected. However, in order to systematically register the sites that are relevant for cultural tourism, the procedures should be in line with the inventories of elements (cf. the introduction).

### **Exploiting cultural heritage for tourism purposes**

The relatively minor overall significance of cultural tourism in rural areas compared to cities suggests that many cultural heritage sites in rural areas have not yet been developed for tourism, or only to a limited extent. The exploitation of the Upper Germanic-Rhaetic Limes in Rhineland-Palatinate, to which the author contributed, will be briefly outlined below as an example how a cultural heritage site can be developed.

Building on a visualisation concept and tourism strategy, the Federal State of Rhineland-Palatinate has developed and implemented numerous measures together with municipalities, business development companies, associations and volunteers in order to exploit the state's world heritage. These included measures to communicate information (e.g. setting up information boards, information panels and a museum), marking the Limes (e.g. setting up stone markers, erecting windows, carrying out clearing measures, putting up signage on road crossings) and recreating the Limes (e.g. replica of palisades, authentic replica of a small fort) (Schafranski/Thomas 2010).

Further measures to exploit the Limes were carried out between 2011 and 2013 within the framework of the EU project LIMES (Large-Scale Innovative and Mobile European Services for Culture Tourism in Rural Areas) together with partners from Bulgaria, Austria and Germany. In particular, new communication and information technologies were also used (Schafranski 2014). examples of which include:

- > the digital reconstruction of elements of the Limes, e.g. watchtowers;
- > the development of suggestions for creative trips on the Limes (e.g. focusing on art & crafts, Roman life, hiking on the Limes, e-bike tours on the Limes);
- > the creation of digital museum guides, which can be used to provide detailed information about the individual elements of specific attractions on the Limes by a QR code;
- > the creation of a multilingual LIMES mobile app with various functions (Figure 3)



Fig. 3: The LIMES mobile app /Source: Schafranski 2014

With the digital museum guide, information can be presented more clearly, updated faster and conveyed more cost-effectively than by using conventional communication channels (e.g. brochures, panels).

The Europe-wide LIMES mobile app provides vivid information about the Roman Limes and over 100 selected cultural heritage sites on the Limes. It contains numerous suggestions on guided tours, events, museums and active and creative getaways, gives a quick overview of eating & drinking and accommodation options and enables a better experience of the Limes as cultural heritage through numerous digital reconstructions.

Similar activities (e.g. digital reconstruction of destroyed cultural heritage sites or parts of heritage sites, creation of digital heritage site guides and a multilingual app) are also conceivable in the Greater Region or the Trinational Metropolitan Region of the Upper Rhine.

### **Promoting networks and cooperation to develop cultural heritage tourism**

The successful exploitation of cultural heritage sites for tourism in the border areas requires that the various actors from the culture and tourism sectors, businesses, administrations and tourism-savvy institutions network and cooperate across borders, as cultural tourism products and activities are usually offered in the form of a bundle of services provided by a number of different service providers. The benefits of networking and cooperation include merging limited resources, pooling skills, mutual assistance, improving quality, creating added value, promoting innovation and expanding the target groups (Buschmann 2013). Networks can be created, at least in rudimentary terms, in the greater regions. Nevertheless, the extent to which existing networks can be developed in the form of ‘continuous learning systems’ (Drda-Kühn/Wiegand 2009) and cooperation can be promoted in order to develop cultural heritage tourism should be examined. The model projects ‘KIRA – Cultural Tourism for Heilbronn-Franken’ and ‘Altenkirchen Cultural Tourism Network’, can provide valuable suggestions for the creation of networks, even though they do not concern border areas.

### **Elaboration of a strategy for the development of cultural heritage for tourism**

The development of the cultural heritage for tourism purposes can be seen as part of (cultural) tourism as well as of the creative sector and cultural sector. Therefore, a strategy for exploiting cultural heritage, which is absolutely necessary for a planned approach, should be integrated. The strategy should also include objectives and measures to promote cross-border networking and cooperation, as well as the use of innovative technologies and social networks. The *Zukunftsbild* 2020 concept for the Greater Region offers an example for how a strategy of this nature could be conceived for the border regions.<sup>16</sup> After a relatively specific description of the desired, envisaged outcome (e.g. the Greater Region as a cultural area), the current potentials and approaches are identified and used to elaborate an agenda for achieving the long-term objectives.

### **Professional use of new information technologies**

An ever increasing number of people have mobile devices such as smartphones and tablets, which they use during their holidays. Today’s smartphones can inform travellers about the tourist attractions in the border region, provide vivid information about those sights, bring hidden treasures to life and much more. This is why mobile services such as apps and QR codes are playing an increasingly important role in tourism. Adapting to this phenomenon includes the development of websites for mobile devices, the digital reconstruction of cultural sites, free WiFi access at culturally interesting points and charging facilities for mobile devices (Drda-Kühn 2015).

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<sup>16</sup> Although the 2003 Tourism Study for the Greater Region also deals with cultural heritage, it should not be seen as a strategy for the planned exploitation of cultural heritage and the promotion of cultural tourism.

## 6 Conclusions

Cultural heritage and cultural tourism open up opportunities for the development of the rural border areas of the Greater Region and the Upper Rhine regions. The studies carried out by European programmes and publications on the exploitation of cultural heritage have shown that initiatives to use cultural heritage as a development resource are expressly desired and can be promoted by the European institutions. In the border regions studied here, there are certainly approaches (albeit in different forms) to exploiting cultural heritage for the development of cultural tourism in the border areas. However, actual strategies and concrete concepts for this are obviously lacking. Without systematic action which builds on an evaluation of the existing approaches, the opportunities for the development of tourism in the border areas of the Greater Region and the Trinational Metropolitan Region of the Upper Rhine associated with the use of cultural heritage sites will continue to be limited.

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Karina Pallagst, Andrea Hartz, Beate Caesar

## OUTLOOK: BORDER FUTURES – ON THE PATH TO A SUSTAINABLE FUTURE FOR THE BORDER REGIONS

### Contents

- 1 Findings from the previous papers: What lessons can we learn from cross-border observation and analysis?
- 2 Obstacles and opportunities in cross-border cooperation: Where do we stand?
- 3 The future viability of cross-border cooperation: What action is required?
  - 3.1 The need for resources ('support')
  - 3.2 Focusing on critical points of development ('bottlenecks')
  - 3.3 Allowing new ways of thinking and innovating ('innovation')
- References

### Abstract

This outlook summarises the key findings of the Subsection and discusses them in the context of obstacles and opportunities as well as the future viability of cross-border cooperation.

### Keywords

Cross-border cooperation – border regions – spatial development

## 1 Findings from the previous papers: What lessons can we learn from cross-border observation and analysis?

**Part 1** described the foundations of cross-border cooperation, with the paper by Beate Caesar and Karina Pallagst initially outlining differences and similarities in the development paths of cross-border cooperation. This enabled placing the current framework conditions and contemporary developments in the border regions under consideration in a region-specific context. A short portrait of the Greater Region and the Upper Rhine region – both of which fall within the territorial remit of the Hesse/Rhineland-Palatinate/Saarland Regional Working Group – was provided by Andrea Hartz and Beate Caesar. Despite their spatial proximity and comparable starting point, the differences in territorial structure, institutional set-up and future prospects become clear.

The paper by Karina Pallagst/H. Peter Dörrenbächer/Thomas Weith looked at how cross-border cooperation is shaping up as a field of application for European spatial development. The current discourses on the requirements of European integration, new regionalism and the reorientation of governance structures in border regions offer different approaches and a new impetus for cross-border cooperation overall.

Finally, Gerd-Rainer Damm's paper explored the challenges of cross-border cooperation. Empirical evidence (interviews with relevant actors) revealed that successful cooperation across the border is largely driven by the self-motivation of the stakeholders involved. The survey reveals that cooperation is stagnating in some fields of action of cross-border cooperation, which suggests that there is a need for strengthening governance in the border regions. This could be achieved by improving personnel continuity, continuing training for specific fields of cross-border cooperation and making the exchange of information and experience more consistent and constant.

**Part 2** addressed strategies of cross-border cooperation in an integrative spatial view. The paper by Karina Pallagst and Beate Hartz demonstrated that spatial planning in the national sub-regions of border regions is organised in quite different ways, and not merely in regard to the normative foundations and types of plans, but also in regard to values, paradigms and planning cultures. Border regions are, however, always decisive for the emergence of new spatial planning strategies up to the creation of new spatial development instruments – both in a national and cross-border context. For example, the spatial category of metropolitan border regions was introduced in Germany as part of the guiding principles for spatial development. Cross-border development strategies also offer approaches for a genuinely cross-border discourse in regard to spatial planning. In some cases, new spatial types and instruments are being created, which results in border regions emerging as laboratories for cross-border spatial planning. The existing diversity, or perhaps even fragmentation of the instruments (at the national and cross-border level) creates particular complexity for cross-border spatial planning, which makes it difficult rather than easier to pursue a future-oriented approach to shaping these areas.

The paper by Andrea Hartz sets out the opportunities offered by the concept of metropolitan border regions, which provides decisive stimuli for both the Greater

Region and the Upper Rhine region: the concept can contribute to adapting cooperation structures and spatial development to the needs of an increasingly interconnected world, a converging Europe and increasing competition between regions. Nevertheless, the metropolisation strategies in border regions come up against substantial structural and political obstacles. It remains unclear how successful the implementation of the guiding principle of a metropolitan border region will be, and what added value this process will bring to the different (national) sub-regions. This will not succeed without broad-based political support, proactive implementation of key measures as part of metropolisation strategies and the bold further development of existing cooperation structures.

Petra Schelkmann's paper describes the development and status quo of the metropolisation strategy of the Greater Region as a highly complex political process which must navigate the tensions between large-scale regionalisation, pronounced polycentricity and region-specific multi-level governance.

**Part 3** focused on the residents of border areas and examined the different ways of life in the border areas.

The paper by Antje Schönwald, Annette Spellerberg and Florian Weber adopted a theory-led approach to constructs and concepts of borders, identities and home in a cross-border context. National borders become 'blurred' to some extent, as border crossings between France, Germany, Luxembourg and Belgium are part of everyday life in many areas. On the other hand, borders tend to be remarkably persistent – whether in people's minds or on an administrative level.

The paper by Annette Spellerberg/Antje Schönwald/Katharina Engelhardt/Florian Weber raised a provocative question about life at the border and thus opening and crossing borders: 'Where would we end up?' Empirical surveys in twin villages testify to everyday activities and events that are characterised by pragmatism and multiculturalism. The border 'as such' is hardly perceptible anymore: residents rather appreciate the advantages provided by the border location and the specific opportunities available on both sides of the border. Both old and new challenges arise in connection with crime prevention, demographic change or language.

The paper by Christian Wille and Ursula Roos examined cross-border life on the Luxembourg border. The empirical study, based on the example of cross-border commuters and residential migrants, showed that residents along the Luxembourg border certainly do live what can be described as cross-border lives. Within the research area, the everyday activities of border area residents tend to attenuate the impact of internal European borders. It is true that latent spatial fragmentation persists and is perpetuated by systemic national differences (taxes, residential land prices, etc.). Yet, precisely these differences – motivated by individuals striving to maximise their benefits – are conducive to a truly cross-border way of life.

Finally, **Part 4** was devoted to current fields of action in regard to cross-border cooperation.

The paper by Frank Baur and Barbara Dröschel illuminated cross-border cooperation in regard to energy, describing the approaches to action and projects for the area of the Greater Region to date. Action is needed in the development of support structures, including a platform for the exchange of information and experience, and in the creation of networks, which should also be reinforced through additional personnel. It also calls for the development of research excellence in the fields of energy/climate protection.

The paper by Beate Caesar/Michael Heilmann/Jörg Saalbach/Werner Schreiner looked at the expansion of cross-border public transport with special attention to the framework established by EU policy. The consideration of various cross-border transport projects reveals how closely transport development is interwoven with other aspects of cross-border cooperation, e.g. the labour market, commuting or local services. Transport infrastructure acts as a ‘cross-border link’ between these fields of action and is thus one of the key policies of cross-border cooperation.

Jörg Saalbach’s paper described not cross-border cooperation, but rather inter-regional cooperation in the Rhine-Alpine Corridor. This large-scale cooperation area extending from the Rhine delta on the North Sea to Genoa was initiated by an INTERREG B project. In a thus far unique dimension in Europe, the stakeholders have chosen the framework of an EGTC to organise their cooperation. The relations between the various constellations of stakeholders can be highly charged, hence this is a very complex process, but also a highly interesting laboratory for transnational and cross-border cooperation.

The paper by Kirsten Mangels and Julia Wohland focused on safeguarding the provision of public services in the rural sub-regions of the Greater Region. Demographic change and the associated shrinking and ageing of the population present a major challenge, especially for rural border areas. Safeguarding the provision of public services collides with the specific requirements and needs in these border regions. The empirical study highlighted the obstacles, in particular due to language barriers and different national laws, regulations and powers, for example in the healthcare sector, but also success stories and the opportunities of cross-border approaches to safeguarding public service provision.

H. Peter Dörrenbächer’s paper raised the question of the extent to which a cross-border vocational education and training area has been able to develop in the Greater Region. The significance of cross-border education and training has increased considerably in recent years; various framework agreements support new, pragmatic forms of cooperation. However, due to the enormous hurdles for cross-border vocational education and training and the small number of trainees affected, the region cannot yet be described as a cross-border vocational education and training area. Future changes, for example through territorial reform in France, suggest that new impulses are emerging here, but there are few indications that a cross-border educational region will evolve.

The contribution by Patrice Harster and Frédéric Siebenhaar looked at the cross-border labour market in the Eurodistrict PAMINA. A comprehensive strategic ap-

proach is being taken in this regard, which is to lead to a joint action plan. A key consideration in this regard is the organisation of the dynamic network structures typical of the labour market and the insufficiency of the usual hierarchical governance and policy mechanisms, when vigorous multi-level governance is required instead.

Franz Schafranski's paper looked at cultural heritage and cultural tourism as a resource for the development of the rural border areas of the Greater Region and the Upper Rhine region. This development is deemed desirable and is encouraged by European institutions, although only rudimentary spatial strategies and concrete concepts have been put in place to date.

## 2 Obstacles and opportunities in cross-border cooperation: Where do we stand?

The **obstacles and opportunities** of cross-border cooperation have been addressed in all the papers in this volume, albeit from different angles. However, fundamental aspects that are not new but are still essential for the success of cooperation processes in border regions serve as a common thread.

One of these is the fundamental issue of **language**, which is crucial for political and planning coordination and decision-making processes. The language skills of the actors involved vary widely; multilingualism cannot be readily assumed. Especially in official cooperation processes, participants often rely on costly simultaneous translations, which are not available for informal discussions. This makes it difficult to develop political and planning routines to deal with complex issues, procedures or even conflict situations.

Another key aspect lies in the different **planning cultures**. According to Knieling and Othengrafen (2009: 43), planning culture refers to 'the way in which a society possesses institutionalised or shared planning practices. It refers to the interpretation of planning tasks, the way of recognising and addressing problems, the handling and use of certain rules, procedures and instruments, or ways and methods of public participation. It emerges as the result of the accumulated attitudes, values, rules, standards and beliefs shared by the group of people involved. This includes informal aspects (traditions, habits and customs) as well as formal aspects (constitutional and legal framework)'. Especially in the cross-border context, different normative regulations, policies, strategies and plans, but also values and philosophies of planning come into play. Since no change is foreseeable in the future due to the national regulatory powers for spatial planning, the exchange of knowledge on different planning policies, processes and instruments will be a core competence in cross-border cooperation in the long run. The more systematically such processes can be designed and the better they reach and involve key political, economic and social actors, the greater their chances of succeeding.

Especially in cross-border cooperation at the level of the Greater Region or the Upper Rhine region, different forms of **governance** and their dislocations and fault lines are manifested at the interfaces between supra-local and municipal actors. In addition,

variable geometries of administrative and functional units are created within border regions, which can overlap spatially and sometimes work on similar tasks (e.g. regional development strategies). On the one hand, the subsidiarity of the levels and the allocation of responsibilities between them must be defined more clearly; on the other hand, it is important for the respective committees and organisations to avoid the appearance of being ‘closed shops’, including with regard to the efficiency of planning processes. In order to achieve vigorous multi-level governance, the challenge of ensuring communication and coordination at different levels and creating the necessary interfaces should be taken up. This could help to steer the use of resources, the exchange of planning know-how and also conceptual development in a more targeted and participatory manner.

Some of the papers in this volume have highlighted the crucial role of **INTERREG funding** in the development of cross-border cooperation and projects in recent decades. However, it should not be overlooked that INTERREG, or more recently, European Territorial Cooperation, even if it follows the implementation of a programmatic structure, is based on an incrementalist approach, which usually supports individual projects. It is therefore not primarily aimed at cross-sectional, coherent and inclusive spatial development in the border regions. In addition, spatial development concepts (regional development concepts, visions) are often elaborated, but these remain informal and therefore non-binding for all spatial stakeholders in the border regions. Concrete implementation is often stalled due to political coordination processes, national priorities or a lack of resources. In the interests of ensuring the capacity of spatial planning to act, the project and concept level need to be significantly better interlinked in order to take into account the claim of wanting to work in a cross-sectional, inclusive manner. In addition, spatial impact assessments of the individual programmes and measures would be desirable, as well as long-term qualitative and quantitative spatial observation.

**Metropolitan border regions** are now recognised as a spatial category. However, whether they are shaped in a manner that is viable in future is subject to considerable debate, especially because metropolitan border regions are not homogeneous areas, but generally regions with pronounced spatial disparities. There is still need for further research, e.g. with regard to the use of planning instruments (spatial observation, development strategies, etc.) and also the operationalisation of the principle of equivalent living conditions, which is an important planning paradigm for Germany. There is a growing need for discussions that can navigate the tension between safeguarding the provision of public services in rural sub-regions, on the one hand, and the need to structure and shape the metropolitan core area on the other. Polarisation would not be constructive here, but the implementation of the concept of metropolitan border regions requires a clear prioritisation.

The question of how the **spatial dimension of the region** affects the conduct and shaping of cross-border cooperation also arises in this context – especially in the case of the Greater Region, where the region’s large territory was created based on national administrative boundaries. Since this means that the impact of the border area is not equally evident in all sub-regions, this aspect must be given greater consideration. In principle, there are two options: an examination of the entire area

in all spatially relevant aspects and processes, or a more detailed study in core zones of cross-border cooperation for selected strategies. With regard to the cross-border regional development strategy for the Greater Region, for example, after extensive discussions on the best approach, a political consensus has been reached to establish the strategy for the entire region. There is still need for further discussion on how to proceed in core zones: Who defines these core zones, and how can cross-border cooperation proceed at different speeds without neglecting the potential development of other areas?

### **3 The future viability of cross-border cooperation: What action is required?**

The potential, new and well-known opportunities and obstacles to cross-border cooperation were described and critically examined in the previous papers on the basis of selected areas. With regard to the future prospects for border regions, three fundamental aspects can be derived from these different perspectives, which should be taken into account at all levels by the stakeholders from the fields of science, everyday practice and politics for the sustainable development of cooperation within border regions. These aspects are listed below and shown schematically in Figure 1.

#### **3.1 The need for resources ('support')**

The role of financial support through the INTERREG Community Initiative has emerged as an important resource and often as a driving force for cross-border cooperation. Continued INTERREG support is therefore essential to ensure intensive cooperation in border areas in future. This would include a long-term commitment on the part of the EU to create a perspective for cooperation in border areas beyond the period of the programme.

However, human resources are also crucial for the efficient implementation of cross-border cooperation. Two trends are emerging in this regard: the smaller the territorial unit, the fewer human resources are available for day-to-day spatial planning tasks to actively contribute to shaping the spatial development of the border regions. Cross-border cooperation is often driven decisively by individuals, who are able to ensure continuity and actively act as catalysts within the networks and processes of cross-border cooperation. As key figures, they have shaped the respective border regions significantly over many years. This continuity on the personnel side is certainly a factor for success.

The establishment of reliable human resources at all levels of spatial planning and for all territorial units should be an important concern and should also be a fundamental consideration independently of INTERREG projects. Equipping cross-border structures and work areas with their own budgets is a sensible way to enhance professionalisation and to ensure that cross-border cooperation is more consistent and constant.



### **3.2 Focusing on critical points of development (‘bottlenecks’)**

Despite a tradition of cross-border cooperation spanning decades, significant cross-border developments, including in rail-based mobility, have not been decisively advanced. In fact, it appears that cooperation was advanced and promoted over many years, in particular in supposedly non-critical areas of cooperation, such as culture or tourism. This was doubtless necessary in order to test cooperation structures and processes and demonstrate successes that could pave the way for projects with more complex needs for coordination. The discussions within the Border Futures Subsection of the Regional Working Group, as well as in the 2015 Planners’ Forum of the Regional Working Group, led to the repeated demand and expectation – expressed from different professional perspectives – that the time had now come to address key problems and critical points. Addressing the existing bottlenecks, which are the key obstacle to integrated spatial development, would represent the next dimension of cross-border cooperation.

### **3.3 Allowing new ways of thinking and innovating (‘innovation’)**

Since there is consensus that cross-border cooperation requires a financial and human foundation, and although, at the same time, there is a substantial body of experience and success in cross-border cooperation in spatial planning gained over many years, it nevertheless seems necessary not to dwell on traditional structures and patterns of thought. The emphasis should rather be on the role of sustainable border regions as laboratories of innovation for spatial developments, planning and strategies. For example, how can useful examples be conveyed systematically to other border areas? How can innovative solutions and new concepts and ideas be made to work, e.g. in the context of ‘metropolitan border regions’? These and other questions make border regions a future-oriented focus area for spatial science research and practice. From the point of view of the Border Futures Subsection of the Regional Working Group, border regions are particularly suitable for establishing laboratories for comparative approaches and integrative strategies of spatial planning that ‘work’ independently of or in addition to the respective national logic. In these discursive learning processes for spatial planning and spatial development, cross-border responses to changing framework conditions can be interlinked with intercultural discourses.

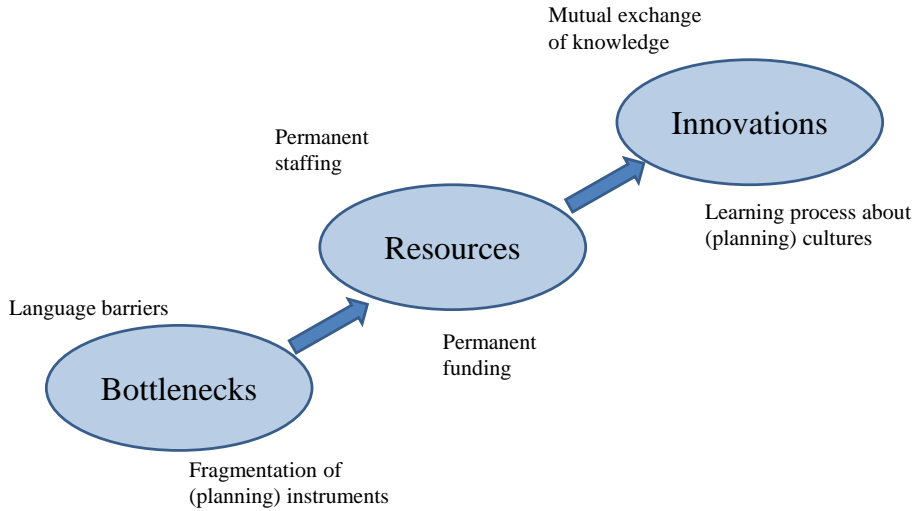


Fig. 1: Diagram of the obstacles and opportunities in cross-border cooperation /Source: The authors

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Patrice Harster, Kristine Clev

## TERRITORIAL REFORM IN FRANCE

### Contents

- 1 Starting point
  - 2 The reform package
  - 3 The spatial impact of the reforms
  - 4 Perspectives
- References

### Abstract

In the last two years comprehensive legislative reforms have been passed in France which aim to change the territorial architecture of the Republic to ensure increased transparency and efficiency in public administration in the long term. The reforms focus on the metropolises, the merging of regions and the reorganisation of the powers of the various levels of regional bodies. Cross-border cooperation on the Upper Rhine and in the Greater Region is affected but not called into question by the reforms.

### Keywords

France – territorial reform – région – Grand Est – Département – inter-municipal associations – cross-border cooperation

## 1 Starting point

The territorial reform in France has an impact on the two border areas examined here, the Greater Region and the Upper Rhine region. Hence, the main spatially-relevant changes enacted by this reform will be briefly outlined below.

France has four levels of local administration which share competences: municipalities (36,700), inter-municipal associations (2,600), *Départements* (101) and *régions* (22). This stacking of administrative levels is often referred to as a 'territorial mille-feuille'. This form of organisation lacks transparency for citizens and compromises the effectiveness of public policy.

A comprehensive reform package<sup>1</sup> envisages changing the territorial architecture of the Republic, with the aim of reducing public spending and taking better account of citizens' concerns.

## 2 The reform package

A first legislative project was implemented in January 2014 with the act on the modernisation of territorial public policy and on the strengthening of metropolises (Act No. 2014-58 of 27 January 2014). The creation of a new status for metropolises was the first step towards clarifying powers at the local level. On 1 January 2015, the metropolises of Rennes, Bordeaux, Toulouse, Nantes, Brest, Lille, Rouen, Grenoble, Strasbourg (*Eurométropole de Strasbourg*) and Montpellier were established on this basis.

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1 The reform package essentially consists of the following three pieces of legislation:  
 Act No. 2014-58 on the modernisation of territorial public policy and on the strengthening of metropolises (*Loi n° 2014-58 de modernisation de l'action publique territoriale et d'affirmation des métropoles, MAPTAM*) of 27 January 2014 as published in the declaration in No. 0023 of the *Journal Officiel (JO)* of 28 January 2014.  
 Act No. 2015-29 regarding the delimitation of the *régions*, elections in the *régions* and *départements* and the modification of the election calendar (*Loi n° 2015-29 relative à la délimitation des régions, aux élections régionales et départementales et modifiant le calendrier électoral*) of 16 January 2015 as published in the declaration in No. 0014 of the *Journal Officiel (JO)* of 17 January 2015, page 777.  
 Act No. 2015-991 on the reorganisation of the territory of the Republic (*Loi n° 2015-991 portant nouvelle organisation territoriale de la République, NOTRe*) of 7 August 2015 as published in the declaration in No. 182 of the *Journal Officiel (JO)* of 8 August 2015.

The new administrative units are intended in particular to contribute to the economic dynamism of the country and now have expanded powers. Metropolises close to borders (Lyon, Strasbourg) can join cross-border cooperation structures. With its establishment, the Eurométropole de Strasbourg has assumed all the powers of the former *Communauté urbaine de Strasbourg (CUS)*, supplemented by new mandatory powers.<sup>2</sup>

The second legislative package, which is also relevant for cross-border cooperation, includes the act on the delimitation of the régions, elections in the régions and départements and the modification of the election calendar (Act No. 2015-29 of 16 January 2015), which reduced the number of régions from 22 to 13. The act lays down the new boundaries of the régions. This ‘new map of the régions’ was adopted in December 2014, against the express wishes of the Alsace région. The reasons for the merger and thus for the creation of larger régions are to strengthen the régions as economic areas, to give them more powers and, in particular, to provide more instruments for economic development.

The decision to merge the régions entered into force on 1 January 2016. For the border area with Germany and thus for the territorial remit of the Regional Working Group, the restructuring and merging of the regions of Alsace, Lorraine and Champagne-Ardenne into the new Grand Est région plays an important role.<sup>3</sup> Its (new) dimensions mean that this region will help to bring the cross-border cooperation areas of the Greater Region and Upper Rhine regions closer together.

The third package concerns the act on the reorganisation of the territory of the Republic which entered into force on 7 August 2015 (Act No. 2015-991 of 7 August 2015). The key objective of the law is to newly regulate the territorial organisation of the country by establishing a statutory basis for the powers of the various levels of territorial authority (régions, Départements, inter-municipal associations, municipalities). The ‘general competence clause’ in effect up to that point was largely abol-

2 Cf. Decree No. 2014-1603 regarding the establishment of the metropolis named ‘Eurométropole de Strasbourg’ (*Décret n° 2014-1603 portant création de la métropole dénommée ‘Eurométropole de Strasbourg’*) of 23 December 2014 as published in the declaration in No. 0298 of the *Journal officiel ‘Lois et Décrets’ (JORF)* of 26 December 2014.

On 1 January 2017, the Eurométropole de Strasbourg assumed further powers from the Département du Bas-Rhin (road network in the area of the Eurométropole, social security fund, housing solidarity fund, youth welfare fund). Cf. Fortier, Jacques: *Decentralisation: Ce qui bouge le 1er janvier*. In: *Dernières Nouvelles d’Alsace (DNA)*, 1 January 2017, page 12.

3 The Grand Est région in north-eastern France spans approximately 57,800 km<sup>2</sup> and has a population of about 5,550,000. The région comprises 200 cantons and 5,195 municipalities. The average population density is 97 inhabitants/km<sup>2</sup>, with the région combining very different sub-regions (cf. *Atlas de la région Alsace Champagne-Ardenne Lorraine*, URL: <http://www.grandest.fr/atlas/> [as on 30 March 2017]). The name ‘Grand Est’ is the result of a citizens’ survey and entered into force with Decree No. 2016-1262 on establishing the name of the Grand Est région (*Décret n° 2016-1262 portant fixation du nom de la région Grand Est*) of 28 September 2016 as published in the declaration in No. 0227 of the *Journal Officiel (JO)* of 29 September 2016.

ished, in particular for the *régions* and *Départements*.<sup>4</sup> The regulatory content of the act is relevant for spatial development as well as for the development of the border regions, and includes in particular the following relevant sections:

Section I (Articles 1-13) deals with the further development and strengthening of the regional level in favour of balanced spatial development:

- > Definition of the responsibilities of the *régions* in the areas specified by the law (housing, urban policy and urban renewal)
- > Allocation of powers for the economy and economic development, transport, management of the public departmental road network
- > Allocation of a leading power for tourism
- > Introduction of a regional waste prevention and management plan and a regional plan for spatial planning and sustainable development

Section II (Articles 14-23) aims to rationalise the territorial organisation and facilitate inter-municipal associations:<sup>5</sup>

- > new targets for inter-municipal associations;
- > joining/integration of previously isolated municipalities into inter-municipal associations;
- > strengthening the mandatory tasks of inter-municipal associations;
- > supplementing the remit of inter-municipal associations in such a way that they can be considered eligible for general financial allocations from the central government.

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4 The general competence clause (*clause générale de compétence*) confers general regulatory powers to act on territorial authorities without specifying the individual powers. This 'general competence clause' was initially abolished through Act No. 2010-1563 on local government reform (*Loi n° 2010-1563 de réforme des collectivités territoriales*) of 16 December 2010 and was then reintroduced with the MAPTAM Act of 27 January 2014 for the *départements* and *régions*, only to be revoked again by the NOTRe Act of 7 August 2015 in favour of precise allocations of powers to the *régions* and *Départements*. According to the current legal position, the general competence clause in France now only applies to the municipalities. Cf. *Clause générale de compétence : une décision du Conseil institutionnel*. URL: <http://www.vie-publique.fr/focus/clause-generale-competeence-decision-du-conseil-constitutionnel.html> (as on 16 September 2016).

5 Intermunicipal cooperation at the level of public law takes place in France in the legal form of an intermunicipal public entity (*établissement public de coopération intercommunale, EPCI*) with financial sovereignty and legal competence. The various types of association organised as an EPCI include municipal associations [*communautés de communes*] (established by the Act of 6 February 1992), urban communities [*communautés urbaines*] (Act of 31 December 1966), agglomeration communities [*communautés d'agglomération*] (Act of 12 July 1999) and metropolises (*métropoles*) (Acts of 16 December 2010 and 27 January 2014).

Section III (Articles 24-29) introduces a number of measures aimed at ensuring solidarity and equality among spatial units, including:

- > the primary power of Départements for ‘social and spatial solidarity’;
- > shared powers for culture, sport and tourism with the introduction of central contact points.

### 3 The spatial impact of the reforms

The municipalities remain the only level of territorial authority to which the general competence clause continues to apply.<sup>6</sup> This allows municipalities to take care of all the everyday concerns of their citizens.

The local level is also strengthened by new instruments to promote intra-municipal associations to ‘new municipalities’ (*communes nouvelles*), a legal status introduced by the act on local government reform (2010).<sup>7</sup> The *commune nouvelle* is a territorial authority that merges and thus replaces several neighbouring municipalities. A new law provides that municipalities that choose to take this step can benefit from financial incentives.<sup>8</sup>

Municipal associations [*communautés de communes, CDC*] close to the border (e.g. CDC du Pays de Wissembourg, CDC du Sauer-Pechelbronn, CDC de l’Outre-fort, CDC du Pays Rhénan, CDC de la Plaine du Rhin) have signalled their interest in joining the EGTC Eurodistrict PAMINA as a member, thereby further consolidating the local roots of the Eurodistrict.

In future, the Départements will mainly carry out social tasks (solidarity) with a particular focus on preventive measures, people in need, childcare and safeguarding the independence of seniors. In addition, there are tasks in relation to territorial solidarity, e.g. in the form of the development and provision of the required technical and specialist capacities to provide assistance and support to municipalities and inter-municipal associations in areas where the latter lack adequate resources (road construction, housing, etc.).

Other previous responsibilities of the Départements are gradually transferred to other territorial authorities; for example, the Bas-Rhin Département is handing over

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<sup>6</sup> Cf. Footnote 4.

<sup>7</sup> Act No. 2010-1563 on local government reform (*Loi n° 2010-1563 portant réforme des collectivités territoriales*) of 16 December 2010 as published in the declaration in No. 0292 of the *Journal Officiel (JO)* of 17 December 2010, page 22146.

<sup>8</sup> Act No. 2015-292 regarding the improvement of the legal framework of the *commune nouvelle* for stronger, viable municipalities (*Loi n° 2015-292 relative à l’amélioration du régime de la commune nouvelle, pour des communes fortes et vivantes*) of 13 March 2015 as published in the declaration in No. 0064 of the *Journal Officiel (JO)* of 17 March 2015, page 4921.



powers to the Eurometropolis of Strasbourg<sup>9</sup> and the Grand Est région<sup>10</sup>. The precise arrangements for this transfer (financial resources, employees, etc.) are governed by agreements concluded between the Département, the région and the Euro-métropole de Strasbourg.

## 4 Perspectives

The régions, as key players of economic policy at the subnational level, will be strengthened: they are now required by law<sup>11</sup> to draw up a plan for economic development, innovation and internationalisation by 1 January 2017,<sup>12</sup> as well as to take over the future management of ports and airports. They have lead responsibility for regional railway transport (*Transport Express Régional, TER*) and public intercity bus transport, as well as for the public road network. In addition, they have been the administrative authority for European funding since 2014 and have been fully responsible for vocational education and training since 1 January 2015.

The impact on cross-border cooperation cannot be foreseen in detail at this stage (cf. *MOT [Mission Opérationnelle Transfrontalière]* 2015). In principle, it can be assumed that the newly merged larger régions will take over the existing memberships and formal legal obligations of the former régions (e.g. the Grand Est région is a member of the EGTC Eurodistrict PAMINA), unless explicitly different resolutions are adopted.

The scope for régions and Départements to enter into cross-border cooperation is not called into question by the reforms; both levels of territorial authority can continue to engage across borders within the framework of their own and shared powers. For example, when regional plans and programmes are drawn up, it is possible<sup>13</sup> to provide for areas that specifically focus on cross-border issues and/or to involve neighbouring regions in the preparation of planning documents. In this sense, formal and informal cross-border participation in environmental and spatial projects, plans and programmes will continue to be pursued in the Upper Rhine region, and in

9 Cf. Decree No. 2014-1603 regarding the establishment of the metropolis named 'Eurométropole de Strasbourg' (*Décret n° 2014-1603 portant création de la métropole dénommée 'Eurométropole de Strasbourg'*) of 23 December 2014 as published in the declaration in No. 0298 of the *Journal officiel 'Lois et Décrets' (JORF)* of 26 December 2014.

10 The transfer of powers to the Grand Est région relates in particular to economic development and transport (bus transport outside urban areas and school transport).

11 Act No. 2015-991 on the reorganisation of the territory of the Republic (*Loi n° 2015-991 portant nouvelle organisation territoriale de la République, NOTRe*) of 7 August 2015.

12 The adoption of the Regional Strategy for Economic Development, Innovation and Internationalisation (*Schéma régional de développement économique, d'innovation et d'internationalisation, SRDEII*) Grand Est by the Regional Council is scheduled for 28 April 2017 (cf. URL: <https://www.grandest.fr/wp-content/uploads/2016/09/srdeii-livret-1-orientations.pdf> (as on 25 March 2021)).

13 E.g. *Schéma régional de développement économique, d'innovation et d'internationalisation (SRDEII)* (cf. URL: <https://www.grandest.fr/wp-content/uploads/2016/09/srdeii-livret-1-orientations.pdf>) or *Schéma régional d'aménagement, de développement durable et d'égalité des territoires (SRADDET)* (cf. URL: <https://www.grandest.fr/politiques-publiques/sraddet/>).

particular in the Eurodistrict PAMINA, in accordance with established and proven practice. This is particularly true for the regional scheme for Regional Strategy for Spatial Planning, Sustainable Development and Equality (*Schéma régional d'aménagement, de développement durable et d'égalité des territoires, SRADDET*), which is often referred to as the 'Plan of plans' and must be elaborated for the Grand Est région by the end of 2018. As the Grand Est région is the French region most shaped by cross-border interaction and cooperation, there are strong arguments here to provide adequate space for the cross-border approach in the context of the co-construction of the SRADDET.

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Karina Pallagst

## SELECTED CROSS-BORDER FORMS OF COOPERATION AND INTERREG FUNDING IN EUROPE

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### Abstract

This paper presents an introduction to forms of cooperation on European, intergovernmental, federal state, regional and municipal levels. The EU Community Initiative INTERREG is described as a significant funding instrument for cross-border cooperation. This excursus thus provides background knowledge for many of the papers in this volume.

### Keywords

Cross-border forms of cooperation – INTERREG – EU structural policy – funding period – EGTC

## 1 Introduction

The theoretical insights outlined in the paper by Karina Pallagst/H. Peter Dörrenbächer/Thomas Weith in this volume are also manifested in the way in which cross-border cooperation is institutionalised and organised.

Cooperation in cross-border regions has experienced an upswing in line with the Europe-wide trend towards regionalisation in the sense of New Regionalism, as well as regional governance and cross-border governance, as outlined in the preceding papers in this volume. Selected forms relevant to the territorial remit of the Hesse/Rhineland-Palatinate/Saarland Regional Working Group are presented below and illustrated with examples from this area. Organised forms of cross-border cooperation have now emerged throughout Europe, including in the territorial remit of the Regional Working Group, and have a long tradition. They frequently begin as ‘soft’ forms of cooperation through ‘soft spaces of governance’ as “in-between” spaces of governance that exist outside, alongside or in-between the formal statutory scales of government, from area masterplans to multiregional growth strategies’ (Houghton/Allmendinger/Oosterlynck 2013). A perpetuation of initially informal initiatives over time is almost indispensable in order to further develop cooperation initiatives. This involves choosing certain hard forms of cooperation and organisation from numerous alternatives.

Forms of cooperation in a cross-border context are based on various organisational options, e.g. associations, municipal special purpose associations or as a European Grouping of Territorial Cooperation (EGTC), a special legal form intended specifically for cooperation at the European level. Before briefly explaining the organisational forms based on the aforementioned distinction, a brief overview of the legal bases underlying cross-border cooperation will be useful.

Initial ideas for creating a legal framework for cross-border activities in Europe were discussed as early as the 1960s. The outline convention on cross-border cooperation between territorial authorities<sup>1</sup> laid the first cornerstone for this. Pursuant to Article 2(1) and (2) of the convention, communities, authorities or bodies exercising local and regional functions and regarded as such under the domestic law of each state may take any concerted action designed to reinforce and foster neighbourly relations and enter into any agreement necessary for this purpose (see also the paper by Beate Caesar and Karina Pallagst in this volume). The convention has now been signed by 40 member states of the Council of Europe. For a long time, there were almost no prospects for cross-border cooperation on a public law basis, as the states did not want to see their sovereignty curtailed by a superordinate body (Gabbe 1992). While associations or special purpose associations are founded on the respective national legal system, the EGTC was the first instrument of cooperation to be created at the Community level, which is endowed with its own legal personality. This form of organisation contributes significantly to facilitating cross-border cooperation. EGTCs are used to establish associations for cooperation which are capable of carrying out

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1 Cf. European Outline Convention on Transfrontier Co-operation between Territorial Communities or Authorities of 21 May 1980.

territorial cooperation projects or measures. EGTCs are made up of member states, regional and local territorial authorities and/or institutions established under public law.

Forms of cooperation for cross-border cooperation pursue actions at different levels (multi-level policies) and can be distinguished as follows (modified based on Bleicher 1981):

- > European level
- > Intergovernmental level
- > State level
- > Regional level
- > Municipal level

These forms of cross-border cooperation will be outlined below, using examples from the border regions within the territorial remit of the Regional Working Group to illustrate the broad spectrum of cooperation forms that have evolved to date. Due to the large number of committees and organisations, this discussion does not claim to be exhaustive.

## **2 Forms of cross-border cooperation**

### **2.1 Forms of cooperation at the European level**

There are initiatives that address issues of cross-border cooperation at the European level. For example, the Association of European Border Regions (AEBR), organised as a registered association under German law, which has been providing a platform for the mutual exchange of experience between border regions since 1971. As an association spanning a large territory, the Greater Region is a partial member of the AEBR, while the Südlicher Oberrhein association is a full member.

The Metropolitan Border Regions Initiative Group (*Initiativkreis Metropolitane Grenzregionen, IMeG*) also deserves mention here: initiated through a Model Project for Spatial Planning of the Federation, since 2011 it has aimed to enhance the specific development opportunities in the Greater Region, rather like a learning network, and to eliminate obstacles in cross-border spatial development. The starting point for the IMeG was the Model Project for Spatial Planning on 'Transregional Partnerships in Cross-border Interactional Areas' (which ran from January 2008 to May 2011). The IMeG is used to develop strategies and projects aimed at functional integration and partnerships for large territories, using the principle of strong border regions to act as a driver of development. Reference is made in this context to the guiding principles for spatial development in order to better reconcile the policies at the federal and state levels for these border regions (Metropolitan Border Regions Initiative Group

2013). Among the founding members of the *IMeG* are the Meuse-Rhine Euroregion, the Greater Region, the Trinational Metropolitan Region of the Upper Rhine and the Lake Constance region (see also the paper by Andrea Hartz in this volume).

## 2.2 Forms of cooperation at the intergovernmental level

At the intergovernmental level, spatial planning commissions or intergovernmental commissions have been established as an essential form of organisation, which can be used for either bilateral or multilateral cross-border cooperation. The German-French Intergovernmental Commission was established in 1969, and the German-Belgian commission in 1971.

The legal framework is also known as the Karlsruhe Convention of 1996, which regulates forms of cross-border organisation between territorial authorities and local public organisations between Germany, France, Luxembourg and Switzerland.

## 2.3 Forms of cooperation at the state level (federal state, province, autonomous region, canton)

In Germany, as a federation, the level of the federal states also plays an important role in shaping cross-border cooperation. The Greater Region can be regarded as an essential multilateral form of cooperation between states, since its territory includes the federal states of Rhineland-Palatinate and Saarland.<sup>2</sup> Forms of organisation of the Greater Region at the state level are briefly outlined in the following section.

The Summit of the Greater Region is the most decisive institutional organisation. The decision to hold regular Summit meetings of the highest political representatives of the enlarged SaarLorLux region was taken in 1994. The Summit is the key political organ for cross-border and interregional cooperation in the enlarged SaarLorLux area. The Summit meetings provide an impetus for cross-border development and define the general policy orientations. The Summit meetings address issues of cooperation affecting the partner regions and make recommendations in this regard. The regular Summit meetings bring together the heads of government of the Grand Duchy of Luxembourg, the federal states of Rhineland-Palatinate and Saarland, the Walloon Region, the French Community of Belgium, the German-speaking Community of Belgium, the Lorraine Region, the Lorraine Regional Council, the General Council of the Meurthe-et-Moselle *Département* and the General Council of the Moselle *Département* (Saarland 2014). Committees can also be set up at the state level. In 1996, for example, the Economic and Social Committee was set up for the enlarged SaarLorLux area, which acts as an advisory body to the Summit on common cross-border economic and social issues. The Interregional Parliamentary Council (IPC) was set up in 1986 as an additional committee at the state level (see also the paper by Andrea Hartz and Beate Caesar in this volume).

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2 For an extensive description, see Niedermeyer/Moll (2007) as well as Dörrenbächer (2009).

## 2.4 Forms of cooperation at the regional level

The regional level is particularly important in the charged field of European integration, as outlined in the paper by Karina Pallagst/H. Peter Dörrenbächer/Thomas Weith in this volume. As a form of cooperation at the 'grassroots' level, regional cooperation, which is very common in Europe, is diverse. This is where different organisations meet, some of which operate at the municipal level (local authorities, districts and urban districts), but which can also take place in cooperative groupings (regional associations, regional planning associations). Examples from the area of the Hesse/Rhineland-Palatinate/Saarland Regional Working Group as well as the Greater Region and the Upper Rhine will be briefly described below.

Regional cross-border cooperation in the area of the Greater Region:

- > *Regional Commission of SaarLorLux–Trier/Western Palatinate–Wallonia*  
In 1971, the German-French-Luxembourg Intergovernmental Commission decided to establish the Saarland–Lorraine–Luxembourg–Trier/Western Palatinate Regional Commission (for more detail, see the paper by Andrea Hartz and Beate Caesar in this volume).
- > *Saar-Moselle Eurodistrict*  
The Saar-Moselle Eurodistrict was established in 1997 (initially as an association called *Zukunft Saar-Moselle Avenir* [Future Saar-Moselle]) by German and French municipalities from the Saarbrücken/Moselle-Est border area. To further strengthen their organisational form, a European Grouping of Territorial Cooperation (EGTC) was established in 2010 to promote cross-border municipal cooperation. Its members are municipalities and associations of municipalities from the area of Saarbrücken, Völklingen to Saargemünd, Forbach and St. Avold. It is planned to create a long-term European association of municipalities embedded at the local level with the help of the EGTC in order to create the same living conditions, a single administration and uniform institutions on the German and French sides (Saar Moselle Eurodistrict 2014).
- > *SaarLorLux+ Euroregion*  
The COMREGIO working group of local authorities was established in 1988 by municipal representatives within the area of the current Greater Region. The need for an institutional cross-border representation of municipal interests led to the establishment of the SaarLorLux+ Euroregion in 1995 as a non-profit association under Luxembourg law (SaarLorLux+ Euroregion 2014). As an association of municipalities, the SaarLorLux+ Euroregion represents municipal interests in relation to other cross-border committees as well as national and regional authorities. Its members include cities and municipalities from Saarland, Rhineland-Palatinate, Luxembourg and Lorraine.

Regional cross-border cooperation in the Upper Rhine region:

- > *Upper Rhine Conference*  
In 1975, the tripartite (German-French-Swiss) regional commission for the south-

ern Upper Rhine region and the bipartite regional commission for the northern Upper Rhine region were established under the umbrella of the Intergovernmental Commission. Finally, in 1991, the two regional commissions were merged to form the German-French-Swiss Upper Rhine Conference (see also the paper by Andrea Hartz and Beate Caesar in this volume).

> *Regio Pamina Eurodistrict*

The Regio Pamina Eurodistrict has been organised as a cross-border local special purpose association since 2003. The special purpose association is headquartered in France and is a public body in the form of an unrestricted public sector association (*syndicat mixte ouvert*) in accordance with the provisions of Articles L.5721-1 et seq. of the General Local Authorities Code (*Code Général des Collectivités Territoriales*). Three themed committees – devoted to spatial development and transport; finances, the economy and social affairs; and the environment, tourism, sport and culture – discuss current issues and project initiatives and bring them to the attention of the association's General Assembly (Regio Pamina Eurodistrict 2014). Decisions by the association's General Assembly are adopted at the regular public meetings.

## 2.5 Forms of cooperation at the municipal level

Within the framework of municipal cooperation, cross-border city networks have evolved, which deal with certain issues of spatial development. For the area of the Regional Working Group, the following are relevant:

- > Quattropole (the cities of Saarbrücken, Metz, Luxembourg, Trier)
- > Lela+ (Luxembourg, Esch-sur-Alzette, Longwy, Arlon, Metz and Thionville)
- > Upper Rhine 2002 (Baden-Baden, Basel, Colmar, Freiburg, Karlsruhe, Lahr, Landau, Lörrach, Mulhouse, Offenburg and Strasbourg)<sup>3</sup>

In addition to the forms of cooperation identified above, which help to organise cross-border cooperation, the EU's structural policy for border regions plays an important role in the context of European Territorial Cooperation. The INTERREG programme is briefly explained below because of its significance for cross-border cooperation.

## 3 Funding and structural development through INTERREG and expectations for the new programme period

The INTERREG Community Initiative has emerged as a structural framework for cross-border cooperation since 1990 (Manthey 1992). INTERREG, which is financed by the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF), takes into account the fact that

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3 Landau is the only city within the territorial remit of the Hesse/Rhineland-Palatinate/Saarland Regional Working Group to be a member of this city network.



significant structural weaknesses and disparities still exist at the European borders. The aim of the programme is to better integrate the intra-Community border regions into the European area by focusing the INTERREG funding predominantly on underdeveloped areas, areas affected by industrial decline and developmental disparities in rural areas. Today, INTERREG is one of the objectives of the European Cohesion Policy, which aims to promote European Territorial Cooperation.<sup>4</sup> Based on a stock take of the situation in their territories, the competent national authorities draw up programme proposals for funding and development objectives for each border region.

There have been four INTERREG programme periods to date. Two programme areas are important for the border areas within the territorial remit of the Hesse/Rhineland-Palatinate/Saarland Regional Working Group: the Greater Region INTERREG programme and the programme for the Upper Rhine. Both are intended to strengthen cross-border cooperation in line with the Community Initiative through local and regional projects between partners from different areas.

INTERREG has, on the whole, proved to be an important measure for European regional development for cross-border cooperation in Europe through its concrete project-based approach, which is consistent with the French approach to spatial planning (*aménagement du territoire*). The problematic issues that such comprehensive programme funding entails are well known to the stakeholders and lie in the increasing bureaucratic effort required for the application process and the implementation of the project as well as in the funding required, which often makes access and participation difficult, especially for smaller municipalities.

Despite the complexity of the INTERREG Community Initiative, it is essential for the future viability of cross-border cooperation in the border areas within the territorial remit of the Regional Working Group. The rationalist approach based on classifications developed in political science, as described in the paper by Karina Pallagst/H. Peter Dörrenbächer/Thomas Weith in this volume, has emerged as an essential driver of cooperation in a cross-border context. The next programme period under INTERREG V is now underway and concrete project funding can therefore continue to benefit the border areas.<sup>5</sup>

As chosen stakeholders, who are involved in the implementation of INTERREG, Petra Schelkmann and Patrice Harster have noted the following new aspects in particular.<sup>6</sup>

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4 INTERREG is built around three strands of cooperation: a) cross-border, b) transnational; c) interregional.

5 The regulations for the 2014–2020 programme period were published in the Official Journal of the European Union on 20 December 2013.

6 The following information was provided to the TU Kaiserslautern by the members of the subsection on Border Futures, Dr. Patrice Harster and Petra Schelkmann, for use in this chapter.

### **3.1 Thematic concentration**

The thematic concentration of resources on a few priorities related to the Europe 2020 Strategy is reflected in the INTERREG V A Operational Programmes. Whereas INTERREG A and the European Territorial Cooperation Programme (ETC) has long been more open and therefore thematically more diverse than other structural and cohesion policy programmes, restrictions have now been imposed for these programmes as well. It remains to be seen whether the effects hoped for in terms of better programme management and more targeted use of resources will be realised to the desired extent, or whether this restriction will rather turn out to be a hindrance to cross-border cooperation.

### **3.2 The focus on results and increasing the significance of indicators**

Programmes and projects are to be focused increasingly on measurable targets, which will be reviewed on the basis of indicators. In addition, there is to be a stronger orientation toward objectives. In addition to the figures, the content of the projects, i.e. their qualitative aspects, should not be overlooked.

This and the previous aspect will change and shape the new programme period.

### **3.3 Facilitation through simplification in the implementation of projects**

Both the EU Regulations on the Structural and Cohesion Fund and the ETC, as well as many other Commission documents, take up the aspect of simplification and at times even make specific proposals in this regard. It is a welcome development that the Operational Programme for the INTERREG V A programme on the Upper Rhine makes use of these proposals and thus lays the foundations for their implementation. The proposals include, in particular, ‘simplified cost options’ such as flat rates or standardised unit costs. These are simplifications which mainly benefit the project level, as they facilitate the administrative and financial implementation of the measures. However, as mentioned earlier, these simplifications must be viewed against the additional work required by the thematic concentration and the increasing significance of indicators.

### **3.4 Employment: A new intervention area with new opportunities for cross-border labour markets**

The opening up of the ETC to thematic priority 8 (promoting sustainable, high-quality employment and supporting labour mobility) of the ESI Funds and its Common Strategic Framework (EU Regulation No. 1303/2013) will create new opportunities for cross-border labour markets. The issue of employment has so far been mainly addressed by the ESF, which has proven to be difficult to use and restricted in a cross-border context. However, some cross-border labour markets offer significant potential to improve the situation on both sides of the border, which is not only

economically important, but also conducive to social inclusion. The Operational Programme on the Upper Rhine takes up thematic objective 8 in its priority axis C. Initial projects have already been turned into programmes and also include the training sector.

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## ABSTRACT

### **Border Futures – Zukunft Grenze – Avenir Frontière The future viability of cross-border cooperation**

What current discourses are relevant for border areas? What opportunities for and obstacles to integrated territorial development arise from the specific situation of border regions? How can these be utilised or overcome in a goal-oriented way? These questions were central to the discussions of the Border Futures working group. Border regions like the Greater Region<sup>1</sup> or the Trinational Metropolitan Region of the Upper Rhine extend far beyond the immediate border area. While institutional structures of cooperation can be perpetuated through agreements and organisations, there is a lack of instruments which cross-border cooperation structures can deploy in response to changing situations. Cross-border cooperation faces new challenges from increasing cross-border interactions, processes of economic structural transformation, new energy policies in the national sub-spaces, and demographic change. Another factor is increasing spatial polarisation, which influences the further development and future viability of the affected border areas, and involves metropolisation issues in urban centres and the provision of public services in rural districts. Building on discussions of the Border Futures working group, this volume sheds light on cross-border cooperation in practice with recent research relevant to planning in border regions in the European context. The insights collected here are intended to be usable in the border areas within the territory of the Regional Working Group and should also contribute towards the broader specialist discourse on the further development of cross-border cooperation. Issues of sustainable cross-border governance, new spatial functions and new planning instruments play a role here, as do the possibilities provided by the current EU structural policy programming period for border areas.

#### **Keywords**

Cross-border cooperation – spatial planning – spatial development – border area – border region

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1 The Greater Region abbreviation refers to the Greater Region of Saarland – Lorraine – Luxembourg – Rhineland-Palatinate – the Walloon Region – the French Community of Belgium and the German-speaking Community of Belgium



What current discourses are relevant for border areas? What opportunities for and obstacles to integrated territorial development arise from the specific situation of border regions? How can these be utilised or overcome in a goal-oriented way? These questions were central to the discussions of the Border Futures working group. Border regions like the Greater Region<sup>1</sup> or the Trinational Metropolitan Region of the Upper Rhine extend far beyond the immediate border area. While institutional structures of cooperation can be perpetuated through agreements and organisations, there is a lack of instruments which cross-border cooperation structures can deploy in response to changing situations. Cross-border cooperation faces new challenges from increasing cross-border interactions, processes of economic structural transformation, new energy policies in the national sub-spaces, and demographic change. Another factor is increasing spatial polarisation, which influences the further development and future viability of the affected border areas, and involves metropolisation issues in urban centres and the provision of public services in rural districts. Building on discussions of the Border Futures working group, this volume sheds light on cross-border cooperation in practice with recent research relevant to planning in border regions in the European context. The insights collected here are intended to be usable in the border areas within the territory of the Regional Working Group and should also contribute towards the broader specialist discourse on the further development of cross-border cooperation. Issues of sustainable cross-border governance, new spatial functions and new planning instruments play a role here, as do the possibilities provided by the current EU structural policy programming period for border areas.

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