

Critical Dictionary on Borders, Cross-Border Cooperation and European Integration

Birte Wassenberg and Bernard Reitel (Eds.)

In collaboration with Jean Peyrony and Jean Rubio




PETER LANG

BORDER STUDIES / BORDERS AND EUROPEAN INTEGRATION

VOL. 1

In the current crisis of the COVID-19 pandemic, borders have again become a central issue of the European Union (EU): re-bordering has been the first response of almost all Member-States for the protection against the virus. De-bordering is again on the agenda, as free movement in Europe means mobility and mobility means economic recovery. However, the main actors of this crisis were the national states, not the EU, nor local or regional stakeholders at the border. The apparent failure of a "Europe without borders", the lack of reactivity from the EU institutions and the paralysis of cross-border actors has resulted in a general questioning of European Integration. But do we really understand the role of borders in European Integration? And how does cross-border cooperation function in reality, in the different EU border regions? Does it contribute to European Integration and if it does, who are the main players and what are their motives, objectives and tools?

This Critical Dictionary on Borders, Cross-Border Cooperation and European Integration takes up the challenge to answer these questions. It is the first encyclopaedia which combines two so far not well interconnected interdisciplinary research fields, i.e. Border Studies and European Studies. Organised in an alphabetical order, it contains 209 articles written by 124 authors from different countries and scientific disciplines which are accompanied by 66 maps. The articles deal with theory, terminology, concepts, actors, themes and spaces of cross-border cooperation at European borders and in borderlands of and around the European Union (EU). Taking into account a multi-scale perspective from the local to the global, the Critical Dictionary follows a combined historical-geographical approach and is co-directed by Birte Wassenberg and Bernard Reitel, with a large contribution by Jean Peyrony and Jean Rubio from the *Mission opérationnelle transfrontalière* (MOT). The Dictionary is also part of four Jean Monnet activities supported by the Erasmus+ program of the EU for the period 2016-2022: two Jean Monnet projects on EU border regions, a Jean Monnet network (Frontem) and the Franco-German Jean Monnet excellence Center (University of Strasbourg), as well as the Jean Monnet Chair of Bernard Reitel on borders and European integration (University d'Artois). Rather than being designed as an objective compilation of facts and figures, it should serve as a critical tool for discussion between researchers, students and practitioners working in the field of borders, cross-border cooperation and European Integration.

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Birte Wassenberg & Bernard Reitel, in collaboration
with Mission opérationnelle transfrontalière
(Jean PEYRONY & Jean RUBIO)

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PETER LANG



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“Grenzen sind Narben der Geschichte. Man braucht sie nicht zu vergessen, soll sie aber auch nicht kultivieren. Das Gemeinsame des Gebietes, beiderseits der Grenze, ist wertvoller und bedeutsamer als das Trennende”.

“Borders are the scars of History. One should not forget them, but one should not cultivate them either. That what unites a territory on both sides of the border is more valuable and significant than what separates”.

Alfred Mozer¹

¹ Alfred Mozer (1905–1979), is of German origin and has emigrated in the Netherlands in 1933, acquiring the Dutch nationality after 1945. He is a journalist and politician, member of the Socialist Partij van de Arbeid (PvdA) and engaged in the European Movement. He becomes Secretary of the Commissioner on Agriculture of the first European Commission and was head of Cabinet from 1958–1970. Living in the German-Dutch border region, he thereafter co-founded the cross-border association EUREGIO in Gronau and became the first president of the Permanent Conference on European Border Regions on 17 and 18 June 1971 at the Castle of Anholt (EUREGIO), which later on took on the name of the Association for European Border Regions (AEBR).

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Raphaël Mariotti has been working as a junior project manager at the Euro-Institute Kehl since August 2017, ensuring the preparation and follow-up of training, consultancy or study projects

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The authors of this critical dictionary are of multiple origin, lecturers, professors and researchers from universities and research centres specialized in Border Studies, civil servant from European Institutions, directors, secretary generals, project managers or consultants from regional groupings or cross-border structures, etc. Some authors have contributed with one and others with several articles, some have co-authored with one, two or three colleagues or even constituted a dictionary editorial team. Some sign their article in their official function or on behalf of the structure they represent, but some also sign as private authors, independently of their employer. There is thus a large diversity in the authorship of this dictionary and the following scale only mentions each author individually with the indication of his/her professional affiliation or function, which does not necessarily mean that the article represents the view of their work structure/institution.

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Welcome Address

I am delighted to introduce this edition of the “Critical Dictionary on Borders, Cross-Border Cooperation and European Integration”. Europe’s history is scarred by many wars and political tensions, which have directly affected many border regions that serve as barriers between countries. At certain times in history, cooperation across certain borders was not only unimaginable but simply impossible. This continent has always been characterised by an extremely dense number of national borders, and reducing their impact has always been a difficult task. Today, after 60 years of European integration, Europeans have accomplished a great deal by working together and bringing peace across our continent. Nevertheless, border regions continue to remain on the periphery of economic and social development

Border regions were the first to experience first-hand the freedom of movement following the introduction of Schengen, as well as the benefits of the Euro. Yet still many citizens living in these regions remain disillusioned by the European project. The European Union (EU) and member states must do far more to make them feel the added value of the EU – it is not enough to simply make the borders invisible. Many citizens living on border regions continue to face daily obstacles when crossing to other countries to find work, study or seek adequate public services such as healthcare, education and childcare.

The EU’s internal borders entail different structures, competencies, as well as social and fiscal laws, which today continue to fragment the EU. Despite all our accomplishments, borders are often considered as impenetrable barriers. Too often citizens, businesses or local and regional authorities do not pursue cross-border activities, which they feel would require too much time and effort. Consequently, many opportunities are wasted, keeping border regions perpetually constrained.

Border regions are crucial for the completion of the European Single Market, but they are far more than that. They are home to one-third of the entire European population and so need to be put at the heart

of European integration. Border regions need to be places where the European integration starts and will be completed. We must not forget our external borders either, as cooperation with our neighbours, which in some cases could end up being future EU member states, is of crucial importance for the development of the EU as a whole. The European Committee of the Regions as well as the Congress of Local and Regional Authorities of the Council of Europe are institutions for which facilitating cross-border cooperation has always been a key objective.

Coming from the German-speaking region of Belgium which is located on the borders to the Netherlands, Germany and Luxembourg, I know first-hand how important cross-border cooperation is. For the European Committee of the Regions, which I have the honour to represent, and for myself personally, cross-border cooperation and strong border regions have always been essential for our future. We must insist on having cross-border cooperation as a priority for the EU – for our sake and for the sake of future generations.

It is therefore my great pleasure to have the opportunity to write the foreword for this publication, an initiative of fundamental importance for our work and of great importance for the work of the EU, its member states and local and regional authorities.

Written by many of Europe's esteemed cross-border experts, the Critical Dictionary reflects the diversity and complexity of cross-border cooperation, the uniqueness of our many cross-border regions and the vast experience they have in connecting our continent. I am particularly impressed by the numerous maps that give a clear illustration of the phenomenon of cross-border cooperation in Europe today.

It is also a good starting point for our work on the future EU's Multiannual Financing Framework and, importantly, with regard to European Territorial Cooperation which in the past thirty years has been essential in supporting cross-border cooperation across Europe.

The Critical Dictionary is not only essential reading for practitioners and experts in cross-border cooperation, but also for students who wish to pursue their career in this area and who want to shape the Europe of tomorrow.

Karl-Heinz Lambertz

Foreword

The current context of the COVID 19 sanitary crisis is worrying. The pandemic which started to spread from China in January 2020, making Europe its epicentre in March/April 2020, has given rise to many fundamental questions concerning our modern society, as well as the functioning of European integration and International Relations. Whereas until now, the benefits of globalization based on growing interconnection, world-wide liberal trade and mobility were largely praised, the current situation has suddenly put an emphasis again on its disadvantages. For the spread of virus has become such a world-wide danger mainly because it was uncontrollable due to the increase of mobility of people on a global level – especially with the development of mass tourism.

For Border Studies and European integration, this situation has significant consequences. If the principle of a “Europe without borders” had already been shaken by the 2015 terrorist and migration crisis in Europe, leading to bordering processes both at the external and the internal Schengen borders of the EU, these bordering processes were not always permanent nor systematic. Instead, the coronavirus has been a “bordering earthquake”. It has resulted, one by one, and nearly in all EU member states in a reflex of complete, systematic and hermetic closure of national borders, with border controls imposed not as an exceptional measure against an identified category of people – refugees, criminals or terrorists – but as a principle protection against the “other”, i.e. the person from the other national state, who might be infected by the virus. This bordering has happened without consultation at EU level and without consultation of the European people. It has caused immediate problems in European border regions which have become – as part of the European integration process – spaces of flow, mobility and communication. Cross-border transport means, tramways, trains, etc. were interrupted, cross-border workers had difficulties to get to their work-places, being hampered by numerous (new) administrative obstacles in terms of authorization papers and physical obstacles in terms

of checks at the borders, cross-border relations were cut off by the border, separating colleagues, friends and families. In short, the national border (re)became a barrier impossible to overcome.

It is true that in the sanitary crisis, borders were being imposed worldwide everywhere, also nationally, in the private sphere, between “me” and the “other”, as distancing seemed the only possibility to contain the uncontrollable spread of the pandemic. However, the non-concerted national bordering measures within the EU are dangerous: they convey the message, that the sanitary threat comes from outside the nation-state, as if the virus chooses to infect nations and not individuals. As if the virus could be stopped at a national border. This logic ends up with a new “national” bordering process in the mind of the European people which might explain why even in border regions with a long experience of cross-border cooperation, for example in the Greater Region or the Upper Rhine Region, it took at least two weeks to react and to propose that patients from the overcrowded hospitals in Alsace could also be transported to the neighbouring German regions rather than to the more than a 1000 km distance away situated City of Marseille. It also explains, why the EU and the local and regional authorities seem paralyzed by the crisis. Everything is being placed back to the national level of decision: the European Commission thus took several weeks to finally determine on 16 March 2020 that the external Community borders should be secured in terms of travel restrictions into the EU. This decision was validated by the EU Council the following day, but the Council struggled to find a solution for a financial support package to help particularly heavily affected EU member states (Italy, Spain, France). It first only came up with “second best” funding measures, as some member states refused to accept the principle of collective debts. In the end, it took until the 18 May 2020 for the Franco-German couple Merkel-Macron to propose an EU rescue fund, which led the European Commission finally, on 27 May 2020, to unveil a 750 billion euros plan to help the EU recover from the coronavirus pandemic. Why has the European solidarity waited for so long? Local and regional authorities in border regions were also absent in the discussions for the crisis resolution, although there are numerous cross-border working groups on health issues in several Euregions and there exists even a Franco-Spanish cross-border hospital in Cerdagne. The situation seems all the more paradoxical when taking into account that in border regions, the interdependencies are so strong that, for example, the health system in Luxemburg or in Geneva can

only function with the contribution of cross-border workers who are employed as nurses, doctors or in other functions of the health sector. Where is the European multi-level-governance? Where is our ideal of cross-border cooperation and European integration?

This Critical Dictionary on Borders, Cross-Border Cooperation and European Integration therefore comes in as a reminder of what we have achieved in the process of European integration and what we should not renegotiate nor bargain against “old recipes” used by nation states of bordering, national retraction and sovereignty discourses. Instead, the Dictionary should stimulate new interdisciplinary research and discussion on how to resolve crises with global effects – terrorism, migration, epidemic, climate change – which can affect border management in Europe, with the tools promoted by the EU, i.e. multi-level governance, solidarity and a Europe which does not retract itself to its national borders but stays open and willing to return to its principle of free circulation and European citizenship.

Our project has already a long history in itself. The Dictionary has been a long-term project, elaborated in a permanent process of interdisciplinary reflection, discussion, re-questioning and adaptation. I had the idea very early in my academic career, in 2008, when I started my multidisciplinary research activities on cross-border cooperation with my political science colleague and friend, Joachim Beck, who was at the time director of the Euro-Institut in Kehl¹. I was preparing at the same time my Habilitation Thesis on the History of the Council of Europe and, as a specialist, both of European Integration History and Border Studies in Europe, I realized that there was a scientific gap between these two scientific disciplines. Enlarging my research in cross-border cooperation from the Franco-German-Swiss Upper Rhine region to the European and international level, I also felt unable to geographically situate the multiple trans-regional borderlands in Europe, as the only tool available for this was the map of European border regions edited by the Association of European Border Regions (AEBR), which is a useful overview of Euroregions at European level, but cannot give precise information on the details of territory, governance structures and actors. I was therefore convinced that a didactical tool was needed for students,

¹ The Euro-Institut is a pluridisciplinary Franco-German further education body specialized in the study, research and expert council on cross-border cooperation in Europe.

researchers and for actors in the field of European Border Studies, which could both create a link between research on cross-border cooperation and European integration and serve as a historical atlas of border regions in Europe.

The project of the Critical Dictionary was then progressively constructed on the basis of my multidisciplinary research activities on cross-border cooperation, undertaken between 2008 and 2013 within the research unit *Frontières, Acteurs et Représentations de l'Europe* (FARE) of the University of Strasbourg, in cooperation with Joachim Beck (political and administrative sciences) at the Euro-Institut Kehl and the *Transfrontier European Network* (TEIN)² and then continued in the framework of my Jean Monnet Chair with the European Commission on the contribution of cross-border cooperation to the European Neighbourhood Policy (2013–2016). The Chair's objective was to create new teaching modules in Border Studies at Sciences Po Strasbourg of the University of Strasbourg, especially for the Master students in European integration and International Relations. The “Castle-talks on Cross-border Cooperation”, which have been organised since then two times a year as a forum of discussion on cross-border cooperation at the château Pourtalès, in Strasbourg, have also largely contributed to the development of the idea of the dictionary. They bring together researchers in the field of European Border Studies, the European students of Sciences Po Strasbourg and the American students of the European Study Centre Strasbourg (CEPA) and allowed for a continued interdisciplinary discussion on borders, cross-border cooperation and European integration.

The first official presentation of the dictionary was made at a Conference on “Cross-border Cooperation as a Tool for Neighbourhood Policies”, which was organised by the European Commission for specialists in Border Studies from Latin America, the Caribbean Space and Europe

² Composed of: Sciences Po Strasbourg, *Centre for Cross Border Studies* (Ireland), ICRESS (Université Perpignan), ITEM Expertise Centre of Maastricht, Université de Nice, *University of Southern Denmark*, University of Ljubljana (Slovenia), *Carinthia University of Applied Sciences* (Austria), *Viadrina Centre Borders in Motion* (Frankfurt/Oder, Germany); Olza Association (Cieszyn, Poland), Institute EuroSchola (Trinec, Czech Republic), University of Applied Sciences and Euro-Institute of Kehl, Research Centre « Discontinuités » of the Université d'Arras/Université catholique de Louvain-la-Neuve, University of Girona (Spain), the Institut d'Estudis Catalans (IEC) in Barcelona (Spain).

from 27 to 29 November 2013 in Fort de France, at the University of the Antilles and Guyana. At the Association for Borderland Studies (ABS) World Conference on “Post-Cold War Borders” which took place in Joensuu, St. Petersburg, from 9 to 13 July 2014, it was also highlighted as an innovative idea by my public policy colleague Emmanuel Brunet-Jailly, at the time chief editor of the *Journal of Borderland Studies*. From the start, the idea of a Critical Dictionary has also been actively supported by Karl-Heinz Lambertz, in his functions as president of the Association of European Border Regions (AEBR), rapporteur of the Congress of Local and Regional Authorities of the Council of Europe and President of the European Committee of Regions.

However, it was not until a trilateral cooperation was started with Bernard Reitel, professor in political geography at the University of Artois and Jean Peyrony, director of the *Mission opérationnelle transfrontalière* (MOT) that the implementation of the project could be envisaged. The Critical Dictionary was then designed as part of two Jean Monnet research projects I obtained from the European Union (EU) for the period 2016–2020³, the Jean Monnet Chair of Bernard Reitel, the Franco-German Jean Monnet Centre of Excellence in Strasbourg which I co-direct since September 2018 and a Jean Monnet network on European Border management models (Frontem), which brings together 7 specialized Border Studies universities and research Centres under the leadership of the University of Strasbourg (for the period 2019–2022). The first step towards its realization was a collaboration with the DG REGIO at the European Commission for the 25th anniversary of Interreg in 2015. Nathalie Verschelde, responsible for this event at the DG REGIO, allowed us to edit a publication on *25 years of Territorial Cooperation in Europe*⁴, which already presents a series of maps and articles on European Regional Policy and on cross-border cooperation in EU member states. The publication, which followed a combined historical-geographical approach was jointly written by Bernard Reitel and myself, with a large contribution of Jean Peyrony and his team in the MOT in Paris, which is specialized on expert advice for French and European border regions and has an important know-how in cross-border cartography. It has

³ A research project on conflict and cooperation at EU borders (2016–2018) and a project on crises in European border regions (2018–2020).

⁴ Wassenberg, B., Reitel, B., *25 years of Territorial Cooperation in Europe. A Historical Perspective*, European Publication Office, Luxembourg, 2015.

constituted the basis for this Critical Dictionary of Borders, Cross-Border Cooperation and European Integration.

The present publication is thus the outcome of a long process including several research projects, the close interdisciplinary cooperation of specialized researchers and practitioners of cross-border cooperation and the fruit of a certain number of networks in European Border Studies. Bernard Reitel, Jean Peyrony and myself would like to express our gratitude to several partners and institutions, without whom this project could not have been realized. First, Jean Peyrony's team at the MOT and especially Jean Rubio who has created all the maps with diligence, patience and passion and it may be underlined that these maps constitute the backbone of this publication. Second, the Euro-Institut Kehl directed by Georg Walter, which has accompanied the project from the start and has ensured all possible support including the employment of three traineeships for the implementation of the project. My special thanks in this respect goes to the Euro-Institut deputy director and my friend Anne Thevenet, who has always helped with the conceptual and logistic organisation of the Dictionary. She has also maintained the link with, the TEIN network based at the Euro-Institut whose members have participated, as researchers and specialists on cross-border cooperation in the different articles, thus largely contributing to the scientific excellence of the dictionary. Among the personnel of the Euro-Institut, three exceptional young trainees have also got to be mentioned, for the excellent management and logistical organisation of the project. First and above all Raphaël Mariotti, a former student of the Sciences Po Strasbourg's Master on "Regional Integration and International Relations", who has followed up the dictionary for more than two years, first in the framework of his Master traineeship and then as project manager employed by the Euro-Institut. His accurate capacities of coordinating more than 100 authors and almost 200 articles and of facilitating the work of the steering committee by means of organizing Skype meetings, ensuring communication and follow-up of the different phases of realization of the project have been indispensable for the good governance and implementation. His successor, Thibault Delabarre, during his traineeship for the Sciences Po Strasbourg's Master on "Regional Integration and International Relations" had then assisted Raphaël thus doubling the capacity of project assistance. But the finalization of the project has been accompanied by Baptiste Gilbert, our research assistant, a former student of the University of Nantes' Master on "European and International Studies", who has not only taken up the

whole organisation of the project without problem, but has also ensured the scientific quality of the dictionary, mainly by closely following up the peer-review system between the scientific committee, the steering committee and the authors, the editing process of text revision and formatting as well as the harmonization of notes and the bibliographies. Finally, I would also like to thank my former Canadian Master student Dillon Baker, my PhD student Claude Beaupré and Laurent Bury for the English proofreading of the articles.

But there are other partners who have largely contributed to the realization of this dictionary: We owe our gratitude to Karl-Heinz Lambertz, president of the Committee of Regions (2017–2020), Martin Guillermo, Secretary General of the AEBR, Andreas Kieffer, Secretary General of the Congress of Local and Regional Authorities, Emmanuel Brunet-Jailly, President of the Association for Borderland Studies (ABS), Joachim Beck, Rector of the Hochschule Kehl and former Director of the Euro-Institute Kehl and of course all authors and peer-reviewers of this publication, without whom this collective work could not have been accomplished.

Finally, we would like to mention the European Commission, especially the Erasmus+ Jean Monnet activities, the University of Strasbourg, the University of Artois and the research units UR2468 *Discontinuités* and the UMR7367 *Dynamiques européennes*, whose financial and scientific support largely contributed to the success of the dictionary.

Birte Wassenberg

Introduction

This critical dictionary on Borders, Cross-Border Cooperation, and European Integration fills a gap in the scientific literature in border and European studies. In so doing, it pursues three main objectives: first, it establishes a link between the two (as of yet) still relatively unconnected disciplines; second, it provides an interdisciplinary tool for students, researchers, and practitioners, through an overview of theory, terms, forms, actors, and tools of territorial cooperation in Europe which allows for the use of the Critical Dictionary as a practical guide for facilitating the development of neighbourhood relations and the management of cross-border projects; third, the dictionary orientates the traditional top-down approach to European integration by taking into account, not only European Union (EU) institutions and member states, but the links that these institutions and actors have to the multitude of local and regional initiatives which have thus far fed into the process of European integration. It is therefore a first step towards a new decentralized, territorialized approach to European integration, one that looks at integration as a mosaic of bottom-up processes identified by starting from the local and regional level of Europe's borderlands.

A Link Between Border Studies and European Integration

Border studies and European integration are still two largely unconnected research fields. Border studies' focus is on the analysis of the border and its functions in International Relations. It initially emerged in the United States in 1976, when a network of researchers (mainly geographers and political scientists) set up the Association for Borderland Studies (ABS), which then developed and spread internationally and eventually spun-off a second network on Borders in Transition (BRIT). ABS regularly publishes the *Journal of Borderland Studies*, which deals with a diverse range of subjects related to the border.¹ It was a first

¹ Cf. <https://absborderlands.org/journal/>

attempt at adopting a global view on the issue and has largely contributed to the emergence of Border Studies as a scientific discipline. In Europe, the border, regarded as a limit of state sovereignty, disappeared from the social scientific fields after World War II. The main contributions were published in national or disciplinary frameworks², which has influenced the way the border has been taught in the two cultural and linguistic areas.³ Since the 1990s, border studies has been subject of a large number of research works and the historiography on the matter is abundant.⁴ Geographers often put an accent on the geo-political dimension of the border, which becomes apparent with its territorial affirmation; for example the articulation of politics and of space, as Michel Foucher has explained it.⁵ More recently, Border Studies in Europe have been analysed in a similar sense by Marie-Christine Fourny and Anne-Laure Amilhat-Szary,⁶ while also being stressed by political scientists such as Malcolm Anderson and Eberhart Bort, particularly as it pertains to the western and the eastern European borders.⁷ The historical dimension of the border has also recently been examined in two books, one edited by Sabine Dullin and Sophie Cœuré on the *Frontières du communisme* (Frontiers of Communism) and the other by Michael Gehler and Andreas Pudlat on *Grenzen in Europa* (Borders in Europe).⁸ This increase in publications (for which authors do not presume to be able to provide a complete

² Cf. Raffestin, C., Guichonnet, P., *Géographie des frontières*, PUF, Paris, 1974; Dion, R., *Les frontières de la France*, Monfort, Brionne, 1947; Prescott, J. R. V., *Political Frontiers and Boundaries*, Allan & Unwin, London, Boston, 1987.

³ The authors are undoubtedly influenced by the languages they use (those which are better known), and this explains the preponderance of references in German, French and English languages.

⁴ In *Villes et frontières. Un jeu de construction de territoires*, Bâle, Berlin, Strasbourg, Université de Paris Ouest-Nanterre-La Défense, 2010, Reitel, B. largely reported on the scope and scale of geographic works on the notion of the border.

⁵ Foucher, M. *Fronts et frontières*, Fayard, Paris, 1986.

⁶ Amilhat-Szary, A.-L., Fourny, M.-Ch. (eds.), *Après la frontière, avec la frontière: nouvelles dynamiques transfrontalières en Europe*, Editions de l'Aube, Paris, 2006.

⁷ Anderson, M. *Frontier Regions in Western Europe*, Frank Cass, London, 1983; Anderson, M., Bort, E., *Boundaries and Identities: The Eastern Frontier of the European Union*, Social Science Institute, Edinburgh, 1996.

⁸ Dullin, S., Cœuré, S. *Frontières du communisme. Mythologies et réalités de la division de l'Europe de la révolution d'Octobre au mur de Berlin*, La Découverte, Paris, 2007; Gehler, M., Pudlat, A. (eds.), *Grenzen in Europa*, Historische Europastudien Band 2, Olms Georg Verlag, Hildesheim, Zürich, New York, 2009.

bibliography) stems from the period between the 1990s to the 2000s which was marked by an acceleration of globalization, the dismantling of the Iron Curtain, and the process of European integration through the transfer of national sovereignty to the European level and its different impacts in political and geographical terms⁹.

This link between Border Studies and European integration has so far been neglected. Thus, scholars of European integration, especially historians and economists, have focused mostly on successive periods of integration¹⁰, on actors and policies¹¹, on institutions¹², and on the impact of economic integration on border spaces.¹³ It was only in 1989 when René Girault, one of the founders of the liaison group of historians with the European Commission, initiated a program on European identities that set up a working group on borders in Europe.¹⁴ Research on cross-border cooperation has also so far been undertaken independently of that of European integration. The study of the relations below the state level that have developed after World War II alongside European borders was largely initiated in the 1970s. Cross-border cooperation refers to all types of relations (institutional, contractual, or informal) which occur on a

⁹ Milward, A. S., *The European Rescue of the Nation State*, Routledge, London, 1992.

¹⁰ Cf. first publications of the liaison group of Historians with the European Commission at Bruylant/Bruxelles-Giuffrè/Milano-LGDJ/Paris-Nomos-Verlag/Baden-Baden: Poidevin, R. (ed.), *Histoire des débuts de la construction européenne, mars 1948-mai 1950*, vol. 1, 1986; Schwabe, K. aus (ed.), *Die Anfänge des Schuman-Plans, 1950/51*, vol. 2, 1988 and Trausch, G. (ed.), *Die Europäische Integration vom Schuman-Plan bis zu den Verträgen von Rom*. Beiträge des Kolloquiums in Luxemburg 17–19. Mai 1989; vol. 4, 1993.

¹¹ E.g., Bussière, E., Dumoulin, M. (ed.), *Milieus économiques et intégration européenne au XXe siècle*, Artois presses université, Arras, 1998; Varsori, A. (ed.), *Inside the European Community. Actors and Policies in the European Integration from the Rome Treaties to the Creation of the 'Snake' (1958–1972)*, vol. 9, 2005; Milward, A., *The European Rescue of the Nation State*, Routledge, London, 1992.

¹² E.g., Spierenburg, D., Poidevin, R., *Histoire de la Haute autorité de la Communauté européenne du charbon et de l'acier*, Bruylant, Brussels, 1993; Dumoulin, M. (ed.), *La Commission européenne 1958–1972, History and Memories of an Institution*, Opoce, Luxembourg, 2007; Dumoulin, M. (ed.), *La Commission européenne 1973–1986, History and Memories of an Institution*, Opoce, Luxembourg, 2014.

¹³ Ratti, R., *Théorie du développement des régions-frontières*, Fribourg, Centre de recherches en économie de l'espace de l'Université de Fribourg, 1991.

¹⁴ Girault, R., *Identité et conscience européennes au XXe siècle*, Hachette, Paris, 1994; Frank, R., *Les identités européennes au XXe siècle. Diversités, convergences et solidarités*, Publications de la Sorbonne, Paris, 2004.

regular basis between actors who live on either side of one or several national borders and are within relatively close geographical proximity. In fact, the first multidisciplinary studies were launched when Raimondo Strassoldo and his colleagues at the International Sociological Institute of Gorizia created a network of researchers who led a scientific study on cross-border relations and cooperation at local and regional level in Europe.¹⁵ Since then, other scientific disciplines have shown an interest in the field of cross-border cooperation. For example, geographers mainly analyse the functions and effects of borders on different scales; law specialists examine the legal tools and problems of cooperation; political and administrative scientists regard cooperation in relation with the subject of governance, federal and regional studies; economists study the economic disparities and flows between border regions; historians look at the origins and the development of neighbourhood relations in cross-border areas while sociologists question the actors involved in public policies.¹⁶

The rare attempts to study cross-border cooperation with regard to the integration of European states were made by political scientists in the mid-1990s who regarded cooperation in relation to the subject of a “Europe of regions”, in which local and regional actors were the central focus of integration, in the sense that they seemed to represent the ‘most ideal’ level of governance for achieving a united Europe that reflected the democratic rights of the citizen.¹⁷ Cross-border cooperation was also identified as a means to implement the Single European Market and to establish a ‘Europe without borders’ with free movement of goods, services, capital, and people.¹⁸

¹⁵ Strassoldo, R., *Boundaries and Regions*, International Sociological Institute de Gorizia, Trieste, 1973.

¹⁶ For the bibliographical references of the different disciplines, cf. Wassenberg, B., “Historiographie de la coopération transfrontalière”, in *L’approche pluridisciplinaire de la coopération transfrontalière. Les jalons pour un travail de recherche interdisciplinaire*, Cahiers de Fare No 5, L’Harmattan, Paris, 2014, p. 9–15.

¹⁷ Grom, I., *Die grenzüberschreitende Zusammenarbeit als Beitrag zur Förderung der europäischen Integration*, Verlag Dr. Köster, Berlin, 1995; Raich, S., *Grenzüberschreitende und interregionale Zusammenarbeit in einem Europa der Regionen*, Nomos, Baden Baden, 1995.

¹⁸ Ricq, Ch., *Les Cantons frontaliers et l’intégration européenne*, Acte Unique européen, 1992, Report from the Symposium of Oct 28, 1988 in Geneva, Council of Europe, Strasbourg, 1990.

This Critical Dictionary takes a different perspective: In order to frame and conceptualize the dynamics taking place within the territorial sub-systems of cross-border cooperation in Europe and to connect them to the process of European integration, the dictionary uses neo-institutionalist theories and applies a new, territorialized approach to European integration.¹⁹ This approach focuses on the role of local and regional actors who operate in a given territory and who have an effect on the process of integration. It starts from the observation that in many regions all over Europe, innovative forms of local institution building are being created. This institution building is done either with specific reference to European integration (adjustment of the operating size of the supra-local, such as the regional level) or by following the governance logic of multi-actor cooperation for the purpose of stimulating new territorial development approaches.²⁰ In this respect, the border is a political construction, one where the regime changes in accordance with the development of the relations between the states on either side. The framework provided for several decades by the policy of territorial cooperation by the EU encourages the emergence of European cross-border regimes based on strong multi-scalar cooperation within a framework of free circulation. This cross-border regime transcends the distinction between external and internal borders because it is imposed beyond the limits of the EU. One aim of this critical dictionary is to question this cross-border regime by enabling an analysis on the scale of states and cross-border regions.

The critical dictionary on cross-border cooperation presents these multiple cross-border areas and governance structures in the EU and also provides the reader with a list of theoretical terms and approaches in the field of border studies and European integration which serve as a grid for analysis.

¹⁹ March, J. G., Olson, J. P., *Rediscovering Institutions: The Organisational Basic of Politics*, New York, 1989.

²⁰ Beck, J., “European Cross-Border Cooperation of the Future: Capacity-Building and the Principle of Horizontal Subsidiarity”, in: Iva Pires (ed.), *Borders and Borderlands: Today's Challenges and Tomorrow's Prospects*, Proceedings of the ABS Lisbon Conference Centro de Estudos Geográficos, Lisbon, 2012, p. 13–33.

An Interdisciplinary Tool for Scholars and Practitioners

Two basic needs have clearly emerged from the research on cross-border cooperation in Europe: On the one hand, a global overview on the subject is still lacking, especially at the EU level. There exists no pedagogical tool for students, researchers, or other actors that could be used to find precise and clear information on terminology, theoretical approaches and different disciplinary concepts, or for existing cross-border regions in Europe. Moreover, the interdisciplinary approach on cross-border cooperation and its role in the process of integration is still insufficient. The Critical Dictionary on Borders, Cross-Border Cooperation, and European Integration fills in this gap. Its concept is similar to the dictionaries which have already been published on the EU.²¹ Indeed, for cross-border cooperation, such a reference book does not exist, except for a *Manual of the Council of Europe* dating from 2006, which is not structured according to an alphabetically classified logic.²²

Our publication is based on our previous interdisciplinary research on cross-border cooperation. Two major projects must be mentioned in this context. First, a research program led from 2008–2013 by the Historical Research Centre *Frontières, acteurs et représentations d'Europe* (FARE) of the University of Strasbourg and the Euro-Institut Kehl, which consisted of a series of thematic seminars on cross-border cooperation and a final Conference in 2010 on “*Building Bridges Across Borders: Towards territorial cohesion in Europe?*”. The results were presented in six books published between 2009 and 2013 in the Steiner-Verlag Edition of Stuttgart, entitled; *Living and Researching Cross-border cooperation in Europe*.²³ While this was an excellent starting point for the Critical Dictionary, it was not sufficient to present an all-encompassing overview

²¹ Bertoncini, Y., Chopin, Th., Dulphy, A., Kahn, S., Maningand, Ch (ed.), *Dictionnaire critique de l'Union européenne*, Colin, Paris, 2008; Gerbet, P., Bossuat, G., Grosbois, Th. (ed.), *Dictionnaire historique de l'Europe unie*, André Versaille, Waterloo, 2009.

²² Ricq, Ch., *Handbook on Cross-Border Cooperation*, Council of Europe, Strasbourg, 2006.

²³ Wassenberg, B., Beck, J. (eds.), *Vivre et penser la coopération transfrontalière (Volumes 1–6): Les régions frontalières françaises; Gouvernance in deutschen Grenzregionen; The European dimension; Les régions frontalières sensibles; Integration und (trans-)regionale Identitäten; Vers une cohésion territoriale?*; Steiner Verlag, Stuttgart, 2009–2014.

of cross-border territories within the EU. The series of publications indeed mainly covered pioneer regions in western Europe, with a focus on the French and the German borders and on some more sensitive cases, such as Northern Ireland or Catalonia. In order to take into account the multiplicity of existing cross-border areas in Europe, a large number of geographic spaces still needed to be covered. Particular attention had thus to be paid to the ‘new’ (after 2007) external borders of the EU and to the way that cross-border cooperation had been used as a “Small Neighbourhood Policy” to stabilize the European continent.²⁴ After the fall of the Berlin Wall in 1989, Euroregions have indeed been spreading at the European Community’s borders with the East, with the objective of preparing the Central and Eastern European states for future accession to the EU. The first such Eastern Euroregion was created in 1991 at the border between reunified Germany, Czechoslovakia, and Poland (*Euroregio Neisse-Nisa-Nysa*).²⁵ Cross-border cooperation also developed in the Balkans and alongside the Russian border.²⁶ Outside of these examples, a large number of other geographical spaces could be listed whose actors and institutions of cooperation had yet to be explored.

The second project was an interdisciplinary historical-geographic approach which was conducted in 2014–2015 by Bernard Reitel, Jean Peyrony, and Birte Wassenberg, in cooperation with the European Commission. This project led to the publication of a book on *25 Years of Territorial Cooperation in Europe*, which presented a series of maps and articles on European Regional Policy and cross-border cooperation in EU member states.²⁷ However, this publication was not organised as a dictionary and did not contain explicit theoretical underpinnings. Rather, it has been designed as a practical guide for Interreg project or program managers to learn about the EU’s territorial cohesion

²⁴ Klatt, M., Wassenberg, B. (ed.), “Secondary Foreign Policy – Local International Relations: Can Cross-Border Cooperation function as a Tool to Peace-Building and Reconciliation in Border Regions”, *Special Issue Regional and Federal Studies*, vol. 27, issue 3, 2017.

²⁵ Eckart, K., Kowalke, H. (ed.), *Die Euroregionen im Osten Deutschlands*, Schriftenreihe der Gesellschaft für Deutschlandforschung, Berkin, 1997.

²⁶ In 2001, the Euroregion *Evros-Maritsa-Merci*, was created between Greece, Turkey and Bulgaria; in 2003 the Euroregion *Driva-Sava- Majevisa* between Bosnia-Hezogovina, Croatia, and Serbia.

²⁷ Wassenberg, B., Reitel, B. (with Peyrony, J.), *25 years of Territorial Cooperation in Europe. An Historical Perspective*, European Publication Office, Luxembourg, 2015.

policies and to get an overview on the EU member states cross-border areas. However, this publication did employ a methodology based on a combination of geographical and historical tools to reconstitute the puzzle of territorial border spaces in Europe and consisted of a series of complementary articles and maps. For each of the EU member states or a group of member states, the articles retraced the development of decentralized cooperation by focusing on five main points: origin of territorial cooperation, main actors, territory, development of governance structures and their link with the European Community/EU, and tools of cooperation/integration (legal instruments, use of European structural policies, formal and informal relations, European and/or regional integration). For each article, a map was supplied by the *Mission opérationnelle transfrontalière* (MOT), which illustrated the geography of the decentralized cooperation (territorial spaces of cross-border cooperation, governance structures).

This Critical Dictionary takes up this new methodology. It is composed of scientific articles written by specialists on cross-border cooperation coming from the most varied disciplinary backgrounds. It consists of two distinctive parts: First a conceptual section dealing with terminology, theories, and tools of cross-border cooperation which answers some key questions such as what is a region, a border, a cross-border worker, a (trans-)regional identity, and cross-border governance. Second, there is a geographical section which represents a repertory of member states of the EU and their neighbourhood and a variety of cross-border regions at different scales. Each of the 27 EU member states has been covered by an article, to which the United Kingdom has been added. It seemed indeed unthinkable to not include the latter, which has been part of the European Community/EU for several decades and the departure of which poses a concrete problem of cross-border cooperation with Ireland. Switzerland has also been integrated in the list of states due to the special relationship it has developed with the EU but also because it has been among the pioneers launching initiatives of cross-border cooperation in the 1960s. In some cases, states have been regrouped into larger areas, not in order to minimize the position of the individual states, but rather to underline the intensity of links and the essential part that they have played in the process of European construction. This is the case of the Benelux states, which represent one of the first spaces of economic integration in the history of the European Community. The Baltic States have also been regrouped, but for another reason, as they share a common history and

are confronted to similar challenges. In contrast, an article has been reserved for each of the member states of the Nordic Council, which are also members of the EU, i.e. Denmark, Finland and Sweden, whereas Norway and Island have been dealt with together, in a specific article on the Nordic Council. Finally, we have also chosen to mention the role of micro-states in cross-border cooperation. Rather than dealing with each of them separately, we have decided to select the case of Andorra, which presents the advantage of having already been largely studied by our *Transfrontier European Network* (TEIN). However, overall, we have not presented an individual article on all other states which are part of Europe, but not of the EU. Some of these states are mentioned in other articles, for example the ex-republics of Yugoslavia (apart from Croatia and Slovenia) are dealt with in an article on the “Balkans”, or Belarus, Moldova and Ukraine, as well as the Caucasian states, are mentioned in the articles on the European Neighbourhood Policy and the Eastern Partnership. Finally, Russia is also dealt with in several articles (Polish-Russian Border Region, Finland, Baltic states), as well as Turkey (Cyprus, Greece, European Neighbourhood Policy). Thus, the geographical zone that we cover corresponds mainly to the EU and its neighbourhood area according to a gradual approach without asking the question on a precise delimitation of Europe, which is not our research purpose. The approach we follow is therefore Eurocentric, but we understand it still as “enlarged”, open and critical.

Furthermore, we propose articles on many cross-border regions. We have tried to cover the field as widely as possible being aware that it is still difficult to be exhaustive. Thus, we have selected areas where cooperation appears as particularly emblematic, in function of the network of researchers and practitioners that we were able to mobilize and who dispose of a good knowledge of the territory. Besides, it seemed essential to be able to propose a multi-scalar analysis which takes into account local and regional initiatives in different regions in Europe. However, we have not been able to take into account certain cross-border spaces for which we do not possess enough (or any) information and this explains that some areas in Europe are better represented than others. We hope that the actors engaged in cross-border associations or movements in these neglected areas will forgive us of not having mentioned them. Each region has been presented via its historical development, its governance structure and its geographical territory. The description of cross-border cooperation is also presented for each EU member state (including the

UK) with an updating of the information collected for the book on *25 Years of Territorial Cooperation in Europe*. The articles contain bibliographical elements which allow for the curious reader to acquire more knowledge on the subject. The Critical Dictionary is organised by means of key words classified in alphabetical order. For the conceptual section, a list of key words has been elaborated and the authors were asked to analyse each term according to a fixed scheme, which includes an explication of the notion, connected terms, issues, and bibliographical references (among others).²⁸ However, this analytical grid was intended to be a guideline more than restrictive structure for the articles and each author was free to conceptualize and to evaluate the key word according to his/her scientific discipline, geographical origin and research experience.

The dictionary should not be considered exhaustive, though the scope of what is covered was made to be as broad as possible. The concepts presented concern trans-border cooperation in a general manner, but also take into consideration the totality of theories and reflections on borders beyond their purely geographical dimension. The delimitation of the field has been done on the basis of an abundant bibliography, while taking into consideration the relevance the terms covered to their practical usage by experts on cross-border cooperation and contemporary debates within the field of Border Studies. However, it is entirely possible that the reader may yet perceive some important terms missing from the publication. As in every production of this kind, it was necessary to make choices and trade-offs in order to complete a final publication. Notwithstanding, that information which was included has undergone evaluation by an international committee composed of scientists and practitioners of cross-border cooperation located in more than 15 EU states. This committee was tasked with critically reading and evaluating of all the submissions which were then returned to each author with comments who then had the opportunity to consider the changes and adjust their entries accordingly.

The geographical section of the dictionary consists of articles on border spaces in the EU and companion maps, which together present an analysis of the borders as a whole by distinguishing between the constructions of the

²⁸ Border: characteristics and functions (barrier, affirmation, regulation, etc.), connected terms (territory, frontier, limit, etc.).

cross-border territory²⁹, the representations of the border and the general history and governance of cross-border cooperation.³⁰ In this section, the reader can also find examples of transnational cooperation, emblematic cooperation at the regional level and local cooperation with specific spatial configurations.³¹ For the authors of this collective publication, the focus has always been on the fact that we are dealing with a “critical” dictionary, which means that there is no request for uniform thinking. Quite on the contrary, we invited authors to give their subjective analysis of a given term or area to further stimulate interdisciplinary research and discussion.

The theme of the border – given that it fits into the field of political geography – presents an ideological dimension that can, at times, engender controversy. The editorial committee has opted to publish some articles with a view of including a plurality of approaches to stimulate debate and discussion. Essentialized visions have been excluded, however, because they consider the border as a fixed limit separating territorial units with irrevocable identities. The choice was made to concentrate on cross-border cooperation through a discussion of current and future issues. Consequentially, we have chosen not to tackle existing borders between different parts of Europe – the north and the south, east and west – that rely on measuring differences that could reify divisiveness or be instrumentalized by certain actors. Moreover, the authors have chosen not to discuss internal tensions that exist in certain states and are sometimes taken as a real political border, e.g. Belgium or Spain, except for the case of the United Kingdom in order to discuss the multi-scalar consequences of Brexit.

In this respect, this Critical Dictionary should be regarded as a beginning and not an end in itself. It is not a Wikipedia collection on border terminology, theory, and regions in Europe, but rather a contribution to the scientific debate on border studies and European integration.

²⁹ The expression ‘cross-border territory’ is an oxymoron, as in a national framework, the border is a limit of sovereignty, establishing a marker of identity. Nevertheless, we will use this expression to describe any cross-border area, clearly delimited, provided with a joint, sustainable governance structure.

³⁰ France: Upper Rhine, Saar-Lor-Lux, Catalan Region.

³¹ The Baltic Sea Macro-Region, the Regio Basiliensis, the *Öresund* Strait, etc.

Maps to Identify Cross-Border Integration at Different Scales

One objective of this Critical Dictionary is to allow for a visualization of cross-border cooperation throughout the EU and its surroundings. Even when one has a detailed map of a cross-border region, comparisons between them can sometimes prove difficult as semiotic choices are not identical from one region to another. A harmonized legend has been created at the European level to allow for such a comparative analysis. We have chosen a comparison between regions to allow for a more global vision, at the expense of a detailed analysis which in a number of instances proves to be impossible. This objective, however, was not without its difficulties. First, it was necessary to determine what information should be considered critical. From the outset, the focus was on institutions rather than programs or projects. An institution exists over a longer period time, while the duration of a project is often more limited. Nevertheless, some projects have been represented as they are emblematic models of cooperation. In other instances, initiatives were identified according to a bottom-up perspective from a local or regional base. The programs resulting from a top-down approach largely involving states were not examined, except if they had real buy-in from local and/or regional actors.

The challenge then became to identify the perimeters of the framework in which the institutionalisation of cross-border cooperation occurred. There are many cases which exist with a weak degree of institutionalisation in the legal sense of the term; for example, an association has the advantage of being flexible in its operations and less constrained by the legislation of the state. In any case, institutionalisation is defined generally according to a governance structure that fulfils a certain number of criteria: a program of activities, regular interactions, a defined scope for action and a persisting existence over a number of years. The resulting inventory of institutions that meet these criteria, however, does not claim to be exhaustive, since there is no organisation that systematically lists governance structures with very different statuses. The *Association des régions frontalières d'Europe* (ARFE) created a map of all the Euroregions in 2011, but did not continue to update it, making it an insufficient way to systematically monitor changes in Euroregion institutions. Therefore, we opted to use the website of the *Mission opérationnelle transfrontalière* (MOT), which is regularly updated and produces maps at different scales due to its experienced cartographer

Jean Rubio.³² Consideration of creating a harmonized cartographic framework has since been undertaken.

The proposed legend seeks to distinguish consistent scales of cooperation by taking into account two geographical dimensions; scale on the one hand and population on the other. Three spatial scales are thus retained. Since cross-border cooperation is essentially the work of local or regional actors, we have used these two scales to represent cross-border territories. The identification of boundaries at the local level is relatively simple: it is defined as the areas in which the actors involved are in the vicinity of the border and where their actions are part of a small area. The communities involved at this level are often territories of the Nomenclature of Territorial Units of Statistics (NUTS) 5 (communes) or 4 (inter-municipal structures or aggregates of communes).

The regional scale was split in two parts, one qualified as regional and the other supra-regional. In both cases, the groupings often cover NUTS 3 territories. However, we have distinguished large entities that typically associate NUTS 2 and/or NUTS 3, with smaller ones that include NUTS 3 or even NUTS 4. The increase in area usually leads to an increase in complexity, but also in some cases results in covering areas at a greater distance from the border. As a result, the regional scale generally corresponds to configurations where the effects of the border are more or less felt throughout the perimeter, while at the supra-regional scale some communities consider themselves less impacted by the cross-border dimension. Differentiation between the two scales does not always correspond to strictly objective criteria.

Finally, the concepts should be considered according to the language used. The concept of 'region' that we have chosen is that of the English or German, whereas the French in general would use the word *territoire*. In French, the word *région* refers to a larger scale (NUTS 2) which falls under the purview of French regional authorities. The historical Euroregions of the German border are smaller spaces than those of the Franco-Spanish border, the latter which takes into account, for example, research and innovation issues. Thus, the Franco-German "Eurodistricts" are cross-border territories that are basins of everyday life, whereas the Euroregions of the Upper Rhine and Greater Region are areas that don't commonly undertake urban functions. Cooperation on a larger scale – for example

³² MOT. Cross-border-territories EU, <http://www.espaces-transfrontaliers.org/en/>.

those of France with its neighbouring regions – is now called “macro-regional”. This shows that convergence within the EU is also a matter of vocabulary and that terms and concepts are changing over time.

A second distinction takes into account the spatial characteristics of populations by distinguishing between densely populated, urbanized, and less populated areas, within which a hierarchy is established between urban Centres. Certain territories are home to large cities (population of several hundred thousand inhabitants), most of which have a metropolitan dimension, governance functions (political and economic) and innovation (research). These urban Centres act as a hub of circulation on a European scale. As a result, we have made a distinction between metropolitan territories – which have a metropolis – and urban areas characterized by a high population density and the existence of smaller cities. The maps completed at the level of each state and some dyads make it possible to reveal the abundance of cooperation and the complexity that results from it.

A First Step towards a new Decentralized, Territorialized Approach to the History of European Integration

The Critical Dictionary can also be regarded as a first step to a new, territorialized approach to European integration. This approach uses a geographic-historical methodology to describe a more decentralized history of small areas of integration in border regions. From a methodological point of view, this could be called a Multi-Orientated Scale Approach to European Integration and Cross-border Cooperation and European Integration (MOSAIC). This approach reconstructs the historical development of multiple areas of local cooperation to reinterpret them in the context of European integration. Like a mosaic, which is constituted like a puzzle with the whole formed from a large number of individual pieces, this ‘mosaic’ method is inspired by the Holberg Prize Symposium in 2010 on *Doing DeCentreed History: The Global in the Local*, where several researchers presented their decentralized approach to global history.³³

³³ Davis, N., “DeCentreing History: Local Stories and Cultural Crossing in a Global World.” *History and Theory*. 50.

The outcome of this innovative approach to the history of European integration is a new focus on the role of borders and border regions. Marie-Thérèse Bitsch was the first historian to emphasize the role of border regions for the process of European integration after 1945 in a Conference which she organised in Strasbourg in 2002 on *Le fait régional dans la construction européenne* (The Regional Element in European Integration).³⁴ However, this approach was centred on the study of actors, in line with the historical approach of Wolfram Kaiser, who emphasized the existence of multiple networks acting across national borders which directly influence European policy-making and the development of a multi-level European Community governance system.³⁵ For their part, the works of political scientists on the contribution of cross-border cooperation to the construction of a 'Europe of regions' were rather one-sided, as they took on a positivist approach to the idea of a 'Europe without borders', for which border regions were presented as model areas of integration.

Until the recent crisis of the EU, culminating in the Brexit decision of 2016, the positive link between cross-border cooperation and European integration seemed intuitive. Particularly since the completion of the European Single Market in 1992, the effects of integration have been felt most directly in Europe's border regions. For this reason, it is interesting to note that border regions have increasingly been identified, both in theory and in practice, as 'exemplary' of the process of integration.³⁶ However, since the Schengen crisis – partially induced by substantial migration flows and terrorist threats in 2015 – this positive link between cross-border cooperation and European integration has been increasingly questioned. Newly imposed border controls in the Schengen area, for various durations, shows the diversity of functions that the border takes on, both positive and negative, in the process of European integration

³⁴ Bitsch, M.-Th. (ed.) *Le fait régional et la construction européenne*, Bruylant, Brussels, 2003.

³⁵ Kaiser, W., Leucht, B., Rasmussen, M. (eds.), *The History of the European Union. Origins of a trans- and supranational polity 1950–1972*, Routledge, Abingdon, 2009.

³⁶ Lambertz, K.-H. (ed.), *Die Grenzregionen als Labor und Motor kontinentaler Entwicklungen in Europa. Berichte und Dokumente des Europarates sowie Reden zur grenzüberschreitenden Zusammenarbeit in Europa*, Dike/Nomos, Zürich, Baden-Baden, 2010.

and international relations.³⁷ The question then is whether this process of re-bordering is a temporary period of tension in a general context of European integration, or whether this development reveals a more fundamental trend towards rising nationalism, in the sense of the border being considered as a barrier of protection more than an interface with neighbours. The prevailing logic of increasing border security in the world seems to indicate in the direction of the second interpretation. Are we entering a new era of re-bordering in which European integration and the concept of free mobility (and by extension a European cross-border regime) no longer have a role to play?

The Critical Dictionary takes into account this new trend and considers the multiple functions that the border takes on with regard to both their positive and negative impacts on European integration. It leads us away from an overly one-sided, positivist approach to cross-border cooperation as a necessary contribution to European integration and re-establishes cross-border cooperation as a specific branch of Border Studies,” which may help to explain the process of integration in Europe, but also processes of European disintegration.”³⁸

Recent Policy Developments and Perspectives

European internal borders are a two-fold reality. Each border is a line of separation between two national sovereignties, a fact which remains true notwithstanding European integration. EU policies do not cover all fields, and when they do, directives are transposed, sometimes without interoperability across borders; national differentiation still functions.

But a borderland is also a functional zone, an area where people live and work. In these areas people will often cross the borderline in order to work, shop or meet friends. We can observe this in highly integrated cross-border conurbations such as the tri-national agglomeration Basel, the Greater Geneva, the Oresund region and the region of Luxembourg, with their massive flows of cross-border workers. Otherwise, despite the

³⁷ Wassenberg, B. (ed.), *Castle-Talks on Cross-Border Cooperation. Fear of Integration? The Pertinence of the Border*, Steiner Verlag, Stuttgart, 2018.

³⁸ Wassenberg, B., “The Place of Cross-Border Cooperation in International Relations,” in Dominguez, L., Pires, I. (eds.), *Cross-border Cooperation Structures, Learning from the Past to the Future*, Peter Lang, Brussels, 2014, p. 67–81.

dismantling of border controls, European borders play often the same role as borders in other regions of the world. And nowadays, for many European states, security concerns have been put high on the political agenda.

Economists claim that divisions due to borders are one of the main obstacles to development³⁹, though there are recent examples of economies where complementary economic systems engender conditions for the border to be open.⁴⁰ Planners often urge to think out of territorial boxes⁴¹, while political scientists propose to combine institutional and functional multilevel governance patterns.⁴² Philosophers describe “Europe as borderland”.⁴³ The sociologist and anthropologist Bruno Latour wonders how to ensure protection without moving back to identity and defence of borders.⁴⁴ According to him, the answer cannot be simply local or global. In Europe, the risk for nation-states, with their borders confining sovereignty, is to remain stuck in a local approach, whereas the EU, through its creative tinkering, has managed to materialize necessary overlaps between national interests.

European legislators prescribe the implementation of territorial cohesion through “cross-border regions”.⁴⁵ In the last decades, European policy-makers have developed a tool box comprising cross-border programs (Interreg) to fund development across borders; institutional structures – the European Groupings for Territorial Cooperation (EGTC) – to support cross-border governance; and more recently a legal instrument, the European Cross Border Mechanism, to hybridize

³⁹ World Bank. *Reshaping Economic Geography*, World Development Report, 2009.

⁴⁰ Ratti, R., *Théorie du développement des régions-frontières*, Centre de recherches en économie de l'espace, Fribourg, 1991; Jeanneret, P., *Régions et frontières internationales: l'exemple de la frontière franco-suisse, de Genève à Bâle*, Institut de Recherches Economiques et Régionales, Neuchâtel, 1985.

⁴¹ Faludi, A., *The Poverty of Territorialism, A Neo-Medieval View of Europe and European Planning* Elgar Studies in Planning Theory, Policy and Practice, Cheltenham, 2018.

⁴² Hooghe, L., Marks, G., *Types of Multi-Level Governance*, European Online Papers, October 2001, <http://EIOP.or.at/EIOP/PDF/2001-011.PDF> (2.11.2019).

⁴³ Balibar, E., “Europe as Borderland,” *Environment and Planning D: Society and Space*, 27, p. 190–215.

⁴⁴ Latour, B., *Down to Earth: Politics in the New Climatic Regime*, Polity Press, Cambridge, 2018.

⁴⁵ Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union, article 174.

national functional legislations. This would allow local stakeholders not only to identify obstacles to cross-border integration, but also to propose innovative approaches at the national or European level, through a systematic, multi-level process ensuring that answers are given in a reasonable timeframe. A network of national border nodes that coordinate on issues pertaining to each border and at the EU level would enable them to capitalize on such solutions.

It is worth mentioning that in 2019, France and Germany signed the Aachen Treaty which affirmed the two countries' desire, "to enhance their cooperation on European policy with the aim of promoting European unity, efficiency and cohesion while keeping the cooperation open to all member states of the EU. The two countries shall provide local authorities in border regions and cross-border entities such as Eurodistricts with appropriate competences, dedicated resources and accelerated procedures to overcome obstacles to the implementation of cross border projects (...)"⁴⁶ The Treaty also stipulates that technical and political cross-border cooperation committees, "shall coordinate all aspects of cross-border observation (...) draw up a common strategy for identifying priority projects, monitor on an ongoing basis difficulties encountered in border regions and elaborate proposals to address them, as well analyse the impact of new legislation on border regions."⁴⁷ This document acknowledges the role of Eurodistricts and Euroregions to use their common border in an effort to foster cross-border integration and proposes this as a benchmark model for other European countries as a contribution to the integration and cohesion of the whole of Europe.

On the other hand, Brexit has clearly shown how strong the links resulting from EU integration are and how difficult it is to disentangle them. Perhaps, unsurprisingly, the place where the most severe contradictions have arisen out of Brexit is the borderline dividing the island of Ireland. Thus, the EU had reached a crossroad. Borders still reveal fiscal as well as social disparities between national territories and generate asymmetric, divergent development. This should lead to bilateral cooperation aimed at co-development, which has thus far happened only in limited cases.⁴⁸ The next steps should therefore be to

⁴⁶ Treaty of Aachen, 22 January 2019.

⁴⁷ *Ibid.*

⁴⁸ Lambertz, K. H., "Conflits potentiels et possibilités de compromis," Rapport CG37(2019), Congress of Local and Regional Authorities, Council of Europe.

mitigate the dogma of fiscal national sovereignty and in the longer term, to reach the effect of harmonization at European level. The main obstacle to cross-border and European integration and cohesion doesn't lie along the borders, but within national states, in their economic, cultural, institutional, legal, and cognitive software: the national cohesion systems which still have to be made interoperable. Nations form certainly "imagined communities"⁴⁹ and states constitute political communities. Complex and open, these communities are not fixed for eternity, or homogeneous, they are moving, interdependent and they are marked by political tensions. Borderlands are places where innovative types of interoperability and mediation can be experimented with, both within cross-border public services for citizens and businesses and through processes involving persons as well as institutions. Will European states continue to share sovereignty, acknowledge different national narratives, and invent a common one on every border and at the European level? Or will they prefer the old narratives and withdraw into their territorial boxes? This is one of the next critical challenges for borders, cross-border cooperation and European integration.

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⁴⁹ Anderson, B., *Imagined Communities. Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism*, Verso, London, 1983.

Articles

Aachen Treaty

The Franco-German Friendship or Elysée Treaty, signed on 22 January 1963 by Chancellor Konrad Adenauer and President Charles de Gaulle, underpinned the Franco-German reconciliation process. It had been initiated as an important step towards a strengthened intergovernmental cooperation between the two states, but its originality resided in that part of the treaty which provided for the fostering of encounters between the French and the German population. Thus, the Elysée Treaty has allowed for many Franco-German exchange programs, the creation of a Franco-German Youth Center, (the *Office Franco-Allemand pour la Jeunesse* (OFAJ)) in 1963, of a Franco-German Television Channel (ARTE) in 1991 and of a joint High School Diploma, the *AbiBac*, in 1994. Although the treaty has also led to an increased cooperation of the two states in many policy areas and the constitution of the so-called Franco-German couple within the European Community/EU, its main success has undoubtedly been the bottom-up approach to reconciliation involving the French and the German citizens and fostering relations not only between representatives of the two governments, but also between the populations of the two countries.

However, this bottom-up approach did not include an association of cross-border actors or governance structures and especially local and regional public authorities have been left out in the bilateral relations regulated by the Elysée Treaty. On the one hand, this is due to the fact that cross-border cooperation has only started in 1963 at the Franco-German border, first in the Franco-German-Swiss Upper Rhine Region and then in the neighbouring the Saar-Lor-Lux Region, and that it was therefore difficult to be considered for the institutional set-up of the bilateral Treaty. On the other hand, the Treaty followed a purely intergovernmental and not a multi-scalar approach, so that the two states did not even intend to associate local or regional actors to the its functioning. Franco-German cross-border governance structures have therefore largely existed outside the Treaty framework, even after 1975, when the first intergovernmental

Treaty of Bonn was concluded for cross-border cooperation and a Franco-German Swiss inter-governmental Commission was created at the level of the Foreign Ministries.

The link between Franco-German intergovernmental and local and regional cross-border cooperation was only established in 2003, when, at the occasion of the 40th anniversary of the Treaty of Elysée, which was celebrated at the Franco-German border in Strasbourg and in Kehl on 22 January 2003, the French President Jacques Chirac and the German Chancellor Gerhard Schröder declared that a Eurodistrict would be created between the Cities of Strasbourg and Kehl. However, this link was more political than legal, for it consisted in an impulse given by the highest policy level of the Treaty of Elysée for the implementation of a local cross-border project. This did not yet provide for a permanent link between intergovernmental and cross-border governance structures of Franco-German relations. For a legal recognition of cross-border cooperation within the bilateral institutional framework of the Elysée Treaty one has therefore to wait until 2019, when the latter was formally revised.

It was at the occasion of the 56th anniversary of the Elysée Treaty on 22 January 2019, when President Emmanuel Macron and Chancellor Angela Merkel signed in Aachen a new treaty on cooperation and integration. The initiative was launched by Emmanuel Macron who placed the Franco-German couple in the EU as one of the priorities of his presidency. On 26 September 2017, during his speech at the Sorbonne University, in Paris, he announced his intention to conclude a new Franco-German Friendship Treaty in order to strengthen the bilateral cooperation. His intention was not to replace the Elysée Treaty, but he aimed to build on it by adapting the bilateral cooperation to the key issues shaping the 21st century in the interests of strengthening the European integration project. This treaty has been signed against a fraught backdrop, amid international tensions, Brexit and the resurgence of nationalistic rhetoric in Europe and it is therefore not merely a symbolic celebration of Franco-German friendship, but a tool serving a proactive, effective, committed and coordinated Franco-German alliance.

The Aachen Treaty extends the Élysée Treaty by asserting the will to give a concrete form to a closer relationship with a real strategy of convergence, of economic and social models, of positions within international bodies, of regulations in border areas, for the sake of greater European integration. On the political level, the Aachen Treaty brings

an important innovation: it provides for the creation of a joint Franco-German Parliamentary Assembly composed of 50 members of the *Bundestag* and 50 members of the *Assemblée nationale*. This new political body has held its constitutive session in Strasbourg on 5–6 February 2020. During the Covid crisis, it has already proven its transnational surplus value: it has thus emphasized several times the need to re-open the border between France and Germany, whilst the national authorities still practiced the policy of closure and border checks.

But the Treaty also lays the groundwork for concrete cooperation projects: there is a mutual Franco-German defense clause (Art.4.1); a provision for a Franco-German digital platform of information and audiovisual content (Art.9); another one for a Franco-German “citizen fund” (Art.12), which will be used for financing new twinning partnerships and Franco-German civil society-led initiatives; and there will be the creation of a Franco-German Council of economic experts (Art.20).

What is important for local and regional actors involved in cross-border cooperation is that the new treaty marks a real recognition of cross-border cooperation as a central element in European construction, with the Chapter IV being entirely devoted to it. Its main objective is the elimination of cross-border obstacles to facilitate the implementation of projects and to simplify the daily lives of border region inhabitants. To this end, “the two countries shall provide local authorities in border regions and cross-border entities such as Eurodistricts with appropriate competences, dedicated resources and accelerated procedures to overcome obstacles to the implementation of cross border projects” (Art.13.2.); and “if no other instrument allows them to overcome such obstacles, adapted legal and administrative provisions, including derogations, may also be provided for” (Art.13.2.).

The setting-up of a Franco-German Cross-Border Cooperation Committee is one of the treaty’s flagship measures. It comprises “such stakeholders as national, regional and local authorities, parliaments and cross-border entities such as Eurodistricts and, where necessary, the Euroregions concerned. This Committee shall coordinate all aspects of cross border observation (...), draw up a common strategy for identifying priority projects, monitor difficulties encountered in border regions and elaborate proposals to address them, as well as analyse the impact of new legislation in border regions” (Art.14). The treaty therefore focuses on Eurodistricts as they are products of the French-German cooperation,

while the two Euroregions, the Upper Rhine and the Greater Region, involve other states. But this focus on Eurodistricts is not a coincidence: in fact, the local political Council of the Eurodistrict Strasbourg-Ortenau has been largely lobbying during the intergovernmental negotiations so that its interests of cross-border cooperation would be taken into account. In June 2018, it adopted a resolution which asked for a certain number of measures to be integrated into the future treaty, such as the need to promote bilingualism or cross-border mobility, but also to associate cross-border structures to the future bilateral institutions of the treaty. The lobbying was successful: the Eurodistricts are mentioned twice expressly by the treaty as structures to be granted help for cooperation and to be associated to the treaty's governance structures.

Taking into account the success of the Elysée Treaty, it was believed that the Treaty of Aachen would be warmly welcomed by the French and German population. It was all the more surprising to see some reactions in the French national and regional media (for example France 2 or the *Dernières Nouvelles d'Alsace*) put forward by populist parties and sovereigntist movements that denounced the new treaty as “selling Alsace to Germany”. Historians have analysed this as a revival of resentments (*ressentiments*) and of French nationalism which aims to denounce German imperialism in order to reinforce the French national identity. But it certainly shows how fragile the process of reconciliation can be even 60 years after the signing of the Elysée Treaty. Nonetheless, exactly one year after it was signed, the Treaty of Aachen entered into force on Wednesday, 22 January 2020. The Franco-German Cross-Border Cooperation Committee was officially established, in Hambach. The Committee will adopt an annual roadmap and meet together at least once a year. It can set up targeted working groups and has the ability to propose that legislation be adapted. It has already identified a first list of 12 obstacles to overcome, including six priority ones relating to healthcare, cross-border apprenticeships, marathons (with respect to medical certificates), school trips, the “Crit’Air” windscreen disc and tax issues relating to labour law.

While the Elysée Treaty had raised a controversy about its compatibility with the European construction, the Aachen Treaty insists that the French-German cooperation “promotes European unity, efficiency and cohesion”, and is “open to all member states of the European Union.” This is also true for the chapter on cross-border cooperation. This is manifest, for instance, in the field of cross-border monitoring that France

and Germany propose to develop on all their borders, joining their efforts in a European perspective. The bi-national and multi-level Cross-Border Cooperation Committee created by the treaty can also be seen as a forefront of generalization of the European cross-border mechanism (ECBM) proposed by the European Commission since 2015, but which has not yet been implemented. This mechanism is a supplementary step towards institutional cross-border integration that goes beyond the European Grouping of Territorial Cooperation (EGTC). Indeed, it is a proposal to resolve legal and administrative obstacles in a cross-border context and would enable the application, in a given member state and in relation to a common cross-border region, of the laws of a neighbouring member state if the laws of the former are a legal obstacle to the delivery of a joint project. For the cross-border actors in the Upper Rhine Region, the Treaty of Aachen might also have a beneficial effect, as the new European Regional Alsatian Authority (*Collectivité européenne d'Alsace*), which has been created by law on 2 August 2019 and will be constituted by the fusion of the two Departments *Haut-Rhin* and *Bas-Rhin* in 2021, has essential competences for cross-border cooperation and may thus also be associated to the governance structures in the new Treaty framework.

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Agriculture and Rural Development

Borders delimit rural areas that are largely conditioned in their present and in their history by national contexts. They can thus juxtapose territories whose social, cultural, economic or landscape characteristics can be radically different. One of the most striking contrasts can oppose the residual or discontinuous agricultural spaces of the peripheries of Gaza or Rafah (Egypt) to the vast Israeli irrigation discs which adjoin the two borders. The same occurs with the border between Mexico and the United States, particularly where it crosses the Imperial Valley, between two parcel organisations and two agricultural systems within the same irrigated perimeter. In Europe, the East-West opposition can still be perceived on both sides of the former Iron Curtain (legacies of the collectivization period). Intra-European contrasts, at the level of the European Union (EU), are nevertheless smoothed out by the increasing integration of markets, economic policies (first Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) of the EU), but also common rural development policies (LEADER program, EAFRD, 2nd pillar of the CAP). On both sides of the borders, however, taxation, the application of European directives, know-how and legacies, differ.

These contrasts and oppositions are anything but neutral. They contribute to shaping the territories, affecting rural border areas in their landscapes and dynamics.

The separation function of borders is persistent. Even in Europe, there are anti-migrant fence in many parts of countryside, in some cases running along the most sensitive borders (i.e., Hungary-Serbia). In the context of pacification and then “de-functionalization” of the border lines within the Schengen area the territorial impact is fortunately less significant. Though, former strategic forests can nevertheless represent an essential landscape component. While they are now a tourist asset, they have also isolated or marginalized some areas (i.e., Avesnois-Thiérache in the north of France). For its part, the former east-west German border is not only easy to find in the countryside, but is also being re-functionalized as part of a vast local development project, for example the *Grünes Band* project – a Green Belt project with memorial and ecological objectives. The border, even when open, also continues to condition practices and representations. The tourist activity in the Ardenne region, with a strong

discrepancy between the Belgian part and the French part of the massif, is an illustration.

The interface function of borders, for its part, is particularly fed by the importance of the flows generated by the discontinuity gradient. It stimulates, also in the rural areas, leisure and commercial activities, due to in part the differences in taxation of products such as tobacco and alcohol. The proximity of the border is also not without consequence on real estate prices, in connection with the importance of the flow of cross-border workers. Case in point is the Franco-Swiss border, or conversely, the relative weakness of the influence of Lille on the Belgian countryside. Interface situations may also affect agricultural activity. The specialization of Brittany in intensive farming activities owes much to its maritime situation (direct importation of protein meals). Above all, the dynamics of valorization of discontinuities can be quite remarkable, even between two countries economically, politically and culturally as close as France and Belgium. French farmers, particularly in the outskirts of Lille, have deployed intensive production systems that have long been based on the production of endive due to the relative proximity of the Lille consumption basin. Their immediate Belgian neighbours, more distant from the Brussels market, have developed a speculative agriculture (particularly potatoes). Because they have solicited more of their soils, because they are looking for complementary surfaces, because the cost of access to the land is uneven and because the tax systems differ, Belgian farmers come to sublease land in France (on a strip of about 20 km, in sometimes high proportions). Conversely, French producers living in peri-urban areas, disqualified from regional agro-food companies with high requirements for irrigation and plot size, find opportunities amongst Belgian industrialists. This last example underlines how, even within a homogenized space like the European agricultural area, borders can generate specific dynamics. The border in this case represents a discontinuity that paradoxically determines cross-border agricultural basins.

Beyond border territories, strategies for the use of asymmetries and integration dynamics operate more and more at a transnational scale and shape the countryside away from the borders. The influx of northern European populations (British and Dutch) in search of cheap traditional rural houses in the French and southern European countryside could have a major impact locally. In agricultural terms, the process of land grabbing

by external investors reflects a dynamic of internationalization of the land market. These dynamics, which could drastically affect the economy and the social organisation of the territories, do not only concern the countries in Africa or Asia, but also in Europe. Examples abound of land acquisitions in Slovakia, Moldova, and Ukraine by Danish, Dutch, or German investors. Also, part of the process are purchases of cereal lands and vineyards in France by farmers of northern Europe or Chinese investors. The view can be reversed: the insertion of territories in a globalized economy, (i.e., a context of competition among agricultural areas), also involves the emergence of new boundaries and discontinuities. For example, the definition of Protected Designation of Origin and Protected Geographical Indication (PDO-PGI) perimeters corresponds to a logic of territorial differentiation whose full valorization takes place across borders (the economics of singularities – Karpik, 2007, 2010, maintaining or increasing the gradient of discontinuity with a double game of scale, singularity of a national territory, exclusivity of a terroir).

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Alzette-Belval*

The cross-border agglomeration Alzette-Belval presents an urban continuum inherited from the steel and mining era. Covering an area of 170 km² and welcoming 95,714 inhabitants in 2017, it is currently composed of 12 municipalities. The political cooperation really began in the 2000s with the implementation of a major project: Belval. Pursuing a polycentric spatial development to “unblock” Luxembourg-city, the State of Luxembourg created ex nihilo a new urban centrality at the border, where 25,000 jobs and 7,000 inhabitants are envisaged. A public investment of more than one billion euros is planned over two decades to clean up a brownfield land and build a multifunctional urban district including a university and research centres, decentralized public administrations, a concert hall, companies and shops. In reaction of this Luxembourgish urban regeneration project, French authorities have decided, in 2009, to invest 300 million euros over 20 years for the development plan of an eco-agglomeration. Such a public investment aims at complementing the Luxembourgish project in an attempt to avoid the status of simple suburbia.

These two urban projects are achieved autonomously by the national development agencies. However, despite some political divergences, there is a willingness to connect these planning initiatives thanks to a cross-border cooperation implying strategies, concrete achievements and institutional settings. At the strategic level, the French and Luxembourg states signed in 2004 a framework convention proposing a shared vision of the development of the cross-border living area anchored specifically on the Belval project. At the operational level, the first cross-border actions implemented are mainly intended to respond to mobility issues, particularly through new road sections and rail or bus services in order to improve accessibility to Belval, but also towards Luxembourg-city. At the partnership level, a cross-border cooperation structure was established in 2013 in the form of a European Grouping of Territorial Cooperation (EGTC) bringing together local, regional and state actors. All the cross-border instruments have been put in place. They, however, might still be insufficient to meet the needs of the cross-border area.

* For the map, see article ‘Greater Region’.

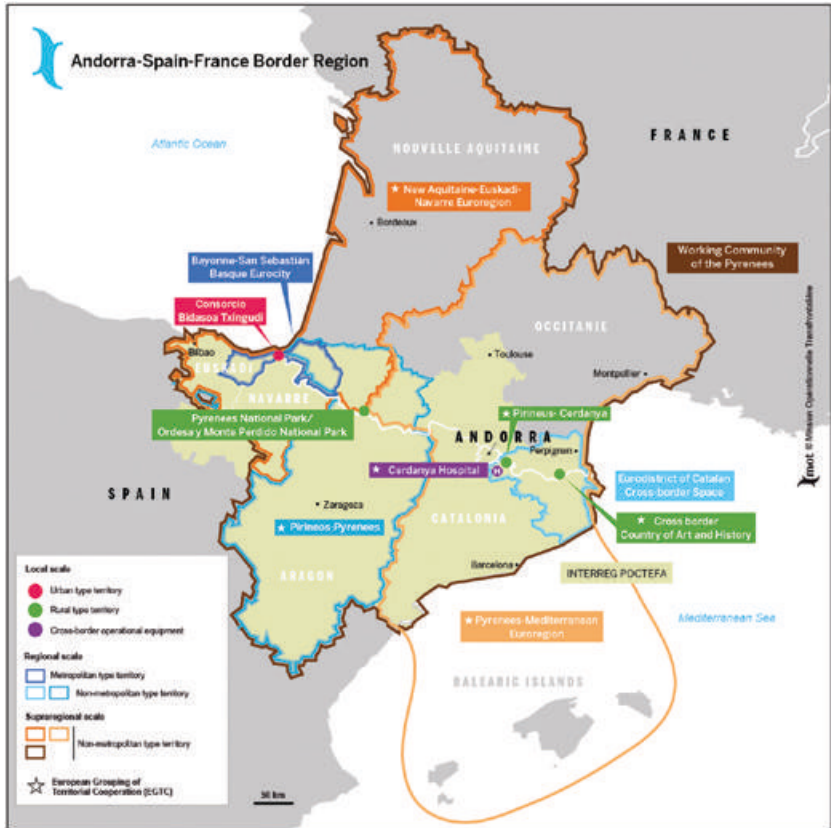
The setting up of a territorial project at a cross-border scale is especially challenging. The first obstacle lies in the disparities between territories. Indeed, the attractiveness of the Alzette-Belval agglomeration is, for the moment, stronger felt along the Luxembourgish side as it holds a larger portion of residents, jobs creation, public facilities, and – most importantly – a tax system that favours the establishment of companies in the Grand Duchy. Such circumstances de facto increase the inequalities between municipalities in terms of financial resources. The second obstacle concerns the gap between the institutional framework put in place at the local level with the EGTC and the functional reality resulting from the Alzette-Belval agglomeration being a component of the cross-border metropolitan region of Luxembourg. The lack of spatial concordance between these two perimeters hinders the organisation of this emerging urban centrality. In the long run, to cope with these challenges and guarantee a more coherent spatial development, a cross-border solidarity could be discussed and designed between public authorities, as well as some concrete initiatives for this purpose such as a shared management of certain public services or even fiscal retrocession.

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Andorra



Andorra is a micro-state in the middle of the Pyrenees Mountains, a small country of 468 km² with 6 embassies around the world (Paris, Madrid, Brussels, Lisbon, Vienna, New-York), as well as a permanent mission in Geneva and permanent representation in Strasbourg. Located between France and Spain, it has always had special relationships with these two states. It was first a co-seigneurie, which became a co-Principality in 1278 with the “Paréages” (agreements between the bishop of Urgell and the Count of Foix), and was represented by its two co-Princes until 1993 after which, it became a state in its own rights. A few months

after the adoption of its Constitution, in July 1993, Andorra joined the United Nations and in November 1994 became a member of the Council of Europe. An agreement which dates back to 1990 was reaffirmed in 1996, associating Andorra with the European Union (EU) and giving it advantageous peculiarities such as a customs union establishing the existence of a free trade regime based on the tariff classification of industrial products. In 2011, Andorra also signed a monetary agreement with the EU, allowing it to use the Euro as its official currency.

Over the years, Principality of Andorra has signed a series of treaties and agreements with the French and Spanish States in fiscal, economic, educational and health matters, thus enabling bi- and tri-lateral cross-border cooperation. In total we can count 7 international agreements: the Trilateral Treaty (1993) between Andorra, France and Spain, which recognised the Principality as an independent State and enabled it to establish diplomatic and balanced relations with its two neighbouring countries; the Educational Convention with France (1993), which set up an educational system based on the French model; the Social Security Convention with France (2000), which allowed insured persons and their dependants to receive medical services in Andorra or in France; the Trilateral Convention with France and Spain (2001), which allowed for free movement and establishment of Andorran citizens in France and Spain, as well as the movement, stay and establishment in Andorra of both French and Spanish citizens; the Tax Cooperation with France (2009), with which the Principality declared that it was abandoning its tax haven situation and contributing to the exchange of information on tax matters and, finally, the two recent agreements with France on technical cooperation and mutual assistance in civil security and on cross-border police and customs cooperation (2014).

These treaties signed over the past three decades have made it possible to foster cross-border relations and to make the border more and more porous. However, there were also some border disputes. The Border Convention with France in 2000 first moved the border line so that a new tunnel was not located on French territory (the border between the two countries no longer follows the course of the Ariège River at this point). This issue required a decade of negotiations between France and Andorra in order to reach agreements on the exact delimitation of the border and the joint management of the water. The treaties were signed in Paris on 6 March 2012 thus ending the only remaining dispute between the two countries.

The first regional cross-border cooperation agreement was the Working Community of the Pyrenees (Communauté de travail des Pyrénées CTP) signed in 1983, at the instigation of the Council of Europe, which wanted to create a cross-border cooperation structure in the Pyrenees. Its first seat was in Andorra. In 2005, the CTP set up a Consortium, a legal entity under Spanish public law, offering it new possibilities for action, particularly for the management of European funds and programmes. Indeed, from 2007 onwards, the Consortium became the managing authority for the Cross-border Cooperation Operational Programme POCTEFA (France-Spain-Andorra) which enabled Andorra to actively participate in Interreg projects. In November 2013, when Andorra assumed the presidency of CTP, it set itself the objective to foster cross-border cooperation by promoting transnational and interregional cooperation and participation in EU funded programmes. Thanks to Andorra's accession to the Treaty between France and Spain on cross-border cooperation on 16 February 2010, which entered into force on 1st December 2012, cross-border relations have indeed been given new momentum.

The increase in cross-border cooperation goes along with Andorra's effort to move closer to the EU through greater participation in the Internal Market. Negotiations for an Association Agreement with the EU began in March 2015 hinged on the Andorran government's desire to build an area of prosperity and promote neighbourly relations based on the values of the EU. Furthermore, Andorra is negotiating jointly with Monaco and San Marino, two other European micro-states for the creation of an Agreement concerning the four freedoms of movement (goods, services, capital and persons).

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Arrabona*

The Arrabona European Grouping for Territorial Cooperation (EGTC) was first established in 2011 by the municipalities of Győr and Mosonmagyaróvár in Hungary, and Dunajská Streda and Šamorín in Slovakia. Arrabona EGTC currently includes 32 municipalities, 4 of which are located in Slovakia and 28 in Hungary and it has its seat in Győr, the sixth largest city of Hungary, whose old roman name was Arrabona.

The EGTC operates on the territory of the member municipalities, and includes a population of approximately 200 000 inhabitants in an area of more than 860 km². A large majority of the inhabitants of the two involved Slovakian cities possesses Hungarian nationality. According to the 2011 census in Slovakia, 75 % of the inhabitants of Dunajská Streda and 57 % of Šamorín declared themselves as Slovakian citizens with a Hungarian nationality.

The operation of the EGTC is based on the General Assembly, the major decision-making body composed of members which meets once a year. The chairman and the three vice-chairs are elected by the General Assembly for a mandate of four years. The chairman acts as a representative and as a leader of the EGTC.

In a long-term perspective, the EGTC aims to sustain the ecological balance of the Danube Valley and to facilitate the development of the social and technological infrastructure of its operational area. It also runs a non-profit enterprise that is responsible for elaborating and managing projects. The business activities of Arrabona include tender writing, project and financial management, as well as marketing and promotional activities. The EGTC has managed several projects and it acts often as a project management body for the member municipalities. In this respect, the grouping has implemented projects of a total value of 23 million euros. From 2017, the Community-led Local Development (CLLD) initiative of Győr and its surroundings have also been managed by the EGTC concerning the institutional framework and all professional tasks.

The Arrabona EGTC started the realization of cross-border projects in collaboration with the Gate to Europe EGTC on the Hungarian-Romanian border within the framework of a LEADER project entitled

* For the map, see article 'Centroe Territory Euroregion'.

“Thematised cross-border tourism development.” This cooperation aimed at creating a knowledge-transfer between the EGTCs in order to strengthen their capacities for thematic tourism development and marketing of the already existing landmarks. In 2014, the medium-term strategic plan of the EGTC was completed by the Central European Service for Cross-Border Initiatives (CESCI). It focused on three major joint activities, namely knowledge-based cross-border economic development, the strengthening of recreational functions in the middle of a cross-border metropolitan area, and the improvement of social relations and boosting of mutual trust between the people living in the border area.

At the beginning of 2018, the grouping selected 2 projects for funding within the Slovakian-Hungarian Interreg V-A cross-border cooperation program as lead beneficiary: “Buicogreen” aims at the creation of a cross-border institutional cooperation for greener settlements by the integration of local technical resources and equipment and “Cultacross” supports cultural programs for bridging gaps between the cities of Győr and Dunajská Streda.

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Assemblage

The concept of assemblage (*agencement* in French) is rooted in the work of the theorists Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari in 1987. Additionally, it was the subject of further theoretical developments by Manuel DeLanda in 2016. Contrary to the notion of system or apparatus that generally implies some kind of organisation and regulation capacity, an assemblage is much looser and suggests; according to John Allen “the heterogeneous groupings of different parts without actually forming a coherent whole”. Typically, assemblages bring together various components that either play a material role (such as people, organisations, locales, objects and technologies) or an expressive one (such as beliefs, narratives, laws and symbols). The parts that are matched together may thus differ in nature and origin. Furthermore, the relations that link the parts of an assemblage together are not defined and made permanent by their functions or properties but emerge from arbitrary choices, alliances and co-functioning. The origins of an assemblage are thus historical and circumstantial. Finally, assemblages are always in a continuous process of movement and transformations insofar as they are subject to the contradictory forces of territorialisation and deterritorialization. In this perspective, territorialisation is the historical process of delineation and homogenization by which an assemblage temporarily stabilizes itself. In contrast, deterritorialization relates to the intervention, or appearance, of components that disturb established relations and destabilize an assemblage, eventually opening up new possibilities for reterritorialization.

In recent years, assemblage thinking has gained currency in the social sciences and humanities and the concept has been applied to a wide range of topics and contexts such as regions, infrastructure or social movements. In the field of border studies, the application of the concept also looks promising, whether to better apprehend the dispersed, fluid and multifarious character of contemporary bordering practices, to grasp their multiplicity—that is to say the fact that borders do not have the same meaning for everyone—or to question the emergence of cross-border spaces as inchoate processes of territorialisation.

First, assemblage thinking offers the possibility of conceptualizing borders not as fixed demarcation lines but as open processes that involve a multitude of actors, practices and physical locations. For instance, it is now commonly accepted that specific bordering practices that used to be predominantly performed at the state territorial borders have

diffused inwards and outwards, so that border controls and surveillance occur within or outside state territories: at international airports, within transportation nodes, around special economic zones and virtually everywhere when it comes to control the papers of supposed illegal migrants. With such a turn to ubiquitous border securitization and control, bordering practices have extended to include various networks of public, private and supranational organisations, including carriers and their transportation systems, as well as nonhuman ‘actants’ with their surveillance technologies, algorithms and databases. The dispersed, fluid and multifarious character of bordering practices appears as the historical connection between pre-existing assemblages meshed into larger wholes and that question key notions such as territorial sovereignty, citizenship or national security.

Second, the diversity of actors that contribute to the way borders are created and transformed in formal (i.e., state) and informal (i.e., social) processes points the variety of perceptions, beliefs and meanings that co-exist. As social constructions, the significance of borders is indeed situated and multiple. For example, a border wall may signify a protection against external dangers for some, an obstacle or a symbol of political oppression for others or an economic resource for those, like traffickers and smugglers, who know how to bypass it. This diversity of interpretations does not form a coherent whole, but an assemblage of multiple meanings always dynamic and open to change. More than the juxtaposition of a set of meanings, it is the way in which different significations can co-exist or contradict each other, the way in which some gain legitimacy while others are instead downplayed that is important. For instance, Brexit or the border wall rhetoric of Donald Trump can be interpreted as attempts to ‘recode’ national borders through the imposition of a dominant meaning (i.e., only controlled and secured borders protect against external threats). In an era marked by the resurgence of nationalisms in Europe and elsewhere, assemblage thinking lends itself well to a critical approach of the hegemonic role of the state apparatus in the “coding” of border assemblages.

Finally, assemblage theory as a conceptual toolbox provides a way to apprehend cross-border regions and, more broadly, the diversity of socio-spatial formations that transcend national borders (Euroregions, bi-national metropolitan regions, growth triangles...). Cross-border regions are spatial assemblages that do not constitute a coherent whole: they proceed from the gathering of elements that belong to distinct political systems,

territorial jurisdictions, economies and cultural spheres. These disparate elements come together through the logic of co-functioning (functional interdependence) and alliances (willingness to cooperate) that remain historically contingent. Their emergence does not result from the putative disappearance of national borders, but rather from their transformation. A cross-border region is thus the provisional result of a double process of deterritorialization-reterritorialization. The deterritorialization of state borders as pre-existing assemblages happened through the relative opening of borders, the rise of transnational mobility and exchanges and the rescaling of state spaces upwards (e.g., supranational institutions like the European Union), downwards (e.g., decentralization) and sideways (e.g., cross-border regionalism). Such a process of destabilization has opened up new possibilities of reterritorialization and inventive forms of bordering. The emergence of cross-border regional configurations does not eliminate the territoriality of the nation states; instead, the two forces are articulated according to sometimes complementary logics, sometimes conflicting. As the current tensions between economic de-bordering and security-led state re-bordering suggest, cross-border regionalism remains an inchoate project subject to the contradictory influence of the forces of deterritorialization and reterritorialization.

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Association of European Border Regions (AEBR)

The Association of European Border Regions (AEBR) is the oldest association of regions in Europe. It was founded on the 17th and 18th of June 1971 at the Anholt Castle (Euregio, Westphalia) when a group of European border and cross-border regions set up a Standing Conference of European Border Regions, with the support of the Council of Europe.

Border and cross-border issues have not always been part of the European Union (EU) or its member states' agendas. Cross-border cooperation is a relatively new phenomenon in comparison to other aspects of "mainstream" European integration. Following the start of Interreg programs in 1990, cross-border cooperation has since drawn attention at national and continental level. This differed from previous border regions and cities endeavours, where the border had always been present, both in times of control and in times of openness. This rendered cross-border cooperation a major tool to promote development opportunities for these territories. European border regions began cooperating with their neighbours in the 1950s, first at the Western borders of Germany and then in the Nordic countries. In the following years, these initial enterprises inspired further cross-border processes on other borders across the Alps, the Pyrenees, Central and Eastern Europe, the Mediterranean and other spaces. It was also very relevant to the specific case of Ireland and Northern Ireland after the Good Friday Agreement of 1998 which is once more facing challenges due to the Brexit decision.

The creation of the first Euroregion in 1958 at the German-Dutch border (the Euregio with headquarters in Gronau) can be considered the first milestone in European cross-border cooperation. Many others followed along the Rhine, a dozen of which were organised at the end of the 1960s. It was in this context that the Standing Conference of 1971 established the AEBR. AEBR members like to consider its establishment as the second milestone in European cross-border cooperation. Since its creation, the AEBR focused on designing instruments to encourage collaborations between local and regional authorities across borders. The third milestone was the Council of Europe's Outline Convention on Transfrontier Co-operation between Territorial Communities or Authorities, known as Madrid Outline Convention, which was adopted on 21 May 1980, making possible the creation of many cross-border structures all over Europe. During the 1980s, the AEBR concentrated on creating many of these cross-border structures, either under the Madrid Convention and/

or in the framework of other bilateral or multilateral agreements between states. In addition to this, the AEBR also focused on discussing with the European Community (EC) on how to earmark support for cross-border cooperation. This became known as the fourth milestone in 1990, i.e. the Interreg program for the internal borders of the EC and further cross-border cooperation programs for the external borders and beyond.

The fall of the Berlin Wall and the collapse of the Iron Curtain created an opportunity for Central and Eastern European states to engage in cross-border cooperation. They initiated conversations with EU institutions and the Council of Europe to implement all type of reforms, including a new relationship across borders. This led to the creation of many Euroregions. Thus, the first Interreg programs for internal EU borders were followed by programs aimed at external borders and for those between Eastern countries (i.e. Poland and Hungary Assistance for Restructuring of the Economy (PHARE) Cross-Border Cooperation (CBC), PHARE Community of Research Excellence Development Opportunities (CREDO), Technical Assistance to the Commonwealth of Independent States (TACIS) CBC, Community Assistance for Reconstruction, Development, and Stabilisation (CARDS)), which evolved into cross-border cooperation programs within the European Neighbourhood and pre-accession policies. The growing number of dynamic borders brought forth a series of challenges which required a huge capacity building effort. In the framework of the Linkage Assistance for Cooperation in Europe (LACE) project, implemented by the AEBR from 1990 onwards, simultaneously with the start of Interreg and early cross-border cooperation initiatives within Poland and Hungary Assistance for Restructuring of the Economy (PHARE) and Technical Assistance to the Commonwealth of Independent States (TACIS), this European cross-border cooperation Observatory helped to promote cross-border cooperation structures across most European borders. This facilitated a systematic transfer of knowledge and practices until 2001. Since then, the AEBR has continued promoting similar training actions, has taken part and reacted to every proposal within Cohesion and Regional Policy – in particular Territorial Cooperation but also Development Policy – as well as in specific aspect of interest for cross-border cooperation in other European policies (healthcare, labour market, university cooperation, smart development strategies, transport, mobility, connectivity, etc.). At the turn of the new millennium, the AEBR also conducted several studies for EU institutions, with the aim of establishing a legal instrument within public law to expand decentralized cross-border

cooperation processes, an old aspiration of European border and cross-border regions. After various studies and debates in which all European players were given the opportunity of partaking, the EU approved the European Grouping for Territorial Cooperation (EGTC) regulation in 2006. The EGTC is considered the fifth milestone and was further improved in 2013. The tasks of the AEBR have been to not only witness, but also make proposals and play an active role in this process.

Despite the European Territorial Cooperation (ETC) and the growing participation of local and regional authorities in the European integration process, the evolution of a number of other initiatives directly or indirectly affecting border regions, the growing role of the Committee of the Regions, the spread of subsidiarity and decentralization, as well as other instruments, programs and initiatives which might benefit local and regional authorities, most European policies have an inevitable “national bias.” This is in large part due to the fact that decisions are jointly taken by the EU Council, a College of Commissioners and a European Parliament working under many national constraints. However, European citizens demand concrete answers taking into account global and continental challenges, but also different territorial needs and diverse political and social feelings. Each small territory has its complex history and, as a result, there exists a dramatic diversity in the EU. A diversity which is particularly observed in border regions, where more than one-third of the EU population live. “Borders are the scars of history” said Alfred Mozer, member of the Social Democratic Party (SPD) in Germany and Secretary of the Agrarian Commissioner of the first European Commission in 1958 and “border citizens are inextricably Europeans” said Martin Schulz, president of the European Parliament (2012–2014) and they are the best vehicle to heal those scars. The AEBR offers a closer look into cross-border integration playgrounds, prioritizing local players’ first concerns, identifying asymmetries and obstacles, and proposing solutions. Decentralized solutions for cross-border cooperation add value to national endeavours and help to consolidate bottom-up integration processes across national boundaries. Furthermore, the AEBR defends border regions’ interests towards national and European institutions, and offers advice to design cooperation strategies and programs, to identify good practices and models and to inspire new initiatives. The AEBR is the only organisation dealing exclusively with promoting cross-border cooperation all over Europe (and increasingly in other continents) in an integrated and shared manner, encouraging the creation of territorial

and thematic networks, contributing to the knowledge of cross-border realities, facilitating the discussion of proposals and the search for partners with same interests. Thus, it holds true to its motto “Union is strength”.

Currently, the main challenge for the AEBR is to keep adapting to a changing reality and new communication patterns. To this end, an AEBR Youth Forum (organised yearly since 2009 by the AEBR Task Force External Borders) discusses every summer with young people from EU external border regions about the main challenges and proposed solutions for cross-border cooperation and about their views on most relevant European questions. The AEBR is also aware of proposed changes in regulatory procedures and thematic aspects of cross-border cooperation and consults its members regularly on these matters. An Advisory Committee also supports a systematic analysis and compilation of information and the AEBR organises thematic Task Forces with specific mandates on different issues, such as external borders, cross-border culture, cross-border labour market, health, etc.

Despite many AEBR members’ growing activism, the rising amount of work has proven to be an organisational challenge. In addition to this, the AEBR’s financial sustainability has oriented part of its work towards consultancy. Therefore, it currently implements on behalf of the European Commission (DG REGIO), for example, the Interreg Volunteer Youth (IVY) to deploy young volunteers in Interreg projects or “b-solutions” to identify cross-border legal and administrative obstacles and propose appropriate solutions. In addition to this, the AEBR continues to take part in identifying and implementing general or sectoral cross-border cooperation projects (for labour, health, culture, energy, mobility, etc.) in Europe, but in other continents too (for example in some American and West African cross-border regions, and in the City of Jerusalem). Cross-border cooperation is becoming global and, for this reason, the AEBR is leaning towards the creating of a United Nations Declaration of an “International Day of Cooperation across National Boundaries”.

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Austria



Austria is a Central European state which joined the EU in 1995 and formed part of the first wave of enlargement following the fall of the Berlin Wall (together with Sweden and Finland). It has important natural borders: The Alps account for two-thirds of its surface area of 83 855 km and it is crossed by numerous water streams at its borders with Germany, Italy and Slovenia, an important one of which is the River Danube. It also shares numerous borders with European neighbours: Germany (784 km) and the Czech Republic (362 km) to the north; Switzerland (164 km) and Liechtenstein (35 km) to the west; Slovenia (330 km) and Italy (430 km) to the south; and Slovakia (91 km) and Hungary (366 km) to the east.

Austria was one of the major European powers which, under the House of Habsburg, dominated the Holy Roman Empire from the 10th century until its dissolution in 1806. In 1686, the Habsburgs liberated Hungary from Ottoman domination and brought it under Austrian dominion. After a Hungarian rebellion against the Habsburg, the two kingdoms were united under the dual Austro-Hungarian monarchy in 1867, a compromise which granted the Hungarians a large autonomy within this Empire established by the Austrian Franz-Josef I. It then however collapsed after the defeat against the triple Alliance at the end of World War, was dissolved in 1918 and replaced by seven Nation States (Austria, Czechoslovakia, Hungary, Italy, Poland, Romania and Yugoslavia), the borders of which were laid down in the 1919–1920 Peace Treaties. Austria's borders (which have remained the same to the present day) were laid down in the Treaty of Saint German-en-Laye, but it was annexed to the Third Reich in 1938 following the "Anschluss" and was not liberated by the Allied forces until 1945. The country was then divided into occupation zones, like Germany, but neutral status was subsequently negotiated and, as a result, Austria gained its independence in 1955 under a treaty signed with the four Allied powers. Austria never came within the Soviet sphere of influence.

As Hungary was stuck behind the Iron Curtain until November 1989, it is not surprising that Austria and Hungary have not developed early cross-border cooperation given their differing status during the Cold War. However, while Austria was free to enter into neighbourhood relations with the West from 1955 onwards, the Austrian border regions were not very active in western cross-border cooperation either until the 1990s. Only two cross-border working communities were set up in 1972 for the joint management of shared natural spaces: first, the International Lake Constance Conference with Germany, Switzerland and Liechtenstein, which was created between the lakeside authorities of the four States (the Land of Baden-Württemberg, the cantons of Schaffhausen, Appenzell, Thurgau, Saint Gallen and Zurich, the province of Vorarlberg and the Principality of Liechtenstein) so that they could jointly address problems relating to the environmental management of the lake. This cooperation was only stepped up following Austria's accession to the EU in 1995, when the Lake Constance Euregio was established in 1997, now including local partners (the towns of Konstanz, Lindau, Oberallgäu, Ravensburg, Sigmaringen, Kempten and the district of Lake Constance). Second, the Association of Alpine States (ARGE Alp) was established in the central

Alps, in South Tyrol, bringing together authorities from four countries (Germany, Italy, Switzerland and Austria). The region of Salzburg, the *Länder* Tyrol and Vorarlberg thus cooperate with the Land of Bavaria in Germany, the regions of South Tyrol, Trentino, Lombardy, Trentino and Ticino in Italy, as well as Grisons and Saint-Gall in Switzerland in order to manage common economic, social and environmental problems in the Alp region and to develop joint projects in space planning and culture.

At the end of the Cold War, the situation for Austrian border regions changed significantly. It was on the Austrian-Hungarian border, where the Iron Curtain first collapsed on 1 January 1989, when East German citizens were allowed to cross to the West via Hungary and Austria to West Germany. This gave an impetus to Austria's cross-border cooperation with its Eastern neighbours. A first Euroregion was set up in 1993 on the border between Austria, Germany and the Czech Republic: the Bavarian Forest-Bohemian Forest-Lower Inn Euregio (Bayerischer Wald - Böhmerwald - Unterer Inn). This trilateral cooperation was expanded in 2012 around the River Danube and the River Vltava, when the Danube-Vltava Euroregion was established between Upper Austria, Lower Austria (Mostviertel and Waldviertel), Lower Bavaria (Altötting and Upper Palatinate) and, on the Czech side, South Bohemia, Plzeň and Vysočina.

But Austria has also developed cross-border cooperation on the border with Slovakia and the Czech Republic. In 1997, the trilateral Pomoraví-Weinviertel-Jižní Morava Euroregion was founded. At bilateral level, the Styria-Northeast Slovenia Euregio was then established with Slovenia in 2001 linking associations of local and regional authorities on either side of the border; and in 2002, the Silva Nordica Euroregion was established with the Czech Republic.

Austria's first cross-border cooperation with Hungary was the West/Nyugat-Pannonia Euregio (1998) between Burgenland and the Hungarian counties of Győr-Moson-Sopron, Vas and Zala. It is notable, however, that most of the cross-border working communities in Hungary and Austria involve other neighbouring states rather than partners across their joint border. The two States are both involved only in one important macro-regional cooperation project set up in 2003, namely the Centrope Region (Vienna-Bratislava-Brno-Győr), set up together with the Czech Republic and Slovakia, which covers a very large area linking the provinces of Vienna, Burgenland and Lower Austria, the regions of South Moravia and South Bohemia on the Czech side, the regions of Bratislava and

Trnava on the Slovak side and the counties of Győr-Moson-Sopron, Vas and Zala in Hungary. This cooperation was indeed initiated by the Land of Vienna in order to assert its role of leadership as a new metropolis in the heart of Central Europe.

Post cross-border cooperation with the West was mainly developed after Austria's accession to the European Union (EU) and in particular with Germany. Several Euroregions were established on the German-Austrian border, mainly in the form of management tools for the shared natural space of the Alps. The Salzburg-Berchtesgadener Land-Traunstein Euregio was established in 1995, and the Via Salina Euregio, a grouping of three regional associations, one on the German side (the Allgäu Regio) and two on the Austrian side (the Kleinwalsertal Regio and the Außerfern Regional Development), in 1997. The latter was involved in the Zugspitze Euregio, another Euroregion created in 1998 in conjunction with Regio Werdenfels and Regio Seefeldler Plateau in Germany. The Inntal Euregio was also set up in 1998 between municipalities in the Bavarian districts of Rosenheim and Traunstein and the Tyrolean districts of Kufstein and Kitzbühel.

Only two bilateral cooperation arrangements have been established with Italy, with two autonomous regions that have close cultural ties with Austria, namely South Tyrol and Friuli-Venezia Giulia. In 1998, the Tyrol-South Tyrol-Trentino Euregio has linked the province of Tyrol in Austria with the autonomous provinces of Trentino and South Tyrol in Italy and it was converted to a European Grouping for Territorial Cooperation (EGTC) in 2011. A year later, in 2012, the Senza Confini Euroregion was also set up as an EGTC between the Austrian province of Carinthia and the Italian regions of Friuli-Venezia Giulia and Veneto.

In sum, it can be observed that Austria's cross-border cooperation, except for the natural spaces of the Lake Constance and the Alps has rather developed only from the 1990s onwards, to the east as a consequence of the fall of the Iron Curtain, and to the West as a consequence of joining the EU.

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Balkans



As Maria Todorova underlines, “the Balkans are usually reported to the outside world only in times of terror and trouble; the rest of the time they are scornfully ignored”. The Balkans are a region in South-Eastern Europe with a history of contested boundaries. Used in the 15th century to designate the mountainous region of present-day Bulgaria, the meaning given to the term evolved from the beginning of the 19th century. Scientists, journalists and politicians tend to use the term in Western Europe to describe a group of territories located in the “Balkan peninsula”, an in-between disputed between the Ottoman and Austro-Hungarian Empires. In its narrowest sense, it includes the disbanded states

of former Yugoslavia: Albania, Bulgaria and Greece; and it is sometimes extended, depending on the perspective of its user, to Romania, Hungary and/or the western part of present-day Turkey.

The Balkans are considered a negative reference the qualification of which is based on a set of clichés, semi-orientalist essentialism and in particular violence, savagery and primitivism, which still mark the perception of this space today. In this sense, the denomination “Balkans” can be perceived as immediately prejudicial. Through an oriented re-reading of history, the Balkans occupy in the European imagination an unenviable position of the “internal other”, a so-called perpetual and unique powder keg to the point of requiring the use of a specific vocabulary (Balkanisation) to describe the phenomenon that takes place there. Breaking with this posture, we will follow the recommendation of Maria Todorova in 1997 to present the Balkans in all their complexity, as both a specific and a banal space, as a reality with multiple and contested heritages and made of continuous changes, according to territorial reconfigurations and mobility of individuals.

Throughout the last two millennia, this geography has been the object of struggles between populations, between great Empires, and between political visions, in a very similar way than the rest of Europe. During all these periods, South-East Europe constituted a tipping point and a contact point between East and West, a border territory with continuous, large-scale migrations following successive (imperial) dominations. At the political level, three historical periods of contested occupation are often distinguished: Roman and Byzantine; Ottoman and Austrian (then Austro-Hungarian); socialist and capitalist. The region is one of the places where evolving spheres of influence intersect between the great monotheistic religions in Europe. It is also a linguistically and ethnically diverse, for example, the autonomous province of Vojvodina in Serbia currently recognizes six official languages: Serbian, Hungarian, Slovak, Romanian, Croatian and Ruthenian.

In their recent (re)affirmation movement, most states in the region use the term Balkans as a point of historical departure, a heritage from which they should distinguish themselves to prove their “Europeanness”, as stated by Maria Todorova: “[...] what we are witnessing today in the geographic Balkans—namely, the eradication of the final vestiges of a historical legacy of ethnic multiplicity and coexistence, and its replacement by institutionalised ethnically homogeneous bodies—may well be an advanced stage of the final Europeanization of the region, and the end

of the historic Balkans and the Ottoman legacy.” This comprehensive presentation of the Balkan area makes it possible to position the issue of regional and sub-regional delimitations in the region, by situating, over a long period, the relations of power and their legacies, but also the current political instrumentalizations and socio-spatial re-appropriations that the borders reflect. Following the fall of the communist bloc and the Yugoslav conflicts, the issue of cross-border cooperation has become increasingly important in the Balkans. Many initiatives, more or less institutionalised, were launched at all levels; however, few have led to concrete implementation, demonstrating the absence of clear political choices and commitments on this issue.

The most coherent actor in this field remains the European Union (EU). It incorporated the principle of regional cooperation at the Essen European Council in December 1994 and exported the Interreg initiative to future members, stressing “the importance of similar cooperation between the associated countries for the promotion of economic development and good neighbourly relations.” The European ambition seems to rest on three levels. First, it is a genuine strategy of rapprochement which should make it possible to strengthen the links between the countries and peoples of Europe separated by the Iron Curtain for almost fifty years. The aim was to encourage cooperation between candidate countries, in particular by setting up a cross-border cooperation strand within the Poland and Hungary Aid for Restructuring of Economies (PHARE) program. The objective was peaceful coexistence through the establishment of cross-border links, (i.e., networks of interdependence and joint action between actors at all levels). Second, the EU sets as an entry condition for new members the settlement of bilateral conflicts, whereby reaffirming the dissolution of borders within the EU. Third, the issue of “good neighbourliness” is directly linked to the protection of minorities (in line with the declaration on the Stability Pact in Europe) because minorities often belong to majority national groups in neighbouring states (or kin states). Simultaneously, since 1994, the European Commission has been initiating regional cooperation on a larger scale via the Interreg Central Adriatic Danubian South-Eastern European Space (CADSES) project.

The end of the conflicts in former Yugoslavia and the 2004 and 2007 enlargements do not alter the EU line on the subject. The integrated countries continue their cooperation within the different strands of successive territorial cooperation programs (Interreg). The countries of

what the EU calls the “Western Balkans” (non-EU member states from the former Yugoslavia plus Albania) were promised membership in return for the adoption of EU standards. In particular, European leaders link “reconciliation and regional cooperation” to the “rapprochement of each country with the EU”, because it forms “a whole”, according to the European Council. Regional and cross-border cooperation was reaffirmed as a “crucial element of stability” because it would “overcome nationalisms” and constitute a “catalyst for reconciliation” as it was stated by the European Commission. The cross-border strand is then proposed in the majority of EU programs in the region (Community Assistance for Reconstruction, Development, and Stabilisation (CARDS), PHARE, etc.).

As of 2007, the European Commission has decided to make its pre-accession policy more readable and to create a single aid instrument, the Instrument for Pre-Accession (IPA) divided into five parts. Only two are accessible to all countries in the region: assistance for transition and institution building and cross-border cooperation. The latter was thus positioned as a real European tool for pacifying its Balkan periphery. The IPA has been enthusiastically adopted by the countries of the region. All Western Balkan states then renewed or established cross-border cooperation programs with almost all their neighbours, whether members, candidates or potential candidates. At the operational level, the renewal of cross-border cooperation calls for projects launched in 2009 and 2010 had to be matched at the local level: up to a hundred projects were submitted for some of the programs; however, respective budgets made it possible to finance only ten. The same programs were renewed during the period 2014–2020. They were accompanied by transnational programs that partially cover the Balkans in the broadest sense: Balkan-Mediterranean, Adriatic-Ionian, Danube Area, and Central Europe.

What is cross-border cooperation producing in the Balkans? Generally speaking, it constitutes one policy among others the widespread adoption of which reflects the Europeanisation capacity (and even the enthusiasm) of the political and economic elites in the region (i.e., to apply the capitalist and liberal precepts in the political and social organisation of their territories and border territories). However, at regional level, these programs constitute one of the few channels for discussion and real cooperation between national and local representatives across borders, they remain an essential tool for European peace. Nevertheless, they also do little to hinder the double standard of political elites who continue

to manage a nationalist discourse domestically with a pro-European discourse abroad – as is also the case in many other European countries.

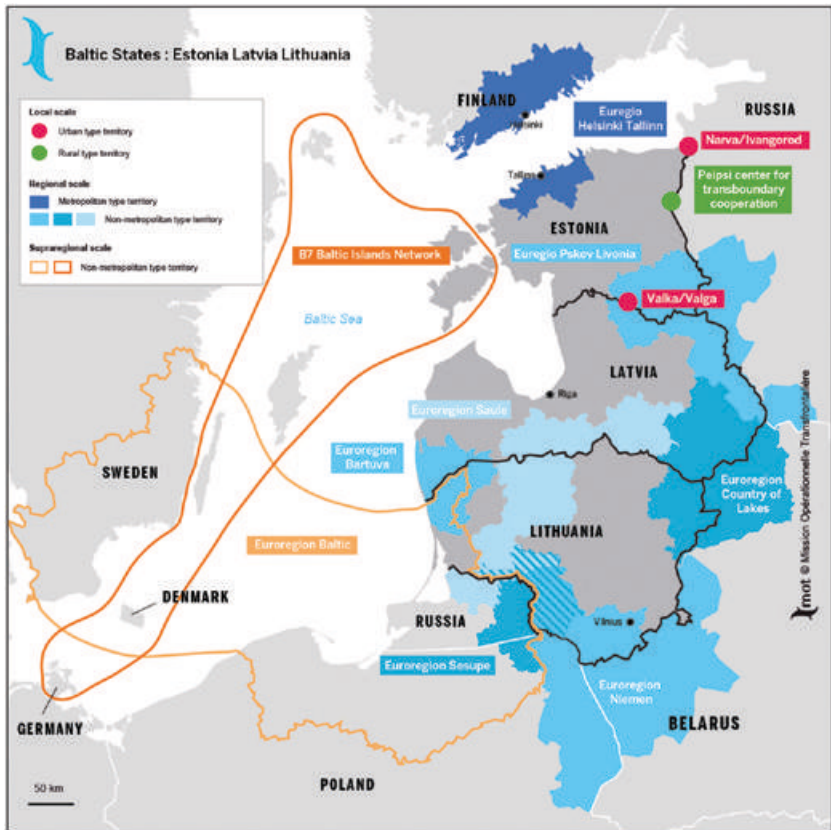
Finally, as the rules are set out by countries which are already EU members and there is a low capacity of influence from future members, these programs call into question the top-down approach used by the EU to integrate new members and especially its neighbours from the Balkans. Does this type of approach not run the risk of ensuring that South-Eastern Europe remains in a “trusteeship” relationship with the EU, under which neither side assumes its responsibilities?

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Baltic States: Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania



The three Baltic States (Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania) have a particular geopolitical situation even if each of them has his own singularity. They have formed part of the Soviet Union for 45 years and have therefore a special relationship with Russia. The fall of the Iron Curtain gave new prospects to the populations of these territories, which are simultaneously located on a border with the European Union (EU), the Schengen Area and North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO), by enabling them to regain their independence.

The first independence of the Baltic states, achieved with difficulty in 1920, was called into question in 1940 when they were occupied by the

Soviet army, before being then invaded a year later by the Nazi regime of Germany. The USSR reconquered these territories in 1944 and they each became Soviet republics, with slight changes to their borders. The 1980's saw a resurgence of nationalist movements in the Baltic states. On 23rd August 1989, a 600 km long human chain was formed linking the capital cities of Vilnius, Riga and Tallinn. This demonstration highlighted the solidarity between the three nations in their common demands against the Soviet regime. All three of them proclaimed independence in 1989, but only really gained it in 1991, after a period of troubles. Their membership of the USSR has left its mark, as they have inherited large Russian minorities, which vary in size from one country to another.

Once they had acquired independence, all three states started to look towards Western Europe. They refused to join the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS), an association of 11 former Soviet republics under the aegis of Russia. Instead, they applied to join the EU in 1995, but at different times, after having passed all the steps of pre-integration, i.e. participation in the Poland and Hungary Assistance for Restructuring of the Economy (PHARE) program and free-exchange association with the EU, to which they acceded together with several other Central and Eastern European states in 2004, the same year, in which they joined the NATO. All three states joined the Schengen Area in 2007 and then the euro Area (Estonia in 2011, Latvia and Lithuania in 2015). They are also members of the Council of the Baltic Sea states. The Council is a regional and intergovernmental forum joining 11 states bordering the Baltic Sea. Founded in 1992, it aims to find answers to environmental, political and social issues in this area. It is one of the few international organisations where a representative of the EU meets a representative of the Russian government.

In the 1990s, European integration appears to be the best way of preserving the independence of the Baltic states and of maintaining peaceful relations with their powerful neighbour Russia. The territorial limits of all three states have undergone radical changes in terms of their function rather than their alignment. These changes took three different forms. First, the administrative borders of each individual Baltic state have become national borders. This applies to the unproblematic bilateral borders between the three states, which became internal EU borders when they joined the EU. The borders with Russia in particular and with Belarus are more of an issue. They not only became international borders but also external borders of the EU and then of the Schengen

Area, thereby hampering cross-border movement. Finally, a number of international borders became internal borders (with Poland, Sweden and Finland). The borders with Sweden and Finland have changed radically; they previously formed part of the Iron Curtain and now, instead of being sealed, they are recognized and peaceful borders.

The three Baltic republics are among the smallest populated member states within the EU: together they barely account for just over 1 % of the EU population. They have been marked by a rapid decline of their population since their independence due to low birth rates and negative net migration. Of the three Baltic states, Estonia is the most sparsely populated (with approximately 1.3 million inhabitants) and proportionally has the largest Russian minority (over 25 %). The capital, Tallinn, accounts for around one third of the country's population. Estonia, the northernmost of the three Baltic states, is separated from Finland by the Gulf of Finland and has also a maritime border with Sweden. Estonia has two continental borders, one with Russia (294 km) and the other with Latvia (339 km). The second independence of Estonia was proclaimed in 1989 and accepted by Russia in 1991. A border treaty was signed between the two states in 2005 modifying the line defined in the Tartu Peace Treaty of 1920: lands were exchanged and the border across Lake Peipus and the maritime border with Russia were defined more precisely. However, the agreement was never ratified by the parliaments. A new one was signed after two years of negotiations in 2016, but it wasn't ratified again by the Russian parliament. The latter argued of persistent tensions in the bilateral relations between both countries, Russia claiming that the rights of the Russian minority in Estonia have been restricted. The other land border with Latvia does not cause any major problems, although the small number of crossing points is a legacy of the Soviet period, when few road networks were built.

Despite these tensions, a cross-border program covering three regions of Estonia and two regions and the city of Saint Petersburg (5 million inhabitants) exists in the frame of the European Neighbourhood Policy (ENP), replacing the former EstLatRus program, which covered also regions in Latvia. Tallinn, the capital of Estonia, is also included as an adjoining region, despite its far location of the border. The entire territory of Estonia is covered by two other cross-border programs. To the west, the Central Baltic program unites the whole of Estonia with are Nomenclature of Territorial Units for Statistics (NUTS) 3 regions in Latvia, Sweden and Finland and establishes cooperation across the Baltic

Sea. The Estonia-Latvia program covers the NUTS 3 regions of southern Estonia and northern Latvia. The first cross-border cooperation body was set up by local authorities in 1994. The Peipus Center for Cross-Border Cooperation is a non-governmental organisation whose mission is to propose management solutions for the Lake Peipus and the River Narva basin, both of which straddle the border. The organisation gradually developed into a cross-border resources and sustainable development competence centre specialised in the external borders. One of the salient features of Estonian cross-border cooperation is that it concerns urban spaces separated or crossed by a border. Cooperation between the two neighbouring towns of Valga and Valka on the border between Estonia and Latvia dates back to 1995 and a joint secretariat was set up in 2003. The aim since 2014 is to reinforce integration between both towns while regenerating wasteland sites. The second cooperation project was initiated in 1999 between the two national capitals of Tallinn and Helsinki, which lie just 65 km apart across the Gulf of Finland. Since the fall of the Iron Curtain, the two cities have been linked by ferry services. These two towns are the only metropolises in the two Baltic states and are home to their main international activities. The creation of the Euregio Helsinki-Tallinn, a cross-border association with a joint administration council between the two capital regions, is a consequence of the constant increase in exchanges, which requires regular coordination. Cooperation has gradually become more complex and new objectives have been set to create complementarities, foster joint growth by increasing mobility and improving transport connections and infrastructures. This cooperation symbolizes the special partnership which has been established between Estonia and Finland, which is considered as a model of development and appreciated because of its linguistic and cultural proximity. The third cooperation project between urban authorities was established on the Russian-Estonian border between Narva and Ivangorod. This cross-border agglomeration was not a problem during the USSR period, but it became one when Estonia gained independence and the international border was activated. A cross-border commission was set up in 2006 between the two urban municipalities and prepared a joint development strategy for economic issues, infrastructure and cooperation between public authorities. The enhancement of common cultural heritage, especially the old system of fortifications and the development of walkways on both side of the river Narva, separating the two towns, were flagship projects changing the urban landscape. Hence, one of the main stakes on the

Russian-Estonian border is the common management of the Lake Peipsi to preserve natural resources. Finally, a cooperation project at regional level is the Pskov-Livonia Euregio, linking Estonian, Latvian and Russian actors since 1996. Created to improve the highway between Riga and Saint Petersburg and to increase trade, the council is now involved also in culture and tourism. All in all, Estonia has fairly informal cooperation structures. Even if the management of shared natural resources, the urban area of Narva-Ivangorod and the improvement of transport networks are important issues, cross-border cooperation between Estonia and Russia remains hampered by potential tensions between the two neighbours. Cross-border cooperation seems to be easier at the internal borders with Latvia, Finland and Sweden.

Whereas Estonia and Lithuania grew up around a central nucleus, Latvia emerged from an association of territories, which had been under Swedish and then Russian domination. A third of the population is concentrated in the capital, Riga, which is the largest agglomeration in the Baltic states. Like Estonia, Latvia has a significant Russian minority (just under 25 %). Russia accepted its new independence in 1991, although the border between the two states has been contested. The size of Latvia had been reduced when it became a Soviet republic and negotiations between the two states failed to progress on this count until Latvia agreed in 2007 not to challenge the borderline of 214 km which had been established during the Soviet period. It took several years however to negotiate the complete demarcation of the border which was finally fixed in 2017. In 2019, the Latvian government constructed 93 km of barbed wire fences on the border to Russia in order to combat illegal immigration. Latvia also has a border of 172 km with Belarus. An agreement signed in 2012 allows Belarusians and Russians living in border villages, who have a special permit, to cross the border without a Schengen visa. Finally, Latvia shares a 450 km border (its longest) with Lithuania. Most of these borders cross vast, sparsely-populated areas.

The whole territory of Latvia is covered by five cross-border programs: two with Estonia (the Central Baltic and the Estonia-Latvia Interreg programs), a specific Interreg program for Latvia-Lithuania (LatLit), the Latvia-Lithuania-Belarus program, which links the Latgale region in Latvia with regions of Lithuania and Belarus; and, finally, the EstLatRus program, which was replaced in 2014 by a bilateral Latvia-Russia program. Five cooperation bodies have been established for Latvia's borders. Chronologically, the first initiative concerns the

cross-border agglomeration of Valka-Valga, a cooperation with Estonia. Four Euroregions were then established over a very short time. The first was the Pskov-Livonia Euregio with Russia and Estonia in 1996. It was followed in 1998 by the Country of Lakes Euroregion in Belarus, Lithuania and Latvia, whose projects include the establishment of a joint information centre on the border with Belarus. A third Euroregion was established in 1999, named Saule, which means “sun” in Lithuanian. It was original in scope in that it linked local and regional authorities in Latvia and Lithuania with local authorities in the oblast of Kaliningrad, a Russian exclave which has been granted special privileges due to its status. The main objective of this cooperation arrangement is to overcome historical conflicts and to improve living standards for the people by boosting economic growth. Finally, the Bartuva Euroregion was set up in 2000 by Latvian and Lithuanian municipalities along the Baltic coast in order to respond to environmental challenges. Latvia’s borders are mostly covered by Euroregions engaged in very differing degrees of cooperation. Overall, the cooperation between the towns of Valka and Valga is the most original of all these arrangements. The recognition of the border delimitation with Russia creates a context more favourable to cross-border cooperation than in Estonia. The issue of Latvia is to consolidate the European Neighbourhood Policy (ENP) with its eastern neighbours (Russia and Belarus) and to intensify its relations at the internal borders with Sweden, Finland and the two other Baltic states.

With 2.8 million inhabitants, Lithuania is the most populated of the three Baltic states. It is also the largest of the three and the one with proportionally the smallest Russian minority (less than 8 %). However, it does have other Slav minorities like Poles, Ukrainians and Belo-Russians. Lithuania derives its legitimacy as a nation state from the history of the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth, which has existed from the 13th to the 18th century. Lithuania’s independence was recognised by the USSR in 1920, after two years of conflict. In the wake of World War II, the oblast of Kaliningrad was ceded to the Russian Soviet Republic and, since its second independence in 1991, Lithuania has shared a border with Russia – an external EU border – via this exclave. Enlargement towards central and eastern Europe in 2004 and the establishment of the Schengen Area resulted in intense negotiations between the EU and Russia, with the EU wanting to secure its borders and Russia wanting to maintain free movement between Kaliningrad and the rest of Russia. A specific visa regime has been introduced for Russian residents of Kaliningrad allowing

them to visit easily the neighbouring regions of Lithuania. A transit document was produced to enable inhabitants of Kaliningrad to cross Lithuania by train to the CIS without needing to obtain a visa. From 1st of July 2019, a free electronic visa can also be obtained by citizens of the Schengen Area to visit the Kaliningrad oblast. There is a second external border in the east of the country with Belarus (502 km), which has been strictly controlled since 2004. Lithuania also has two internal borders, one with Latvia (453 km) and another small one with Poland (91 km).

The entire territory of Lithuania is covered by five cross-border programs. Three are implemented on internal borders, namely the LatLit and Central Baltic programs, as well as the Lithuania-Poland Interreg program, which has enabled energy cooperation to be increased and infrastructures between the two countries to be improved. Two Interreg programs are also implemented on the external borders, namely the Lithuania-Russia program between the oblast of Kaliningrad and the western regions of the country, which has replaced the former Lithuania-Poland-Kaliningrad program in 2014, and the Latvia-Lithuania-Belarus program. Several Euroregions were also established around Lithuania's borders in the second half of the 1990s and at the start of the millennium. The Niemen Euroregion was set up in 1997 between various Polish, Belarusian, Lithuanian and Russian authorities. The objective of the cooperation was to improve the living standards of the population and to boost economic growth. The Sesupe Euroregion was then established in 2003, after the Country of Lakes, Saule and Bartuva Euroregions. It links local authorities in four states (Russia, Poland, Lithuania and Sweden) with their international partners in the aim of bringing about improvements in the economic, educational, cultural and environmental sectors. This cooperation arrangement has a broad cultural section designed to highlight the common cultural heritage and to encourage people to learn the language of their neighbours. Finally, the Baltic Euroregion was the first cross-border cooperation area to link Russia with other European partners. This trans-regional platform was designed as an instrument for reconciliation and the settlement of animosities in order to improve the living standards of the inhabitants and to prevent border disputes. Like Estonia and Latvia, cross-border cooperation in the ENP is a crucial issue for Lithuania due to the neighbourhood of Russia and Belarus. The geographical location of Kaliningrad as an exclave encouraged not only the introduction of a specific border regime but also a cross-border strategy including other EU members of the Baltic Sea.

Overall, the border zones of the Baltic states are covered by numerous cooperation structures, even though they do not cover all the borders. Cooperation mainly takes the form of Euroregions, which vary enormously in size. Aside from these, cooperation at the scale of cross-border agglomerations or urban regions deserves special attention: Even if there is a real distinction between internal and external borders, the proximity of Russia and the specific geographical location of Kaliningrad suggest the elaboration of a strategic convergence between Interreg and the neighbourhood policy programs. More than on other borders, cross-border cooperation in the ENP has to take into account the weight of the psychological and emotional influences.

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Banat-Triplex Confinium (BTC)*

Fifty mayors from the Hungarian–Romanian–Serbian triple border region gathered on 17th June 2009 in order to establish the Banat-Triplex Confinium (BTC) as a European Grouping for Territorial Cooperation (EGTC). The cooperation was officially registered on 5th January 2011, at once connecting the border areas between Hungary, Romania and Serbia in a way which convened this historical region previously divided into three countries by the post-First World War borders.

The seat of the grouping is located in the city of Mórahalom, Hungary, and the partner municipalities are situated in Bács-Kiskun and Csongrád Counties (Southern Hungary) and in Timiș County (South-West Romania). Moreover, eight Serbian municipalities from Vojvodina have been granted observer status due to legislative reasons. As of yet, Serbian settlements are not allowed to join.

The goal of the cooperation is to increase competitiveness of these border areas which were in a marginal situation during the previous decades. The BTC was established in order to address the challenges of climate change by managing the tasks of environmental protection, promoting the use of renewable energy sources, developing local infrastructure, education and training, reducing poverty, increasing social inclusion and enhancing the competitiveness of Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs) within the border region.

The EGTC implemented several successful projects. The first project that connected the EGTC was called “Coop Banat” (strengthening cooperation and network resources in favour of achieving economic growth). The EGTC elaborated an innovative, cohesion-based integrated territorial strategy with development plans between 2014 and 2020. This strategy included four integrated territorial approaches: cross-border agglomeration intervention aiming to improve the conditions of cooperation and the sharing of functions within a polycentric cross-border urban area; the “Gateway to the Balkans” with an objective of using the economic benefits derived from the geographical situation of the region; cross-border agro-innovation and energetic guidelines (Agro-climate ITI) which targets the integrated development of the agrarian and energetic sector of the EGTC; and an integrated cross-border cultural innovation

* For the map, see article ‘Balkans’.

program (Bartók ITI) based on the colourful multicultural heritage of the historic Banat region, home of more than 20 ethnic groups.

Further important projects of the EGTC were the “Expo Train SME” of 2013 and 2014 that created opportunity for local SMEs to introduce themselves and to build relationships; and the project with the title “Dance and music without borders” aimed at introducing historical, cultural, musical values and folk traditions throughout arts programs. Spas located in the border region launched a joint program by which the tourist can use the services of different spa resorts.

The Grouping has experienced some obstacles during its existence and activities. The major limiting factor is that the Romanian authorities do not accept EGTCs as independent subjects, thus ignoring the EU regulations on EGTC. Consequently, the BTC has not been registered until today in Bucharest.

From the perspective of the implementation of the planned integrated interventions, the joining of the Serbian members, who currently have the status of observer members, would be promising. It appears to be an important step and it could give a new impetus to the EGTC and to its activities. However, involvement of the Serbian members needs to be preceded by the Serbian ratification of the EGTC laws. Without Serbian ratification and involvement of the Serbian partners, the original aims of the grouping may be only partly fulfilled.

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Bayonne-San Sebastián Basque Eurocity*

The Basque Bayonne-San Sebastian Eurocity was founded on January 18th 1993 following the signing of a protocol on cross-border cooperation between Henri Grenet, President of the Bayonne-Anglet-Biarritz District, and Eli Galdos, Deputy-General of the Gipuzkoa Provincial Council. In 1997, the Bayonne-Anglet-Biarritz District and the Gipuzkoa Provincial Council created the Cross-border Agency for the Development of the Basque Eurocity, in the form of a European Economic Interest Grouping (EEIG).

The Agency's aim was to create a cross-border urban space along the 50 km corridor between Bayonne and San Sebastian, home to 632 000 inhabitants and constituted by 24 distinct municipalities. It brought together the Agglomération Côte Basque Adour and the South Basque Country Community of communes (now incorporated in the Agglomération Pays Basque), the Gipuzkoa Provincial Council, the Bidasoa-Txingudi Cross-border Consortium, and the San Sebastian City Council. The diverse range of parties involved and their years of experience in building these relations has allowed for active cross-border cooperation in the areas of economic development, the environment, transport, sport and culture.

In 2014, the Oarsoaldea Development Agency (comprising Pasajes, Rentería, Lezo and Oiartzun, with some 71,000 inhabitants), the only district not already a member of the Eurocity, was integrated, alongside an amendment of the statutes of the European Economic Interest Grouping (EEIG). Since 2005, the Cross-border Agency has set up cross-border student exchange programs to integrate young people in the construction of the Basque Eurocity. The exchange program brings together nearly 300 students every year from either side of the Bidasoa river. They discuss issues related to the environment, encouraging learning and use of the three languages of the Eurocity, cultural exchanges, the use of new information technologies and especially building connections between young people in the cross-border area. In 2013, the Eurocity Forum in San Sebastian launched a strategic plan for the Basque Eurocity in order to give a second wind to the Basque Eurocity project and to provide a framework for future European financing.

* For the map, see article 'Andorra'.

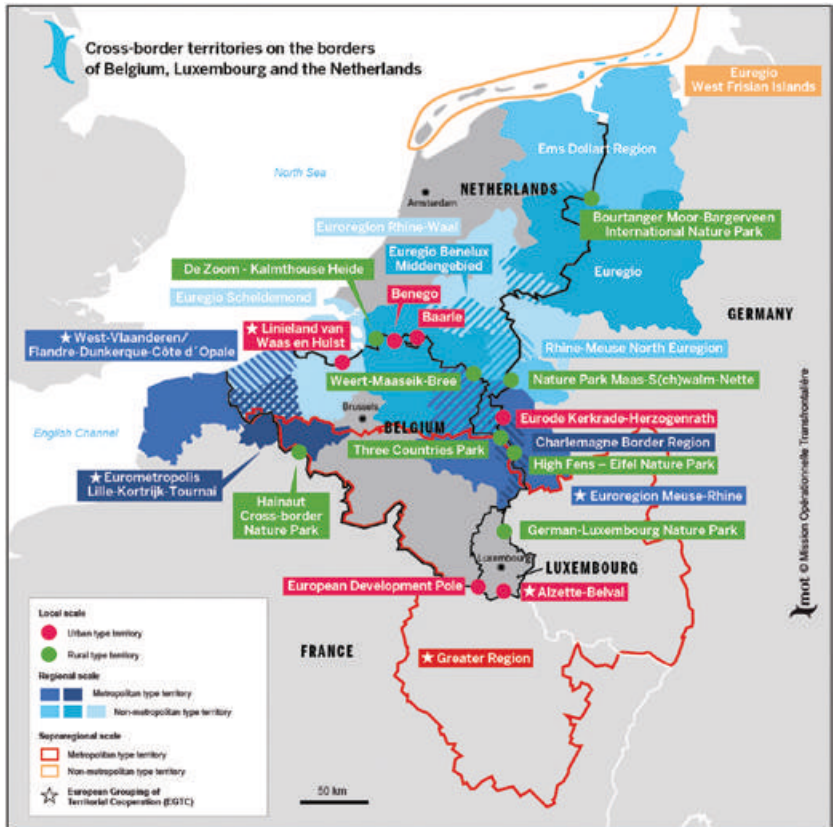
After having been in place for 20 years, elected officials wish to map out the future of the Eurocity through concrete projects that serve citizens. Accordingly, several priority topics were identified, such as mobility between Bayonne and San Sebastian, the environment and water quality, culture, tourism, infrastructure, language policies, higher education, research and technological development, with the parties involved encouraged to working on numerous broad fields of expertise. Some advances were made, while other points were identified as obstacles to cooperation. The first of these is language. Learning English is a priority in Spanish education and training, to the detriment of French, and this increases communication difficulties between participants.

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Benelux States: Belgium, Luxembourg and the Netherlands



Geographically, the three Benelux states are situated in the Centre of continental Europe, but it is mainly their maritime position which draws attention: The ports of Rotterdam and Anvers are the most important sea entries to Europe; politically, they are at the heart of the project of European Integration, as they are among the six founding members of the European Economic Community (EEC), together with Germany, France and Italy. Moreover, they correspond to a single entity that existed between 1815 and 1830, covering approximately the same territory: the United Kingdom of the Netherlands. These three states all share a border

with Germany; Belgium and Luxembourg also share a border with France; and Belgium and the Netherlands share a maritime border with the United Kingdom. The smallest of the three states is the Grand Duchy of Luxembourg which borders Belgium, Germany and France and which, with an area of 2 585 km², is one of the smallest states of Europe. All three states have high densities of population and for its part, Belgium has a border of 450 km with the Netherlands and one of 167 km with Germany.

The history of the Benelux is closely linked to the formation of the three states of the Netherlands, Belgium and Luxembourg. The Grand Duchy of Luxembourg went back and forth several times between the House of Habsburg and the Kingdom of France. In 1795, the whole of the Austrian Netherlands (including the current territories of Belgium and Luxembourg) were annexed by France, which divided it into nine Departments. Between 1810 and 1814, the current Netherlands also formed an integral part of the French Empire. After the defeat of France, however, the Congress of Vienna in 1815 incorporated most of these territories (including eight of the nine French Departments) into the new United Kingdom of the Netherlands (1815–1830). The Duchy of Luxembourg, created from the ninth French Department, acquired a hybrid status in the new European order, since it formed part of a personal union with the United Kingdom of the Netherlands but also became a member state of the German Confederation. After the formation of the Belgian state in 1831, Luxembourg kept its unique status, but its territory was greatly reduced in 1839 to the benefit of the Netherlands, while the border between Belgium and the Netherlands was eventually laid down in 1843. The borders between France and Belgium have been fixed by the Treaty of Courtrai in 1820, but borders and national affiliations still shifted thereafter. Despite their declared neutrality, both Luxembourg and Belgium thus were occupied by Germany in the First World War and again in the Second World War, as was the Netherlands on this occasion. The borders of the three Benelux states were consequently not restored until after 1945, when Belgium obtained the territory it had been awarded by the Treaty of Versailles, namely the eastern districts and the Eupen and Malmedy region, which had formed part of the German Empire before 1919.

These constant changes of borders and political affiliations led the three states to engage in cross-border cooperation at an inter-state level at a very early stage during the interwar period. The Belgium-Luxembourg

Economic Union of 1921 was the first step towards establishing a customs union between the three States, which was achieved as early as 1944 and became the Benelux Union in 1948, when the customs agreement came into force. Since then, the name Benelux has generally been used to designate the three states as a whole in terms of geography, politics and culture. In a way, their cooperation was a forerunner of the process of European economic integration as it developed following the creation of the European Coal and Steel Community (ECSC) in 1950.

It is not therefore surprising that local cross-border cooperation also first developed in the Benelux countries. The first cross-border association, the Euregio, was established in 1958 by Dutch and German local authorities in Gronau. Its geographical boundary was regional but its stakeholders came from the local level. The informal character of this form of cross-border cooperation is significant, as it enabled local authorities on both sides of the border to develop neighbourhood relations flexibly and without legal constraints. This also suited the needs of the Dutch municipalities, which were dependent on a centralized State that had devolved few powers to its provinces.

Subsequently, other cross-border initiatives of this type were taken at both local and regional level, but none involved all three Benelux states together. It was in 1967 when a first example of informal cooperation, Benego, was established by 11 Dutch and 11 Belgian municipalities on the border between the Netherlands and Belgian Flanders. Two more cross-border associations between Germany and the Netherlands came into being in the 1970s, the Rhine-Waal Euregio in 1971, which brought together 20 German and 31 Dutch municipalities, and the Rhine-Meuse-Nord Euregio in 1978, which included chambers of commerce and municipalities from both sides of the border. At the regional level, a first trilateral cooperation was established in 1976, but Luxembourg did not feature among its partners: the Meuse-Rhine Euregio was a Belgian-German-Dutch cooperation initiative.

In the case of Luxembourg, the beginnings of cross-border cooperation were also to be found at the inter-state level, but did not initially involve either of its Benelux partners: it was when an intergovernmental commission and a regional commission were set up in 1971 for the Franco-German-Luxembourg cooperation project SaarLorLux (the future Greater Region). This cross-border cooperation was provided with a legal framework in 1980 through the adoption of an intergovernmental agreement between France, Germany and Luxembourg. Belgium became

involved at a very late stage, in 2005, when the Walloon Region, the French Community and the German-speaking Community were officially admitted to the Greater Region summits, which had been held since 1995, to allow for regular meetings between the chairs of the regional executives of the SaarLorLux partners. Nevertheless, since 1985, Luxembourg had already been cooperating with the Walloon Region in order to find a common response to the coal and steel crisis, in the framework of the Longwy European Development Pole (EDP) project, which was officially set up in 1996 order to facilitate the development of the cross-border agglomeration between France, Belgium and Luxembourg.

Most of the cross-border cooperation in the Benelux states had in fact already been established between 1950 and 1970, with stakeholders on the German-Dutch border acting both as precursors and as initiators of cooperative associations. After the European Commission introduced the Interreg program in 1990, the Benelux states came to intensify their neighbourhood relations by implementing joint projects without necessarily adding new cooperation structures. There were a few exceptions, especially at the Dutch-Belgian border, like the Scheldemond Euregio (1993) between the Belgian provinces of East Flanders and West Flanders and the Dutch province of Zeeland. Belgian and Dutch municipalities also established an original form of cooperation in 1998 with the Joint Baarle Organ (GOB), which allowed them to take joint decisions on matters of common interest. The cooperation between these communes is both necessary and specific, as their border line has never been delimited exactly, so that they are very closely intertwined. A new association of municipalities for cross-border cooperation was also created on the border between the Netherlands and Germany: the Eurode Kerkrade-Herzogenrath. Finally, the island municipalities of the Wadden region in the North Sea created an association in 1999, enabling them to undertake a maritime version of cross-border cooperation: the Wadden Euregio links the islands of Lower Saxony in Germany to the islands of West Friesland in the Netherlands and the islands of Rømø, Mandø and Fanø in Denmark.

The protection of the environment and sustainable development have increasingly become priority areas for cooperation between the Benelux states. The Hainaut Cross-border Nature Park, which links two natural parks in France and in Belgium since 1996, has indeed served as a model for other examples of cross-border cooperation in this field. Thus, the Drielandenpark was created in 2001 as a working community by Dutch,

Belgian and German local and regional authorities. The same year saw the creation of the De Zoom-Kalmthoutse Heath along the Belgian-Dutch border, and in 2002, the Maas-Schwalm-Nette Nature Park was set up on the German-Dutch border. Finally, 2009 Belgian and Dutch municipalities decided to establish a cross-border rural cooperation community named Weert-Maaseik-Bree, which operates on a purely informal basis.

From 2000 onwards, cross-border cooperation in the Benelux states has been intensified by the establishment of a number of European Groupings for Territorial Cooperation (EGTCs), which confer joint legal personality on cross-border institutions. Most of these EGTCs have been created at regional level on the Franco-Belgian border, such as the Lille-Kortrijk-Tournai Eurometropolis (2008) or the Flanders-Dunkerque-Côte d'Opale EGTC (2009) which revolves around the urban community of Dunkerque and the inter-municipal association of West Flanders. In 2010, the Greater Region was also restructured as an EGTC in order to become the single managing authority for the operational Interreg program. Finally, two EGTCs at the inter-municipal level have also come into being: the Linieland van Waas en Hulst, created in 2011 by municipalities and provinces in Belgium and the Netherlands, which aims to jointly develop the left bank of the Scheldt, and Alzette-Belval, set up in 2013, which amounts to the restructuring of a public urban development undertaking between the Lorraine region and the southern part of Luxembourg.

Today, therefore, cross-border cooperation between the Benelux states is both strong and diversified. It complements the still functional inter-state cooperation first established in 1948, as it has neither the same stakeholders nor the same geographical boundaries. It is not intergovernmental in nature and is organised either on a Belgian-Dutch bilateral basis or, in the majority of cases, with one or another of the larger neighbouring countries – Germany or France. However, regional cross-border cooperation has also some political motives: for the federal entities in Belgium (the regions of Flanders and Wallonia and the German speaking Community), it constitutes a means to affirm their autonomy by developing international relations with their neighbours. Ironically, cooperation with the foreign partners often works out easier than intra-regional cooperation within the Federal State, where the tensions between Flanders and Wallonia frequently obstruct the well-functioning of internal state affairs.

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Bi- and Multi-Lateral Treaties for Cross-Border Cooperation



Bi- and multi-lateral treaties have long been used as a contractual strategy by the Council of Europe to initiate, specify, structure, institutionalise and consolidate cross-border cooperation in Europe. One can differentiate between loose forms of association cooperation (like the Euroregions at the German-Polish border), bi- and multi-lateral agreements lacking any legal groundwork and bi- or multi-lateral cooperation form based on the Madrid Outline Convention for Transfrontier Cooperation (officially “European Outline Convention on Transfrontier Co-operation between Territorial Communities or Authorities”, hereafter MOC) from 1980.

Hence, bi- and multi-lateral treaties in the framework of cross-border cooperation can be based on the legal groundwork of the MOC. The MOC – developed and adopted by the Council of Europe – has been widely used as the basis for several bi- and multi-lateral agreements at the West German border regions with its adjoining members. Examples are the Isselburg-Anholt (1991), the Karlsruhe Agreement (1996) or the Brussels Agreement (2002). At the East German border regions this kind of bilateral agreement based on the Madrid Outline Convention do not exist due to the lack of political will.

The MOC shall “facilitate and foster transfrontier co-operation between territorial communities or authorities within its jurisdiction and territorial communities or authorities within the jurisdiction of other Contracting Parties” (Art. 1 MOC) while “transfrontier co-operation shall take place in the framework of territorial communities’ and authorities’ powers as defined in domestic law. The scope and nature of such powers shall not be altered by this Convention” (Art. 2 Para. 1 MOC). The bi- and multi-lateral agreements serve as initialization, structuring and guidance for cross-border cooperation but have no legal binding character: “these model and outline agreements, statutes and contracts are intended for guidance only and have no treaty value” (Art. 3 Para. 1 MOC). In general, the MOC can be considered as a “declaration of intent” that has nearly no legal binding character due to limited binding effect in international law. Nevertheless, the Madrid Outline Convention has been the first convention of the Council of Europe that delivers a general framework for the basics of cross-border cooperation.

The second part of the European Outline Convention offers patterns of agreements and statutes for different forms of cross-border cooperation. The bi- and multi-lateral treaties under international law the Isselburg-Anholt, Mainz and Karlsruhe agreements are examples of application of the MOC.

First, the Isselburg-Anholt Agreement from 1991 provides territorial authorities in the federal states of Lower Saxony (*Niedersachsen*), North Rhine-Westphalia (*Nordrhein-Westfalen*) and in the Kingdom of Netherlands (*Nederland*) with the legal instrument “special purpose association” (Art. 3–5), public law agreements (Art. 6) and local working communities (Art. 7). The Euregio Rhine-Waal is based on the Isselburg-Anholt Agreement and applies the legal form of a “special purpose association” (*Zweckverband*). A “special purpose association”

is a public corporation with legal capacity. It underlies the law of the state where it has its seat (Art. 3.3). The agreement determines the content of the Statutes of special purpose associations and their internal structure. Important to mention is that the special purpose association does not exercise public powers through administrative acts or decrees.

Second, the Mainz Agreement that has been signed in 1996, became effective in September 1998. It includes the German federal states North Rhine-Westphalia and Rhineland-Palatinate (*Rheinland-Pfalz*) as well as the Belgian regions Wallonia (*Région wallonne*) and the German-speaking Community of Belgium (*Deutschsprachige Gemeinschaft Belgiens*). The Mainz Agreement can be considered as an agreement for cross-border cooperation between territorial and public authorities. It is nearly equivalent to the Isselburg-Anholt Agreement with only tiny changes. The German federal government has approved the completion of the agreement. Nevertheless, the Mainz Agreement has only been contracted by the regional authorities and not – like in the case of the Karlsruhe Agreement – by the national level.

Third, the Karlsruhe Agreement was signed in January 1996 between Germany, France, Luxembourg and the Swiss Federal Council (*Bundesrat*) and came into effect in September 1997. The purpose of the Karlsruhe Treaty is to promote the cross-border cooperation between the German, French, Luxembourgian and Swiss territorial and public authorities in the framework of their competencies and with respect of the respective national law. The agreement comprises the Local Grouping for Cross-Border Cooperation (LGCC) which is a legal person of public law. The LGCC shall carry out tasks and services that are in the interest of the member public authorities. Based on the Karlsruhe Agreement the Regio Pamina has been created, first as a local grouping for cross-border cooperation (2001) and later in December 2016 as a European Grouping of Territorial Cooperation. The Karlsruhe Agreement deals with public authorities' cooperation and only enables cross-border cooperation in the fields of the competences of the members. If the competences exceed the responsibilities of one member on one side of the border, the execution of the tasks will not be possible. Therefore, the competences of the pool of joint tasks should be similarly allocated in each nation-state.

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Border/Boundary/Frontier

This article analyses the French conception of the border (*frontière*), which differs significantly from those existing in other languages like German or English, for instance. In the latter, several words are used and each has, more or less, a particular meaning. *Boundary* defines the line of demarcation of a territory, while *frontier* can also refer to the outer limit of knowledge, or the edge between the explored and unexplored, the known and unknown. *Border* is used in a more conceptual sense, as an institution, the way two countries (or two spatial systems) are separated. The border means both dissociation and contact, delimitation and interface, an idea that is made material. In the French-speaking literature, *frontière* has both an anthropological or sociological and political or institutionalised meaning. In German, the word *Grenze* has a more general meaning than its French translation: deriving from the Slavic word *granica*, it is used to describe all types of limits between territorial units, and more generally the articulation between spatial, social, cultural, natural, or political systems. The border as it is described here is a geopolitical object transcendent, more or less, of any linguistic or cultural differences.

The limited world, divided into national territories of unequal size, which planispheres usually show us, presents the international border as the limit of a state's sovereignty. Both as a literal political limit and a socio-political construction, the border has a powerful organisational effect on geographical space. The noun *frontière* comes from the adjective *frontier*, which refers in medieval French both to the facade of a building and the front line between two armies.

The Westphalian border emerged in the 17th century, when in Europe a modern version of the territory was gradually established: a continuous space, marked by the presence of a sovereign political power above all other actors. The idea of a 'border zone' due to military reasons was gradually replaced by the idea of a borderline after the Treaty of Westphalia, which for the first time established conceptually a congruence between a political power, territory, and a group of humans sharing the same identity. Innovations in cartography contributed to this change because they allowed sovereigns to imagine the territories they governed, but negotiations were still necessary to define and demarcate a clear line of separation between territorial sovereignties.

This construction of the border, known as 'bordering', which makes a distinction between 'them' and 'us' through the territorialisation of

the state, allows for the emergence of functions which take place on the political, material, and symbolic levels in both society and space. The establishment of a semic system, a set of norms, rules, signs and devices, is intended to facilitate territorial management and create a common sense of belonging for the resident population. The state is thus a powerful actor in the construction of national identity through the elaboration of a set of laws, the creation of an administrative system, the harmonization of languages and cultures, the writing of a national narrative, etc. A national feeling can also be promoted by the propagation of printing which produces texts written in a standard language and an iconography associating various pictures and symbols. Referring to a divine order above the actions of humans, it is nevertheless the concept of 'natural borders' that political authorities use to legitimate the delimitation of their territories. This modern Eurocentric conception paints the border as an ambivalent object, marked by both severing and uniting; as a tool to assert political power, forming part of a regulation system (control and filtering), revealing differences and asymmetries, and establishing a relationship between two territories.

During the construction of the border, assertion and regulation are reflected in the establishment of different types of mechanisms which some actors of the late-20th century globalization – characterized by the strengthening of interdependencies, the emergence of global problems, such as climate change and poverty, and the reconfiguration of the powers of the state – seem to call into question by advocating the reduction of 'barriers'. A phase of debordering thus follows the construction. After the dismantling of the Berlin Wall and the disappearance of the Iron Curtain, growing interactions suggest that the barrier-border is transformed into an interface-border, where obstacles have disappeared. The devaluation of borders in Europe is inspired by this liberal ideology, while presenting its own characteristics by advocating free movement, as enshrined in the Treaty of Rome.

The events of 9/11 reveal another thesis: there are new phases of re-bordering, reflected in the renewed interest in territorial security issues, the emergence of unprecedented and increasingly sophisticated forms of control, and the multiplication of actors involved in this process. The border-regime of states depends on the ideological context which prevails in the world order. The border then appears as a process where de-bordering and re-bordering are interwoven: it must ensure reliable controls while facilitating efficient flows in a world characterized

both by mobility and security. The state is no longer the only creator of borders, in a context where national sovereignties are contested by various players.

In an open framework, an interface regime prevails: the interactions that result from territorial differences establish a cross-border area or even a cross-border region because of the intensity and multiplicity of economic, financial or social flows. In a national territory, border regions are defined as 'borderland milieu', peripheral spaces which are distinguished from other regions by their singular interactions with the neighbouring foreign territory. In this functional approach, interactions are dynamic and are part of an integration perspective. This assertion, however, is contradicted by an anthropological approach that sees borders as identity markers, since they allow the regulation of social interactions. Political powers seek to reconcile those two contradictory logics by establishing a border-regime. Each state sets its filter terms and articulation with its neighbours. However, these regulations depend on the bilateral relations of each dyad and the section of the boundary that separates two contiguous territories.

European borders appear as exceptions in the global context. The construction of Europe has led to distinguish between internal and external boundaries. Simply put, this means that the control of goods was abolished across the borders between member states, as part of that freedom of movement which was initiated by the single market. This is also true of the free movement of persons within the Schengen area. External borders, which materialize as the terrestrial boundaries of territories as much as in airports and harbours, have become places of regulation and articulation with the other parts of the world. This dual system is complexified by the lack of overlap between the Schengen area and the EU territory. In spite of differences, the European border regime may be seen as a cross-border one, characterized by porosity and peaceful relations, as exemplified by the cross-border cooperation which has existed for decades between some states. The cross-border relations promoted by Interreg programs suggest a multi-level governance framework with multiple players. European borders are no longer an object exclusively managed by states, but an active interface where several players meet.

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Border and Memory

Borders are symbols by which states, nations or local communities manifest their identity and sense of belonging. They represent often “scars of history” and affect, even if physically no more present, the collective memory and social relationship. Borderlands are places where memories of the inhabitants are encoded in urban architecture, monuments, city names and public narratives.

The 20th century brought forward multiple accounts of dynamic changes in borders. In Europe alone, there was the break-up of three Empires (i.e. the Austro-Hungarian, the Russian and the Ottoman Empire), two World Wars, the Iron Curtain and the transformation of Central East European Countries (CEECs) after the collapse of Yugoslavia and the Soviet Union; all of which resulted in considerable shifts and redrawing of borders as well as mass migration and group identity (re)construction. In many cases, the rise of the sovereign states at the beginning and at the end of the 20th century required the consolidation of nations and the creation of a national identity. Collective memory along with language, religion and culture, is of major importance in shaping national identity. It integrates a community by focusing not only on authentic events but also on mythologized events, such as heroic victories or tragic acts. Various interpretations and different ways of remembering the same facts are what separate nations from one another and the consequent distinct historical narratives influence relations between nations. If anything, the limits of common memory seem to determine the boundary of a political community. Otherwise, the loss of territory may involve a dissolution of a community. However, for the purpose to ensure the social cohesion, a group tries to preserve its collective memory. The question “What we should not forget?” plays a central role for the collective identity and integrity.

The concept of collective memory was elaborated in the 1920s by the French sociologist, Maurice Halbwachs who claimed that collective memory was created by communication and interaction between members of a social group such as family, religious community or social class. Collective memory is always group-specific and identity-concrete, it testifies to a specific place and time. Based on the notion of collective memory developed by Halbwachs, the German Egyptologist Jan Assmann, distinguished between communicative and cultural memory. The first refers to informal collective memory that exists only within a group and

is constructed in communication. The latter is highly formalized and concerns events in the remote past. It is transmitted by cultural artefacts as monuments, commemorating celebrations and memorial sites.

When applying the differentiation between cultural and communicative memory to borders, we can identify hard institutionalised borders that are visible in the geographical space and demarked by political agents and soft borders that are constituted by narratives and memories in everyday communication. Both kinds of borders, as well as memories, produce meaning and a sense of belonging. The space of communication defines who shares the past, the identity and who is to be included and excluded. Only members of a memory community can understand the true message encoded in cultural artefacts. Hence, even when the hard borders in form of fences and boundary posts vanished from the physical space, it does not automatically mean that mental borders also disappear. Narratives of shared pasts constitute borders between “us” and “them.” Thus, the abolition of borders within the Schengen zone has not created the European Community of remembrance and common identification. Although the Iron Curtain is a thing of the past, the border between East and West Europe is still manifested in social practices, discourses and commemorative culture. Consequently, the East-West-division continues to function as a “Phantom Border”. It should be emphasized, that whereas both, the hard, physical borders and cultural memory, are fixed from above and might be misused by the ruling authorities, the soft borders and communicative memory are very often rebellious and not readily manipulable. Political redrawing of borders can be introduced fast, but internalization of the new situation requires more time.

Moreover, borders function very often as memorial sites that are marked in the space by material symbols such as monuments, plaques, museums and tourist attractions. A good example provides the Checkpoint Charlie – the previous crossing point on the West/East-German border at the Berlin Wall or the 1956 Memorial Park on the Hungarian-Austrian border which commemorates the Hungarian uprising. In any case, when borders are contested, political regimes try to legitimize them by inventing traditions and historical myths. The German-Polish border as a result of World War II was mythologized by both, the Poles and the Germans. By referring to the medieval Piast dynasty that previously ruled over these territories, the communist authorities in Poland legitimized the shift of the border and Polish presence there. Thus, the previous German Northern and Western territories were officially called

“recovered land” (*Ziemie Odzyskane*). However, these territories have been long remembered by the German expellees as the “lost homeland” (*Verlorenes Heimatland*), the places of their childhood that they hoped to regain. This case exemplifies also the conflict between cultural and communicative memory. Taking into consideration the German space manifested in architecture, protestant churches or everyday items as furniture, books etc., Polish settlers could hardly believe in the “Piaśt myth.” Moreover, because of their traumatic war experience, they could not internalize the officially propagated “border of peace and friendship” with the German Democratic Republic (GDR) and differentiate between Germans from West (Nazis) and East (good socialist neighbours).

Within the European integration process borders are regarded as symbols of reconciliation. Hence, borderlands are places where the rapprochement among societies and European unification are commemorated and symbolically present in form of monuments as e.g. the sculpture “Europe reaches the stars” on the German-French border, the monument in Baarle-Nassau and Baarle-Hertog (Dutch–Belgian border) of two humans shaking hands over a map of both towns and a monument “For Good Neighbourliness” erected in Haparanda to Tornio (Swedish–Finnish border). Furthermore, the European symbolism is applied to public space naming. Many squares, bridges, streets and parks are labelled with the notion of Europe. The collective remembrance of the European integration is also perpetuated in political rhetoric, public discourses and anniversary celebrations in order to anchor it in communicative memory.

Thus, the European framework has provided the borderlands with a tool to accommodate the diverse and often traumatic stories and historical experiences of citizens under one umbrella of European integration.

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Border and Migration

Since the unexpected increase of incoming people into Europe in 2015, which some people call the “refugee crises”, “refugee influx”, “refugee wave”, or “long summer of migration”, migration and borders are a renewed Centre of interest for public and political debates, the media and multiple research projects.

However, the topic of “borders and migration” covers a variety of aspects within Europe, in which refugees are only one of them, such as unforced migration at the external or internal European Union (EU) borders (e.g. labour migration from third countries, internal EU mobility) as well as forced migration (e.g. refugees) especially at the external borders. Moreover, political borders are not the only borders that are related to migration (e.g. linguistic, social, economic). Borders and their political and legal meaning can classify people as stateless, irregular/illegal/undocumented migrants, refugees, asylum seekers, labour migrants, educational migrants, marriage migrants, amenity migrants and more. The terms irregular migrants, illegal migrants and undocumented migrants must be especially used critically as they presume that such an individual can be illegal or irregular, which puts forward an inhuman connotation. Very often, migrants are in a phase of transit overcoming one border to further cross more borders to reach their final destination. This final destination might never be physically reachable but be a part in their own idealized perception as being on their way to country XY (“holy land”). Depending on the country of origin, and on the reasons motivating a person to migrate, borders can be perceived as “open”, “filters” or “barriers”.

Therefore, the EU has invested in different mechanisms and laws to foster or hinder migration and mobility at its internal and external borders (e.g. the Schengen Agreement and the Dublin Regulation), making borders either open, filtering or closed borders depending on the reason for migrating as well as the country of origin of each case.

According to the Schengen Agreement (1985) and the complementary Schengen Convention (1990), open borders facilitate intra-European mobility and the freedom of movement of people. In this case, policymakers and many researchers use the term “mobility” rather than the term “migration” to distinguish between those whose mobility is endorsed (intra-EU citizens) and those whose migration is regulated and restricted (because they are third-country nationals). Within the EU,

there is a lot of cross-border residential mobility between neighbouring countries. Indeed, EU citizens often still work in their country of origin but live in the borderlands of another contiguous member state. This takes place in several borderlands (e.g. the Greater Region *SaarLorLux* or the Slovenian-Italian border). In those cases, borders offer opportunities to reduce housing costs. Such mobility illustrates issues of internal EU mobility that are very often linked to work or other related opportunities such as education, voluntary services and family reasons.

By suppressing the internal borders, the Schengen Convention hardens the external borders. Borders in Europe are filters or barriers for third-country nationals depending on their ability to receive a visa or not. Different types of human trafficking and smuggling are flourishing economies to bypass these visa requirements. Rebuilding territorial boundaries produces different degrees of “motility”, i.e. potential for mobility, and is therefore an evidence of “unequal power relations”.

Simultaneous with Schengen, the Dublin Regulation was established to officially find a burden-sharing of responsibility in the field of asylum and to define the asylum procedure from a European perspective. This so-called Dublin system (Dublin I, II and III), the Common European Asylum System (CEAS), is made to prevent “irregular” mobility of asylum seekers, undocumented migrants and refugees in the Schengen area. The increase of incoming people since 2015 has tested the Dublin system and the Schengen Convention, as several states hardened their internal EU borders by reinventing border controls (e.g. Hungary, Austria, Germany, Sweden). If one state reinvents the borders unilaterally, the heterogeneity of power relations inside the EU as well as between states and migrants becomes obvious.

Frontex, the European border and coast guard agency, was established to monitor migration flows, to fight against criminals and terrorists at EU external borders and to support member states to protect their national borders. This agency was questioned a lot, as Non-Governmental Organisations (ONGs) impugned the tools and measures utilized by Frontex. One representation of this are the so-called hot spots in EU member states with external borders (e.g. Italy and Greece). These “hot spots” are very often camps (regularly or irregularly built) hosting people who entered the EU and were stopped on their way to other EU states. “Hot spots” also exist outside of the EU borders where the European Neighbourhood Policy (ENP) invented measures to externalize the EU borders through migration regimes by preventing people to enter the EU.

These two versions of “hot spots” must be linked with the EU buzzwords “relocation” (vulnerable refugees being transferred from intra-EU hot spots to other EU member states), “resettlement” (vulnerable refugees being transferred from non-EU hot spots to EU member states) and “return” (rejected asylum seekers being returned to their country of origin or the last traceable country of their journey); these are critically perceived to build up tensions at national borders, but also borders between refugees.

Migration plays an important role in (re-)defining border regimes, border management policies and also of border(ing) politics.

However, the linkage between borders and migration is not only the one between state borders and migration, but also between the non-territorial borders that are established between the locals and the incomings and between the “we” and “the others”. It can be distinguished geographically, culturally, through language differentiation and between short-distance or long-distance migration. Also, the perspective on integration from the local side as well as from the different migrant groups’ sides can support bordering processes. Migration and integration policies play an important role in hardening or weakening borders. Is integration seen as an achievement just by the incomings or is it a reciprocal process? Is integration meant as assimilation or as keeping some habit and values and combining them with the ones of the destination country? This is connected to transmigration where linkages between two or more states are made in which people have built their own transnational social spaces by partly ignoring national boundaries and making, therefore, the linkage between migration and borders less evident.

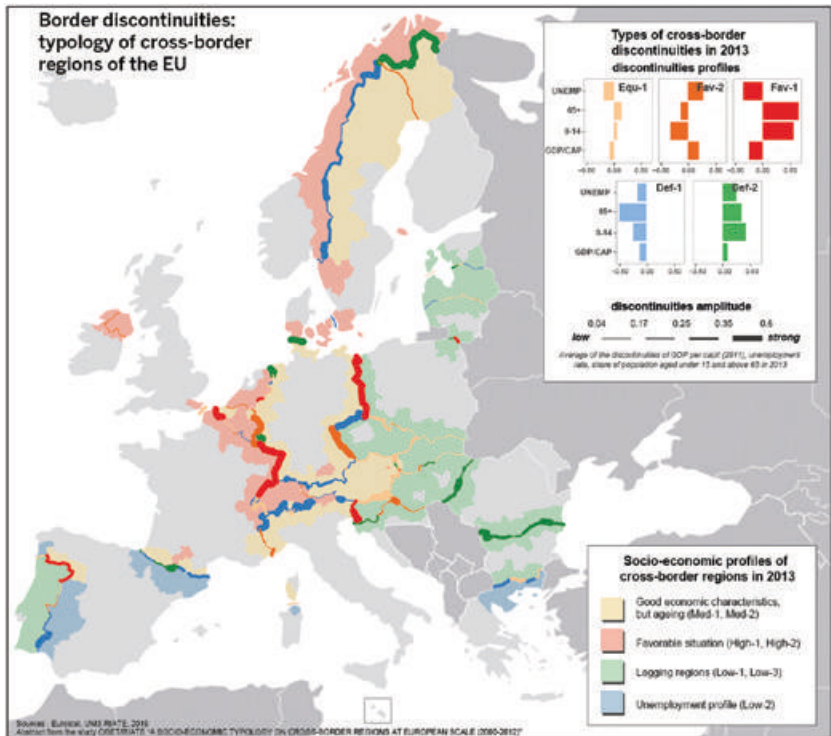
Birte Nienaber

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Border Discontinuities



A discontinuity can be defined as an exceptional dissimilarity between two neighbouring spatial units or two homogeneous regions.

Discontinuities therefore firstly imply the definition of a coherent set of areal units covering the study area. They can be observed at different scales: discontinuities between states of the world or a continent; discontinuities between regions of Europe; discontinuities between administrative units of a country; discontinuities between local authorities or neighbourhoods inside a metropolitan area. The statistical homogeneity and the political relevance of territorial units is a crucial condition for the interpretation of discontinuities. Different territorial divisions can indeed produce different patterns of discontinuities. Some patterns are without interest because they are related to statistical biases and not genuine social differences.

The second criteria for the analysis of discontinuity is the choice of different attributes of areal units associated to a criteria of dissimilarity. In the simplest case, the attribute is a single quantitative criterion like the fertility rate of the population. But even in the case of a single quantitative attribute, different measure of dissimilarity can be chosen for the measurement of discontinuities. The specialists from spatial statistics generally use dissimilarity based on variance or covariance of indicators for the measurement of spatial heterogeneity at local level. However, other criteria can be used depending on the research hypothesis. For example, the cartography of the discontinuities of Gross Domestic Product (GDP)/capita between EU regions will reveal very different patterns when we compare absolute or relative differences. The most interesting discontinuities are based on a combination of criteria covering different dimensions of society, and likely to reveal the existence of real systemic differences between societies located in neighbouring units.

The third criteria is the definition of a threshold defining at which level of dissimilarity we can consider that a border between two neighbouring spatial units can be considered as a discontinuity. This threshold is generally based on the mean and standard deviation of dissimilarity between two territorial units, contiguous or not. As contiguous units are generally more similar than non-contiguous unit (positive spatial autocorrelation), only few limits are characterized by high values of dissimilarity between territorial units located on each side.

National political borders are often associated with very significant discontinuities. For example, it was demonstrated that the differences in age structure between neighbouring regions of Europe in 1985 were very strong along the Iron Curtain (supranational border), strong along the other national borders and moderate to low between regions of the same countries, except in multinational countries or around metropolitan areas. Many studies realized for the European Observation Network for Territorial Development and Cohesion (ESPON) program or the European Parliament demonstrated similar results. They also showed that border discontinuities are not necessary an obstacle for cooperation. They can be a driving force for integration when differences are related to complementarity or can induce flows related to “arbitrage economies”.

We can illustrate this point with a typology that provides a comparable overview of territorial discontinuities throughout the European Union’s (EU) cross-border regions. In that example, territorial discontinuities are identified through a synthetic measure of economic, social and

demographic differences between couples of neighbouring cross-border regions. Based on the use of ESPON, harmonized regional database at the Nomenclature of Territorial Units for Statistics (NUTS) 2/3 level, this measure helps identify boundaries where there is an important break due to a territory being younger/older and more/less economically dynamic than its neighbour. In the absence of direct data about cross-border flows, the underlying assumption is that the discontinuities observed in terms of spatial structures can reveal potentials for interaction between cross-border regions.

The typology based on these couples of cross-border regions highlights two main profiles of socio-economic differences that are subject to varying interpretations in terms of potential complementarities. The profiles displayed in warm colours (red, dark orange and light orange) show cross-border regions with complementary socio-economic characteristics which could lead to worker flows, such as a young population and a high unemployment rate in one side of the border, a high GDP per capita and an ageing population on the other side. The profiles displayed in cold colours (blue, green) show cross-border regions that are cumulating all advantages on one side and accumulating all disadvantages on the other. These situations are not suitable *a priori* to set up mutual cooperation. Each of these socio-economic differences present varying intensities (average value of local differences) which are displayed by the width of the international border.

According to this analysis, the regions the most adapted to cooperation are located in cross-border territories of Germany (East and West), around Benelux and also between Southern Italy, France or Slovenia.

Socio-economic complementarities cannot have an operational use without taking into account accessibility conditions existing between cross-border territories in Europe. Two territories sharing a common international border and experiencing very good socio-economic complementarities are unlikely to exchange and cooperate without any road networks or public transport links. The report published by the *Unité mixte de service* (UMS): *Réseau interdisciplinaire pour l'aménagement et la cohésion des territoires de l'Europe et de ses voisinages* (RIATE) experiments the use of the *OpenStreetMap* road network to create an index of network performance between cross-border regions. The confrontation of this road performance index with the socio-economic typology of cross-border regions reveals that regions experiencing good socio-economic complementarities are also the ones which already have good road

infrastructures linking them. Several exceptions exist, such as the cross-border territories of France and Switzerland, or Poland and Germany, which are significantly less interconnected as regards to what could be expected from their high degree of socio-economic complementarities.

All the borders are not characterized by discontinuities and all the discontinuities are not localized along borders. Border discontinuities, nevertheless, remain particularly interesting because they are associated with specific effects on cross-border relations.

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Border Disputes in Europe

The legal and social science literatures differentiate between three types of border disputes: territorial, positional and functional disputes. Territorial disputes result from a multitude of issues; positional disputes are both technical and legalistic; and, functional disputes are the consequence of opposing and inconsistent border policies.

Territorial disputes are the most complex and violent types of disputes. Often, they have a long unresolved history concerned with territorial integrity, sovereignty and ethnic, linguistic, cultural, religious or political tensions and disagreements. When territorial disputes are also about control of natural resources such as water, oil, gas, coal, fisheries, woods or agricultural land, those are always primarily rooted in disagreement over political issues correlated with sovereign integrity of land and/or sea between people and political communities (the Moroccan-Western Sahara dispute is particularly interesting in this regard). The Correlate of War data base documents territorial disputes as the number one reason for wars since 1800; and, in an overwhelming majority of cases, they are internal disputes between an established member of the international community (today a member of the United Nations (UN)) opposing secessionist demands from a minority group or political community (the unsuccessful secession of Serb-Krajina from Croatia in the failed 1991–1995 war is an example).

Positional disputes result from disagreement regarding the precise location of a boundary line between two or more members of the international community: what is at stake is the exact position or the delineation of a boundary line on land or sea. In a vast number of cases, resolution is limited by legal and geo-locational challenges. Although, they are more easily resolved than territorial disputes because they are more technical, past treaties and agreements are at stake thanks to the lack of precise and specific references or description of land and/or maritime location of the boundary. In most unresolved cases, the issue weighs on missing information in treaties and of the ground or sea: such as a vanished river-island or seasonal changes in a river thalweg (a good example is the Ems estuary/Dollart bay shared by Germany and the Netherlands). Historically, prior to 1850, imprecision was extreme because without the Harrison Clock, the calculation and dotted drawing of maps was simply impossible. The fairly recent UN Convention on the

Law of the Sea of 1982 has led to numerous disputes being raised and resolved both legally and cartographically.

Functional disputes are about border policies, i.e. the policies that implement the border itself. They can result from numerous state actions or inactions; a border can be effectively manned by border guards, posts and gates, and boundary markers, or not. The borderland can also be the site of many natural resources, whether above and below ground, which harvest or mining is disputed because public or private actors cannot agree on terms. Agreeing on basic terms prevent such functional disputes because resource extraction then is uncontroversial. This happens because states and private sector actors, for instance, have formed consortiums to share revenues (for example on the Svalbard Islands there is a Norway Russia partnership for oil in revenues). Clearly, funds are more easily divided than land or sea. Obviously, when members of the international community align their border policies and agree on the administration of the border and borderlands, functional disputes are lessened.

Although the European Union (EU) institutions do not play a major international role in resolving disputes between its EU member states, it has uses of policies to encourage them to work together across borders. As a result, within and around the EU there are few territorial disputes and even fewer positional or functional disputes.

None of the EU institutions play a role similar to that of International Court of Justice (the international arbitrator for border disputes); however, since the Jacques Delors presidency starting in 1985, the European Commission has implemented policies to bridge and bring together communities from either side of most internal, and also most external boundary lines of the EU. Thus, the focus of the Interreg policies, set up from 1990 onwards, is about internal borders in a post Schengen era, whereas the European Neighbourhood Policy (ENP) is about managing what the European Council called, in its 2004 white paper on “A Secure Europe in a Better World – European Security Strategy, a Ring of Well Governed Countries’.” In parts, the ENP is exactly about limiting geopolitical issues with peripheral state partners and to limit the possibilities of disputes.

Illustrations of those EU programs can be found in the resulting peaceful borderlands of the Turkish/Greek “Cyprus” case, or on the northern border of the Republic of Ireland, where the impact of the Brexit decision on the peaceful relations between the Republic of Ireland

and Northern Ireland has become again a much-discussed issue. Both situations illustrate how important peace is to EU member states and how the EU's institutions and policies take care of peace in its internal and external borderlands. Today, the European Commission's policies fund a multitude of cross-border programs in Cyprus: the "green line" is primarily disaffected and, in small instance, tourists visit both sides. Similarly, in Northern Ireland, despite many signs of historical divisions such as murals and arts on walls and streets along the borderlands of many villages, the EU Peace and Interreg programs have facilitated the implementation of a fluid borderland region. The EU Interreg program funds a Franco-Spanish cross-border hospital that provides care for 120 000 residents of the borderland. Also, the very public Brexit discussions are nearly daily reminders that, for EU institutions and member states, the prevention of the reappearance of any form of violence, and thus of any possible visible borders, border gates, border posts and border-guards are unacceptable. Hence the "backstop" proposal that would keep the whole island inside the European free trade area and limit custom and migration checks across the Irish sea where most are taking place today because of Belfast's airport and seaport.

In sum, in the EU, territorial disputes are addressed by programs enhancing peace and constructive collaboration and cooperation, but some of them are still unresolved. For instance, the Ukraine Donbass conflict characterizes a truly violent case in the borderlands of the EU. Because Ukraine remains a "priority partner", the EU supports Ukraine both politically and economically through a number of agreements. However, the Association Agreement it signed with Ukraine caused serious problems: it was at the origin of Ukraine's border dispute with Russia which led to the annexation of Crimea. The EU/Ukraine Summit in 8 July 2019 was strengthening trade, visa and democratic governance reforms in Ukraine. Also, there are still positional disputes, some of which have not been resolved for centuries and are likely to remain "peacefully, unresolved": the France-Spain *Quinto Real* is nearly 400 years old – neither France nor Spain want to delineate the boundary line across this high valley of the Pyrenees; the Austrian-German Lake Constance delineation is another complex legal conundrum and the Ems Dollart estuary (Germany/Netherlands), the thalweg of which moves every season, are as many examples where collaboration suspends in time any possible resolution. Finally, functional disputes are also vanishing because

the ENP transforms the nature of relations across borders. Overall, the EU's use of cooperative and collaborative policies has been surprisingly successful and should be a model for the rest of the world.

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Border Obstacles

Inhabitants of border regions face in their daily life difficulties linked to the presence of the border, whether it is for finding a job, accessing healthcare, everyday travel, or simply talking with border neighbour. According to the Commission's Communication "Boosting growth and cohesion in EU border regions" in 2017, a border obstacle is, "not only a restriction on free movement (...) but a law, rule or administrative practice that obstructs the inherent potential of a border region when interacting across the border". Identifying and finding solutions to such obstacles is one of the major challenges of cross-border cooperation.

The Council of Europe made a first mapping of obstacles and solutions, on the basis of a consultation of member states in 2011. Its analysis by the Institute of Sociology in Gorizia (ISIG) provides a typology of border obstacles including criteria such as; the level of solution (local, national or European), the sectoral policy concerned (employment, transport, etc), and what ISIG calls the reason of obstacles persistence. They further identified six factors; institutional, administrative, economic, expertise (obstacles linked with lack of knowledge), cultural, and lack of propensity to cooperate. These correspond to the six spheres of coordination of actors in open societies identified by Luc Boltanski and Laurent Thévenot; civic, industrial (or functional), market, opinion, inspired, and domestic. In each country, these spheres coexist, and enter into conflict and compromise through arrangements which are specific to it. In a cross-border context, two national systems collide. Emmanuel Brunet-Jailly recalls that boundaries bind nation states; the "boundary" belonging to the same semantic field as "bind". Before being a limit with another country, a boundary is directed inwards. National systems frame daily life and also the way people think. To solve border obstacles and to build cohesion requires new cross-border arrangements.

Over the course of its presidency of the European Union (EU) during the 2nd semester 2015, the Grand Duchy of Luxembourg stressed the need to overcome border obstacles. Obstacles linked with economic costs can be addressed by financial support, like Interreg. Obstacles linked with institutional dimension can be solved through instruments such as European Grouping of Territorial Cooperation (EGTCs). Unfortunately, there is no specific European tool for administrative and legal obstacles at the moment. Luxembourg proposed a new European legal instrument based upon the principle of mutual recognition in the field of public

services, which has been taken up by the Commission with the draft regulation on the 'European cross border mechanism' (ECBM) within the framework of post-2020 legislation. An intergovernmental working group for innovative solutions to cross-border obstacles brings together interested states and experts to support the proposal.

The Commission launched a "Cross-Border Review" in autumn 2015, through a consultation on obstacles to cross-border interaction, two studies and workshops, which led to a communication published September 2017.

Numerous obstacles can be overcome at the level of each border, notably those of an administrative nature or resulting from a lack of knowledge, of concertation, or of cross-border coordination, between local/regional actors (local and regional authorities, decentralized government departments, etc.) on either side of the border.

On a given border the removal of an obstacle resulting from national legislation, or a lack of inter-operability with a neighbouring country, requires changes in the law in one or both of the countries concerned or an inter-state agreement. In this case, the national governments (or federated state governments) concerned need to be involved. At national level, a better account of cross-border concerns has to be taken within national policies though more concertation with the local level and/or neighbouring countries and a greater flexibility and adaptation to the specific cross-border context. It is important to ensure inter-ministerial steering of cross-border cooperation, enabling the necessary regulatory and legislative modifications to be dealt with, as well as the negotiation of inter-state accords.

Certain obstacles can be overcome by intervention at the European level involving a change in EU legislation, for example, the abolition of roaming charges from June 2017. European level intervention can also result in better transposition of EU legislation, assuring interoperability between national transpositions, the creation of specific tools such as the EGTC or that proposed by Luxembourg, coordination within the European Commission and with the other institutions (i.e., border focal point established after the communication).

Coordination mechanisms exist or are emerging in several parts of Europe, in the context of various processes and have an effect at different levels. Organisations such as Euro-institutes take action on certain borders in support of local / regional players. Organisations like the

Mission opérationnelle transfrontalière (MOT) in France or the Central European Service for Cross-Border Initiatives (CESCI) in Hungary bring attention to the remaining obstacles at higher levels of governance, mutualize between several borders the removal of obstacles overcome on one border via the sharing of experience, support the national level in the removal of obstacles, and facilitate concertation between one country and its neighbours. Long-established intergovernmental organisations take charge of dealing with border obstacles at the scale of macro-regions such as Benelux or the Nordic Council. At the European level, the approaches of these different organisations in connection with the Association of European Border Regions (AEBR) could be made inter-operable and coordinated, supporting European institutions and intergovernmental processes.

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Border Region

The concept of region is one of the most commonly used by geographers. As a relatively large space with its own spatial consistency, it can be identified either with a part of the world, a continent or a subcontinent, whose scale is often transnational or supranational, or with a part of a state, on a sub-national scale. In the latter case, the concept takes a polysemous dimension and may have several definitions: it can refer to a space polarized by a metropolis, a space whose population have a sense of belonging, a group of places united by intense interactions, a strictly delimited territory with a development program, or a territory governed by a political authority. We shall focus on the region as a political entity.

Apart from micro-states, the territory of each state is divided into regions, into administrative units situated between the state level and the local authorities. This division aims at ensuring interior diversity while taking several criteria into account: population, surface area and the number of units. A border region is therefore defined as a unit with an international border, which gives it specificity both in its configuration and its organisation.

The territorial structuring of a state leading to the creation of national borders gives border regions a peculiar situation, characterized by three functions: protection, exchange and regulation. For state governments, a border region is a periphery weakened by its adjacent position with another state, the problem being addressed through the building of a more or less elaborate defense system. The populations and players living in border regions are often more sensitive to the exchange prospects allowed by the confrontation with the neighbouring territorial system. On the economical level, the existence of differentials may create a trade in goods which, legal or not, sometimes favours the appearance of situation rents. In all cases, the state tries to regulate the flows, through the implementation of controls. Smuggling is based on legal differentials and makes it possible to introduce added value by selling goods, which are forbidden on one's own territory. Characterized by important fluctuations over time, smuggling seems to have largely vanished from the inner borders of the European single market.

The porosity of borders plays a part in the depth and intensity of interactions, as shown by Oscar Martinez (1994), based on his observations on the U.S.-Mexican border. Four types of situations were

identified in what he calls border zones or borderland milieus: alienation, ignorance, interdependence and integration. Generally speaking, distance is a structuring element in the intensity of flows: the reduction of the effects depends on the kinds of interaction and on the observed dyads.

European integration has deeply transformed border regions: the disappearance of the defense and regulation functions which used to be performed by the military and the customs shows that they are no longer considered peripheries. On the other hand, territorial differences persist, and are even reinforced in some cases. Nothing has really confirmed the fear that the single market would lead to the disappearance of situation rents while creating a tunnel effect (the new fluxes between the main urban poles transform border regions into mere transit zones).

This has even given birth to new specializations. A growing number of skilled jobs are often observed on one side of the border, while the other side seems to be rather characterized by residential dynamics, resulting from the strategies of households and economic players. The public authorities are also involved, implementing strategies specifically devised for those border regions. While the State long wanted to use border regions as showcases, the regional public players now establish new modes of cooperation which consider the border as a resource, drawing their inspiration from the experiments led in neighbouring countries.

Intense interactions between border regions have given birth to functional cross-border regions. Such cross-border integration does not necessarily involve a convergence in living standards or the reduction of disparities. On the contrary, in some cases, borders increase the tensions, as revealed by the dynamics of some urban conurbations close to borders whose effects lead to demographic or land pressure on cross-border spaces. Faced with the consequences of free movement, all border regions do not accede to positive dynamics. A large variety of situations can thus be observed on a European level.

However, the cross-border cooperation agreements established by regional authorities suggest that some cross-border regions take a political dimension. The creation of Euroregions echoes the desire of communities to give institutional form to their future co-development. And yet, one may wonder about the durability of those constructs when territorial systems do not converge without effective State help.

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Border Resource

At first glance, apprehending borders as resources may seem like an oxymoron. In many cases and for many people, national borders refer rather to the idea of separation, barrier or hindrance. That being said, and in spite of their undeniable constraining aspects, borders also have some practical utility for human societies. Since their ‘invention’ at the beginning of the modern era, territorial borders have been widely mobilized to affirm the territorial sovereignty of states, either functionally through the control of mobility and flows or symbolically with the legitimization of the exercise of an authority over a portion of space. From an economic perspective, they have allowed the protection of market areas, the demarcation of public-goods based externality fields (i.e., the financing of public infrastructure) and, as an induced effect, the development of legal or illicit activities and trade based on cross-border differentials. Last, from a cultural point of view, borders have played a key role in the formation and perpetuation of national identities. The explicit reference to the notion of borders as resources is, however, relatively recent and denotes a change in the way borders are defined: from a physical outcome of socio-political processes to ‘dynamic institutions’ constantly made and remade through the practices of a great variety of actors (and not only the state).

In the contemporary era, the apprehension of borders as resources specifically refers to two contrasting perspectives. The first perspective, points to the context of opening borders (i.e., ‘de-bordering’) and the fact that this condition offers opportunities for the development and integration of cross-border regions. The second perspective, refers to a context of security-led re-bordering or resurgent nationalisms and the fact that borders can be mobilized in populist discourses and postures that seek to reinforce and legitimize their role of protection, separation and exclusion. The following analysis focuses exclusively on the first perspective that relates to the rise of cross-border regionalism. In such a context, opening borders represent resources when certain functions or effects instituted by them (see the four forms of resources introduced hereafter) are used to enable or foster political, economic or social activities that transcend the border. To understand borders as resources is to emphasize their socially constructed character. Indeed, a resource must be appreciated in relation to a process of production of a social reality and does not exist in and of itself. It also means that the exploitation of

border-induced resources does not simply derive from the opening (or the ‘disappearance’) of a border but depends on the ability of some actors to apprehend, interpret and take advantage of a specific cross-border context. Finally, and unlike natural resources, border resources do not necessarily diminish when they are used; they can even be strengthened through their use, as suggested by the reproduction of border differentials. It is therefore a recursive process in which the mobilization of borders as resources contributes to their (re)production and their on-going transformation.

Several studies, by Remigio Ratti or Liam O’Dowd have contended that opening borders may serve as resources for the development of border regions. Based on a synthesis of various arguments, four forms of border resources are briefly introduced:

From the moment a border is open, border regions have a distinct advantage, that of being located close to the neighbouring area. This positional advantage can generate different benefits. First, the territorial gateway position which can be claimed by some border cities and regions enables the channeling of international flows, persons or goods. Second, the proximity to foreign markets—but also to critical mass in terms of labour, knowledge networks or other assets—represents key elements for fostering scale and agglomeration economies. Third, neighbouring cities and regions might benefit from positive externalities due to cross-border spillovers (e.g., the commercial or cultural attraction exerted by a border city towards its periphery).

Borders play an active role in differentiating society and space. One of the key potential benefits of border-induced differentiation rests on the exploitation of factor cost differentials such as labour, land, or differences in tax and regulations. Based on an international division of labour, the localization of low-cost industries in border areas represents a remarkable example of such an effect of border differential advantages (e.g., the maquiladoras along the US–Mexico border). The development of cross-border labour markets constitutes another expression of the exploitation of border economic and fiscal differentials, particularly wages and unemployment rates. Lastly, the juxtaposition of border differentials also has effects at the level of residential migration or shopping behaviour. In border regions marked by great socio-economic disparities, one can witness residential strategies based on relocation in the direction of the neighbouring region offering lower living costs. If, in theory, such asymmetries should be weakened by a medium-term process

of convergence, in practice, the reproduction of a combined and uneven development is observed in cross-border regions such as the Greater Region (Luxembourg) or the Greater Geneva.

As a place where ideas and different values are confronted, the border can also be a source of stimulation leading to hybridization and the invention of new ways of doing and thinking. The concept of hybridization refers to the production of new social practices through the mixture of antecedents which were previously separated. The opportunity offered by the border relies on overcoming constraints and differences through a process of adaptation and mutual learning negotiated through daily exchanges. Various fields and registers of activities are likely to be affected by these processes. In Europe, increased cross-border cooperation in the field of urban development and territorial planning reveals a kind of 'institutional hybridization': the confrontation of different urban planning standards, procedures and 'administrative cultures' may result in the development of innovative practices and workable arrangements that combine or reinterpret aspects from the national systems. In practice, nearly thirty years of Interreg projects have shown that such an institutional hybridization remains a challenge and is necessarily part of a long-term perspective.

Finally, the mobilization of the border as an object of recognition allows to display the multicultural nature of some cross-border regions and the opportunities this represents to shape a regional identity or attract international businesses and talented workers in a context of global competition (for an emblematic example, see the Oresund region). The symbolic value of the border becomes involved in place-making strategies at the local and regional levels and refers to the establishment of public and club goods such as regional identity and territorial branding. For political stakeholders, engaging in cross-border cooperation can also represent a means of gaining political recognition and generating leverage for coalition building at the regional level and beyond. These strategies of symbolic affirmation may also reinforce regionalist tendencies and some kinds of inward-looking attitudes that end-up recreating new borders.

Ultimately, borders remain both an opportunity and a constraint, an ambiguous source of advantages and struggles. Their mobilization as resources frequently sustain an unequal process of development that benefits more one side of the border than the other, or one category

of people at the expense of another. The generation, use and control of borders as resources is therefore always subject to contestation and power struggles.

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Border Security in Europe

Securing borders in the 21st century is much less a geo-locational or geopolitical activity than it was fifty years ago. Today, it is as much about information and electronic boundaries as it was about guarding boundary lines, border posts, gates, and cannon or chains across waterways in the past. Obviously, land, sea and air physical infrastructures and walls still exist, but they are in complement to electronic and information-analytics taking place across vast worldwide networks of information-control that do not follow the internationally agreed boundary lines of specific countries. These global borders regulate most traded goods and a large part of all human movements.

Until the 1990s, the literatures on borders and security underscored two fundamentally different approaches to border security. The primacy was that military security remained fundamental in the formulation of border security policies. But European scholars such as Kevin Gray and Barry Buzan profoundly altered the debates by suggesting that security was much more complex than military security suggested, and that combining thinking about security as a multi-sectoral approach including environmental, economic, and social dimensions to security and intelligence had become a necessity. The European Union (EU) Neighbourhood policies complex and multifaceted approaches encompass all those dimensions linking development, trade, and rights, with intelligence and enforcement policies. Clearly, the 1990s was the turning point with the fall of the Berlin wall, the archetypical boundary wall and the rise of pandemics (mad cow, 1996; influenza, 2009), nuclear accidents such as Chernobyl (1986) or the Fukushima Daiichi (2011); all of which demonstrated that boundary lines, even fortified borderlands and border regions, were not enough to secure states and their people from those plagues.

Border policies changed imperceptibly as they progressively subspecialized to differentiate, for instance, between flows of trade and goods, and human mobility. And, since the mid-2015, we have evidence that much more specialization has happened to address the resulting EU and Pan-American political crises that resulted from expanding human mobility within and across these continents. Mobility causes vary and responses to those new massive human movements have resulted in the generalization of camps being set up in 'transit countries' such as Libya or Jordan, and Lebanon in the Mediterranean region, or in the borderlands

of the southern United States, and on the Manus and Nauru Pacific Islands off of Australia. The top destination countries are the United States, the European Union, Saudi Arabia, Russia and Australia. It is notable that many of those camps are not in destination but transit countries. Yet, camps only address contiguous geo-locational and geopolitical issues.

Trade flows and human mobility, however, are increasingly non-contiguous, they are global, and monitored thanks to electronic intelligence taking place in countries of origin and at destination. Today, in North America, the EU, China, India, Japan and others, government agencies collect the biometric information of all incoming airline passengers and negotiate *preclearance agreements* to enhance their ability to control in-and-out mobilities. Preclearance is developing massively, it can prevent travellers from going anywhere and allows, like code-bar, the tracing of movement.

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Border Studies

Only a few years ago the concept of border studies would have either seemed obscure or met with incredulity. Borders were seen to be politically straightforward; their study was largely subsidiary to geopolitical issues and the histories and geographies of states. In only two decades, however, border studies have emerged as a highly complex and multidisciplinary project of investigating the wider societal significance of boundary-making, dealing with the interplay between borders and actors of all sorts. Depending on the point of departure, the exact definition of border studies can differ greatly. According to a more constructivist perspective, border studies can be described as studying human practices that are based on and create differences, whereas in more positivistic approaches the line that demarcates differences is put Centre-stage. This line, as well as the actors and processes, are all constituents of border studies. Whatever stance is taken, contemporary border studies can be considered to have become an interdisciplinary field that critically examines borders both as outcomes, their consequences and becoming.

Many consider Friedrich Ratzel and his work on political geography and borders dating from the late 19th century as foundational. Understanding political borders as a product of social organisation and thus of the gradual emergence of states, Ratzel's aim was to determine the geographical laws governing state growth and the demarcation of national spaces. The central characteristic of Ratzel's understanding of borders was that of socio-ecological processes of stabilizing human populations and the states that would emerge as part of the political and cultural evolution of those populations. With this evolutionary thinking influenced by both Darwin and Hegel, Ratzel and his followers negotiated the historical "fuzziness" of borders as markers of cultural and territorial space by reifying the notion of the binary border as a civilizational achievement demarcating state sovereignty. Ratzel's thinking was elaborated by numerous scholars, such as Otto Maull and Karl Haushofer who studied borders and border emergence as parts of a rather deterministic Society-Environment System (*Mensch-Umwelt-System*). While controversial and in large part discredited, the legacy of Ratzellian border studies remains with us today: despite post-modern, post-structural and other contestations of linearity, the ideational power of the binary border remains in evidence in everyday (geo)political situations.

Simultaneously with the rather deterministic Ratzellian worldview, a more possibilistic approach was pioneered by Paul Vidal de la Blache and his followers. In this approach the world can be considered to be consisting of distinctive lifestyles (*genres de vie*) of different people living in different places. Possibilism was also reflected in border studies that championed a functionalist understanding of space-society relations. Richard Hartshorne's work on Lower Silesia, the Danzig Corridor and other regions affected by shifts in state borders were exemplary of the attempt to develop a systematic approach to the study of border landscapes. Hartshorne suggested that the interaction between political borders and cultural landscapes were an important source of spatial differentiation. More importantly, however, Hartshorne suggested that the analysis of function and, more expressly, the functioning of the state, would provide a meaningful context for scientific rigour.

Disenchantment with the perceived positivism and "border scientism" of the functional approach contributed, by the late 1980s, to a shift from boundary to border studies. The evolution and transformation of the territorial confines of the state therefore became to be understood as part of the more general social production of borders. Rather than merely territorial, borders are now studied as sites at and through which socio-spatial differences were communicated. Moreover, since the late 1980s, border studies have been increasingly characterized by the prioritization of political and social agency. The present consensus is that all borders are man-made and therewith artificial as opposed to earlier notions of "natural" or "structural" borders. This constructivist tradition is closely related to the ideas of the production of space as put forward by Lefebvre and is largely responsible for the development of border studies into a multi-perspectival field of research. Henk van Houtum has related this epistemological move to three parallel approaches related to flows, cooperation and people that, while interrelated, ask rather different questions. The flow-approach asks the question "Do borders matter?" The cooperation-approach investigates "How can borders be overcome?" In the people-Centred approach, the more existential question is raised: "Why are there borders and how are they constructed?"

These three questions involve specific aspects of societal transformation that problematize relationships between the state, state territoriality, citizenship, identity and cross-border interaction. The central conceptual shift lies in an understanding of borders as something inherently social and cultural rather than exclusively political. In this view, borders can, for

example, be studied in terms of local coping strategies, the development of cross-border cultural, economic and personal networks and their use as “place-making” instruments.

The complexity of contemporary border studies is perhaps best captured by the concept of “bordering” in which borders are constantly made through ideology, symbols, cultural mediation, discourses, political institutions, attitudes and everyday forms of border transcending and border confirming. Bordering is, by nature, a multi-level process that takes place, for example, at the level of high politics, manifested by physical borders and visa regimes, as well as in media debates over national identity, legal and illegal immigration and language rights. Another important and closely related element in bordering is the embedding of social understandings of borders within everyday border-crossings associated with gender, family sexuality (i.e. expressed in the increasing feminization of international migration), and cultural expression (e.g. in the form of borderlands as explicit and implicit memory places (*lieux de memoires*)).

It is of course difficult to foresee the future of border studies which resembles looking into a crystal ball. We do permit ourselves however to share some thoughts on the matter. First, borders, or perhaps better the consequences of borders, might be considered to be constantly moving and in motion. They are part of evolutionary processes as well as evolutionary processes themselves. Secondly, borders are clearly relational and multi-scalar, horizontally as well as vertical constructs and have to be studied in this way. Thirdly, borders and border-related practices have more and more become highly ethical issues, which has clear implications for border studies and especially the positionality of border scholars. And, finally, there is the issue of the supposed changing territoriality of borders. Some borders seem to be moving away from traditional territorial state-centric arrangements, whereas in other cases the reverse seems to be happening. Whether or not they are already or becoming a-territorial or are re-territorializing, remains to be seen. As much of these “relocated” border functions still find their supposed legitimization linked to certain territorial bodies (countries, trade-associations etc.), maybe it is better to speak of the trans-territoriality of borders. Just as with transnationalism, where identities, cultures and behaviour are carried to and maintained in other places, also functions, ideas and the operations of borders are transposed to and exercised in other places – be they physical or not.

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Borderities

Borderities is a recently coined term by Anne-Laure Amilhat Szary and Frédéric Giraut to address the individualization of contemporary border regimes. Based on the fact that borders are now considered to be both opening up and closing down simultaneously, through what specialists call a “de-bordering-re-bordering” process, this new notion aims at characterizing the various possibilities of experiencing the border as both sites of complex power, identity and social processes.

The theoretical underpinning of the notion of borderities resides in the assessment of the now somehow outdated character of the territory/state/border triptych, implying that accounting for any of these three notions needed more than a reference to the two others. This questioning opened two major debates, one concerning the evolution of sovereignty, a concept based upon the exclusivity of an authority over a territorial perimeter, the other concerning democracy, since the political regime relies upon the distribution of power among people whose equal rights are encapsulated by their link to the space they belong.

The term itself can be seen as reflective of the capabilities approach, a concept developed by Amartya Sen, which stresses the importance of the individual's capacities to choose for themselves and act accordingly: to exercise agency according to personal values and challenge the role of traditional actors with a more institutional position in the process, such as states and other aid agencies. Applied to the case of borders, the idea of “capabilities” stresses according to Saskia Sassen that the state's power to “encase its territory through administrative and legal instruments” is eroding, although this has not “[reduced] the incidence of borders, even though they change the character and logics of bordering”.

While totally acknowledging this first source of theoretical inspiration that allows for the reframing of power relations in the understanding of borders and de- and re-bordering processes, the authors have wished to place their new concept within a Foucauldian perspective, one that does not analyse power without a look at potential counter powers, in a relational perspective. Thus, the use of borderities is aimed at strengthening a theoretical apparatus for critical border studies. Thinking that Michel Foucault has distinguished three forms of struggles, that which oppose domination, that which are pitted against exploitation as well as that which denounce all that ties a person to themselves, thus insuring his/her submission to others, borderities implies that we analyse

borders politically and as a site for understanding domination processes and the resistance initiatives that the latter induce.

For example, the passage of people through borders constitutes a spatial experience that a person can secure in many ways. It may depend on his/her official status: in terms of nationality and passport: does he/she possess one or more passports? It is also affected by his/her economical status that may counter balance the official one by allowing the person to either purchase a new citizenship or right of residence, or buy the services of illegal agents to cross the border by other means. It also relates to his/her personal and psychological resources, that make us all very unequal in confronting threats and pain. His/her personal networks equally interfere with the process, considering these personal connections as potential help at all the steps of a border-crossing. All of the latter are to be taken into account, notwithstanding his/her political agency, i.e. the capacity of the considered human being to raise against the norms that are imposed upon him/her.

Following up this Foucauldian thread, Anne-Laure Amilhat Szary and Frédéric Giraut have offered to consider that since border functions (division, regulation, control) are no longer all materialized in a unique place, the role of space has to be re-questioned in the understanding of contemporary borders (i.e. much more than dividing lines that could be easily represented on a map). Although Michel Foucault himself never specifically addressed borders, they build upon his works on the state to analyse international divides as essential components of government *dispositifs* (often translated as “apparatus”). Replacing the word governmentality by that of borderity in the original text, it would read as: ‘By [borderity] (governmentality), [we mean] the ensemble formed by the institutions, procedures, analyses and reflections, calculations and tactics that allow the exercise of this very specific, albeit complex, form of power, which has as its target population, as its principal form of knowledge, political economy, and as its essential technical means, the apparatus [or what Foucault calls ‘*dispositifs*’], of security’. This allows for a renewed understanding of bordering processes that encompass a much wider set of spaces than that of the traditional border line, with two major advantages. The first is that it allows to escape from a Western-dominated concept of the border as linear and to account for a much broader range of representations of what is a political border; the second is that it offers border studies a possibility to account for the everywhere, mobile border, one that is no longer based on the equivalence between form and function.

Borderity is thus first and foremost a term used to underpin that borders are a technology of power. This relational understanding of power however also opens the field for another understanding of this new term: borderity is also a differentiated social quality, endowed with potential polity. This second meaning of the term derived with an analogy with territoriality, if we agree that this word does not resume to a national dimension of place identification, in a theoretical perspective developed by geographers who have stressed the importance or meaning to understand space. At this level, borderities appear as a proposal to induce the analysis of mundane border work, offering tools to grasp its unstable nature. It also opens for reflections on the internalization and externalization of border functions, and to formalize the role of economics in the making of borders, which border lay the ground for the state and the nation and allow extra-territorial investments of all kinds.

“We propose considering borderity as both an individualized and a collective relationship in the making of a differentiated and individualized border.” To conclude, we insist on the fact that this neologism appears of great use to focus the discussion on contemporary borders towards that of individualized regimes of control and passage on one hand. On the other hand, it can usefully be mobilised to qualify the evolution of regional integration dynamics, notably within the EU, in a perspective that distinguishes levels of agency, responsibility and impact in the understanding of cross-border practises and region making. Together with others to which genealogy it is very related, such as the concept of borderscapes, the notion of borderity also includes a form of subjective stance, wishing to highlight “spaces of critical intervention in a globalized world where ideological debate often hides behind narratives of efficiency and competitiveness.”

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Borderscapes

Borderscapes can be defined as socio-political panoramas that emerge around border contexts and that connect the realm of high politics with that of communities and individuals who are affected by and negotiate borders. The notion of borderscapes is thus an important elaboration on the concept of bordering, or the more fundamental process of creating socio-spatial distinctions at various scales by multiple actors. While bordering has become a central paradigm within the study of borders, several scholars have suggested that the borderscapes concept provides greater inclusiveness in terms of relating everyday experience to border-making.

The borderscapes concept breaks down sharp divisions between territorial and relational understandings of borders. According to Chiara Brambilla, borderscapes express “the (geo)political and epistemic multidimensionality of the border, enabling a productive understanding of the processual, de-territorialized and dispersed nature of borders and their ensuing regimes in the era of globalization and transnational flows.” The term borderscape puts greater emphasis on representations of borders as well as individual and collective practices of border-making, which shape political subjectivities in specific situations. Epistemologically, the approach connects border experiences with border-making practices.

With regard to the symbolic communication of borders and their significance, the concept of borderscapes can also provide links between cognitive processes and the construction of socio-cultural borders. Borderscapes are contexts where cultural appropriations and social contestations become visible via a broad repertory of communicative means and strategies. As Brambilla herself states in an interview, borderscapes consist of spatial practices in the sense of Michel de Certeau (1990), and thus allow for the abandonment of essentialized ideas of political borders and an understanding of contemporary borders “as continually performed and (re)composed by sets of contingent performances revealing their dynamic character”. And yet, the borderscape is both a reflection and re-appropriation of an existing border context and thus gains social significance as a political project of contestation.

In terms of critical border studies, the borderscape concept helps relativize highly critical positions that problematize links between social relations and territoriality. In the literature we often find a decidedly negative framing of bordering as processes of differentiation and inherently

linked to exclusionary processes. A negative vision of borders is informed by specters of Fortress Europe, neoliberal economic exploitation, the plight of migrants seeking safety from conflict, and the increased securitization of border areas. All of these factors create and reproduce socio-spatial inequalities and as such remain highly salient to the study of borders. However, through the borderscape lens bordering critique has opened up space for alternative understandings of border-making practices. We are not limited to mere deconstruction and questioning of borders as expressions of exclusion or mechanisms of governmentality, but can also study how and why borders serve as resources for dialogue, cultural expression, and political empowerment.

These perspectives come together in the present geopolitical climate where, in stark contrast to the 1990s – when discourses of ‘de-bordering’ Europe enjoyed substantial currency – borders appears to have become formidable barriers symbolizing civilizational difference. Understood as borderscapes, borders cannot be reduced to bio-political mechanisms of ordering and othering or to metaphors such as ‘Fortress Europe’. Instead, the concept suggests that our perspectives must be expanded to include what is happening in terms of everyday life at borders as reflected, for example, in the agency of migrants.

Therefore, thinking in terms of borderscapes has direct ethical implications, adding to a rich social sciences and humanities engagement with borders that takes inspiration from the realm of philosophy. As Hannah Arendt (1968) admonished, identity is disclosed in the public sphere, the exclusion from which results in a loss of identification with political systems and a loss of ‘a sense of being in the world’. Making persons visible or invisible in the public realm is about bordering, about creating distinction. European bordering policies disenfranchise non-citizens through exposing them (as threats) and/or obscuring their claims, problems, and motivations. Conversely, thinking of borders as borderscapes reveals that human conditions might stimulate positive agency, while a politics of visibility could signify an expression of social acceptance and integration.

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Bulgaria



In 2007, Bulgaria was one of the last Central and Eastern European countries to join the European Union (EU) apart from Croatia in 2013, together with Romania. Like the latter, Bulgaria is part of the Balkans, a region in South-East Europe whose image is associated with confrontation, fragmentation, and a development gap with western Europe. It has an area of 110 550 km². Its longest land border is with Romania (608 km), and most of that border is formed by the River Danube, which only has two bridges in this section and three ferries linking both sides. It also shares land borders with Greece (494 km) and three non-EU countries, Serbia (318 km), the Republic of North Macedonia, the new name of

the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia (FYROM) (148 km), and Turkey (240 km). The Rhodope range is a mountain range shared by Bulgaria with North Macedonia and Greece. The country also has a maritime border on the Black Sea.

The history of Bulgaria is closely linked to that of the Russian, Ottoman, and Austro-Hungarian Empires. The first written mention of the name Bulgaria as a territory dates back to 681, but the first kingdom lasted less than 50 years (from 969 to 1018) as it was annexed by Byzantium. It was restored in 1186 but remained under Ottoman rule for nearly 500 years, from 1396 to 1878. A Bulgarian reawakening did not start until the second half of the 18th century, when resistance to the Ottomans developed, culminating in the April Uprising of 1876. The Russian war against the Turks in 1877–1878, during which Romania, Serbia and Montenegro came to the aid of Bulgaria, resulted in its liberation from the Ottoman Empire. Greater Bulgaria was formed in 1878, stretching from the Danube to the Aegean Sea, at which point its borders with Romania were fixed and Sofia was selected as capital, because of its central location of the territory. However, Bulgaria was divided into 5 different parts two several months later at the Congress of Berlin, with only a small part gaining autonomy and 3 of them again coming under Ottoman rule. The Kingdom of Bulgaria was restored in 1908 and fought over Macedonia with Serbia, Montenegro, Greece, Romania and Ottoman Empire in the second Balkan war of 1913. Hostilities commenced with Romania while the latter supported Serbia during the Second Balkan War. In 1913 Macedonia was split between Serbia and Greece, with Romania obtaining south Dobruja which was part of Bulgaria. For this reason Bulgaria allied itself with the German Empire, Austria-Hungary, and the Ottoman Empire during World War I and found itself on the defeated side in 1918; losing access to the Aegean Sea under the Treaty of Neuilly in 1919.

During World War II, the two states were again in opposing camps. Having allied itself with Nazi Germany, Bulgaria managed to recover southern Dobruja. Following the end of World War II, Bulgaria and Romania shared the same fate, passing into the Soviet sphere of influence in 1944–1945, with Stalin backing the establishment of communist regimes in both countries. Bulgaria was therefore separated from Western Europe throughout the Cold War by the Iron Curtain. Over these decades, Bulgaria still had a significant Turkish minority. Between 1950 and 1990, the communist regime signed different agreements with the

government of Turkey enabling the move of more than 300000 people to Turkey. It was not until 1990, after the fall of the Berlin Wall, that the two countries restored democracy and were able to start developing cross-border cooperation with their neighbours at local and regional level. Today, there are still several minorities living in Bulgaria, like Pomak, Slavic-speaking Muslims, but the most significant remains the Turkish one which is mainly localized in the southern part of the country (more than 500000 people according to the census of 2011).

Cross-border cooperation was late developing (towards the end of the 1990s), as the state needed to introduce decentralisation reforms in order to give local border partners autonomous powers. Moreover, relations with neighbouring countries were complicated and marked by serious mistrust, given the deep scars left from their fraught history. That mistrust has coloured bilateral relations between Bulgaria and Romania. Finally, as a result of war in the Balkans, first between Serbia and Bosnia-Herzegovina (1992–1995) and then in Kosovo (1998–1999), there is a feeling that the borders to the west are unstable, making it hard to develop cross-border cooperation communities and bodies, particularly on the borders with Serbia and North Macedonia. Following Bulgaria's accession to the EU in 2007, neighbourhood relations with Turkey were constrained by the EU's new external border which has gradually developed into a wall protecting fortress Europe against the wave of immigrants trying to enter via Turkey.

It is therefore hardly surprising that only one Euroregion has been formed; established in the early 1990s on the border between Bulgaria and Greece, which had joined the European Community in 1981. The Mesta-Nestos Euroregion was established in 1992 in the form of two Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs), one on the Bulgarian side and one on the Greek side. It links the Greek regional district of Thrace in East Macedonia with the Bulgarian region of Blagoevgrad on the banks of the River Mesta. For the remainder, cross-border cooperation only started to develop on the borders of Bulgaria in the late 1990s as the prospect of accession to the EU drew closer.

However, two macro-regional cooperation projects have been established involving Bulgaria. In 2002, Bulgaria, the Republic of Serbia and FYROM established the Eurobalkans Euroregion with the aim of stabilizing and consolidating neighbourhood relations. At the end of the first decade of the new millennium, Bulgaria and Romania jointly launched a macro-regional cooperation project with the countries

bordering the Black Sea. The Black Sea Euroregion was set up in 2008 and links 12 municipalities and districts, one region (Cahul in Moldova) and one autonomous republic (Adjara in Georgia) in five countries (Bulgaria, Romania, Armenia, Georgia and Moldova). Macro-regions are supported by the Council of Europe, which encouraged the creation of the Carpathian Euroregion and the Black Sea Euroregion in order to consolidate democracy in spaces shared by its member states. The aim for the Black Sea region is also to enable a better management of the maritime basin, which is confronted by environmental pressures and a delicate geopolitical context.

Bulgaria started to develop Euroregions from the beginning of the millennium. In 2001, the Rodopi Euroregion was established between an association of 21 Bulgarian municipalities and the Greek Delta-Rodopi regional cooperation organisation and its seven disparate members. In 2001, the first (and only) 'euroregional' cooperation initiative was established with the participation of Turkey, namely the Evros-Maritsa-Meric Euroregion linking Bulgarian, Greek, and Turkish authorities. This was followed by four Euroregions, two with Greece and two with Serbia: the Strymon-Strouma Euroregion on the Bulgarian-Greek border and the Belasica Euroregion, which also involved partners from North Macedonia, both of which were established in 2003; the Nišava Euroregion, set up between Bulgarian and Serbian municipalities in 2005; and the Stara Planina Euroregion, a rural Euroregion set up between Bulgaria and Serbia in 2006.

A number of Euroregions were set-up along the River Danube, mostly involving partners in Bulgaria and Romania, between 2001 and 2005. The Lower Danube Euroregion was found in 2001. It was followed by a trilateral Euroregion to the middle part of the river near the Irongate linking Bulgaria, Romania and Serbia called the Danube 21 Euroregion (2002). A very intensive cooperation project was also established in the border zone between the region of Ruse in Bulgaria and the district of Giurgiu in Romania. The two border towns of Ruse and Giurgiu sit on opposite banks of the Danube. They were linked in 1952 by the first bridge over the Bulgarian-Romanian border, known as the Friendship Bridge. They signed a twinning agreement in 1997, which was converted into a Euroregion-type association in 2002. Since 2014, several projects have been launched to improve transport connectivity, foster tourism, and develop heritage initiatives. The Danubius Euroregion covers various aspects of cross-border cooperation, such as economic growth,

sustainable development, and cultural heritage. In 2002 it created a joint cross-border university, the Bulgarian-Romanian Interuniversity Europe Centre.

Thus, most cross-border cooperation projects involving Bulgaria are recent initiatives organised in the form of associative or inter-municipal Euroregions. There are also two macro-regional cooperation initiatives based around the Black Sea and the Balkan region. Finally, few cross-border communities involve North Macedonia or Turkey. Clearly, it is harder for Bulgaria to develop cross-border cooperation on the external borders of the EU. Despite its fringe location in the EU, Bulgaria exists at the articulation between the European Neighbourhood Policy to the east (post-Soviet countries) and the Mediterranean Area (Turkey). Like Romania, the Danube is a major issue at macro-regional scale as a corridor of transport linking Western Europe to the Black Sea, while the Rhodope mountains may become one with Greece and the Republic of North Macedonia due to the necessity of preserving natural resources.

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Carpathian Euroregion



The Carpathian Euroregion was the first association for interregional cooperation successfully established in Central and Eastern Europe after the fall of the Iron Curtain in 1993.

The territory of the Carpathian Euroregion is encompassed by the Carpathian Mountains. From a historical perspective, the Carpathian region was initially a unified area within the Austro-Hungarian Dual Monarchy that was torn apart by the two world wars; subsequently, this area was separated into several smaller states. The emerging socialist period was not supportive of cross-border interactions, hence transnational contacts were minimal and did not involve the overall population of the

countries. Thus, relations were mainly implemented on the administrative and bureaucracy levels.

The international events at the end of the millennium introduced radical changes in Central and Eastern Europe, like the collapse of socialist governance and the Soviet Union, the separation of Czechoslovakia, the conflict in Yugoslavia and other tensions appearing amongst the states of the region. Simply put, a new world order was in flux and insecurity increased. Emergence of the new globalised order had immediate effects on the majority of the borders, making them more permeable. This meant that they could be crossed without any serious difficulties. Opening of the borders may have additional effects on the region. Nevertheless, the openness demanded to be managed adequately as the region suffered from a troubled past, historical injuries and old, frozen conflicts themselves triggered by border shifts, the appearance of various minorities and a mixture of religions in the area.

The territory of the Euroregion represents a complex and diverse area which has been burdened by deep historical traumas, multiple border changes, oppressed minorities, conflicting identities, as well as heterogeneous ethnic, cultural and religious constellations. Moreover, the cooperating regions (North-Eastern Hungary, Eastern Slovakia, South-Eastern Poland, Western Ukraine and North-Western Romania) are regions with low competitiveness, with social and societal problems. At the time of its establishment, the Carpathian Euroregion substantially differed from similar Western associations as it gathered non-European Union (EU)/North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) countries with different perspectives: Poland and Hungary were successfully integrated countries, Slovakia and Romania were slowly acceding and Ukraine was not a candidate to any of the Euro-Atlantic structures.

Hungarian and Polish ministries of Foreign Affairs appeared as the main advocates for the Euroregion which could function as a preventive tool against possible regional disputes and conflicts within the region. Beside the ministries, the Institute for East-West Studies, a non-profit international organisation founded during the 1980s, also played a decisive and leading role as an external agency in motivating the countries to trigger interregional cooperation.

While the Carpathian Euroregion was initially established by three states, the membership composition has changed several times. The founder parties were Województwo Podkarpackie from Poland; Lviv, the

provinces Ivano-Frankivsk, Zakarpattia and Chernivtsi from Ukraine; and the counties Borsod-Abaúj-Zemplén, Szabolcs-Szatmár-Bereg, Heves, Hajdú-Bihar and Jász-Nagykun-Szolnok from Hungary. At first, the area of the Euroregion was around 101 thousand km² in which gathered 5 million inhabitants. Joining the Slovakian Prešovský and Košický regions, and the Romanian counties of Bihor, Satu Mare, Sălaj, Maramureş, Harghita, Suceava and Botoşani significantly expanded the association. This spread the territory to more than 161 000 km² and 16 million inhabitants in 2003.

Officially, the beginning of the association goes back to 1993, when counties from Poland, Ukraine and Hungary signed the founding documents, the “Statute of the Interregional Association Carpathian Euroregion” and the “Joint Statement”. Then, Slovakia was not admitted as a full member and Romania appeared only as an observer during the negotiations. Both of these states would eventually become full members. The signed documents openly stated that the Carpathian Euroregion was neither a supra-state nor a supra-national organisation, but that it attempted to promote interregional cooperation with the following objectives: joint activities and coordination; promotion of economic, scientific, ecological, educational, cultural and sport cooperation between members; mutual cooperation with international organisations and institutions; and support of joint cross-border projects. Furthermore, the founding documents supported democratic values and the market economy.

All the participating members of the association were non-EU and non-NATO members with deep historical traumas and numerous border changes. Thus, the issue of conflict prevention and reconciliation immediately appeared as one of the main missions. Moreover, the association also included other objectives, such as cross-border crime (e.g. smuggling), illegal (economic) migration, societal issues related to the Roma minority living on its territory and environmental issues. Integration of Poland, Slovakia, Hungary and Romania into the Euro-Atlantic structures has profoundly mitigated the security concerns. Hence, security questions have become less important, at least until the conflict between the Ukraine and the Russian Federation erupted.

The Carpathian Euroregion achieved the building of trust between the cooperating partners. Hence, it has successfully reduced the dangerous mistrust and suspicion between nations and ethnic groups. Moreover, it contributed to economic development as it promoted networking

for business and trade fairs, cross-border growth, the promotion of cross-border/inter-regional investments, the increase of a number of checkpoints, the promotion of tourism, cultural exchanges and the cooperation between universities.

The Euroregion worked out a strategy, the “Carpathian Euroregion Strategy 2020 & beyond’. It was an important step in order to recover and revitalize the Euroregion as a functional cross-border cooperation initiative and it can be considered a medium-term strategy, one that clearly identifies the challenges of the Euroregion, its potentials and draws up strategic alternatives for future development. Moreover, it describes joint development priorities, objectives and proposes common measures.

The Euroregion has implemented a large number of projects between its members. The most important one was the so-called Carpathian Horizon 2020 that aimed to prepare a macro-regional strategy for the Carpathians. The concept was presented in 2005. Subsequently, a working document was drafted that underlined the need to create an environment that promotes innovation and entrepreneurship, a common development of all areas in the region, the development of social and human capital and the enhancement of institutional interrelations. Moreover, it promoted projects with support of tourism, regional (economic) development, historical and cultural heritage, the creation of a Carpathian brand, etc.

Nowadays, the Carpathian Euroregion is partly inactive and the association receives lower satisfaction ratings by the inhabitants of the region. Motivation and enthusiasm of the partners is rather low and the activities are mainly driven by individual projects instead of sharing a coherent joint vision. Several factors can be identified which hinder cooperation and the success of the association, like the size of the participating areas, institutional problems, financial difficulties, uncertainty between district/local government and the central government regarding the division of labour, historical burdens and problems relating to the introduction of the Schengen Acquis.

Subsequently, five different alternatives were identified for the Carpathian Euroregion, as it was summarized by the Carpathian Euroregion Strategy 2020: to finish all projects and terminate the association’s legal entity, to continue business as usual (low profile operation with few projects, but nothing more); to develop a common vision which is supported by the members; to envisage a common organisation (i.e. an extension of the third alternative, where the partners

take more active steps); and, finally an ambitious alternative to create a new European macro-region which would be similar to the already existing ones, like the Danube region.

To conclude, the Carpathian Euroregion has undergone various stages during its existence, from its ambitious beginning to its current low-profile operation. Its future, however, is still open and the participating members have various options depending on their commitment and enthusiasm. At the same time, other structures have appeared within the region, like the Carpathian Convention and the Tisza European Grouping for Territorial Cooperation (EGTC). The former aims to implement cooperation and to assure sustainable development of the Carpathians, while the latter aims to build stable cooperation and social cohesion across the EU external border area.

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Central European Service for Cross-Border Initiatives (CESCI)*

The Central European Service for Cross-Border Initiatives (CESCI) is a Budapest-based think-and-do-tank for cross-border cooperation. The private law association was established in 2009 following the model and initiative of the French *Mission Opérationnelle Transfrontalière* (MOT), which became one of the founding members of CESCI.

Members of CESCI are Hungarian local and regional municipalities located along the border, natural persons and professional bodies from Hungary and abroad. The Board of the association is international due to its members. The main mission of CESCI is to provide local stakeholders with professional support in order to render the borders in Central Europe more crossable, to bring the nations closer to each other and to decrease the separating effects of the borders in daily life; all of which are consequences of a half-century-long communistic era with hermetically closed frontiers. While the activities of CESCI cover mainly the territory of Hungary, the organisation is also active in further Central and South-Eastern European countries and it has two partner organisations: the CESCI Balkans in Novi Sad (Serbia) and the CESCI Carpathia in Košice (Slovakia). The service portfolio of the association includes a wide range of activities. Scientific research activities on particular border regions and in borderlands studies, in general, are mainly carried out by the European Institute of CESCI. The biggest project of the institute was implemented in 2013 when the association, leading an international consortium analysed the geographic and structural characteristics of cross-border cooperation in the Danube macro-region. The association also published research on the Hungarian EGTCs and the changes of space-use behaviour of the population living around the reconstructed Mária Valéria bridge at the Hungarian-Slovak border. This is in addition to its annual scientific journal, the *Cross-Border Review*, edited by James W. Scott.

Based on the most recent methods and developments in regional sciences and borderlands studies, CESCI has elaborated integrated cross-border strategies and programs. Most importantly, the experts of the association have developed a new methodology titled the “cohesion based

* For the map, see article ‘Hungary’.

cross-border integrated planning.” This is a new approach in which the components either strengthening or weakening cross-border territorial, economic and social cohesion are the focus of the state-of-play analysis. These factors are interpreted as challenges against cross-border cohesion/integration while the strategic interventions as responses given to these challenges. Since 2009, CESCO has created a dozen of integrated cross-border strategies and programmes, including the new Slovakia-Hungary Interreg V-A Program (as a member of a consortium) and the regional analysis of the transnational Danube programme. In addition to this, it developed its own cross-border territorial impact assessment method. Based on the results of the strategies, CESCO is involved in cross-border institutional and project development. The main goal of these activities is to fuel long-term strategic partnerships across borders rather than ad-hoc projects and partnerships which had a minimal impact on the borderland. CESCO provides expertise in the creation of permanent cross-border structures, such as European Groupings of Territorial Cooperation (EGTCs) or territorial partnerships, and facilitates the drafting of cross-border projects with a longer-term impact and better sustainability. Up to now, CESCO has supported the establishment of 14 EGTCs seated in Hungary, Slovakia, Poland and the Netherlands.

In order to improve the conditions of long-term cross-border partnerships, the association takes part in policy-making processes at national and European levels. These activities include the contribution to shape the future Cohesion Policy and the relevant Hungarian territorial programmes; the development of cross-border tools like the EGTC, the cross-border Integrated Territorial Investment (ITI) and the community-led local development (CLLD); the development of cooperation at transnational (macro-regional) level; and the legal harmonisation across the borders through not only active participation in the Cross-Border Review project but also the working group on innovative solutions, launched by the Luxemburg presidency. Relating to the latter legal aspect, CESCO has been implementing a multiannual program called Legal Accessibility through which the legal obstacles along the Hungarian borders have been identified and addressed through recommendations for their removal followed by the building of a three-level “barrier-eliminating” system targeted to where the largest territorial scope will be represented by the level of Visegrad Four countries.

For the sake of improving the competences of local stakeholders, CESCO organises conferences, workshops, training and other professional

events and publishes books, brochures, studies, guides, and movies. CESCO coordinates the work of a platform used by the managers of the Hungarian EGTCs through which the representatives of the grouping can harmonize their plans, exchange their experiences and plan their common appearances. Experts of the different ministries and the European institutions also take part in these regularly organised meetings. To share expertise, CESCO operates an online forum for the EGTCs and a bi-monthly electronic newsletter. A data and information base on the Hungarian groupings called EGTC monitor has just been launched by CESCO. The association ensures representation of local stakeholders of the wider region on the international scene by participating in international networks and institutions, such as the Association of European Border Regions (AEBR), the EGTC Platform of the Committee of the Regions and the Association of Borderlands Studies (ABS).

During the recent years, this small organisation has gradually become a recognized member of the “cross-border family” at EU level due not only to the strategic cooperation with the MOT and the AEBR but mainly because of the high-quality thematic maps it generates considered as a trademark of CESCO.

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Centrope Territory Euroregion



The political conference held at Kittsee Palace in 2003, “Building a European Region”, was materialized by the creation of what is known today as Centrope. More precisely, it was the common initiative of political decision-makers of various provinces, cities, counties and regions that led to the development of a form of cross-border regional cooperation in Central Europe. The four states that assumed the project were Austria, the Czech Republic, Slovakia and Hungary and the Federal governors and mayors of the following regions and cities signed the declaration: Bratislava Region, the Federal Province of Burgenland, Győr-Moson-Sopron County, the Hungarian Vas County and its capital

Szombately, the Federal Province of Lower Austria, Southern Moravia Region, Trnava Region, the Federal Province of Vienna, the City of Bratislava, the City of Brno, the City of Eisenstadt, the City of Győr, the City of Sopron, the City of St. Pölten, the City of Trnava and the City of Vienna. Vienna Region has been the leading actor of Centrope since its creation.

This geographical unit hosts a population of 6.5 million on a surface of more than 50 000 km², alongside the rivers Danube, Morava, Vah, and Rába. Centrope is a distinctive space in Europe where four languages are spoken: German, Czech, Slovakian and Hungarian and it is characterized by the fact that a variety of people and a number of minorities live there. From an environmental standpoint, the Danube, Morava/March and Dyje/Thaya rivers constitute the basins for the agricultural powerhouse of the region, while the heights of the Alps and the Carpathians contribute to the variety of its landscapes, with extraordinary potential for tourism.

The location of the Centrope region, lying at the intersection of four countries, makes the endeavour unique in Europe. This Euroregion is notably also a testimony to the diversity of its constituent regions when taking into account that three former Soviet bloc states joined a Western state for cross-border cooperation. This has a considerable symbolic meaning and is indicative of the intercultural prospects embraced by both the “new” and the “old” Europe. The two European Union (EU) capital cities of Bratislava and Vienna, seen as Centrope’s driving forces, are separated by no more than 50 km, the important cities of Brno and Győr, along with many other lively cities, lie at the core of this Euroregion with excellent economic and cultural development potential. However, the absence of Prague and Budapest is an essential trait of this project, as is the struggle of Bratislava to cope with the formidable economic competition exerted by its much more powerful counterpart, Vienna. Despite remaining differences in terms of Gross Domestic Product (GDP)/capita, the parties comprising the region engage in common projects based on such principles as development, creative potential, modernization, research and innovation, synergies between academia and the market, as well as variety. Centrope is particularly promising in terms of economic and trade development, as an exponent of growth in East-Central Europe. Although Hungary and the Czech Republic have not adopted the euro (they still use their national currency, respectively the Hungarian forint and the Czech koruna) which could hinder trade, this situation does not represent an obstacle to cross-border cooperation in

the region. It benefits from an educated, skilled workforce, an improving infrastructure and is thus an emerging Centre of business and investment for multinationals and Small and Medium Enterprises (SME).

Apart from initiating regional economic cooperation, the Centrope Euroregion is also a political project with fairly clear economic dominance exerted by the strong Austrian part and the interests of local investors in the immediate vicinity of the industrialized Vienna region. It is to be noted that, despite Hungary's historical ties to Austria and propensity for collaboration with the latter, under Orbán's leadership, strong hostility towards EU integration has taken its toll on the country's commitment to cross-border projects. The same holds for the Czech Republic, to some extent, albeit the economic benefits of regional cooperation and the successful absorption of structural funds in the case of the former communist countries participating in Centrope which seem to outweigh the political hurdles.

Furthermore, the political conferences which took place under the mottos "We grow together. Together we grow" in Saint Polten (2005), "We Shape the Future" in Vienna (2006), "Ready for Take-off" in Bratislava (2007) and "Regions without Borders" in Győr (2011) shaped the content of the cooperation project. Consequently, the intention of the Centrope partners was confirmed to build a European region based on the deepening and enlargement of cooperation in specific selected thematic areas – such as culture, entrepreneurship and infrastructure – and a timetable was set for tangible cooperation activities. These supportive political declarations were then taken up by the Interreg III A program "Building a European Region" (BAER) I-II, which was implemented from 2004 to 2007. There were parallel projects financed by other Interreg cross-border programs (Austria-Czech Republic, Austria-Slovakia, Austria-Hungary), whose focus chiefly lay on such priority areas as labour, regional management, spatial development, biomass development etc. Two years later, Centrope gave rise to the "Centrope Capacity" project, a successful multilateral transnational project in Central Europe, for the period from 2009 to 2012. This engendered regional offices that brought together stakeholders from within the region so as to introduce task-oriented cooperation activities based on best practice and exchange with similar regions throughout Europe. As it can be remarked, the main funding source for Centrope's projects comes from European funding, while some of the projects have also benefited from Austrian co-financing.

Since Centrope's main objective has been to contribute to the creation of an integrated cross-border region, its thematic cooperation areas have been structured as follows: knowledge region (with focuses on innovation support and research cooperation in Centrope, energy efficiency, E-mobility, biotechnology, information & communication technology), human capital (e.g. human capital pilot – regional development report) spatial integration (e.g. spatial integration pilot – infrastructure needs assessment tool), and, last but not least, culture and tourism (e.g. culture and tourism pilot – culture and tourism marketing). For the implementation of these areas of cooperation, Centrope counts on the region's competitive potentials for economic growth and innovation, its infrastructure, natural qualities, its highly qualified population as well as its manifold and top-quality cultural activities, but it remains a project largely dependent on the political will at national and at regional levels, which makes the cooperation endeavours particularly vulnerable to changes in national or local governments and their political agendas. While there exist numerous activities and projects developed within the Euroregion, its outputs are clearly inferior to those implemented at national level based on structural and cohesion funds provided by the EU.

In terms of organisation, Centrope has an administrative structure made up of an advisory board comprising representatives of all partner regions and cities, working groups that are dealing with specific topics of cross-border cooperation, a steering committee which is responsible for the performance of the project and which – surprisingly and going against the principle of “separation of powers” that should govern the structure based on geographical proportionality-, has only Austrian representatives; and, finally, a Centrope consortium, which conducts the project in accordance with the steering committee and the advisory board, presently made up of five institutions located in Austria.

Since the integration of the four composing member states into the EU (Austria joined the EU in 1995, Slovakia, the Czech Republic and Hungary in 2004), the people of the region have exhibited great mobility: many work and have formed families in their neighbouring country. As such, Centrope is a contribution to the implementation of the Single European Market, as it fosters mobility, openness and the freedom of movement within the EU.

Home to a millennial culture, Centrope makes the most of the commonalities as well as the differences in terms of traditions of four neighbouring nations, which are materialized in the form of youth events

and festivals. The classical element is very much present in museums and monuments that hint at the rich common history of the modern Euroregion. This having been said, the unit itself has seldom functioned as a whole in the implementation of ample, structural projects, which is indicative of the fact that it has yet to engender a sense of shared identity. Indeed, the difficulty to integrate its components and to gather momentum and citizens' support around major projects, perhaps enabling one to exhibit a feeling of belonging to Centrope – a term rarely used among the locals – is typical of the Euroregion. Indeed, Centrope, with its less than spectacular achievements, in comparison with those of most Euroregions, is not a household word among its citizens, let alone in the EU.

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Channel Arc



Compared to other European cross-border regions, the Channel area (covering southern England, northern France and the maritime space between) presents several barriers to cooperation. The most obvious is the Channel itself, which ranges between 33km and 240km wide. This limits some features seen in other regions, such as cross-border commuting or cross-border public service provision. While the construction of the Channel Tunnel now provides a connection between England and France, the operation of services between capital cities has led to a corridor effect meaning direct connections within the Channel region remain limited. The border between England and France is also marked

by different languages, administrative structures and political cultures. It is surprising, then, that despite these challenges cross-border cooperation has developed.

The development of cross-border cooperation has built on a long shared history between southern England and northern France. While the Channel itself represents a geographical barrier not found in many other cross-border regions, it can nevertheless be regarded as a shared space. From the late 1940s attempts were made to formalize cross-border links with the emergence of several town-twinning associations, though this cooperation was limited to civic and cultural engagement. However, cooperation intensified from the late 1980s. The marked change here was formalization of cross-border cooperation through bilateral cooperation accords, which committed regional and local authorities to work together in substantive policy areas beyond the more traditional civic and cultural engagement activities. This process started with an accord between Kent and Nord-Pas de Calais in 1987, which formalized cooperation in the areas of strategic planning, economic development, training, cultural and artistic exchange, tourism and joint promotional campaigns. This was shortly followed by links between Hampshire and Basse-Normandie in 1989 and East Sussex and Haute-Normandie 1993. By the mid-1990s 11 such bilateral links were in place.

These bilateral links provided a foundation for wider cross-border initiatives. The Kent–Nord-Pas de Calais link led to the creation of the Transmanche Euroregion (also involving the Belgian regions of Brussels-Capital, Flanders and Wallonia) in the early 1990s. More significant was the creation of the Arc Manche network in 1996. Initiated by West Sussex and Haute-Normandie, this included every major subnational authority along the Channel coast in England and France. Lower levels also engaged in cross-border cooperation. For example, Bournemouth, Poole, Portsmouth and Southampton in England, together with Caen, Le Havre and Rouen in France, formed the Transmanche Metropole network.

Another development in the 1990s was the European Union (EU)'s Interreg initiative, which facilitated cross-border cooperation by funding joint projects. Kent and Nord-Pas de Calais were successful in securing eligibility in the first program, and the eligibility area gradually expanded to include the whole Channel region over subsequent programming periods, leading to several projects during between English and French partners.

While the early 1990s marked the development and early institutionalisation of cross-border cooperation in the Channel region, the experience through the 2000s highlights some limits. The Transmanche Euroregion disbanded in 2004 and the Transmanche Metropole had disbanded by the late 1990s. The Arc Manche's experience in particular highlights challenges of institutionalizing cross-border cooperation in the Channel region. After its initial creation, the network quickly suffered from a lack of engagement as political leaders on both sides of the Channel disengaged after an unsuccessful attempt to lobby for the whole Channel region to be eligible for Interreg III funding. A new declaration of cooperation was signed in 2003, but cooperation once again died down. A peak in activity was observed in 2012 and 2013 when several joint meetings were held among local and regional political leaders. But as of 2018 the network currently seems to be inactive as austerity measures have limited local and regional authorities' (especially those in England) resources and capacity to engage with it.

Overall, then, cooperation in the Channel region is marked by a lack of stable and lasting cross-border institutions, and has been affected by the willingness of political leaders to engage and local and regional authorities' available resources. The instability and ephemeral nature of this institutional architecture suggests cross-border cooperation in the Channel region is fragile. But it also points to the flexibility and adaptability of the local and regional authorities involved. Indeed, the lack of stable cross-border institutions has not hampered cooperation.

Bilateral contacts between subnational actors on either side of the Channel continue and there have been several joint cross-border projects undertaken to tackle common policy challenges. Two examples are the Espace Manche Development Initiative (EMDI) and the subsequent Channel Arc Manche Integrated Strategy (CAMIS). EMDI (funded by the Interreg III program) conducted a policy analysis of the Channel region serving as a common information tool for subnational actors in the area. CAMIS (funded by the Interreg IV program) built on EMDI, identifying the key policy challenges in the Channel region and how they could be addressed through cross-border cooperation, culminating in a Channel-wide strategy. These projects and their outputs, such as an integrated maritime strategy and Fécamp Declaration on maritime safety, are significant. Firstly, they reflect a pragmatic recognition by Channel region actors that they share common challenges requiring joint solutions. Secondly, they attempt to conceptualize the region as a single policy space. In this sense they represent an attempt to build a loose form

of cross-border governance, albeit without the underlying institutional structure witnessed in other cross-border areas.

Overall, cross-border cooperation in the Channel region has been led from below. While EU schemes such as Interreg have provided some impetus and opportunities for engagement, such programs still require substantial investment and, ultimately, a willingness to engage from the local and regional actors participating. Indeed, cross-border networks such as the Arc Manche received no external funding and relied almost exclusively on the resources brought by member local and regional authorities. As a result, cross-border cooperation has largely been driven by local strategic objectives, the presence of, and ability to seize, opportunities for cooperation, and actors' available resources. Consequently, the intensity of cross-border cooperation fluctuates over time and involvement by individual subnational authorities is varied.

In conclusion, the Channel region represents an interesting case of cross-border cooperation. The border here, and the physical obstacle it embodies, present significant challenges, but actors recognize they share several common policy challenges. A stable institutional structure formalizing cooperation has not emerged, but this has not stopped cross-border cooperation from happening.

Looking to the future, cross-border cooperation in this region faces uncertainty. Subnational actors in England and France continue to face budgetary challenges limiting the resources available for cross-border cooperation activities. Brexit presents a further challenge. The outcome of the UK–EU negotiations is uncertain, and opportunities for cross-border cooperation facilitated by the EU may reduce. Ultimately this would depend on the agreement reached between the UK and EU. Nevertheless, the history of cross-border cooperation in the Channel region shows that local actors have been able to cooperate, despite the underlying contextual challenges this region presents.

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Cieszyn/Czech Cieszyn (Český Těšín) *

The term “border twin towns” refers to towns which are adjacent but separated by a state border. They are considered specific locations on the map of integration of the European continent. Śląsk Cieszyński (Cieszyn Silesia) is one of the most meaningful examples of border twin towns, as its capital town Cieszyn was divided into Cieszyn and Český Těšín (Czech Cieszyn), each on a separate side of the border.

Before 1920, Cieszyn Silesia and its capital town Cieszyn had formed a joint entity in a cultural and administrative sense within historically-variant Polish, Czech and Austro-Hungarian state structures. The Polish national revival and the establishment of Czechoslovakia, coincided with the territorial dispute over the Cieszyn Silesia region between the reborn country and the newly established one. The situation erupted into military conflict which resulted in the division of Cieszyn Silesia and its capital town into two parts, separated by the Olza River, following the decision of the Conference of Ambassadors in Spa (Belgium) on 28th July 1920.

As a consequence of the process, the historical Centre of Cieszyn was Polish, whereas the town railway station was in Czechoslovakia. During the interwar period, Czech Cieszyn was under development. Many modern public facilities were built as they were necessary for the functioning of the town. In 1938, Poland used the opportunity presented by the political situation, after the Munich agreement, and annexed Zaolzie, the Czechoslovakian part of the former Cieszyn Silesia region. As a result, Cieszyn was reunified. The annexation was the response to the incident of 23rd January 1919, when the Czechoslovakian troops entered Cieszyn Silesia and began to occupy the area to the east of the line of demarcation. In 1945, the pre-war border between the two countries was restored and it was the beginning of the cooperation under a new socialist umbrella.

The intensification process of Polish and Czech relations coincided with the fall of totalitarian regimes in 1989, both in Poland and Czechoslovakia. The first steps towards the process were taken by the municipalities of both towns. In 1990, the official visit by the mayor of Cieszyn to Czech Cieszyn, at the invitation of its respective mayor, began a totally new phase

* For the map, see article ‘TRITIA’.

of Polish and Czech relations. Only three years later, in 1993, numerous regional associations of local self-governments were established. Many issues related to crossing the border, telecommunication, road transport and tourism were taken into consideration and widely discussed on both sides of the border. The Cieszyn Silesia Euroregion, founded on 22nd April 1998, was the corner stone of all cross-border activities taken up by its two members Cieszyn and Czech Cieszyn. Undoubtedly, the two countries' accession into the European Union (EU) in 2004 and their entrance into the Schengen Agreement in 2007 were the most significant steps in the common Polish and Czech history of de-bordering process.

Today, nearly one hundred years since the town was divided into two parts, the integration process between the two Cieszyn cities has become stronger. It is the result of numerous joint activities, such as: collective programs for cultural, educational, and sporting events; jointly published informational and promotional materials; studies on road transport and parking; as well as the flagship program "Ciesz się Cieszynem – Ogród dwóch brzegów" (Enjoy Cieszyn – the Two Shores Garden) aimed at developing and revitalizing the banks of the River Olza and its surroundings.

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Citizens' Engagement in Cross-Border Regions

Cross-border projects and activities organised and led by the citizens of a border region, voluntarily and on their own accord, are essential components of local and/or regional cross-border cooperation.

In this context, the expression “cross-border cooperation between civil society” is often used, whereby a more precise distinction must be made between organised civil society on the one hand (associations, clubs, citizens' initiatives, etc.) and non-organised civil society on the other (participants in events, active individuals, etc.).

The first visible and sustainable forms of civic engagement in border regions emerged after World War II, when political initiatives formed partnerships between towns and communities of two different countries. Town and community partnerships are often shaped by a close cooperation between the local political level and the civil society, since the former is usually the initiator of the partnership and provides the framework for the cooperation as well as financial resources for activities – and this even between former “enemies” (Bristol-Hannover 1949; Hamburg-Marseille 1958). The partnership between Reichshoffen in northern Alsace (France) and Kandel in southern Palatinate (Germany), which dates back to 1961, shows that citizens' engagement can also go beyond political links. For example, in order to foster friendship and organise cross-border activities between the two villages, a registered association of cross-border friendship was founded. The use of organised civil society structures, such as a partnership association, can reduce dependency on the political context and thus increase more stability of the partnership. The importance of town twinning has been underlined, among other things, by its inclusion in the European Union (EU) program “Europe for Citizens” (2007) – as a successor to the financing of town twinning by the European Community since 1989 – and in the Aachen Treaty (2019), even if the scope of action in these cases extends beyond border regions.

The progressing institutionalisation of cross-border cooperation in the form of Euroregions and similar cooperation forums, as well as the promotion of territorial cooperation by the EU, led to a strengthening of civic involvement in border regions. The Euregio on the Dutch-German border can be seen as a pioneer in the promotion of citizens' projects. It set up a social and cultural working group as early as in 1971 and specifically supported encounters between citizens through art, culture

and sport events. Other cross-border structures and territorial authorities later reproduced this concept, which is primarily based on a low-threshold application, small funding rates (often up to a maximum of 5000 euros) and active support of project development by a cross-border structure. Encounters between the inhabitants of the cross-border region are often placed in the foreground. Whilst the non-permanent and short character of such meetings can be viewed critically, practice shows, however, that many funding instruments have criteria to ensure the sustainability of projects, emphasizing active and intercultural cooperation. Examples are the structured funding initiatives of the Danish-German region Sønderjylland-Schleswig in the cultural sector, in particular via the project “*KursKultur*” (2015–2019) and its predecessor “*Kulturbrücke*” (2008–2011), and the specific support for small Euroregional projects of the Belgian-German-Dutch Euroregion Maas-Rhin.

Furthermore, these financial tools mostly promote a diversity of their subsidized projects, which, in addition to culture and sports also include topics such as multilingualism, environment and economy.

Specific instruments for the promotion of civil society measures are the so-called people-to-people or small-scale projects, which are part of the EU’s cross-border cooperation program (Interreg A) supported by the European Regional and Development Fund (ERDF). These tools are widespread in many European countries, with a focus on land borders, particularly in Belgium, the Netherlands, Germany, Poland and the Czech Republic. It is worth mentioning that the organisational form (decentralized/centralized) and funding practices (criteria and amounts) of those instruments is very different in each border region. The reasons for the striking concentration of these funding instruments around Germany’s borders can be found in the decentralized organisation of the Federal state of Germany as well as the strong position of German associations within the civic society.

Apart from the positive effects of targeted, financial support for citizens’ engagement in border regions, sustainable networks of cross-border civil society have also developed in particular where a bottom-up approach based on concrete needs was pursued. For example, on the territory of the Eurodistrict Pamina, which is a European Grouping of Territorial Cooperation (EGTC), a dynamic network of so-called multipliers has developed since the 1990s, which includes groups of certain social actors (i.e. women, senior citizens) and interest groups (i.e. youth work, adult education, environmental education, public transport). The Eurodistrict

Pamina, as a cross-border institution, has accompanied, supported and, if necessary, coordinated these processes. This approach aims at the autonomy of civil society actors, developing and implementing projects and measures independently. In this regard, thematic forums and workshops have also proved to be effective for networking of the civil-society actors and for exchanging good practices.

However, models that are primarily based on institutionalised consultation processes and the specification of framework conditions for citizens' engagement in border regions are often far less practical and effective, especially in connection with a large-scale area of action. Territorial proximity and thematic relevance are fundamental to people-oriented cross-border cooperation, creating a positive environment for citizens' engagement in the border region. However, unexploited possibilities of direct and indirect participation in cross-border governance by civil society do still exist, with some Euroregions pursuing interesting approaches in this respect. For example, the European region Tyrol-South Tyrol-Trentino defines its political orientation on the basis of regular representative citizen surveys. Furthermore, the civil society's desire for a cross-border or European association law has not yet been clarified, although such a law could simplify administrative procedures and strengthen citizens' engagement.

Ultimately, solid citizen's engagement in cross-border regions depends on many factors. Mutual trust cannot be replaced by occasional funding opportunities or a policy driven top-down approach – it has to be built up and supported over years. Against this background, it seems logical that it is especially in pioneer border regions that civil society is active in the long-term, relying on experienced structures and motivated stakeholders.

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Cohesion

For Emile Durkheim, who introduced the concept of cohesion in social sciences and inspired the “solidarist” doctrine, as well as the French conception of state legitimated by its provision of public services, social cohesion is ensured by the social division of labour, but also by law and governmental action. His seminal book also evoked the “interregional division of labor”: the specialization and interdependence of spaces and so announces the territorial dimension of cohesion.

The Treaty of Rome already aimed at ensuring a “harmonious development by reducing the differences existing between the various regions and the backwardness of the least favored regions”. Closely associated with the history of the European Union (EU), the objective of economic and social cohesion appeared officially in the treaties in 1986 with the Single Act. In this context, it corresponded to the idea of solidarity, implemented through the European Cohesion Policy, which was supposed to secure the participation to the internal market of all citizens (social cohesion, with the European Social Fund (ESF) supporting employment and inclusion) and all regions (economic cohesion, with the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) supporting territorial investments and all at once reducing disparities between states, between and within regions). This was the essence of the so-called Jacques Delors’ “package”. All European and national policies were supposed to contribute to cohesion. As Fabrizio Barca explained in the report he wrote in 2009 for the European Commission, the Cohesion Policy was to be implemented in a decentralized way through shared management, the only approach for pursuing a policy of economic and social development that was compatible with the present stage of political development of the EU. It was expected to fund “the production of bundles of integrated, place tailored public goods and services,” and so to make the EU visible to citizens.

In 1997, the Amsterdam Treaty’s article on “Services of general economist interest” stated that these services promote “social and territorial cohesion.” A new step was taken with Art. 174 on the functioning of the EU, as amended in 2007 by the Treaty of Lisbon, where territorial cohesion appeared as the complement of economic and social cohesion. “Cross-border regions” were quoted together with islands or low density areas among territories deserving particular attention. Cohesion became a shared competence between the EU and the member states, which

partially met the demand of spatial planning stakeholders to have it acknowledged as a European competence.

The concept of territorial cohesion has been developed initially in the intergovernmental context of the European Spatial Development Perspective in 1999, followed by the Territorial Agenda of 2007 and 2011, but also through the reports on cohesion issued every third year by the Commission and the Green Paper on territorial cohesion in 2008.

Territorial cohesion has first been defined by stakeholders representing the interests of specific (peripheral, mountainous, insular) regions and more generally territories challenged by globalization, in terms of handicaps presented by certain territories justifying specific policies, such as compensation and equalization, aiming at a more balanced, polycentric territorial development. Since the Green Paper, the emphasis has been placed on the diversity of territories and their development capacity based on their specific assets: the “territorial capital” involving material and immaterial dimensions such as the role of social networks, trust, participation and culture. The acknowledgement that “geography matters” required a territorial approach including the management of urban concentration with its positive and negative impacts, the better connection of territories so as to assure territorial equity (for people should be able to live wherever they want, with access to public services assuring equal opportunities) and the territorial integration resulting from mobility and cooperation between territories.

According to the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) in 2001, the cohesion between productive and residential territories results less from explicit territorial policies, such as spatial planning, than from implicit territorial policies, such as delivery of public services or welfare, mainly organised within a national framework. Territorial cohesion also appeared as the territorial declension of sustainable development, taking into account territorial quality, identity and efficiency and the need to act at all levels, from the local to the global.

Implementing territorial cohesion requires place based policies, an integrated territorial approach, horizontal coordination of sectoral policies at every geographical level and vertical coordination in the context of multi-level governance from local to European. It also requires cooperation across administrative borders within functional spaces (urban – rural and metropolitan regions, cross-border regions, macro-regions such as the Baltic and Danube spaces). At the European level,

it requires trans-European networks ensuring continental territorial integration, EU wide networking between territories (supported by programs such as URBACT, Interreg Europe) and improving knowledge of territories (supported by the European Observation Network for Territorial Development and Cohesion (ESPON) program) allowing to develop a territorial impact assessment of policies, and spatial perspectives).

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Committee of the Regions

The Committee of the Regions was created by the Maastricht Treaty on European Union (EU) in 1992 (then Art. 198) and held its first plenary session in April 1994. Even though the EU treaties refer to the “Committee of the Regions”, it decided in 2014 to refer to itself as the “European Committee of the Regions”. The article follows the treaty *nomenclatura* and the corresponding abbreviation “Committee of Regions”.

The treaty set up a new consultative body to represent local and regional authorities composed of a set number of representatives per member state (and a corresponding number of alternate members) to be nominated through unanimity by the Council. The Committee of Regions was given a relatively limited number of policy areas, in which its consultation on new EU legislation became compulsory, namely education, vocational training and youth, culture, public health, trans-European transport, communication and energy networks, economic and social cohesion. In addition, the Committee of Regions was given the possibility to adopt positions (opinions) on its own-initiative.

The reasons why such a body, which was in many ways created as an image of the already existing Economic and Social Committee (EESC), appeared on the EU stage at that precise moment are still subject to academic debate. Two elements, however, seem to have been crucial. On the one hand, the European Commission had already set up consultation networks with sub-national authorities in the context of the EU’s Cohesion Policy to improve policy effectiveness, seeking to strengthen its own position *vis-à-vis* the member states. On the other hand, subnational entities in many member states, notably the powerful German *Länder*, felt increasingly pressured to implement European level decisions in a growing number of fields (particularly since the European Single Act of 1987 and the push to complete the European single market), without having direct access to the policy-making process. The time was therefore ripe for the creation of a new institutional channel to bring sub-national levels into the EU decision-making process, at a moment when concerns about the legitimacy of the integration process and the distribution of competencies between the EU and its member states started to become more pronounced. Yet, the diversity of sub-national structures across EU member states and the very different distribution of political and administrative powers between these levels meant that the Committee

of Regions had to represent a very broad range of different structures. The decision, which levels would be represented by the Committee of Regions – and in which manner – was therefore left to each member state. Moreover, despite some further-reaching ambitions, notably by the federal or regional entities of some member states, the Committee of Regions could only become an advisory body.

On this basis, the Committee of Regions started its development in the mid-1990s and has since received an expansion of its areas of “obligatory consultation” under the EU treaties with every treaty change, as well as the expansion of membership with the successive enlargements. The Treaty of Lisbon marks an important historical landmark in this development, not only because it introduces an upper limit of 350 Committee of Regions members (and 350 alternates), but also because it recognizes, in response to the ongoing discussion on subsidiarity and how to implement it, the Committee of Region’s important role in this regard. It was indeed given a right to not only defend its own prerogatives before the European Court of Justice, but also to bring action before it for suspected breaches of the subsidiarity principle. The Committee of Regions has over the decades actively pursued and, at least partially, achieved an increase in the institutional acknowledgement as the most visible expression of the principle of multi-level governance within the EU system and it has sought, through numerous formal and informal channels, to increase its influence on EU decision-making. In doing so, it has built on the political legitimacy of its members, who all have to be democratically elected or at least responsible to an elected body at some sub-national level and it has managed to build administrative capacity and know-how in a number of key policy areas of particular concern to local and regional representatives, in close interplay with the other EU institutions as well as with numerous EU and international stakeholders.

The Committee of the Regions’ membership is organised into political groups (broadly mirroring those in the European Parliament, representing five political “families” in 2020) and the members meet for five or six plenary sessions per year, as well as for working meetings of six thematic “commissions” covering all major EU policy areas. The key political instrument of the Committee of Regions are its “opinions” through which it formulates the concerns and proposals of the local and regional level, as early as possible in the process of drafting or revising EU legislation, either on the basis of obligatory consultations by the other EU institutions, or by its own-initiative. In addition to these

formal contributions, it also develops other tools and projects at specific moments of the EU's political process, creating networks and organizing debates in order to offer a platform of expression for the specific views of sub-national levels of governance. One of the key activities in this respect is the annual organisation, together with the European Commission's DG REGIO, of the European Week of Cities of Regions under the form of a series of workshops, which annually attract more than 5000 participants.

The Committee of Regions is probably most recognized in the EU policy community for its contribution to the debates about – and successive reforms of – EU Cohesion Policy, where it works closely with regional associations, the European Commission and the European Parliament, trying to provide both expertise and political input to the EU decision-makers. Beyond this “natural” area of concern, however, the Committee of Regions has continuously sought to influence policy making in areas ranging from environmental legislation to migration, from support for research and innovation to agricultural policy, always basing its contributions on the proximity of its membership to EU citizens and the need to feed information about the successes (and failures) of EU policy implementation on the ground into the EU-level discussions. With the growing emphasis in recent years on the quality of the implementation of EU policy, the Committee of Regions has thus tried to provide information and create structures to assess the functionality of EU legislation. It has also successfully lobbied for the creation and further development of the legal instrument of the European Grouping for Territorial Cooperation (EGTC), for which it also provides the registry. In the periodic discussions about the future of the EU and in preparation for different treaty changes, the Committee has consistently sought to strengthen the visibility and influence of sub-national levels of democratic governance, in the interest of greater legitimacy of European integration, as well as improving decentralized communication and debate about EU policies through instruments such as citizens' dialogues.

In this context, the role of the Committee of Regions in promoting a culture of subsidiarity in the EU has received once more recognition from the highest level in late 2017, when three representatives of the Committee of Regions were included among the nine members of the task force on subsidiarity and proportionality set up by the European Commission President. The Committee of Regions has thus, despite the

formally weak role assigned to it by the EU treaties, seen a remarkable development of the scope and visibility of its activities at its headquarters in the heart of the EU institutional district in Brussels and across the territorial units of the EU.

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Congress of Local and Regional Authorities of the Council of Europe

World War II left Europe with many new borders, even dividing Germany into four occupation zones. In the 1950s, young European federalists started to dismantle border barriers by fighting for freedom of travel between European countries. However, it was not until 1985, with the signing of the Schengen Agreement, that systematic barriers to intra-European mobility were dismantled between five of the original member states of the European Community (France, Germany and the Benelux states).

As early as the 1960s, the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe attempted to convince its member states that they should facilitate cross-border cooperation. This was performed through the European Conference on Local Authorities (ECLA), set-up under the auspices of the Council of Europe in 1957, which became the Conference of Local and Regional Authorities of Europe (CLRAE) in 1975 and later the Congress of Local and Regional Authorities (1994).

In 1972, when the ECLA organized the first European Symposium of Border Regions in Strasbourg, the Swiss philosopher and regionalist Denis de Rougemont, who chaired the working group on Culture, defined borders as “scars of history”. The participants of the Symposium understood that national borders (even where deemed as “natural”) would result in the nation states being eager to transform them into insurmountable barriers. To reassure member states, it was reasserted that the establishment of cross-border cooperation between local authorities would imply the recognition of existing borders that would not be moved again and would therefore help ensure the respect of national sovereignty and territorial integrity, banning the idea of irredentism and revision of such borders. At the same time, local authorities would be able to cooperate with their neighbours in the interest of their citizens. Instead of facing a blank area on the other side, a border city would be able to develop in a 360-degree environment. It took a long time before national governments were convinced that such developments did not undermine their rights or prerogatives. The Final Act of the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe (CSCE) in Helsinki (1975), which recognised the stability of all national borders in Europe including those established in the aftermath of World War II, may have been helpful in that respect.

Despite fierce resistance of a number of national governments, in 1980, the Council of Europe was able to respond to constant pleas of the CLRAE, supported by the Parliamentary Assembly, and to adopt the Madrid Convention, or “European Outline Convention on Transfrontier Co-operation between Territorial Communities or Authorities” (Treaty Nr.106). The convention contains a whole series of model agreements between local authorities. However, to take into account hesitations of some member states, it also specifies in certain cases the necessity for national legislation to be adopted in order to make the convention operational (by defining which areas are concerned at national borders and by defining models for interstate agreements). In 1985, the CLRAE pushed for the adoption by the Council of Europe of a European Charter of Local Self-Government (Treaty Nr.122), which specifies in Art. 10 (para 3), that “local authorities are entitled, under such conditions as may be provided for by the law, to cooperate with their counterparts in other states,”

After the Council of Europe’s first Summit of Heads of State and Government held in Vienna in 1993, it was decided to transform the CLRA into a statutory body, the Congress of Local and Regional Authorities (1994). The idea of cross-border cooperation made its way to the governments even initially opposed to it, sometimes in conflict with centralised policies, giving more way to local initiatives. The summit had indeed recognised “the role of the Council of Europe in the creation of a tolerant and prosperous Europe through trans-frontier cooperation of territorial communities or authorities.”

The Congress continued to push this idea and, in early 1996, France acted together with Germany, Luxembourg, and Switzerland as pioneers by adopting the intergovernmental Karlsruhe Agreement, paving the way for cooperation agreements between local authorities which were recognised by law between the countries concerned. It immediately opened the possibility for the creation of the Palatinate, Middle Upper Rhine, North Alsace (Pamina) Regio, which has since then inaugurated a whole series of cooperation programs, with major support also from the European Union (EU).

The commitment of these four states also opened up the way for the adoption of several additional protocols for the Madrid Convention (Treaties Nr.159 and Nr.169). The second, adopted in 1998, was expressly designed to pave the way for “inter-territorial cooperation” between local and regional authorities with foreign non-neighbouring counterparts.

A third additional protocol (Treaty Nr.206) was adopted in 2009 and provided for the creation of European Cooperation Groupings (ECGs) between local or regional authorities giving them full legal status. It must be stressed, however, that the draft of this third additional protocol was delayed for several years as the EU member states were interested in adopting a text within the Community framework, which would offer the possibility of creating cross-border groupings of local government with administrative authority in two or more EU member states or even with an external state (provided that the administrative seat of the grouping is placed in an EU member state). The EU was therefore able to adopt, on 5 July 2006, the Regulation 1082/2006 on European Groupings of Territorial Cooperation (EGTC). The Committee of the Regions, which has been since 1994 the “sister organisation” of the Congress of Local and Regional Authorities within the EU settings, has pushed very hard in this direction. Today, about 30 such groupings exist at a number of international borders.

In recent years, the opening of borders has experienced some setback, partially as a consequence of increased migration and fears of terrorism. While these concerns pertain mainly to unrestricted border crossings by individuals, it may undermine the spirit of the Schengen Agreements, but does not hinder progress in the field of specific cooperation between local authorities at borders.

It also appears that in the conflict between the EU and the UK government about Brexit, the question of the reestablishment of an international border between Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland has become a central point, as the opening up of that border has been understood as a major contribution to peace in the area.

When comparing action by the Council of Europe’s Congress and the EU’s Committee of the Regions, it has become clear that the Council of Europe with its 47 member states has the comparative advantage of covering much larger geographical area in Central and Eastern Europe, including Russia, Ukraine and the Caucasian states, as well as in South Eastern Europe, including Turkey and the Balkans. To foster cross-border cooperation in that large part of Europe continues to be a major factor for peace and reconciliation, at least in those parts where so-called frozen conflicts do not hamper all progress.

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on 1 January 1948 and was transformed into the economic union of Benelux in 1958. The Benelux union was also at the heart of the Schengen agreements signed in 1985 with France and Germany on the elimination of controls at internal borders. The Benelux Treaty was amended in 2008 to lay down three themes for future cooperation: the internal market and economic union, sustainable development, and justice and home affairs. It also set out the extension of cross-border cooperation and the possibility of collaboration with the regional cooperation bodies of other European Union (EU) member states.

The second intergovernmental cooperation forum was put in place in the early 1950s by the countries of northern Europe, the Nordic Council, created in 1952 between Denmark, Norway, Iceland and Sweden. It was expanded to Finland in 1955, followed by the Faeroe Islands and Åland Islands in 1970 and Greenland in 1984. It took the form of a Nordic Parliamentary Council composed of 87 representatives and in 1971, it was supplemented by an intergovernmental body, the Nordic Council of Ministers, which meets regularly to discuss common problems and matters of cross-border cooperation. The Nordic Council cooperation extends well beyond mere consultation or information exchange: it has for example established common rules for its members concerning the organisation of the labour market and social security and has also implemented a Nordic passport union, guaranteeing the free movement of citizens among its member states.

A third intergovernmental cooperation forum came into being in Central and Eastern Europe, shortly after the fall of the Berlin Wall in 1989: the Visegrad Group, created in 1991 between Poland, Czechoslovakia (split into the Czech Republic and Slovakia in 1992) and Hungary. Its first objective was to overcome remaining animosities between these neighbouring states and to develop a common strategy towards the European Community. Cooperation has been channelled through contact groups at all levels – diplomats, experts, non-governmental organisations, associations, etc. – and the subjects dealt with were also quite diverse including culture, environment, transport, tourism, science and education, but also more sensitive subjects, such as security or defense. Cooperation has been established mainly on an informal basis, but the member governments make annual contributions to a common fund created in 2000, in order to support a variety of cooperation projects. An action plan has also been drawn up every year to set the priorities for cooperation. Finally, in 1993, the Kirkenes

Declaration established a cooperation forum aimed more closely at protecting the environment around the Barents Sea. This forum, whose members are states bordering on the Arctic (Norway, Finland, Russia, Sweden, Denmark and Iceland), consists of two distinct bodies: the Barents Euro-Arctic Council, which brings together the foreign ministers of the member states and the European Commission, and the Barents Regional Council, whose members are the different regional entities of the Barents region, as well as representatives of the indigenous peoples living in Finland, Norway, Sweden and Russia. The Barents forum operates both at intergovernmental and at regional level, but each of the councils has its own working groups on environment, transport, tourism health, culture, etc. It is therefore a hybrid organisation somewhere in between a cooperation forum and a cross-border working community.

Interregional cooperation forums are more recent, mainly due to the fact, that sub-national actors have only been encouraged by the European Community to engage in cross-border activities since the mid-1980s. Linked to the idea to associate local and regional authorities to the implementation of the Single European Market, the European Commission reformed the European Regional Policy in 1987 and put into place the Structural Funds in 1988, which provided for different possibilities of support for regional development. Linked with new waves of decentralization in France, Italy and Belgium and the spreading of the idea of building a “Europe of the regions”, regional authorities were now encouraged to engage in cross-border and interregional cooperation.

The first example was the Assembly of European Regions (AER), which started in 1985 as a network of interregional cooperation between 47 regions and 9 interregional organisations and was then set up as an association in Brussels, in 1987. It was above all a political forum seeking to strengthen the role of regions in European Integration and pleading in favour of regional participation in the European Community’s decision-making process. The strong members within the AER, such as the German Land Baden-Württemberg or the Spanish Autonomous Community of Catalonia advocated the concept of a “Europe of Regions” and it was the AER which successfully lobbied for the creation, within the EC, of a body representing regional authorities: the Committee of Regions, created in 1994. A different example was the so-called Four motors for Europe cooperation agreement, which was signed in 1988, bringing together four strong economic regions (Catalonia, Lombardy, Baden-Württemberg and Rhône-Alpes) in western Europe. It was a more functional interregional

cooperation forum and its orientation was economic, but nevertheless, the regions involved were either entities with strong political powers (German *Länder* and Spanish Autonomous Communities) or those from states that had undergone recent decentralization (French regions and Italian provinces). The Four motors for Europe was an original initiative which underlined the concept of an economic dorsal in the heart of the European Community, the so-called blue Banana. It was supposed to foster the economic integration projects of the Delors Commission, but has in fact shown little institutional development. Since 1990 this forum has also included Flanders and Wales. In 1990, another large-scale interregional forum was founded, the Atlantic Arc, which was a maritime network reuniting 32 coastal regions from Scotland to Andalusia, under the aegis of the Conference of Peripheral Maritime Regions of Europe (CPMR). Finally, since 1996, a bilateral interregional forum was also created in the maritime sector: the Channel Arc, which has grouped French and British regional authorities, with the objective of initiating maritime cooperation.

Overall, the intergovernmental and interregional cooperation forums in Europe show three major tendencies: A first group of them acts as a more general network defending the political interests of their members, such as the Visegrad group or the AER; a second group is more functionally orientated on economic issues (Benelux, Four motors of Europe) and a third group is focused on issues deriving from the specific geographical position of their members (Nordic and Barents Council, CPMR). The advantage of these forums is their rather flexible and not heavily institutionalised character. In comparison to International Organisations or formalized cross-border institutions, they can therefore easily adapt their missions, integrate new members and work with rather modest financial means. However, this also implies that their function is more orientated on exchange of information, concertation or lobbying rather than on joint management of projects.

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Council of Europe and Cross-Border Cooperation

The Council of Europe was the first European Organisation which considered cross-border cooperation as a matter of concern to be dealt with at European level. Three key elements characterize its approach. First, it adopted from the start a bottom-up perspective by associating local and regional authorities themselves to European cooperation in this field. Second, it sought to create the legal conditions necessary to enable its member states to let their local authorities manage more or less autonomously their cross-border cooperation. And, third, it was a pioneer in using cross-border cooperation as a tool for geopolitical stabilization of post-Cold War European borders.

The Council of Europe's interest in border regions and their "small foreign policy" resulted from the fact that, in the 1950s, some members of the Consultative Assembly of the Council of Europe also had an important local mandate, for example the French Mayor of Bordeaux, Jacques Chaban-Delmas. They pledged to give an opportunity to local authorities to be able to take part in the activities of the Council of Europe. The political debate was also closely linked to the issue of local self-government pushed forward mainly by regionalists such as the Swiss philosopher Denis de Rougemont who were fighting for a "Europe of regions". In 1957, the Council of Europe thus created the European Conference of Local Authorities (CLA) in which local authorities met regularly under the Council of Europe's roof. It was enlarged to the participation of regional authorities in 1975 and became the Conference of Local and Regional Authorities of Europe (CLRA). One of its main achievements was the adoption of a European Charter of Local Self-Government by the Council of Europe in 1985.

The CLA also dealt with the topic of cross-border cooperation. On its recommendation, the Consultative Assembly started to work on the idea of drafting a European Convention on cross-border cooperation. In 1966, the report presented by Giuseppe Maria Sibille stressed that, with the exception of structures established by an international treaty, there were no possibilities for cross-border contracts between local authorities. The Assembly therefore proposed a draft convention providing for three types of international links between local authorities: study and co-ordination groups, service or supply contracts and associations of local authorities. The project was rejected by the member states at that time, because they considered International Affairs to be their

reserved sphere of influence. It was taken up again in 1972, at the first symposium on cross-border cooperation organised by the Council of Europe in Strasbourg, mainly due to the lobbying efforts of the Association of European Border Regions (AEBR) set up in 1971. At the second symposium in 1975, the final declaration called for a new Draft Outline Convention. This time, the Committee of Ministers instructed its Steering Committee for Municipal and Regional Matters to draw up a text, which was submitted to the Assembly for opinion in 1976. This text provided for clear undertakings by governments to facilitate cross-border cooperation, but it was not legally binding and left states free to choose the desired form of cooperation from among several options. It was not until 1979 that the Parliamentary Assembly gave a positive opinion on this draft. The European Framework Convention on Transfrontier Cooperation between Territorial Communities or Authorities was opened for signature by member states in Madrid on 21 May 1980 and came into force on 22 December 1981. Due to its non-binding character, it was more of a political than a legal asset: it was indeed the first inter-governmental agreement in Europe that allowed local and regional authorities to regulate relations with their neighbours, within the limits of their respective national legal systems. However, the legal possibilities provided by the Convention were improved by three additional protocols subsequently adopted in 1995 (1st protocol, No. 159), in 1998 (2nd protocol, No. 169) and in 2009 (3rd protocol, No. 206). The most significant change was introduced by the 3rd protocol which provided for the possibility to set up a cross-border legal structure, the so-called Euro-regional Cooperation Grouping (ECG). But in comparison to the legal tool of the EU, the European Grouping or Territorial Cooperation (EGTC), the ECG suffers from the fact, that the Council of Europe's legal instruments are international law which does not have a direct effect on its member states and is therefore more difficult to implement.

The Council of Europe was also the first European Organisation to recognize the geopolitical functions of cross-border cooperation. After the fall of the Berlin Wall in 1989, its rapid enlargement to the Central and Eastern Europe states and to the Republics of the former Soviet Union and Yugoslavia quickly confronted it with need to ensure the stability of its new member states' borders. Border regions acquired a geopolitical role and the Council of Europe committed itself to use cross-border cooperation as a "factor of democratic security". This function was linked to a general focus on the strengthening of local and regional democracy.

At the Vienna Summit of Council of Europe in 1993, it was first decided to convert the CLRA into the Congress of Local and Regional Authorities, an assembly of local and regional authorities with two chambers, one local and one regional. It was created in 1994 and cross-border cooperation became one of its regular activities. The Council of Europe also adopted a Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities in 1995, a legal tool which was of significant importance for cross-border regions marked by the presence of minorities. The European (geo)political dimension of cross-border cooperation now extended well beyond the technical neighbourhood issues of spatial planning to address strategic challenges such as access to vital re-sources (water, energy) or to dealing with potential conflicts in border regions (due to minority problems, autonomy movements, etc.).

From the 2000s, the “small scale neighbourhood policy” of the border regions at local and regional levels became indeed an integral part of the Council of Europe’s strategy to achieve security within and around Europe. In 2002, the Committee of Ministers adopted the Vilnius Declaration on regionalization and the consolidation of democratic stability in Greater Europe and in 2003 the Chisinau Political Declaration on cross-border cooperation between states in South Eastern Europe. Its committee of experts on cross-border cooperation undertook a survey on the legal framework for cross border co-operation in member states and identified a number of obstacles and difficulties that local authorities have to overcome in order to engage in effective cross-border cooperation. This led to a recommendation of the Committee of Ministers in 2005 pleading its member states to reduce these obstacles. It also resulted in the creation of a database on cross-border cooperation (Matching Opportunities for Regions in Europe, MORE), the aim of which was to provide local and regional authorities with practical support for their cross-border cooperation.

The Congress of Local and Regional Authorities have also launched activities to foster the role of cross-border cooperation for democratic stabilization. This was first initiated by a report presented by Hans Martin Tschudi in 2002. In 2006, the Congress then created a working group responsible for monitoring the Congress’ activities for cross-border cooperation. Its main achievement was to help create two macro-regions around the Adriatic Sea and the Black Sea, the goal of which was to instigate multilateral cooperation for the shared administration of these two maritime areas. The Adriatic macro-region was inaugurated

in Puma, Croatia, in 2006, covering local and regional authorities from six countries with Adriatic coastlines (Italy, Slovenia, Croatia, Bosnia-Herzegovina, Montenegro and Albania). In 2008, fifteen municipalities from five countries (Armenia, Bulgaria, Georgia, Moldova and Rumania) signed the creation the Black Sea macro-region in Varna, Bulgaria. Of the other bordering countries associated to the cooperation in the Black Sea macro-region (Azerbaijan, Greece, Russia, Serbia, Turkey and Ukraine), Turkey and Russia have a significant geopolitical stature. By supporting these macro-regions, the Council of Europe has endorsed the promotion of the geopolitical role of cross-border cooperation. Compared with “classic” cooperation, new elements have been introduced into these macro-regions: multilateral cooperation between cities and regions that do not necessarily share a common border, cooperation between regions of the EU and external regions, as well as “maritime” as opposed to territorial cooperation (which also includes the participation of national and European authorities). The Council of Europe’s pioneer work for the formation of macro-regions has been an important asset for the EU when it developed its macro-regional strategies in the 2000s.

In its report presented by Karl-Heinz Lambertz in 2009, the Congress re-iterated its aim to promote “democratic security” at the borders of the 47 member states of the Council of Europe. But this report also emphasized the role of cross-border cooperation for social cohesion. This points to a convergence of its aims with the EU’s regional policy. Certainly, the Council of Europe’s understanding of cohesion is not as economics-oriented as that of the EU because it focuses mainly on the humanitarian, social and political components, nonetheless, the objectives of the two European organisations increasingly seem to converge in the field of cross-border cooperation.

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Croatia



Croatia has so far been the last state to join the European Union (EU), in 2013. Until 1991, before declaring independence, it was part of Yugoslavia, a federation which was created in 1918, after the dismantling of the Austro-Hungarian Empire. This federation of states was formed against a background of complex and sporadic emerging tensions and nationalist movements in this part of south-eastern Europe, which had been occupied by the Ottoman Empire and which is generally referred to in western Europe as the “Balkans”. From the day it was founded, Yugoslavia was home to peoples who each considered themselves

to be very different, but regarded all as Slavic by western Europeans. After World War II, the republic took the name of the Federal People's Republic of Yugoslavia and adopted a communist regime. It comprised six federated states, namely Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, Macedonia, Montenegro, Serbia and Slovenia. In 1948, Marshal Tito, the Prime Minister, broke off relations with the Soviet Union. Yugoslavia did not therefore join the Warsaw Pact in 1955 and helped found the so-called Non-Aligned Movement. A change to the constitution in 1963 greatly increased the autonomy of the six republics in the federation. Each republic was based on a majority nation, but in reality, the population was far from homogenous in each republic. New changes were made in 1974, when the republics were given the right of secession. The upheavals in Europe in 1989 also impacted on the Yugoslav republics. Croatia and Slovenia held free elections, leading to a change of government, and sought to renegotiate the federal pact. These two states jointly declared their independence in June 1991. Federal troops (mainly Serbs) invaded the two republics. The European Parliament adopted a resolution, extending a qualified recognition of Croatia and Slovenia in December of the same year, followed by a unilateral recognition of Germany, leading to the dismantling of the Yugoslav Federation. War broke out in Croatia while the Serbs living mainly in the eastern part of the territory declared their independence under the name "Republic of Krajina" (which means "frontier" in both Serbian and Croatian languages). Yugoslavia claimed this eastern part of the Croatian territory. The conflict initially led to a loss of territory, which was ultimately reconquered. The war ended in 1995 with the Dayton Agreement, signed in December: it put an end to the conflict between the various nations in neighbouring Bosnia and Herzegovina, with which Croatia shared a long border. Serbia recognized the border with Croatia the following year. The borders between Slovene and Croat territories were based on the dividing lines in place in pre-1991 Yugoslavia. The war had emphasised the differences between the two countries, which had previously enjoyed close relations, while they were still part of the same federation. If anything, the accession of Slovenia to the EU in 2004 and then to the Schengen Area in 2007 consolidated the border between the two states. It was hoped that Croatia's accession in 2013 would facilitate rapprochement and the development of cross-border cooperation. Slovenia opposed the accession of Croatia for several years on the grounds of an outstanding dispute over their maritime border in the Adriatic Sea and the land border, which follows a fairly

complex route. Following mediation by Sweden, the two states finally agreed that a commission should be set up to define the border. This agreement has been reviewed by the Permanent Court of Arbitration in The Hague, which approved the expansion of the maritime territory of Slovenia in the Piran bay and a direct access to the international waters in the Adriatic Sea whilst providing in exchange a small part of land territory to Croatia. Croatia still contested the decision and Slovenia questioned the European Commission which decided not to get involved. Slovenia then brought an action before the Court of Justice of the European Communities (CJEU) in 2018. In January 2020, the CJU said it has no jurisdiction to rule on this dispute and that both countries have to solve this problem themselves. The conflict is currently not resolved and this could hinder the cross-border cooperation between the two countries.

More than 4 million inhabitants live in Croatia. The territory is shaped like a crab's claw and has a long coastline and numerous islands close to the shore. It shares a long border with Slovenia (668 km). It also shares another internal EU border with Hungary (355 km). Croatia also has a long border with Bosnia and Herzegovina (1009 km) and a much shorter border with Serbia (317 km), both currently being external EU borders. The 6 km wide Neum corridor divides Croatian territory and gives Bosnia and Herzegovina access to the Adriatic Sea. The County of Dubrovnik-Neretva is therefore a Croatian exclave, which has a tiny border with Montenegro (19 km).

Croatia has been involved in several transnational programs for the period 2014–2020 (the Danube Area and Central Europe) and in two macro-regional strategies (the Adriatic and Ionian macro-region and the Danube macro-region). Croatia also belongs to the working community of the Danube countries and to the Alpe-Adria working community. The Adriatic Sea and the Danube are territorial cooperation opportunities for Croatia. Interestingly, the Croatian territories bordering on Slovenia, which used to be included in the Instrument for Pre-Accession Assistance (IPA), are now included in Interreg V cross-border cooperation programs, while the Croatian territories bordering on Serbia and on Bosnia and Herzegovina are now covered by the IPA (Croatia-Bosnia and Croatia-Serbia programs). This extension allows new regions to become more involved in cross-border cooperation.

There are few cross-border cooperation structures. The most visible cooperation initiative is the Danube-Drava-Sava Euroregion set up in 1998 between Croatia, Bosnia and Herzegovina and Hungary. This

cooperation was driven primarily by economic stakeholders, with the chambers of commerce of Pécs-Baranya (Hungary), Osijek-Baranja County (Croatia) and Tuzla Canton (Bosnia-Herzegovina) partnering the local and regional authorities in the three countries. The Dráva-Mura Euroregion was another tri-national cooperation initiative with Hungary set up in 2003. Most cross-border cooperation seems to be concentrated on the land borders of Croatia. However, the maritime dimension exists, albeit at supra-regional level, in the framework of the Adriatic and Ionian Euroregion.

All in all, the belated development of cross-border cooperation in Croatia may be explained by the fact that it only recently joined the EU. Initiatives appear to be less developed and less visible in Croatia than in Slovenia, the other former Yugoslavian republic in the EU. This may be due to the nine-year time lag between the two accessions, but this gap should narrow as projects are developed under Interreg V and the IPA. The challenge here is both to promote cooperation and to pave the way for lasting reconciliation with the other countries in the Balkans as well as to resolve the dispute on the maritime border with Slovenia.

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Cross-Border Actors

In Europe, there is a multiplicity of borders and it is not surprising that there is also a multiplicity of actors engaging in cross-border relations. Cross-border actors can either come from the private or the public sector and they can be situated at different governance levels, national, local and regional, as well as trans-regional.

With regard to other regions in the world, Europe is characterized by a focus on local and regional authorities who not only engage on cross-border cooperation, but also create common institutions and governance structures. This is linked to the fact that, within the framework of the 28 member states of the European Union (EU), border relations are situated somewhere between internal and external relations and leave a large scope for cross-border action on the local and regional level. Indeed, since the Treaty of Maastricht in 1992, the EU has instituted a multi-level governance system, in which European, national, regional and local actors are associated in order to participate in European Integration. This implies for cross-border actors, especially those belonging to the public sphere, that their activities are channelled in order to contribute to the European regional policy. Specific EU funds (Structural Funds) and programs (Interreg) have been put in place since 1990 in order to help these cross-border actors to operate and to finance their common projects. This European specificity also explains, why the number of cross-border actors has significantly increased in all EU border regions.

In the public sphere, despite an increasing focus on the local and regional level, national states have always been and still are important stakeholders for cross-border cooperation. They were crucial actors for its legalization in the pioneer regions in Western Europe, for example the Upper Rhine Region or the Saar-Lor-Lux Region. Their ability to conclude intergovernmental treaties on cross-border cooperation facilitated the creation of an institutional and legal framework in which local and regional authorities could then operate. Even after the creation of the European Grouping for Territorial Cooperation (EGTC) in 2007, national states are still required for the preparation, adoption and implementation of this European legal tool in the EU's border regions.

Below the central state, cross-border actors from the public sphere englobe all local and regional authorities. Due to the diversity of European political systems and different degree of decentralization, these actors largely diverge with regard to their size, their legal competences and their

administrative organisation. The most homogeneous unit in this sector is the local authority, i.e. a city or commune. Local authorities in Europe are normally ruled by an elected political body and presided by a mayor, although the modalities of designation of the latter might largely differ from one State to another. Also, there are often groupings of smaller local authorities which may form a supplementary level of governance, such as the *Communités de communes* in France or the *Städtegemeinschaften/ Stadtkreise* in Germany. Since the end of the Second World War, many border cities and communes have engaged in close neighbourhood relations, which first took on the form of town-twinning with an overall objective of reconciliation and have since then evolved to the creation of integrated living-spaces, labelled as Eurocities. On the regional level of governance, cross-border actors are extremely diverse in size, form and structure. There are the units of Federal states (Belgian regions, German or Austrian *Länder*, Swiss Cantons), which are themselves recognized as states and dispose of large financial and legislative powers, often including the right of participation to foreign policy activities. There are other regions (certain Italian provinces or Spanish autonomous regions), which dispose of very large competences, enabling them to conduct a rather independent neighbourhood policy. But there are also regional units of decentralized States (regions or departments of France or many Central and Eastern European regional authorities) which have evolved from a very dependent position from the central State to gain more autonomy, including for cross-border cooperation. Finally, some regional authorities (Dutch provinces or the British Regional Councils) remain largely attached to the central state and do not dispose of a margin of manoeuvre for independent cross-border activities. These disparities between scope and competences of local and regional authorities have an important impact on cross-border cooperation, since the lack of homogeneity might create problems of coordination and administrative mismatching.

In Europe, there exists also the specificity that cross-border actors in the public or private sphere might be trans-regional actors. Since the beginning of cross-border cooperation in Europe in the 1960s, a lot of common governance structures (Euroregions, Euregios, Interreg secretariats, etc.) have been set up in EU border regions and these trans-regional actors have become one of the main initiators and managers of cross-border activities. These cross-border structures are normally composed of administrators from each side of the border and they often dispose of a whole series of cross-border working groups, platforms of

discussion, or joint project management bodies in order to regulate the cross-border cooperation of the border region. It is these trans-regional cross-border actors who, in the end, are the true heart of development of European cross-border cooperation.

An important role for cross-border cooperation in Europe is also played by so-called para-public actors from the economic sector such as chambers of commerce, chambers of trade or trade unions. Representing either the business sector or the workers interest, their participation in cross-border projects is essential in order to establish a link between the public and the private sector and to create a multiplying effect towards the business world on the one hand and the civil society on the other. Contrarily to individual private actors (firms or physical persons), they are indeed eligible for application to Interreg projects and can thus participate in EU-funded territorial cooperation.

Private actors are not very present in European cross-border governance structures and projects. The business sector first suffers from the fact that individual firms cannot apply for EU-funding. Also, in the cross-border economy, for example in sectors such as tourism or agriculture, competition is high and often leads to protectionist behaviour rather than a willingness to engage in cross-border cooperation. Besides, with growing globalization, powerful economic actors (large firms or multinationals) are not necessarily interested in neighbourhood relations with border region, as their focus is to develop competitiveness on a larger scale, European or even international.

The lack of presence of the civil society in cross-border cooperation has also been identified as a major problem. Traditionally, there is only one category of persons who largely engages in cross-border activities: the cross-border workers who live in a border region and are employed in the neighbouring state. Their status is very specific and many border States have concluded bi-lateral treaties in order to deal with it (for example to avoid double taxation or regulate social security rights, pensions etc.). However, the main objective of cross-border workers is generally to profit from the economic differentials existing between border regions, i.e. a higher salary in a wealthier neighbouring state which brings them a net amelioration of their economic situation in their home country. From the perspective of the EU's economic cohesion policy, this might be regarded as problematic, for this policy aims at levelling economic regional differences between border regions which is not in the interest of cross-border workers. For the rest, it is often difficult to mobilize the

population or associations in the civil society to engage in cross-border projects. The population living at the border might profit from the neighbour region by means of cross-border shopping or tourism, but the implication in cross-border cooperation has been more difficult to initiate. Since the late 1990s, local and regional authorities in border regions have therefore tried to stimulate participation of the civil society. They have set up so-called people-to-people program, allowing for associations to apply for small-scale Interreg projects. Also, the creation of Eurodistricts in some border regions point into this direction: it aims at creating a cross-border space, in which the civil society becomes the main actor of cross-border cooperation.

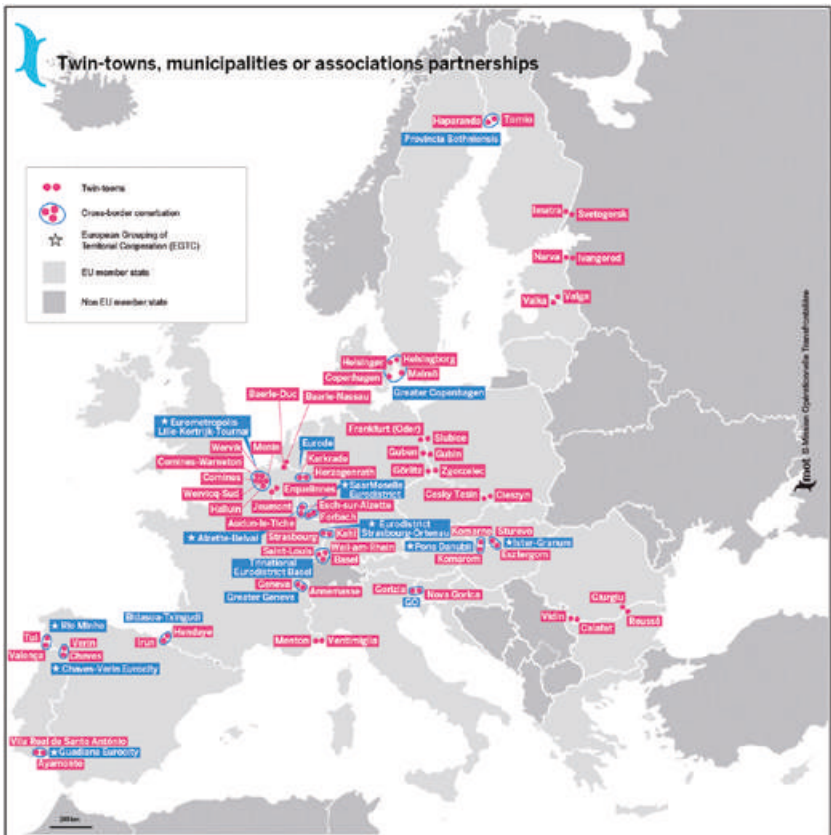
Since the introduction of the Interreg program by the European Commission in 1990, the number of public actors from the local and regional level of governance has been constantly increasing in the EU: administrative departments and units of local and regional authorities in nearly all policy fields (transport, culture, environment, health, space planning, etc.) are today implied in cross-border activities and projects. In contrast, the private sector has not been involved in this dynamic development: the business sector and civil society are still largely underrepresented in cross-border cooperation.

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Cross-Border Conurbations



In general, the relationship between the city and international borders is not immediately obvious given that the former often refers to centrality and attractiveness while the latter to separation and differentiation. Identifying what is a city is becoming increasingly difficult in a globalized world characterized by strong urban growth; however, the classic definition of a grouping of a large number of people engaged in various activities within a small space, remains valid today. The city is primarily a spatial and social object with a political dimension, whose density and diversity of population and activities are powerful markers. This seemingly coherent picture is, however, crossed by social borders

which reveal a heterogeneous space characterized by inequalities and even tensions between the populations which live there. In this sense, all the agglomerations of the world are thus marked by unstable internal borders which divide and structure their spaces.

Cross-border conurbations constitute a singular category of urban spaces: they are groups which have morphological and/or functional continuity despite the presence of one or more international borders. Identifying their specificities requires returning to the territorial construction of the state and the relations that exist between it and cities as a political object. According to Max Weber, European cities are distinguished from cities in other regions of the world from the Middle Ages by their autonomy from territorial powers. From the 13th century onwards, the construction of states was characterized by a slow, irregular, but progressive subjugation of cities to the power of the states within a context of territorial integration. The location of the border reveals all the more this influence of the state – when the latter is associated with a line of defense, the city is assigned military functions which materialize through fortifications, both to ensure the defense of national territory and to establish the authority of the king or prince. The emergence of the Westphalian border reflects the concomitant appearance of border cities, cities largely influenced by the presence of this limit and its ambivalence. “Defence cities” are often a point of control and regulation of exchange, while also serving as places of articulation between territorial units. In this regard, the urbanity of cities is imbued with this ambivalence: military and customs functions occupy large spaces which fall to the jurisdiction of the state and escape urban management, but at the same time the latter seeks to make the city a showcase and an emblem of the representation of its power. The management of the border town is therefore pervaded by the rules in force, clearly distinguishing it from its cross-border environment.

The process of European integration calls into question this organization: while in a national context, the border town is symbolically, politically, and statistically cut-off from its cross-border environment, from a European perspective, an agglomeration is a single identified piece. Nevertheless, the presence of the border influences its spatial organization and management.

The history of the spatial and temporal construction of these agglomerations shows various processes at work. Some cities were cut in half when the border was drawn, as is the case on the German-Polish

border. In other cases, a new city was created by a territorial power to face an existing city and the growth of the two entities led to the emergence of an urban conurbation through coalescence. Finally, certain agglomerations are emerging because the border constitutes a resource which is exploited by certain actors. The settlement of entrepreneurs in a bordering territory to take advantage of cost differentials or to be present in a national market leads to demographic and spatial growth. Whatever the process described, the border is characterized by a certain permeability, which is favourable to exchanges in relative proximity. On the European scale, several dozen cross-border conurbations and agglomerations have been identified, with sizes varying between several thousand to several hundred thousand inhabitants. The polycentric nature that these agglomerations present translates into the existence of many cross-border interactions, as much economic, as social, and cultural.

The uniqueness of these agglomerations can be understood mainly by their management problems. Indeed, national legal and political contexts permeate local management and often prove to be incompatible in a cross-border context. Urban services are most often organized in national frameworks which makes integration difficult. The domestic organization of public service networks (public transport, water supply, waste collection, etc.) stems from the existence of distinct legal and technical systems, but also from different cultural practices, which can result in approaches to understanding or resolving problems differing greatly on either side of the border. Cross-border cooperation is established by local authorities to resolve these difficulties and facilitate the articulation of national frameworks; a process which can take various forms such as partnerships, integration, and the pooling of equipment or resources. These arrangements are negotiated in a multi-dimensional framework, at once political, legal and cultural.

Due to Interreg programs, many cross-border agglomerations have developed projects which aim to strengthen their cooperation. Some seek to better coordinate their actions or to carry out concerted improvements to their public spaces. Others attempt to construct a common vision of development resulting in plans that are “co-constructed” by the different parties involved from a defined scope of action on which a common analysis of the situation can be established. The sustainability of such cooperation requires the establishment of a formal framework that can take different forms such as an association or legal entity (a European Grouping of Territorial Cooperation (EGTC) for example).

The management of cross-border conurbations, which is in one sense facilitated by the existence of a strong proximity between local authorities, does not cease to reveal the importance of disparities of all types between neighbouring states. Cross-border cooperation certainly appears as a mode of action which consists of constantly inventing new mechanisms for working together on the scale of the agglomeration, but it is also a way for cities to make themselves understood and better recognized by political powers at European, national, and regional levels when they present their projects. In this sense, the cross-border conurbation is a veritable laboratory for European integration.

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Cross-Border Cooperation

“Borders are scars of history. One must not forget these scars, but for developing Europe’s future we must also not cultivate them”. This quotation is often used to explain the existence of cross-border cooperation in Europe. It was originally introduced by Alfred Mozer, member of the Social Democratic Party (SPD) in Germany and Secretary of the Agrarian Commissioner of the first European Commission in 1958, who, was given the task of founding the first cross-border Euregio along the German-Dutch border.

As a term, cross-border cooperation was then officially introduced in 1980, in the European Framework Convention on Transfrontier Cooperation between Territorial Communities or Authorities adopted by the Member States of Council of Europe in Madrid. It refers to those relations being created between actors who cross the border between two neighbouring states, with the overall goal to overcome or to weaken its negative effects. In Europe, after World War II, national political borders had indeed also become psychological barriers marked by the souvenirs of painful experiences. Cross-border cooperation was meant to heal these psychological scars of the borders and to make the border a place of exchange instead of a division line. The historical beginning of these types of neighbourhood relations were the twin-towns which were formed from the 1950s onwards between communes at the border between France and Germany. However, cross-border cooperation englobes a wide range of actors ranging from states to regional or local authorities and form private association to the citizens. In this context it is important to note that cross-border cooperation does not primarily deal with private interactions between individuals but with the collective interests in neighbourhood relations of private or public actors.

But which are the borders to cross in order to establish good neighbourhood relations? There is a whole range of borders which are essential for cross-border cooperation: natural borders (rivers, seas, mountain chains) which can be overcome by help of bridges, tunnels, etc.; political borders which determine the sovereignty spheres of two neighbouring national states and which also determine the limits between different national political-administrative systems, which can be made permeable by common projects and cross-border governance structures, social and economic borders which can be bridged by reducing the differentials between the economic level of development in border

regions; finally there are also normative and cultural borders – such as language or dialect borders – which often are not precisely geographically fixed but rather represent spheres of cultural influence which may eclipse each other or shift. With cross-border cooperation, the dividing line of these borders can be devaluated by help of intercultural competence.

Historically, in Europe, cross-border cooperation developed between local and regional authorities from the 1950s onwards, in parallel and complementarily to the process of European Integration. Both processes pursued the same goal announced by the Schuman Declaration of the six founding Member States of the European Community (EC) on 9 May 1950: to achieve an ever closer union of people in Europe. However, the approach of cross-border cooperation was much more pragmatic and geographically restricted: it was about finding practical solutions for problems related to everyday life in the borderlands, i.e. directly situated at a national border. A pioneer project which illustrates this pragmatic approach was the bi-national airport Basel-Mulhouse, the construction of which was started by the border communes long before the international convention was actually signed in 1946. But whereas, the EC regarded borders as economic barriers which should be abolished between its Member States, cross-border cooperation aimed more at changing the function of the border than the border itself. Accordingly, it was not the goal of cross-border cooperation to abolish borders but to overcome their “Westphalian” function of division.

Three key terms may be used to comprehensively describe the development of local and regional cross-border cooperation in European border regions: uniqueness, variety and complexity. Each region is unique by its history, resulting in an extreme variety of time periods, levels of governance and tools of cross-border cooperation. Also, each region has different actors involved in this cooperation: trade unions, entrepreneurs, local or regional politicians, etc. Complexity then results from these two elements: to be able to understand the mechanism of cooperation in each region, there must be a fundamental analysis of their specific history, their tools and actors of cooperation. As a pioneer region in Europe, the Euregio between the Netherlands and Germany can be named, set up in 1958 in Gronau as an association of local authorities from both sides on the border. The first cross-border association between France and Germany were set up in the Franco-German-Swiss Upper Rhine region (Regio Basiliensis, 1963), followed by the Saar-Lor-Lux region (1971). It is less due to the effects of the bilateral Franco-German reconciliation

process but to concrete initiatives by private actors who decided to create platforms for exchange of information, discussion on border issues and also for the management of joint projects.

The main problem for cross-border cooperation by local and regional authorities in Europe was its legitimization. Foreign policy is a reserved sphere of competence of the national state and therefore, in principle, cross-border cooperation was an interstate matter, in the context of which the national sovereignty of the states was not questioned. In the 1960s, sub-national actors could only engage in neighbourhood relations across a national border by means of private law tools or innovative methods of cooperation, the so-called cross-border engineering. Cross-border actors thus employed very different means for the implementation of their activities: again and again, new tools were tried out which adjusted to the specific regional conditions. This permanent cross-border engineering resulted in a step-by-step approach, by which cross-border cooperation was initiated as a sequence of practical solutions for existing border problems. However, after this pioneer-phase, when cross-border regions like the Upper Rhine or Saar-Lor-Lux created ever closer links and started to develop long-term cooperation and joint projects in hard-core policy fields including space planning, transport and environment, the step-by-step approach quickly reached its limits. In the 1970s, local and regional authorities therefore handed cooperation over to the national level, where it was legalized and institutionalised. This phase of legalizing cross-border cooperation took place in form of bilateral or trilateral treaties signed by the neighbouring states, which shifted the cross-border governance up to the intergovernmental level. Participation by local and regional authorities was not always guaranteed during this process, as only Federal states (Germany, Switzerland) associated local and regional authorities to the newly created cross-border institutions, whereas centralized states (Netherlands, France) reserved them for representatives of the national state.

This situation only changed from the 1980s onwards, mainly due to three factors: First, a new wave of decentralization strengthened the competences of regional authorities in several Western European States (France, Belgium, Italy, Spain), allowing them more easily to develop cooperation with their neighbouring border regions. Second, the EC started to associate local and regional authorities to the implementation of its Regional Policy. Since the introduction of the Interreg program in the 1990s, cross-border cooperation has become an integral part of

European Integration and border regions were identified as laboratories for the implementation of the Single European Market. Cross-border cooperation was generalized in Western Europe, spreading to all border regions of the 12 member states of the EC, which participated in the Interreg programs. Third, the end of the Cold War allowed for cross-border cooperation with and in Eastern Europe. Formerly separated from their neighbours by the iron curtain, many Central and Eastern European border regions developed relations with the neighbouring regions in Western Europe, first as external partners via Euroregional associations and participation in Interreg projects and, from 2004 onwards, as full members of the European Union (EU). The Eastern enlargement of the EU also allowed EU funded cross-border cooperation to extend to new external border regions (Polish-Russian border); and, finally, within the pan-European dimension of the Council of Europe, cross-border cooperation engulfed local and regional authorities of 47 member states, some of which do not share a border with the European Union (EU) – e.g. the Russian-Ukrainian border.

Local and regional cross-border cooperation in Europe certainly questions the Westphalian concept of the border as a symbol of the natural limits of the state's power. Since the 1960s, many border regions have indeed created their own cross-border governance structures, which act common administrative bodies, comparable to the European Commission on the EU level and which have started to form a transnational space for public politics. By constantly adjusting the different political spheres in the border regions – local, regional, national ones – to each other, cross-border regions become in-between areas, where the national border is no longer a Westphalian line, but is replaced by a transnational borderland, *sui generis*. This also calls for the development of new legal instruments, as the dependence on the respective national legal order often rather slows down cross-border cooperation instead of supporting it. In this context, the development of European framework regulations, from the Council of Europe's Madrid Convention in the year 1980 as far as to the EU's European Grouping for Territorial Cooperation (EGTC) in the year 2006 is an essential initiative towards Europeanization. However, the questioning of the Westphalian order does not imply that national borders have disappeared. The persistence of the border is illustrated by many obstacles still existing for cross-border cooperation: differences and discrepancies between the national systems, of national policies

in cross-border regions, etc. To overcome these obstacles, the classical methods of the Westphalian state are not sufficient anymore: new tools, models and theories must be developed especially for cross-border cooperation.

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Cross-Border Economic Cooperation

Borders in their rudimentary forms are seen as obstacles to international trade and the exchange of goods and services. Bigger markets are usually a result of removing borders and potentially may affect productivity and growth in borderline regions. At the same time, cross-border economic cooperation may minimize divergences and disparities between neighbourhood regions. Due to the latter, successful cross-border economic development would in many cases reduce the previous economic gap between two economically divergent regions. In some ways, cross-border cooperation acts as a structural response to the peripheral location of some states, as it positively affects their location attractiveness.

Cross-border cooperation may shape internal and external processes. On the one hand, in the international context, many global issues have affected economic and trade relations in cross-border regions; on the other, internal economic and political parameters as new innovation systems or improved governance structures may influence the operation of cross-border regions.

An important part of cross-border economic cooperation is the so-called process of mergers and acquisitions (M&A) where home companies buy or rent the counterpart's production facilities starting a new business or industry. That's the opposite logic to that of the green-field investment model where a totally new production line is established in the neighbourhood region or country. Cross-border M&A largely supports the vision that both partners can benefit from the new merger via synergy effects such as new technologies or brands. In the same vein, as a consequence of these complex processes, revitalization of the economies of scale might emerge due to the intensification of the integration processes of cross-border economic cooperation. In the context of M&A, there are two possible options; the first presupposes the movement of capital flows as, for example, would be a stock purchase; the second option does not anticipate capital investments but partners are more interested in joint partnerships in the field of research and development or potentially in sharing manufacture or distribution resources. In fact, scholars recognize two M&A models: i) the horizontal one presupposes mergers between companies within the same industrial branch, ii) vertical mergers are those connecting corporate bodies with different industrial types. In the European Union (EU) context, several

mergers happened in the field of airline companies. The most well-known M&A cases were Air France / KLM, Lufthansa / Swiss, and Lufthansa / Austrian Airlines. Furthermore, the M&A process is also important in the European automobile industry. The very latest announcement within the sector in 2019 has been a merger of the Fiat-Chrysler company with the PSA group (the Peugeot owner).

International free trade agreements would in their basic forms arrange structural adjustments among competitive economies. Specifically, the latter has been important in the European regional cooperation context. The idea of trade liberalization somehow started with the European Free Trade Association (EFTA) as the intergovernmental organisation including four European countries: Iceland, Liechtenstein, Norway, and Switzerland. Its main task has been to arrange and encourage economic cooperation and free trade without barriers among the member states. Members advocate liberalization of the economic exchange and promotion of other free trade agreements. EFTA has been among more important world traders and one of the leading partners of the European Union. Additionally, the European Economic Area (EEA) as founded in 1994 includes countries of the EU and EFTA members. In fact, the EEA Agreement widens the EU's internal market to EFTA's states: Iceland, Norway, and Liechtenstein, whereas Switzerland is not a partner in this agreement.

The Common Market, as the predecessor of the European Single Market, was imagined initially as the customs union putting like efforts into trade liberalization of goods. The idea of the European Single Market was the step forward towards stronger economic cooperation among the EU member states. Though sometimes controversial, several scholars posit that the idea of the single market also appeared as a response to the shortcomings of the Keynesian economic policy in national states and potentially has offered new deregulation models of trade and private initiatives. However, due to the economic crisis in the last decade the single market concept in the EU has faced numerous challenges. Somehow losing its vision, European member states have oriented policy actions towards other fields. On the other hand, negative prosperity in some economic sectors the EU and its members have focused priorities again to find a new potential of the single market in the contemporary wave of globalization challenges.

The EU has been intensively involved in free trade also outside its borders. One of the latest successfully negotiated agreements was

between Canada and the EU, called the Comprehensive Economic and Trade Agreement (CETA). Proponents of the agreement have argued that CETA will bring many new opportunities for investors on both sides. The main goal of the agreement is to soften trade barriers and open doors for new direct investments and as consequence induce more intensive economic growth and the creation of new jobs. Like any other free trade agreement, CETA has had faced criticism from academia and civil society. Allowing more intensive financial cooperation, the agreement would also provoke speculations on the financial market, and as such lower the level of regulation. Consequently, the harmonization of regulatory rules between partners would soften previously strict standards in many policy areas of possible regulation.

However, in other areas of the world free trade is more difficult to achieve and does not necessarily have beneficial effects on cross-border economic cooperation. As such, on the contrary to the European aspects of free trade, some other free-trade zones are based in developed economies and developing countries at the same time. The North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) facilitates trade between economies of Canada, the United States and Mexico. The free-trade zone Mexican Maquiladoras has been faced with the advantage of new technologies that positively influenced working processes; on the other hand, wages of less-skilled workforce dropped down significantly in some periods of cross-border economic interaction between Mexico and the US.

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Cross-Border Governance

Cross-border governance is a specific way of governing. Its specificity comes from its geographical and political context of being “on” the border of two or more states.

The concept of governance initially emerged in the 1980’s in the United Kingdom. It defines that there is no longer a unitary way of governing; far from the classical way to solve a problem by official institutions and rules publicly defined, globally and equally applied and controlled, a process of governance requires arrangements, networks, cooperation among various kinds of public and non-public actors and floating rules. It has been developed for instance for dealing with urban policy, environmental challenge or other spatial issues. Governance is a process of collective “rulemaking” produced when no formal system can be used. Public authorities from various scales, private sector, civil society and associations take part of the process of decision making, of the regulation and of the control. The public authority is no longer the unique policy maker.

The group of decision makers is formed according to the problem to be solved or the area to manage. The different partners have to be coordinated in order to find a solution, to mobilize and allocate resources and capacities necessary for the project and to implement a sustainable solution; public authorities come from diverse levels of powers and blur the hierarchical procedure. All collaborate as they are interdependent and have to co-intervene in order to achieve the common and collectively chosen goal.

This way of governing has been developed in order to deal with new problems, new stakes, new areas and tend to create new rules, new types of coordination and new kinds of conventions. Governance is then connected with a multi-actor process: corporates, civil society and other kinds of organisations or associations are not only influential – as it can be the case for experts or lobbyists – but are also included as partners of the policy making. When regional, local and sometimes supranational authorities cooperate in such a procedure, they take part of what is called a multi-scalar process of governance. Multi-scalarity means that public authorities intervene at various scales; these coalitions question the legal system and the hierarchical system is replaced by a process of negotiation among partners connected to or interested in the problem or the space; specific arrangements have to be found.

Previously, cross-border cooperation used either international jurisdictions or bilateral coordination to develop cross-border activities and some Euroregions have also been created. However, since the 2000's, a specific process of cross-border governance induced by cross-border regions has been extensively discussed by the scientific literature, especially according to the new roles of the border, the multi-scalarity and the emergence of networks created by such cooperation. As such, cross-border cooperation, the law, the administration and the norms differ from one side of the border to the other. This gives rise to one question: how to govern "at the border"?

In practice, some cross-border activities tend to meet legal or administrative obstacles by breaking the rules. A large part of cross-border cooperation does not induce an integrated process of governing and most of cross-border situations are initially regulated in a local and pragmatic way. However, after a while, the need for transferring, pooling or sharing resources, equipment or activities requires some kinds of rulemaking. When long term projects or partnerships emerge, the question arises of how to regulate or control the process and how to implement it, and partners need to find some kind of institutional arrangements. It is, for instance, the case when metropolitan areas are being built in a cross-border region.

A functional arrangement and a process of cross-border governance must be established. Additionally, a learning process can be developed to tend to a more formalized institutionalisation. Just like in any process of governance, cross-border governance is not easy: decision makers will tend to find equivalently qualified colleagues at the other side of the border in order to work harmoniously alongside each other (e.g. people with the same education or the same expertise). However, with administrative and legal systems being often very different, any co-decision is always challenging. At the same time, even if a temporary transfer of competencies happens from principals to agents, no specific allocation of resources occurs and no transfer of powers exists. Various European instruments have been created in order to help institutionalise a part of the process of governance. Euroregions, and more recently European Groupings of Territorial Cooperation (EGTC)s, have some capacity in formalizing cross-border regulations. Other consortiums exist, either working on the European management of water basins or mountains or ruling cross-border natural parks or areas of organised access to cross-border healthcare (like the *Zone Organisée d'Accès aux Soins Transfrontaliers* (ZOAST) at the Franco-Belgian border).

However, there has been no capacity of building a cross-border jurisdiction thus far, and similarly, no power has been transferred towards such institutions. Even if a multi-scalar process of governance is created, national or regional public authorities are always required, for guaranteeing the common interest or control, at least as authorities of last resort.

A process of governance, such as a cross-border governance, is a functional way of rulemaking based on a collective objective and a multi-actor and multi-scalar cooperation. Such a process has spawned crucial issues in terms of sustainability (i.e. what about the permanence of the chosen solutions or way of governing?), of legitimacy and democratic representativeness (i.e. what about the choice of the partners and of the rules?).

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Cross-Border Identity

Defining the notion of (collective) identity is a complex task as it can all too easily be instrumentalized and reified, while it is in fact a social and, very often, political construct. This is even truer when there is a territorial dimension, since it implies to delimit the social group with whom this identity is associated. The notion of cross-border identity could thus be a kind of oxymoron, whereas it is a many-shaped reality.

Each individual is at the intersection of collective identities which determine social groups. The logic of differentiation on which all collective identities makes them unique in time, in relation with other social groups, without giving them any immutable form.

The various kinds of collective identities existing in the world overlap and intermingle without dovetailing exactly. According to anthropologists, the limits separating and distinguishing those identities are often subtle and barely in evidence. According to sociologists, the sense of belonging in a collective identity depends on the sharing of norms and significant myths propagated by different speeches. Territories are among the main attributes of many identities, especially those which are conceived by political powers, establishing a hierarchy between the collective forms of identity. The notion created by anthropologists, of moving, blurred, sometimes invisible limits, differs from that of political scientists and lawyers, for whom the world is divided into political communities characterised by permanent national identities, within clearly circumscribed territories. Beyond doubt, international borders are markers of identity: they delineate a territory inhabited by people who share more or less a sense of belonging in the same group. Anssi Paasi has shown how the construction of borders by a nascent political power in the Grand Duchy of Finland in the nineteenth and early 20th century made it possible to distinguish between “them” and us, “the others” and ourselves.

An implicit hierarchy also seems to exist between collective identities. National identity is linked with the political building of the state, a powerful producer and symbols and signs, among which territories are seen as a major element. The creation of an iconography, in the words of Jean Gottman in 1951, or the establishment of a semic system, as described by Claude Raffestin in 1980, aims at creating a sense of belonging in a national community. Henceforth, borders appear no longer simply as a line separating different sovereignties, but also between groups of norms and significant codes which are perceived, understood and shared by a

population living in one same territory. Language, culture and law are part of this unit, as well as some symbols, like the national flag or anthem. The production of norms by the State determines the congruence of borders, which are more than a sovereignty limit or an object of distinction; they are a multidimensional device which creates a territorial discontinuity in all aspects of everyday life, whether political, legal, cultural, economic or fiscal. The maps of Europe seem to show that each state produces its own homogeneous identity, different from those of its neighbours. However, as revealed by the existence of diasporas, cross-border identities can be constructed through networks, but also thanks to specific norms and links, which are clear enough to become permanent. The notion of cross-border identity is all the more relevant as borders induce a contiguity of national territories, among which, border regions present a singularity. A border identity feed on the protecting and separating dimensions of borders, and on specific interactions with neighbouring territories. Cross-border identity is built from a set of significant elements among which the national border appears as a shared object. However, the cross-border sense of collective belonging encompasses several realities, based on heritage, relations or projects.

Borders, as political and territorial constructs, often divide territories whose different parts have common characteristics. Cross-border continuity is then a legacy of the past: it can easily be seen in place-names and the material or immaterial heritage. However, this is a vanishing legacy, for each state produces its own imagery and semic system, according to its own logics. Linguistic practices are part of the visible cross-border legacies, as shown by many examples in Europe. Linguistic borders do not coincide with political borders, far from it, and even when these have long been established, they cannot prevent the existence of cross-border communities, some enjoying the status of national minority within their own territory.

A second form of cross-border identity is established in a logic of interaction between neighbouring border regions. In such a context, cross-border identity results less from the sharing of common elements than the intensity or specificity of interactions. The existence of differentials is the source of legal and illegal exchanges, fluctuating over time. Smuggling has also shaped many territories, hence the idea that a border can also be a resource. In the same vein, confronting alterity and difference in a context of relative familiarity linked with contiguity favours transfers which can lead to the emergence of hybrid configurations.

Finally, it may be argued that a sense of belonging appears when a border becomes an unavoidable element and a shared resource, as an interface in the building of common projects. The institutionalisation of cross-border cooperation, whatever its shape, helps produce forms of identification through a project logic: among the stated objectives, there often feature creating a common sense of belonging which transcends the border for various reasons, reconciling populations separated by a conflictual border, solving problems related to administrative and cultural barriers, creating synergies and favouring exchanges, or reinforcing the legibility of a cross-border area. Such identity building is made stronger by institutional integration. Each institution thus tries to make its action visible through discourses, devices and emblems. The creation of symbols and common signs of recognition, the production of bilingual or trilingual discourses – depending on the available languages –, the existence of activities and events, but also material facilities like circulation networks, contribute to a sense of belonging. Public authorities are extremely keen on devices like maps showing cross-border continuities, whether physical (topographic, orographic or hydrographic units), functional (flows, networks) or institutional (scopes of action of cross-border cooperation). By making the border look like any other limit, insisting on continuity or interactions, those documents allow for easier identification. However, such instrumentalization does not systematically induce a sense of belonging, which remains partly subjective. Cross-border identity building through projects, which is clearly favoured by the Interreg programs, remains a fragile process since it needs to stand the test of time, in a context where national frameworks are constantly prevailing.

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Cross-Border Impact Assessment

Border regions are faced with the consequences of European and national legislation, policies or programs which can potentially have negative or positive effects on, for instance, cross-border cooperation, cross-border economic development or the situation of cross-border workers. For a long time, there has been a debate on the impact assessments and the territorial dimensions of legislation, policies and programs. The European Commission has discussed the topic in the framework of its own impact assessment strategy. In its “Better Regulation” package adopted in 2015, the Commission has proposed measures to ensure that territorial aspects are factored into policy options. This should happen through the implementation of robust impact assessments of legislation that include territorial elements. The European Commission defines “Territorial Impact Assessment” as the procedure (or method) to “evaluate the likely impact of policies, programs and projects on the territory, highlighting the importance of the geographic distribution of consequences and effects and considering the spatial developments in Europe.” However, the European Commission’s guidance documents do not discuss specific assessment criteria for border regions. Territorial Impact Assessment is still a non-mandatory procedure. Considering the myriad of border regions the European Union (EU) counts, it seems to be difficult for the European Commission to map out detailed cross-border effects for all the EU’s border regions in the impact assessments it conducts.

Under the framework of the European Observation Network for Territorial Development and Cohesion (ESPON) program, several instruments for territorial assessment have been developed (called Tequila, Quick Check, Eatia, Target-Tia). There is an ongoing debate on how to use them in the case of cross-border territories. Medeiros, for instance, proposed the adaptation of the ESPON Target Territorial Impact Assessment technique to assess the territorial impacts of the cross-border cooperation programs. Already in 2012, the Euro-Institut (Kehl) and The Centre for Cross Border Studies developed a Tool Kit for an *ex ante* assessment of the effects of cross-border cooperation programs in 2011. The European Commission recently experimented with the application of the Quick Check method to assess the possible impacts of legislative proposals.

As of yet, national governments have not been able to develop specific tools to measure their effects on border regions, *ex ante* or otherwise.

They also face difficulties in carrying out *ex ante* impact assessments of their policies. In particular, they may face obstacles when seeking to cohesively integrate cross-border impact assessments into their existing frameworks, the ones with which they assess the impact of new legislative, policy and enforcement measures. For example, in the Netherlands, the government and the Lower House of Parliament, have been discussing the introduction of a review for national legislation and policy initiatives focusing on the border regions for a number of years. As of yet, there is an intensive debate at the working level on how to improve consideration of cross-border effects in the proposals of the various line ministries.

Additional challenges existing at the national level relate to the specificity of the expertise necessary to carry out cross-border impact assessments in certain border regions. It may be difficult for line ministries to obtain the necessary expert knowledge relevant to each border region surrounding their country. For example, Germany borders on nine other countries, which likely complicates *ex ante* impact assessments conducted by the Federal Government in Berlin. The multitude and unique nature of individual border regions could reinforce the need for small-scale bottom-up impact assessments from the perspective of specific border regions.

Finally, even border regions themselves face challenges in implementing *ex ante* or *ex post* impact assessments for their own territory. Despite the need for structural analyses of the border effects of newly adopted and prospective legislation, policy and enforcement, there may be issues regarding the availability of relevant tools, know-how and cross-border data. This is an issue that, for instance, the Dutch Province of Limburg has been raising for a number of years. The Province has stimulated the debate by issuing its own cross-border impact assessment in 2013 and 2014. Since 2016, Maastricht University is conducting a legislative assessment of certain policies or legislation for the Dutch/Belgian and Dutch/German borders.

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Cross-Border Integration

The concept of cross-border integration has gradually become one of the key paradigms of the Cohesion Policy of the European Union (EU), and in particular, the promotion of cross-border regionalism. The success of this notion in the policy field contrasts with its complexity in scientific approaches that emphasize polysemy and the ambiguities which characterize its different interpretations. The most widespread approach of cross-border integration focuses on the exchanges and relationships that link formerly separate border areas. Cross-border integration is seen as a consequence of the emerging opportunities induced by the opening of state borders to free movement of goods, services, capital and people. It has been conceptualized by Oscar Martínez according to an evolutionary process based on increasing cross-border interactions. Another key approach to cross-border integration focuses on the convergence between the two sides of a border. From this perspective, two interconnected spatial entities separated by a border should be seen as an integrated unit on the basis of a reduction of their differences. Convergence can either be assessed from a structural point of view based on measures of territorial disparities (e.g., socio-economic development, spatial distribution of nationalities) or from an ideational perspective based on people's perceptions and ultimately a shared sense of belonging.

These two approaches only partially cover the complexity of the concept and their contradiction highlights some analytical flaws. The first limit arises from the equivocal relationships between interaction and convergence. The existence of functional interactions does not necessarily lead to the reduction of social and spatial inequalities between either side of a border. Important cross-border flows are usually fed by economic differentials and uneven development, the latter contributing to the reinforcement of the former. Furthermore, strong asymmetry of flows can result in social resentment and political tensions between border communities. The second limit is linked to the multidimensional character of cross-border integration that comprises flows and transactions other than those related to the economic sphere, such as residential mobility, cultural exchanges or political linkages. These cross-border interactions develop according to different temporalities and various geographical scales. Consequently, interactions may lead to convergence in one domain and increase disparities in another.

Contrary to the widely held idea in policy discourses, cross-border integration is not a linear and deterministic process: it can follow different trajectories and take multifaceted forms according to the economic, political and geographical context, the scope of border inequalities and differentials, and the intensity of the resulting cross-border interactions. The current trend towards nationalism or security re-bordering also stresses that cross-border integration ultimately remains an open-ended process closely linked to the functional role and the symbolic meaning of borders.

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Cross-Border Labour Mobility

According to the European Commission, the European Union (EU) has 40 internal land border regions, which represent 40 % of the Union's territory and close to 30 % of the EU population. Cross-border labour mobility is identified by the European Commission as, "the most important area directly affected by border obstacles". However, labour mobility can lead to a stronger sense of European citizenship. These possibilities mean that border regions have the potential to exceptionally benefit from European integration. Yet, at this point border regions within the EU are generally still far away from realizing this potential. Economic performances and access to services are generally lower in border regions. An improved cross-border labour mobility would be a means to improve their situation. However, today working across borders still brings many obstacles for both employers and employees.

The focus of this article is on cross-border work, where people have a realistic possibility to commute cross-border every day. Cross-border mobility in this sense is different from transnational mobility where EU citizens decide to migrate to another EU member state. Cross-border work depends on the question whether it is possible to establish integrated cross-border labour markets in particular cross-border territories.

A basic obstacle for both employers and employees is the general lack of labour market integration. For employers, the lack of integration of employment services means there is no proper means of accessing the potential employee pool on the other side of the border. For workers, this lack of integration is most evident in the lack of information services. Finding employment across the border starts with being well informed about practical matters. A problematic issue for workers is the difficult search for responsible information bodies in many border regions. There has been for many years a lack of information services on taxes, social security, pensions and diploma recognition. One instrument directly related to the improvement of the cross-border employment services is the European program EURES, that supports the work of cross-border networks and offers an online portal where employers and employees can find cross-border matches. Besides EURES, in some border regions structures have been recently set-up to provide individual workers with cross-border job mediation. These are joined cross-border employment services (as in the case of the German-French or the Dutch-German borders).

The national development of social policies has resulted in a patchwork of social security systems across the EU. The issue of social security coordination has seen some improvement, but despite EU legislation (i.e. Regulation 883/2004) it continues to be a challenge. A geographical case study of the Øresund region at the Danish-Swedish border by the European Commission has illustrated these issues and revealed several difficulties regarding social policies. Identified obstacles are: loss of income insurance, double taxations for certain professions, and a lack of access to subsidized workplaces across the border.

While there is some improvement, pensions as well as other issues surrounding social security continues to be a major obstacle. More recently, national changes in retirement age have led to new challenges for cross-border workers with a career in two, or more EU member states. Cross-border work is still hampered by difficulties in the field of recognition of professional qualifications despite EU legislation. The recognition of professional qualifications laid down in Directive 2005/36/EC enables the free movement of professionals such as doctors or architects within the EU. Other professions do not fall under Directive 2005/36/EC and are governed by specific legislation. In practice, it turns out that frictions caused by national legislation can be still relevant. For example, at the Dutch-Belgian border even though nursing staff falls under the directive, Belgian nurses' education is often not sufficient to work in the Netherlands because Dutch law requires a quality standard for specialized nurses that they would not fulfil.

The EC has presented case studies that bring similar problems in other border regions to the surface. An interesting comment came from a case study into the Greater Luxembourg area which showed that the EC Directive provides a solution in a legal and theoretical sense, but the application could be improved.

In DG REGIO's extended survey of 2016, language was regarded as a relevant problem in border regions by 38 % of respondents, making it the second most mentioned obstacle. Respondents put emphasis on language barriers in the professional world, focusing on the potential for greater mobility of human resources in cross-border regions. Inability to communicate, read, and understand a work assignment can cause many difficulties. The lack of language skills was also the main barrier encountered by unemployed and inactive EU foreigners. Moreover, professional job mediators (according to experiences at the Dutch-German border) also take note of cultural barriers, meaning that job

seekers do not generally attempt to work or stop working across the border because of differences in working culture.

Cross-border labour mobility can offer a number of advantages by allowing a more efficient matching of worker skills with job vacancies and facilitating the general up-skilling of European workforces. Metropolitan border regions are characterized by intensive cross-border functional interdependencies and similarities. They produce integrated cross-border urban areas that can reflect an attractive and welcoming image due to their international and multilingual characteristics. This integrates metropolitan functions and has particular potential for growth and innovation. In this sense cross-border polycentric regions could offer opportunities to converge towards a more balanced development that is beneficial to the whole territory.

The economy in border regions is still hindered by obstacles that lead to disadvantages with respect to economic activities and the labour market. Naturally, labour mobility barriers that can be identified are in obvious matters such as language skills. Other important obstacles are in the areas of social policies, taxation and qualification recognition. While these issues are complex enough in themselves, it is also difficult for cross-border workers to be provided with proper information to mitigate them. Case studies have shown that these difficulties persist in border regions all across the EU. While some EU-level measures can partially solve this, root causes are a lack of legal integration and lack of communication and cooperation between EU member states. Daily practice shows that borders do not disappear easily for the average citizen and harmonization is needed in several areas across 28 national systems. This poses a great challenge for the future.

In this respect, cross-border mobility is a crucial test case for European integration and essential for a vast proportion of the territory of the EU. If it is evident for the stakeholders in border regions that they benefit a lot from European integration, the idea of more European integration will have an important voice.

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Cross-Border Maritime Cooperation

Local cross-border maritime cooperation can be defined as a cooperation between coastal regions across a maritime border. Characterized by proximity, it is addressed by cohesion policy through the cross-border strand of European Territorial Cooperation (ETC). It differs from the cooperation undertaken in larger maritime spaces, addressed by the transnational strand of ETC and by macro-regional strategies. However, the boundary between these two strands is not watertight. For example, the Franco-British Channel coastlines have been so far covered by two cross-border maritime programs: France (Channel) England, and 2 Seas, but also by the transnational North-West Europe program, and the Atlantic Maritime Strategy. In light of the “classic” definition of cross-border cooperation proposed by the Council of Europe as “neighbourly relations between local authorities across a national border”, the maritime space (except in the case of a shared coastline) constitutes both a natural barrier and a link. Border maritime areas are interdependent and form spaces of existing or potential joint development. The aim of cooperation is to go from “peripheral” maritime territories to “shared” maritime territories.

While national governments are the primary players involved in maritime cooperation on topics relating to the environment, maritime traffic and security, over the past years, coastal local authorities such as port towns, public institutions, regions, departments, provinces and other sub-regional levels have developed local maritime cooperation initiatives. As maritime zones are areas where the sovereignty of state is particularly strong, the main challenge facing these local or regional players has been to be allowed to take initiatives.

At the intersection of cohesion policy and of the European Union (EU)’s Integrated Maritime Policy (IMP), the importance of territories separated by straits or maritime basins (the English Channel, the Strait of Bonifacio between Sardinia and Corsica, etc.) for the development of the European territory as a whole is now firmly established. In 2008, the issue of maritime cooperation was given greater visibility at European level through the creation of DG Mare. In addition to the categories of straits and basins, there is the case of territories that share a common coastline (the French-Italian Riviera, the French-Belgian coastline, etc.) notably in the context of “integrated coastal zone management.”

In order to promote maritime cooperation, a cross-cutting and multi-sectoral approach is needed, such as the DG Mare's "blue growth" strategy. The Lisbon Treaty strengthened the principle of subsidiarity, which for straits means that Europe and the member states have a greater obligation to involve the local authorities in these coastal areas in the formulation of policies. Additionally, territorial cohesion now features alongside economic and social cohesion in Article 175 of the Treaty, which explicitly mentions, among the areas requiring "particular attention" "cross-border regions" and island regions; straits and maritime basins are therefore concerned.

Aside from requiring geographical proximity, existence of a fixed link (bridge or tunnel) or permanent maritime or air links enabling access between partners, local cross-border maritime cooperation also requires a shared culture. Through regardless, such cooperation is not necessarily easier today, despite the support from European programs. The need of transport infrastructures and services should be emphasised, in order to solve the territories' problems of accessibility by land, sea or air. The time factor (crossing time, but also ferry frequency) is essential. Today, despite the process of European integration, transport provision remains structured according to the domestic needs of the member states. For many, cooperation on maritime border is not a priority.

Maritime cooperation is generally not an immediate necessity for border coastal local communities and authorities, unlike the communities of land cross-border living areas. But maritime cooperation represents opportunities, with an undeniable development potential, in fields such as economy (maritime clusters), creation of maritime links, improvement of ports areas, renewable energy, tourism, culture, but also a necessity, with environmental protection, prevention of maritime pollution, risk, etc. It necessitates political determination, a shared vision of the issues and what needs to be done, and the development of strategic planning, such as integrated coastal zone management.

The development of governance in local maritime cooperation requires linkage between the different territorial levels concerned by the maritime border. This linkage is necessary because of differences in allocation of powers concerning maritime spaces between local, regional, and national levels.

This linkage could be achieved by the emergence of governance and planning in a "maritime basin" approach focusing on the issue of

environmental impacts, or on topics such as maritime safety. For instance, the European Straits Initiative works towards the recognition of the specificities of European straits in current debates to launch structuring projects in these territories.

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Cross-Border Mediation

Generally, mediation is an alternative, clearly structured and systematic way of resolving disputes. As a third party and neutral person, mediators assist the disputing parties in the process of communication in order to reach a mutually acceptable settlement. Mediation is a voluntary and confidential procedure led by a neutral, independent, impartial and qualified mediator. Thereby, mediation allows the parties to discuss controversial issues in a safe and pleasant environment and to develop their own constructive, creative and comprehensive agreement that best fits the individual needs and interests within a suitable timeframe.

Mediation is regulated at European level through the Directive 2008/52/EC on civil and commercial matters. It is to be underlined that a European code of conduct for mediators has subsequently been published. Additionally, Directive 2013/11/EU regulates the alternative dispute resolution for consumer disputes. Thus, the European Union (EU) sets a framework for mediation with a restriction on some fields; the EU also mentions cross-border disputes, but refers to transnational matters in both directives.

If we now focus on cross-border contexts – which implies a limitation of the geographical areas but covers a larger range of issues concerned by mediation in comparison to the European approach – mediation takes a broader meaning. Indeed, if mediation is normally used when a dispute occurs, in the cross-border context, mediation can also have a preventive aspect. The first indication for this is that, in some cross-border contexts, it is difficult to speak of “disputes” without potentially causing negative diplomatic impacts. The word “obstacles” is more frequently used, especially since 2015, when the Luxembourgish Presidency of the Union and the *Cross Border Review* launched by the European Commission have shed light on it (the *Review* led to the Commission’s Communication “Boosting Growth and Cohesion in EU Border regions” adopted on 20 September 2017 and the implementation of the B-Solutions tool). A second indication is that cross-border contexts are rather fragile, for most of the time, even if cross-border cooperation highly improves lives of citizens, it remains dependent on the good will and capacity of actors. In this regard, preventing obstacles and supporting actors in their common cross-border projects in order to enable a smooth cooperation is essential and mediation can definitely contribute to it, as it is a method which aims at facilitating the communication and understanding process.

It is also important to have a look on complementary approaches to mediation starting with the theories of Lev Vygotsky who introduced the idea of cultural-historical psychology. He saw human psychological development as emerging through interpersonal connections and actions with the social environment. Thereby, he pointed out the importance of recognition and knowledge of the cultural roots of a person in order to interact with him/her. Another important approach linked to the previous one is the cultural mediation which enables the identification of cultural schemes, which determine the interaction between individuals and use them as means of overcoming (potential) disputes. This process allows to transform the tensions that emerge in the interaction into a learning process and an enrichment.

In any case, mediation must be slightly adapted to the realities of cross-border contexts. In fact, cross-border cooperation brings together actors from different systems and cultures who do not know each other well, who are not used to working together and who often do not speak the same language. Misunderstanding and complexity are therefore “normal” within the sub-system of cross-border cooperation (the systems below the national ones). “Preventive mediation” can help, from the beginning, to avoid conflicts. Of course, “curative mediation” (after the problem occurred) can also maximize the possibilities of overcoming cross-border obstacles and solving border disputes.

In order to achieve this, the form of mediation must be modified according to the concrete situation, as more than two parties are often involved (as a result of the asymmetry of competences) and as the language and the culture of the parties are different. Moreover, creativity is required to define and implement the mediation process because even the word “mediation” remains strongly associated with the idea of disputes, and thus has a negative connotation. Even if actors need the help of and appeal to a third neutral party, they are unlikely to call this mediation; in practice, it is still more often called “support”.

In addition, specific competences for mediators in a cross-border context are necessary. Like in any other context, the mediator should be independent, respectful, tolerant and possess very good listening skills. Additionally, the mediator in a cross-border context should also have a strong sense of empathy, high intercultural competences, as well as a great knowledge of the systems and languages of both sides of the border. Eventually, mediators can also use complementary methods and tools like the non-violent communication (Marshall Rosenberg), the

communication square (Friedemann Schulz von Thun) or the active listening (Carl Rogers).

To put it in a nutshell, the mediator is a facilitator. In order to ensure the impartiality and fairness of the mediation process and guarantee the open-mindedness and willingness to cooperate of the parties involved, he/she should: concentrate on the cooperation process; enable each party to take part to it through a well-organised communication and working process; act as a guide in order to allow the parties to know and understand each other well in order for them to be able to build a strong, trustworthy and fruitful relationship; take all points of view into account and ensure equity for the access to information and for the decision-making procedures; help the parties to find an alternative way to conduct cooperation projects that fit with the interests and systems of the parties; and help the parties to find adapted solutions together to problems that might occur.

An example of such a mediator in a cross-border context is the Euro-Institut in the Upper Rhine Region.

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Cross-Border Metropolitan Region



The effects of the European integration process are most apparent in the cross-border regions. They foster intensive interrelations extending beyond national borders and thus functional integration in Europe. In particular, cross-border agglomerations and metropolitan regions provide their population with a broad range of opportunities. Advantage can be taken of specific offers for jobs and services, educational institutions, cultural activities and leisure facilities on either side of the border. Moreover, there are particular infrastructures in border regions, such as bilingual kindergartens, educational institutions and study programmes. Nevertheless, these regions suffer from their peripheral position when

it comes to the implementation of national policies, while complex multi-level interrelations and governance can hamper joint cross-border strategies and actions.

Even if the European Union (EU) 2020 Strategy to foster intelligent, sustainable and integrative growth pays little attention to territorial cohesion and territorial potentials, Cross-Border Metropolitan Regions (CBMRs) make a strong contribution to these objectives. CBMRs also support the strategic aims of the Territorial Agenda of the EU 2020 to promote polycentric spatial development and innovative networking of urban regions and cities. In doing so, they perform very well, but the future task will be to intensify work on metropolitan strategies for cross-border regions in order to strengthen their regional development.

An important contribution to show the potentials of Cross-Border Polycentric Metropolitan Regions was made by the European Observation Network for Territorial Development and Cohesion (ESPON) Metroborder project based on a Europe-wide analysis of Functional Urban Areas (FUA)s as well as on two case studies, the Greater Region and Upper Rhine Region. The report emphasizes that these regions are an important, newly emerging element in European spatial planning and urban systems; they have great development potential. These findings were reinforced by the analysis of the German Federal Institute for Research on Building, Urban Affairs and Spatial Development (BBSR) in their publication: *Metropolitan Areas in Europe*. They encompass those areas or places with a large variety and concentration of metropolitan functions. The regional distribution of metropolitan functions at European level allow a new differentiation and categorization of metropolitan areas throughout Europe and the relevance of cross-border areas, especially within the ‘European pentagon’ between London, Hamburg, Munich, Milan and Paris.

The discourse on CBMR was pushed by the German-wide discussion on ‘domestic’ metropolitan regions in the context of “Concepts and Strategies for Spatial Development in Germany”, approved for the first time by the Conference of Ministers for Spatial Planning in 2006 (*Ministerkonferenz für Raumordnung*). Following this, the action program “Demonstration Projects of Spatial Planning” (MORO) for cross-border functional regions has been launched in order to explore the metropolitan potential of those regions. As a result, the Cross-Border Metropolitan Regions Initiative (IMeG) was founded in Berlin on 17 March 2011. The IMeG partners represent institutions within

the Euregio Meuse-Rhine, the Trinational Metropolitan Region Upper Rhine, the Lake Constance region and the Greater Region. The Greater Region encompasses the Saarland, Lorraine, Luxembourg, Rhineland-Palatinate, the Walloon Region, the French Community of Belgium and the German-speaking Community of Belgium. The aim is not to compete with existing structures in CBMRs, but rather to support them and to work with combined strengths on territorial cooperation and cross-border metropolitan spatial development.

As a result of the IMeG cooperation process, the following constitutive characteristics of cross-border metropolitan regions can be summarized as follows. First, intensive cross-border functional interrelations and commonalities: The core areas of IMeG regions encompass cross-border agglomerations or urban networks. This structure enables intensive functional and spatial interrelations in the areas of business clusters, job markets, education, retail or health services, transport networks, and also cultural and leisure activities. The intensity and scope of cross-border interrelations illustrates the functional integration of CBMRs and can be represented by a broad variety of indicators, such as commuter flows or the number of collaborations between universities. Nevertheless, the difficulty in acquiring data and the lack of comparability hamper the concrete analysis of functional integration. Second, existing institutional agreements in cross-border cooperation: Many CBMRs look back on a long tradition in cross-border cooperation. At the end of 1960s and beginning of the 1970s, the first experiences of cooperation led to the establishment of official intergovernmental commissions followed by legislative bodies in the late 1980s and early 1990s. In particular, the 1990s saw the Interreg program begin to have an enormous influence on cross-border cooperation and its stabilization. The following decade was marked by the supplement of predominantly national structures through the foundation of (municipally funded) Eurodistricts, urban networks, and other forms of open cooperation. The development processes are still going on with a stronger focus on metropolitan functions and regional restructuring, as can be seen in the Greater Region with the shift into a CBMR based on the ESPON results. Third, large-scale character and polycentric spatial structure: Similar to the interior German metropolitan regions, the CBMRs focus on large-scale regionalization processes in order to establish competitive spaces for cooperation and action on a European or even global scale. The large-scale structures expanded from time to time according to their regional and institutional

needs. Furthermore, they mostly show a polycentric spatial structure including agglomerations, urban regions and rural structures. These highly differentiated forms of spatial structures enable a division of work. Fundamental to this are intensive partnerships between the different sub-regions which all contribute to a strengthening of growth and innovation within the CBMR. And, finally, Metropolitan functions and potentials for growth and innovation: The IMeG regions are equipped with strong metropolitan location factors; this is one of the results being worked out by the BBSR in the 2010 study *Metropolitan Areas in Europe* and the ESPON Metroborder project. Beyond the IMeG regions within the European Pentagon, there are more dynamic and powerful cross-border regions corresponding to the functional criteria of cross-border metropolitan regions in Europe such as: the Öresund Region, the Eurometropolis Lille-Kortrijk-Tournai, the Trinational Eurodistrict Basel, the cross-border agglomeration Grand Genève or the Centrope Region, which is located within the border area of Austria, Hungary, Slovakia and the Czech Republic. Even though CBMRs differ in size, in spatial and socioeconomic patterns and in their metropolitan potential, they can be seen as strong cross-border regions which can contribute to coherent spatial development in Europe.

In conclusion, cross-border polycentric metropolitan regions are very important for Europe and its cohesion; nevertheless, in the future they will have to meet challenges and tackle the prevalent obstacles to cross-border cooperation.

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Cross-Border Project

Cross-border cooperation in Europe is, to a large extent, driven by specific demand-oriented interventions in the form of projects.

Projects are by definition unique and temporary. In other words, a project is a specific set of operations undertaken to achieve a certain goal within a predefined period of time. Therefore, it has a defined scope and resources. Projects have a distinct organisational structure, usually consisting of a project team, a project manager, a steering board and sponsors.

Any project is also deemed interdisciplinary as it includes people coming from different organisational sectors. The specificity of a cross-border project, however, is that it necessarily involves at least two stakeholders situated on either side of a border. Partners and team members of cross-border projects are, therefore, faced with the additional complexity of differing political, legal and administrative systems as well as cultural, language and historical differences. Often unknown to the partners in the beginning of a project, these differences have to be taken into account at each phase of the project management. One of the main challenges of managing a cross-border project is to not only establish ways of functioning and communicating for the purpose of the project, but also to develop a collective learning environment. In order to be able to work together on common goals, this learning environment should allow partners to get to know each other, develop confidence and move from a state of concurrence to one of cooperation.

The first phase of a cross-border project is its definition. The project partners generate a project idea by analysing the cross-border region, its needs and unused potential. The possibility of raising funds through cross-border projects also plays a crucial role (see below). Having a clear understanding of what needs to change in order to arrive at a more satisfying situation enables the project partners to define the right level of cooperation as well as the added value of a cross-border project. It is important to be aware that the territory, its problems and potentials were until then perceived from a one-sided perspective by the stakeholders on each side of the border. Working from a cross-border perspective means overcoming many obstacles to combine different kinds of nationally collected data, establishing cartographies, identifying shared, complementary or competing (and sometimes opposite) views on a specific problem and developing a common vision.

In the second phase, the cross-border project partnership is established. As a successful partnership is crucial for the planning and implementation of a cross-border project, it is important to identify, get to know and involve the project partners as early as possible. Various asymmetries regarding competences, responsibilities and resources, as well as different levels of intercultural competences and divergent goals, can constitute a significant obstacle to cross-border projects. In order to build trust and avoid misunderstandings, sufficient time should be dedicated to clarifying each partner's functioning (e.g. legal structure, interdependencies with other actors, decision-making processes and working processes), competences and expectations. This also implies the negotiation of a mode of communication, methods of functioning, individual roles and responsibilities as well as resource contributions. Building a partnership has to be seen as an ongoing and dynamic process throughout the entire project.

In a third phase, the partners plan the cross-border project. They set objectives, define work packages, an action plan and expected results. They elaborate a budget and identify potential funding sources. Even if the project partners might geographically be quite distant, it is important to involve all of them as much as possible in the planning process in order to assure that they have the same understanding of the project and of its roles and responsibilities. At this stage, cultural differences regarding communication and time management, as well as working processes, often become the most obvious and the stakeholders might reach their limits of acceptance of differences. That's why, it can be helpful to allow space for processing, communication and mediation if needed.

The fourth phase consists in implementing the project. This implies carrying out the activities defined in the work packages to achieve the project objectives and deliver outputs and results. Additionally, effective monitoring provides support for the project implementation by acting as an indicator whether targets are being met and activities need to be revised. It allows for financial and risk management and, thus, for keeping the project on track. Most cross-border projects also require a form of reporting on the progress of implementation, i.e. fulfilment of quantitative or qualitative indicators.

In the final phase, the project closure, all project activities need to be finalized and a final report on the project outputs and impacts is drawn up. This is often also the last opportunity to communicate externally on the project results.

The financial support available to cross-border projects is an important aspect and often a factor that can spark off the development and carrying out of the latter. In addition to a number of national, local and regional grants, the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF), more precisely its strand Interreg A, is one of the most important funding program for cross-border projects. With the aim of strengthening economic and social cohesion in the European Union (EU) by correcting imbalances between its regions, the first 31 Interreg A programs were launched in 1991 with an EU contribution of 1.082 billion euros. Since then, the number of cross-border cooperation programs has doubled and the financing has increased to 6.6 billion euros for the programming period of 2014–2020. However, when managing cross-border projects co-financed by Interreg A programs, the project partners have to respect additional rules and specificities concerning the scope, objectives, expected results, as well as monitoring and financing, which, according to many cross-border actors, can prove difficult as well as time and labour consuming.

In order to achieve greater impact and more effective use of investments, Interreg as well as other funding programs for cross-border projects are increasingly result orientated. Therefore, program requirements are more demanding with regards to actions plans, budgeting and especially the fulfilment of indicators measuring the project results and impacts. However, it is difficult to predict all variables influencing the course and outcomes of a project, as its implementation depends very much on a context which is prone to change; especially in a cross-border context where political and financial support can shift rapidly. A certain flexibility is thus needed so that the project can adapt. Moreover, the increasing focus on measuring concrete project results often leads to the neglect of the benefits arising from the cooperation across border itself. For example, this is true in terms of networking, building social capital, intercultural understanding, mutual recognition and trust building, all of which are key elements for sustainable cross-border cooperation.

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Cross-Border Review

2015 was the year when European Union (EU) financing for cross-border cooperation in the framework of the Interreg program celebrated its 25th anniversary. What had started as a modest Community Initiative in 1990 and had become a fully-fledged objective of European Cohesion Policy with an increased budget and an expanded geographical coverage due to the EU enlargement and the introduction of maritime cross-border cooperation areas.

The celebration of this anniversary was also the occasion to assess what had so far been achieved by Interreg. It seemed to be a success story: With modest financial means, much had been done along EU internal borders to build trust between close, yet divided, populations. Some of the most precious environmental assets – air, water, the fauna and flora – had been better protected thanks to cross-border cooperation investments and initiatives. Cross-border cooperation also prepared and equipped border regions in order to better deal in common with natural and man-made disasters. In many areas long secluded and cut-off, mobility across borders was improving and neighbours could generally get access to each other more easily than before. But border inhabitants know that these good points were not the full story. How about this speech therapist who still does not know how much she will earn now that she shares her working time between the two sides of the border? How about this man in a Nordic border who after an accident at work cannot follow his rehab at home because it is on the other side? How about all these pupils in technical schools who simply cannot do their apprenticeship close to home, on the other side? How about this single mother who wastes three full days per week for a dialysis treatment 100km away from home when there is just as good a service 3km away, on the other side? And why can this ambulance not pick up a patient in need of urgent intervention right on the other side?

Indeed, there is a marked difference between the positive Interreg outcomes and achievements and the unsatisfactory real-life border situations. The need to understand and fully grasp this paradoxical phenomenon was the beginning of what became known in the European Commission's DG REGIO as the "Cross-Border Review". In Summer 2015, DG REGIO launched a two years' comprehensive study on border obstacles/barriers along all EU internal land borders, which was based on an inclusive method by outsourcing research work and by involving

stakeholders with deep knowledge and practical experience early on in the process in order to obtain regular feedback and checks against real border life. Inclusiveness was also secured through an on-line public consultation in 23 languages.

As anticipated, one of the key challenges for the study was the availability of reliable information. It was imperative to be able to measure the scale of the issues, the frequency of occurrence of certain problems, the impact they have locally, on people, on the economy and on the European integration process. It became quickly obvious that only some borders offered enough data and information to be able to apprehend the border phenomenon. Hence, there was a bias in the study towards more integrated border regions in northern and north-western Europe, because there was a fundamental and serious lack of information from other parts of Europe. This fact was quickly checked and ascertained via early work with stakeholders and there was no immediate remedy. Complementary information was then gathered via the public consultation strand of the Cross-Border Review. DG REGIO was involved with direct interaction along borders, with border institutions and citizens: within the space of a few weeks, 11 visits took place across Europe. As a result of this mobilization and wider promotional work, the public consultation received over 600 replies. This has been considered a very good result in the framework of public consultations launched on-line by the European Commission on such a specific topic. Close to 300 private persons took the time to respond to the questionnaire and more than 60 organizations representing sometimes very high numbers of citizens (e.g. the Association of European Border Regions (AEBR)). Importantly, the responses came from all parts of the EU and not exclusively from highly integrated cross-border regions with a high degree of awareness of border issues. More than 80 % of responding individuals and organizations were based in border regions. A key feature to retain is the very high level of convergence between the findings of the desk review carried out by the study and the replies received from the wider public, as top obstacles identified under both strands were almost identical.

In parallel to the study and public consultation, four workshops took place with border partners from all horizons. These moments were key in establishing the diagnosis and in identifying the root causes. With the help of border partners, the most acute border difficulties were identified and a deeper understanding of the mechanisms at work in border interaction was gained. If DG REGIO was the coordinator of this

work, it was obvious from the start that other services in the European Commission would need to be associated – mainly from “thematic” services such as transport, health, education and employment, but also from “horizontal” services such as internal market, e-Government or the Secretariat-General implementing the Better Regulation package. The increased awareness of border-specific problems from Commission services which are normally more remote from territorial considerations has been a one of the side-successes of the Cross-Border Review initiative. It proved very challenging for the Cross-Border Review team in DG REGIO to synthesize all the data, information and facts obtained during 15 months of research and exchanges. The temptation of using all the material collected was strong, but when it comes to drafting a political document (the basis for a Commission Communication), there is an imperative to be shorter and sharper. Even more importantly, it was soon decided that proposing a list of concrete actions would be more powerful than any plea for attention, no matter how well formulated.

This long process led to some conclusions that can be used for future implementation work. First: “Words matter” – one of the most striking issue the Cross-Border Review team had to face and address was in establishing a common understanding outside the border community for such fundamental terms as “cross-border” or “obstacle”. The word cross-border was the most challenging one. Whereas to the border community, it is very obvious, this is not the case in other circles and especially within the European Commission, it became clear that not everybody meant the same thing when talking about “cross-border activities”. This confusion was aggravated by the fact that the same word was also used to mean different things in different Commission services. To the Regional Policy “family” of DG Regio, cross-border implies proximity of two or more regions situated along an administrative border – as is implied in Art. 174 of the Treaty of the Functioning of the European Union (TFEU). To most other services the word refers to activities that go “across borders”, without any sense of geographical proximity, as is for instance illustrated in the Directive on Patients’ Rights in Cross-Border Healthcare. This had to be clarified repeatedly and it explains why most meetings to discuss the Cross-Border Review work started with the sharing of a map. The word “obstacle” also carries a different meaning within the legal profession: for some it is very strongly linked to the European Court of Justice’s (ECJ) interpretation and implies a notion of infringement to existing legislation, whereas to the border layman, the sense is different

and applies to any situation which is more complex, more costly or longer because it takes place on the other side of the border. Second, in the absence of solid data, personal stories are very powerful. Being unable to call upon reams of impressive statistics, the Cross-Border Review team quickly decided that using personal stories was an effective way of “converting” the non-border community. The absurdity of many cross-border situations, the persistence of “small yet annoying problems” have gone a long way towards illustrating this topic and convincing hierarchy and colleagues of the merit of this work. Third, there is a very closely-knit border community around Europe. Throughout the entire process, it has been fascinating how easy it has been to exchange views among border people. Immediate recognition of each other’s plight, no need for lengthy explanations. Even when issues touch upon different topics, the process that leads to difficulties or “obstacles” is always immediately recognized. Every border across Europe is different from the next one, but every border issue has its roots in similar processes. Having said that, the Cross-Border Review team was also struck by the lack of visibility of many issues – whether key decision-makers are too far away from borders, or whether they are under the misgiving that the completion of the Single Market has resolved all border issues – these difficulties are simply not recognized enough at central level. Border regions therefore must become better at articulating some of this themselves and they need to improve their collective advocacy.

But this Cross-Border Review also led to the adoption of a Communication to address these difficulties and propose a series of new concrete actions: On 20 September 2017 the Commission adopted its Communication “Boosting Growth and Cohesion in EU Border Regions” which highlights ways in which the EU and its member states can reduce the complexity, length and costs of cross-border interaction and promote the pooling of services along internal borders. It looks at what needs to be improved to ensure that border citizens can take full advantage of the opportunities offered on both sides of the border and also proposes measures in order to facilitate cross-border cooperation. Among the actions proposed by the Commission to enhance the competitive and cohesive situation of border regions, it especially addresses some of the legal and administrative barriers currently hampering closer cooperation. The implementation of these actions is facilitated by the creation of a “Border Focal Point” within the Commission and consisting of Commission staff with expertise in cross-border issues, which will

offer advice to national and regional authorities to tackle legal and administrative border obstacles.

The Cross-Border Review therefore illustrates a very enriching evaluation process of cross-border cooperation in Europe and shows how dedication, backed by access to as much information as possible from stakeholders can lead to significant policy initiatives from within the European Commission, also in the context of what is often perceived as a public administration “isolated” from real life issues.

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Cross-Border Spatial Planning

Stricto sensu, and from a theoretical perspective, cross-border spatial planning refers to the desire to organise territorial development and land use across border. The use of the words “spatial planning” stems from the willingness of the European Union (EU) to use a communication tool that eases discussions and debates between the actors of Europe. Since there is no cross-border jurisdiction specifically dedicated to this domain, and no harmonization of territorial planning systems in Europe, spatial planning at the cross-border scale faces many obstacles. In addition, it is very differently implemented depending on the geographical context in which it occurs (from local to macro-regional scales), and on the involvement of its stakeholders. Without clear and rigid definition, the expression “cross-border spatial planning” has been stretched to cover a large range of initiatives, sometimes limited to modest outcomes. The “EU Compendium of Spatial Planning Systems and Policies” by the European Commission in 1997 is the first formal EU document to evoke cross-border spatial planning as such. It has then been followed by the European Spatial Development Perspective of the European Commission in 1999, which largely insists on the importance of cooperation beyond national borders for overcoming the negative externalities linked to borders. From an academic viewpoint, there is a wide range of approaches. Certain scientific works have dealt with the issue of spatial planning in a trans-national context, some have focused on comparisons between policies and spatial planning systems, and others have treated the emergence of a “European spatial planning” and its influence on national planning systems and the practices of territorial actors. Lastly, some studies have described more concrete attempts to develop spatial planning strategies at a cross-border scale or, at least, have sought to bring more coherence between the existing ones. Nevertheless, the definition of the concept of spatial planning at the cross-border scale varies depending on the context, and its very existence is even discussed in the absence of any recognized formal competence at a supranational scale.

However, in a European context where the opening up of borders has often had direct impacts on the spatial development of border areas, cross-border cooperation in the field of planning can be perceived as a necessity. Concretely, various initiatives of cross-border spatial planning have been conducted in Europe, notably thanks to the Interreg programs. They can be classified in three different categories depending

on whether they lead to knowledge production, strategy definition or the implementation of tangible outputs. The first type of initiatives, which is probably the less constraining one, consists in observing and analysing the spatial development trends at the cross-border scale. This knowledge production can take the form of territorial diagnoses, cross-border statistical observatories or even cross-border geographical information systems. The second type of initiatives, which often relies on the conclusions provided by the first ones, consists in producing territorial strategies, which aim to establish a common framework for joint actions on spatial development. At the local level, such strategies generally focus on issues that affect the daily lives of people, whereas at the regional level, they often consist in determining common strategic guidelines. The third type of initiatives differs from the first two ones in the sense that it consists of actions implemented to respond to concrete problems or to specific needs that emerge at the cross-border scale, such as, for instance, cross-border accessibility, waste collection or sewage treatment. They can also result from an attempt to generate economies of scale in the provision of public services that require a critical mass by combining financial means. Other types of concrete outputs can also come from the ambition pursued by policymakers to foster or build a cross-border identity by developing, for instance, common and symbolic living spaces (such as public places for instance), infrastructures and monuments.

Whatever their aim, these initiatives should be regarded with some critical hindsight since they are not always as efficient as expected. Territorial planning is still largely legally anchored in territorial systems, “taking place in containers”, according to Andreas Faludi. Cross-border areas are furthermore spaces of meeting, confrontation or hybridization of different planning cultures. Cross-border territorial actions often focus on consensual issues (environmental protection, touristic roads, cross-border cycle paths) while other issues that shape spatial development dynamics in a decisive manner are avoided (airport development, creation of economic zones). Another limitation of cross-border spatial planning lies in the fact that the actors in charge of it have to deal with the paradoxical necessities to work for a cross-border common good on the one hand while respecting the constraints imposed by the national regulatory frameworks and strategies on the other hand. They are constantly torn between a domestic logic that promotes and defends its territorial sovereignty and a cross-border logic that requires to transcend the state framework in order to better fit functional spaces that overlap

the political boundaries. Going beyond the competition that prevails between the territories requires a very important commitment from the stakeholders involved in the governance. Such a commitment depends on the quality of the collaboration, which first of all requests trust as well as a capacity to step back from short term and national interests in order to serve long term and collective cross-border objectives. Of course, not all the different types of issues are equally easy to handle at a cross-border scale. In cases where interests are diverging across the border, stakeholders may be reluctant to share information and to cooperate with their neighbours. Yet, despite these reservations, adopting a spatial planning strategy at a cross-border scale can potentially provide tangible advantages that result from the combination of the means, the know-how and the resources on both sides of the border to better tackle common issues. This is why, even if the lack of speedy progress can sometimes lead to a certain disillusion, this long run process deserves to be reinforced in order to achieve the territorial cohesion objective of the EU.

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Cross-Border Territories

In traditional geography reflections, borders were regarded as lines that demarcated (national) territories, accompanied by “fringes” that represented zones of tradition between different types of territories. In that context, Friedrich Ratzel (1892) stressed that natural (geographic) borders can be identical or not with political borders. In contrast, the contemporary understanding conceptualizes borders and border regions as social constructions: Borders are “made” in political and societal negotiations, and, as such, they can be seen as social constructions. This is true for the definition of perimeters and for political priorities, be it “cooperation needs” or “migration management regimes”. These constructions can “harden”, or they can be modified and replaced. In that sense, borders and bordering can be seen as a dynamic process.

In consequence, there is no “default” way of defining border regions. The delimitation and establishment of border regions has to consider political and territorial complexity as well as a large diversity of perspectives. In the political praxis, two ways of defining border regions have become more prominent in recent years – the pooling of administrative territories and the functional approach.

Since 1989, the Interreg A program is part of the European Territorial Cooperation Policy and, as such, of European Union (EU) Cohesion Policy. It provides financial resources for the cooperation of different kinds of actors in border regions. The program areas are often Nomenclature of Territorial Units for Statistics (NUTS) 3 regions on either side of the border, and this “eligibility area” is often accompanied by so called Euregios. These territories link districts and municipalities from both sides of the border and they make up “pooled territories”. The logic is a rather intergovernmental one on the regional level (interregional governance). The political mandates are rather soft as all political decisions have to be approved by domestic authorities. The Euregios support the implementation of the EU cross-border cooperation programs. The strength of these Euregios certainly is the continuity and the solid institutional position linking the EU, national and regional authorities. The soft political mandates, however, leave scope for further institutionalisations.

Since the late 1990s, the functional approach came high on the agenda of regional studies and policy. Metropolitan regions, global networks and also border regions were regarded as territories that are defined by flows

of commuters, economic investments and a growing number of political issues that are hard to address in the traditional political formats. This is most obvious for metropolitan cross-border region like those around Luxembourg, Geneva or Copenhagen.

However, the functional approach has remained a rather academic perspective for border regions. The lack of data hinders discussions on functional cross-border areas. Moreover, the role of domestic institutions with their defined perimeters and roles remains predominant.

Nevertheless, there is a certain trend towards a multiplicity of cooperation forms (“institutional thickness”) that complements Euregios with local cooperation formats (e.g. Eurodistricts that are very present along the French-German border), meso-scale formats (e.g. Europaregion Donau – Moldau) and the (hitherto four) macro-regional strategies across Europe.

Contemporary political organisation is very much linked to the concept of territoriality: The political power is defined as a congruence of an institutionalised political authority, its territory (‘perimeter’) and its inhabitants. This raises problems in border regions as soon as it comes – for example – to the planning and construction of cross-border transport infrastructure or to the organisation of social insurance systems for cross-border commuters. European Territorial Cooperation activities can help to prepare the ground by feasibility studies and exchange formats, but due to the lack of formal competencies, neither binding regulations nor major investments can be ensured. A series of bi- and multi-lateral initiatives and platforms on all political levels help to overcome the complex situation. The cross-border airport of Basel is a very early example in the late 1940s. And, the countless bilateral tax agreements still illustrate the predominant intergovernmental logic also in border regions.

Since 2006, the so-called European Groupings of Territorial Cooperation (EGTC) allows the institutionalisation of border regions in a “harder” way, i.e. in assigning a legal personality to cross-border institutions. Amongst the so far approximately 60 EGTCs, many of them remain rather soft in their political focus. Even those more prominent EGTCs (e.g. the EGTC Tyrol – South Tyrol – Trentino), focus on issues of ETC programs and on rather classical cooperation issues.

As such, contemporary border region building can be summarized as follows: Border regions are constructed and developed in a contingent way. Territorial functionalities across borders develop in a rather dynamic

way, whilst the political tool-box is following step by step. The Euregios and the EGTCs are EU induced formats that certainly are a good basis for cross-border cooperation. In practice, they are complemented with flexible ad-hoc formats that address “soft spaces with fuzzy boundaries.”

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Cross-Border Workers

Cross-border workers are a product of a labour market that extends beyond national borders in Europe. They are defined by their residing and working in two distinct national (often neighbouring) spaces, between which they travel back and forth on a daily or at least weekly basis. Their motive is often economic: they either are employed in the neighbouring state region because they can find a job there or because the salary is higher than in the home country. As resident of one state and employee in another, cross-border workers are confronted with intercultural socio-cultural (language, cultural habits) and administrative-political differences (tax systems, social security, health insurance).

The number of cross-border workers has increased considerably: from 250 000 in 1975 to 420 000 in 1995 and to 780 000 in 2009 in the European Union (EU)-27 (670 000 in the EU-15). By 2015, they made up 0.9 % of the 220.7 million-strong labour force in the EU-28. The largest numbers of cross-border workers come from France (438 000), Germany (286 000), Poland (155 000), Slovakia (147 000), Italia (122 000), Rumania (122 000), Hungary (111 000) and Belgium (107 000). Within the EU, Luxembourg is their first destination, with 181 000 incoming workers; 42 % of Luxembourg's labour force reside in Belgium, Germany and France.

Outside of the EU, Switzerland is another 'magnet'. Despite the slight decrease observed between 2017 and 2018, the number of cross-border workers has increased by 11.3 % over the last five years, from 282 000 in the 4th quarter of 2013 to 314 000 in the 4th quarter of 2018. In 2018, over a third work in the Lake Geneva region (37.3 %); there are also many of them in in northwestern Switzerland (22.1 %) and Ticino (19.8 %). In Ticino, they make up no less than 27.3 % of the labour force. But they are not always welcome. In Geneva, cross-border workers have indeed been the targets of several populist campaigns; they are accused of taking the jobs of Swiss citizens and of encouraging social dumping. The Geneva Citizens' Movement (*Mouvement Citoyens Genevois*), for instance, put up posters in Onex during the 2015 municipal election campaign that read "Progress for Onex: zero cross-border workers in town" (*Ville de progrès: commune zéro frontalier*) and has called for enforcing a "cantonal preference" principle when hiring unemployed people in Geneva.

Generally, cross-border workers are found in areas where territorial concentration dynamics accentuate the effects of the phenomenon, i.e.

in border regions with important economic differentials. For instance, in Alsace, they make up 34 % of the working population in the Wissembourg employment basin; the labour force in the area of Saint-Louis, across the border from the industrial hub of Basel, included 43 % of cross-border workers in June 2019, according to the Statistics Office INSEE. This had local effects in terms of contributions and tax revenues for the municipalities of residence and in terms of urban planning, including road traffic and public transport. Cross-border work can therefore affect the economic situation and development of a border region, both in positive (investment, population growth, etc.) and negative (housing prices, traffic congestion, etc.) ways.

Cross-border worker flows also raise several inter-related questions, pertaining to legal transformations, the dependence towards labour markets and the impact of these flows on the territories. Overall, cross-border work is perceived as an opportunity for territorial development, insofar as the jobs performed in the other/neighbouring country bring benefits in return, even if the exchange may be unequal. The cost of education and professional training is born exclusively by the state or even the municipality of origin, but economic benefits are shared (asymmetrically) between the companies in the country of work and the employees, mostly in the country of residence even if purchases are often made across an entire cross-border area.

For the inhabitants of a border region, cross-border work can however also cause problems. It is a complex form of mobility, as the flows of cross-border workers often coincide with residential flows in the opposite direction – for instance, German, Swiss or Luxembourgian citizens who continue to work in their country but have chosen to reside in France. This was clearly the case in Alsace in the 1990s: by the 1999 census, there were 15 800 German workers, versus 6 900 in 1990. In 1998, according to a report from the Alsatian Regional Council, there were over 40 % of Germans in some North Alsatian housing estates – by then, the cost of land on the French side was three times lower than in Germany; one could build a house for half what it would cost in Germany. Clearly, these flows have a noticeable impact on housing and land prices, in a market where demand is high and Luxembourgian, German and Swiss residents have higher resources than the local French buyers. This has resulted in rising prices, causing tension among the local French population. Nowadays, these residential flows tend to go both ways: since the mid-2000s, increasing numbers of Alsatian workers have

made Germany home. For instance, in 2008, there were 1 000 Alsatians living in Kehl, an attractive urban area across the Rhine from Strasbourg; their number exceeded 3 100 by 2019, meaning 8.5 % of the town's population. They were attracted by easier access to homeownership, with the cost of real estate lower than in Strasbourg by 30 to 35 %. The interplay between these processes is a permanent source of tension: high flows (of people, goods, etc.) reflecting a dynamic of integration, and new interactions reshaping identities, with possible hybridizations (resulting for instance from working together) and redefining alterity (bedroom communities...).

These intersecting processes at work raise the question of who cross-border workers are as a group. Many competing representations coexist. Are they less protected than others due to the discrepancies between national legislations? An example of this is the different scales for calculating disability levels in France and Germany, causing some individuals to only receive social minimum benefits after an occupational injury. Are they, on the other hand, privileged few, moving to get the best pay-checks and the best tax advantages? For instance, individuals with similar qualifications may be paid approximately 25 % to 40 % more in Luxembourg than in France and pay fewer taxes and social contributions. Are cross-border workers accomplished lobbyists, considering they have managed to be exempted from paying the French Generalized Social Contribution (CSG) on their wages after bringing their case to the European Court of Justice (15 February 2000 judgment)? Or are they, as they like to define themselves, "pioneers of Europe" in everyday life?

Within the EU, the status of cross-border workers is partly defined by regulation no. 36/63 based on articles 48 to 51 of the Treaty of Rome, and by regulations no. 1408/71 then 883/2004 and 987/2009 on the coordination of social security systems. The latter also applies to bilateral relations with Switzerland (although the 9 February 2014 Swiss referendum on "No to mass immigration" resulted in further regulation of labour flows). Further developments are to come. On 13 December 2016, the European Commission presented a revision of the EU regulation on social security coordination. The European Parliament and the EU Council reached provisional agreement on the proposal in March 2019. The legislation of each country still applies, but bridges have been introduced in order to establish a system applicable to these mobile individuals. These guidelines, however, do not suffice to address all of the varied and often technically challenging individual cases

encountered. In the absence of European standards, bilateral agreements cover the taxation of cross-border workers, so that they do not have to pay taxes in both, their country of work and their country of residence. Yet, income and corporate tax levels have not been harmonized. “Border effects” still exist. Recurrent debates on “posted workers” in Europe are a broader illustration of the issues surrounding free movement and increased competition.

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Cross-Border Working Communities*

Cross-border working communities are, in principle, groupings of regional authorities seeking to establish multilateral cross-border cooperation. The majority of them cover a broad area united by a particular geographical feature (a mountain range, for example), and generally contain a large number of regional authorities. They are often rather informal, functioning with a non-binding legal basis and their members do not transfer any decision-making powers to a joint governance body. Thus, they have distinguished from the so-called Euroregions, which normally group together local or regional authorities from a small number of adjacent border regions with the objective to create a true cross-border area. That results in a more binding cooperation framework, which allows policies to be initiated and joint projects to be carried out.

Historically, however, the two concepts of working communities and Euroregions have been intrinsically linked. The first Euroregion to be created in Europe—the Gronau Euregio on the Dutch-German border—was indeed initially a cross-border working community. It began in 1954 when two local associations, one German and one Dutch, were founded in order to bring together five border regions which, between them, comprised more than 100 municipalities on either side of the border. This cross-border working community was transformed into a Euroregion in 1958, the Euregio, which was progressively institutionalised, with a common office built in 1985.

The same kind of development took place on the borders between the Netherlands, Belgium and Germany and in the Upper Rhine Region, at the Franco-German-Swiss border. It was in 1967 when a cross-border working community, Benego, was established by 11 Dutch and 11 Belgian municipalities of Flanders. This gave then rise to a number of Euroregions which were first set up as cross-border associations and then progressively institutionalised. In 1971, the Rhine-Waal Euregio was created, which brought together 20 German and 31 Dutch municipalities, followed by the Rhine-Meuse-Nord Euregio in 1978, which included chambers of commerce and municipalities from both sides of the border. At the regional level, a first trilateral cooperation was established in 1976: the

* For the map, see article 'Cooperation Forums'.

Meuse-Rhine Euregio, which was a Belgian-German-Dutch cooperation initiative.

In the Upper Rhine area, the Regio Basiliensis, started as a working community in 1963 and was set up as a Swiss association (*Verein*) in Basel, which associated French, German and Swiss local authorities in order to develop the cross-border agglomeration around Basel. Two homologous working communities were then created on the French and the German side of the border: first, the Regio du Haut-Rhin (Upper Rhine Regio), established at Mulhouse in France in 1965, and second, in 1985, the Freiburg-im-Breisgau Regio in Germany. The structure of these working communities then developed into a Euroregion: In 1995, they were merged to form the TriRhena Regio, comprising the South Baden region (Germany), the north-western region of Switzerland (Basel, Solothurn, Aargau and Jura) and the Department of Haut-Rhin (France).

Not all pioneer cross-border regions have undergone the same process. Indeed, out of two cross-border working communities, which were formed in the neighbouring border region between Germany, France and Luxembourg, only one was later transformed into a Euroregion. Thus, in 1971, the Institute for Regional Cooperation was first initiated as a cross-border working community by industrial stakeholders, i.e. the Saar Mines Board, the Coalmines of the Lorraine Basin and the United Steelworks of Burbach-Eich-Dudelange. However, at the same time, a mixed Franco-German-Luxembourg intergovernmental commission was set up by the foreign ministries of the three States and the working community was then merged into an institutionalised framework of cooperation. In contrast, the equivalent working community established in 1976 by the trade unions of the border region, the SaarLorLux Interregional Trade Union Council, became the SaarLorLux Euregio in 1995, the aim which was to enhance institutional cross-border cooperation at the regional level.

Most other cross-border working communities that developed from the 1970s onwards resembled multilateral cooperation groupings around shared natural spaces, such as lakes or mountain ranges. Thus, in 1972, the International Lake Constance Conference was established by the regional authorities bordering the lake (the *Land* of Baden-Württemberg in Germany, the Swiss cantons of Schaffhausen, Appenzell, Thurgau, St. Gallen and Zürich, the Austrian *Land* of Vorarlberg and the Principality of Liechtenstein) in order to resolve the environmental problems of the lake. The same year, the Association of Alpine states

(Arge Alp) was set up in order to bring together authorities from five countries to manage the mountain area of the central Alps. In 1978, a second working community was also created for the eastern Alps under the name of Alpe-Adria. It was exceptional in that despite the Cold War, it also included cross-border cooperation with the communist State of Yugoslavia.

It was Switzerland's border cantons which then multiplied cross-border working communities to enhance their cross-border cooperation, especially in the Mont Blanc region. In 1982, the Western Alps Working Community (*Communauté de Travail des Alpes Occidentale* COTRAO) was founded in Marseille. Centred on Geneva, it regrouped regional authorities from three countries (France, Italy and Switzerland) bordering the Mont Blanc. Within the COTRAO, the Mont Blanc Community of regional and local authorities was then established in 1991, which became a more institutionalised structure in 2014, when the partners agreed to create a European Grouping of Territorial Cooperation (EGTC). From then on, it resembled more a Euroregion than a working community. Further to the north, in 1985, the Jura Working Community brought together Swiss cantons and the Franche-Comté region of France. In 2001, it was transformed into the Trans-Jura Conference, but it stayed a cross-border working community. A second Franco-Swiss working community, the Lake Geneva Council (*Conseil Léman*) was formed in 1987 around Geneva and the Lake Geneva agglomeration. Finally, two working communities have been created between Italy and Switzerland: the Valais-Valle d'Aosta Council (1990) and the Regio Insubrica (1995).

At the Franco-Spanish border, after the death of General Franco in 1975 and the democratic transition in Spain, the Pyrenees Working Community was created in 1983, comprising three French regions, four Spanish autonomous communities and the Principality of Andorra. By contrast, it took much longer for the first cross-border working communities between Spain and Portugal to come into being. The Galicia-North Portugal Working Community was founded in 1991. In 2010, it evolved to a quasi-euroregional structure by becoming an EGTC. Other cross-border working communities were created between the two countries: the Castile-Leon-North Portugal Working Community in 2000, and the Algarve-Alentejo-Andalusia Euroregion Working Community in 2010. The simultaneous designation of the latter as a working community and a Euroregion shows that the distinction

between these two types of cooperation remains fluid in terms of both form and content.

This also holds for the numerous Euregions which have been created after the fall of the Berlin Wall in 1989, alongside the former Iron Curtain. Most of them were labelled immediately as Euroregions, but as in the 1960s in western Europe, they started as cross-border working groups and only progressively evolved into more institutionalised bodies. In contrast, the number of multilateral cross-border working communities created around natural areas were rather limited. The Danube *Länder* Working Community (*Arge Donauländer*), whose membership consists of both regional authorities and national States bordering the river Danube, was set up in 1990 during a conference of the heads of state or government at Maria Taferl, in Austria. Another cross-border working group bringing together border regions and cities in Germany and Poland alongside the river Oder, the Oder Partnership, was founded in 2006 in Berlin. Lastly, one cross-border working community was established in 2002 between Slovenia and Carinthia around the mountain range of the Alps: the Arge Carinthia-Slovenia.

In conclusion, cross-border working communities in Europe are very diverse and sometimes difficult to distinguish from Euroregions, especially since the latter often start as working communities and are later institutionalised. But these multilateral communities have one thing in common: they are platforms for discussion, exchange and consultation which bring together border communities, with a view to improving their neighbourhood relations.

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Culture and Interculturality

Culture is a highly polysemous term that generally encompasses two different dimensions. In a broad-anthropological approach, culture refers to the distinctive customs, references, values or belongings of a particular group or society, including linguistic or denominational elements. A more restricted-exclusive use defines culture as the literary and artistic productions of a particular group or society. Both notions are interlinked: the “fine-art” cultural expressions often relate to a particular vision of the world, a particular group culture. With the enlargement of the traditional “fine-art” remit of cultural policies to more social and individual oriented issues, a rigid distinction between both dimensions is less and less clear – and for some observers less and less relevant – in delivering cultural projects. However, both are actually interconnected.

The border for its part is an evolving political construction. Some social groups present distinctive cultural traits that were previously established and parallel the fixation of the actual European nation states’ borders, for instance: Basques and Catalans between France and Spain, Tyrolean people in Northern Italy, Swedish speaking groups in Finland, German minorities in Denmark or Poland, Hungarian minorities in Romania. The European integration process, which promotes local and regional specificities and supports cross-border cooperation, has encouraged a certain revival of these cross-border cultural interactions, while pushing cultural issues beyond the geo-historical rationale.

Indeed, the European cultural agenda also advocates interculturality, that is to say the contact and dialogue between the distinct cultures of Europe, which are situated at different scales and often built on national references. Interculturality is expected to favour the emergence of common European references and values. Border areas, due to their history and to the high daily commuting flows within most of them, are privileged spaces for cultural contacts that can be considered hybrid or intercultural, linking past and future national, regional or transnational cultural and identity references. The European Union (EU) motto “Unity in Diversity” expresses in itself this combination between the defence of diversity, the resurgence of some regional and sub-national cultures and the mitigation of interstate borders. This motto also embodies a critical challenge: cultural diversity, interculturality and cross-border contacts can be sources of conflicts, incomprehension or rejection.

At operational level, different figures and studies show that culture has become a frequent domain of European cross-border cooperation, implemented by different organisations: Euroregions, Interreg programs, European capitals of culture, among other agreements between public or non-governmental stakeholders. We generally observe three main trends in the projects' profiles, which gather both the broad-anthropological and exclusive fine-arts dimensions of culture. Historic heritage projects refer to common cross-border geo-cultural elements (e.g. cultural routes or language courses); event-type projects showcase territorial and socio-economic assets like creativity, dynamism, attractiveness (e.g. festivals, prizes, exhibitions or concerts); network-focused projects target cross border professional and sectorial networking strictly speaking; or, more broadly, networking between authorities, institutions and audiences from both sides of the border (e.g. cross-border passes to access cultural establishments, annual meetings or fairs, cross-border TV programs).

Regardless of how successful cross-border cultural cooperation might be, some schemes also convey a certain paradox when officials regularly quote and claim culture to be an emblematic sign of the success and liveliness of cooperation, while the public attendance figures and allocated budget reveal in reality the low intensity of this domain of cooperation. Moreover, some cases show that cultural actions, due to their critical symbolic and narrative dimension, are not always the easiest ones to "share" at the cross-territorial level where different stakeholders, situated at different scales, interact following their own (not always cross-border oriented) agenda. Among populations, living in a border region with a high level of intercultural contacts does not necessarily mean enthusiasm or adhesion to the European project, including in its cultural dimension. The actions developed so far can nevertheless be viewed as steps in the complex process of developing and institutionalising renewed forms of policies and governance in emerging cross-territorial contexts.

Finally, the cultural issues in cross-border context recall some of the challenges of the European construction. In the field of culture, the EU cannot replace nor reproduce national, state or other cultural belongings but rather complement these belongings with shared references and a sense of common destiny. Solving the equation between individual cultures combining diverse references and the achievement of a transnational demos

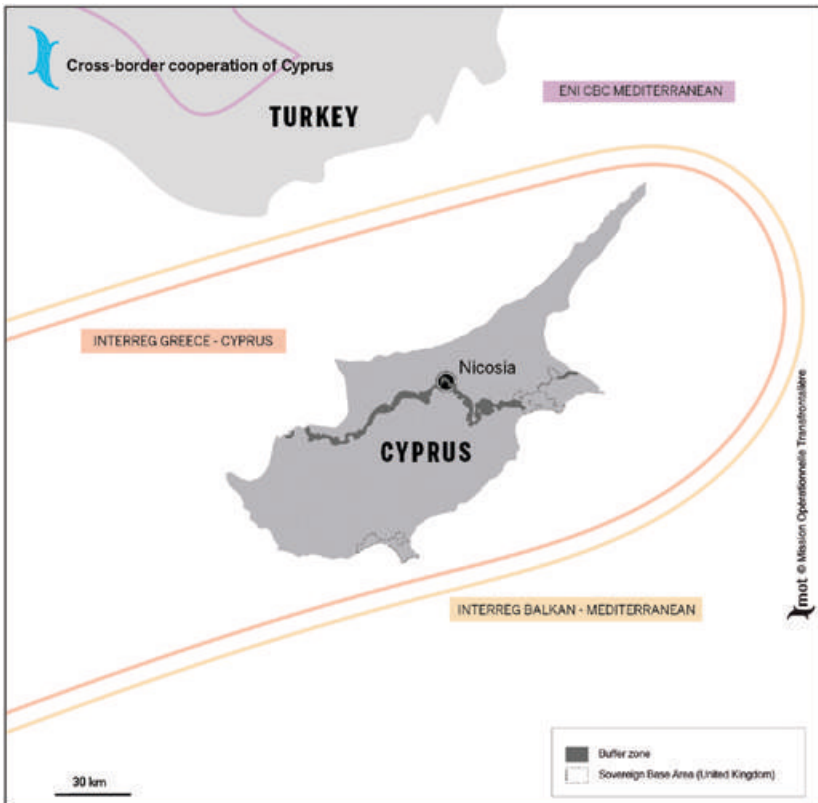
can be a critical milestone in European construction. Cross-border cultural cooperation, as a vector for interculturality, can also be a critical operation in this process.

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Cyprus



Cyprus has a population of 1.2 million and covers an area of just over 9 000 km². Cyprus is an island and lies close to Turkey and to the Middle-East (the distance with the coast of Lebanon is less than 300 km), and has therefore a peripheral location in the European Union (EU). Greek and Turkish are both the official languages of the country, which is still divided into two parts, the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus which is only recognized by the government of Turkey and covers 35 % of the total area and the Republic of Cyprus, which is member of the EU. The population of this latter is approximately 880 000.

Cyprus is a former possession of the Ottoman Empire that was occupied and then annexed by the United Kingdom in 1914. When

the island gained its independence in 1960, the Greek inhabitants of Cyprus were keen to become part of Greece. Greeks were in the majority on the island, which also had a large Turkish minority (approximately 20 % of the population). The Turkish army occupied the island in 1974 in response to a rebellion that aimed at replacing President Makarios, who was in favour of independence, with a leader proposing union with Greece. The outcome was the partitioning of the island with the creation of the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus in the northern part of the island. The capital, Nicosia, was then divided in two, which is always the case at present. The establishment of a quasi-sealed border resulted in reciprocal migrations: the Greeks living in the northern part of the country moved south and the Turks living in the southern part migrated north. The Association Agreement signed with the European Economic Community (EEC) in 1973 provided for a customs union with the latter. Cyprus applied to join the EEC in 1990, but the problem of the partitioning of the island were the main obstacle to accession, mainly also because Turkey is a member of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO), but not of the EU. The UN plan for reunification presented by the UN Secretary General Kofi Annan failed in 2002 referendum in Cyprus, where the Greek Cypriots voted against unification so that the issue had still not been resolved when Cyprus finally joined the EU in 2004. The Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus is not recognised by the member states of the EU. The border follows the Green Line drawn in 1964 by a British officer for the purpose of establishing a dividing line between the populations. Crossing points on the Green Line have been organised since 2008, including one in the centre of the capital. Cyprus is therefore in a unique situation, because although the Green Line is not an officially recognised border it has a serious impact on the life of the people and on the way the country is organised. There are also two large sovereign British military bases on the island (Akrotiri and Dhekelia) covering an area of 254 km². Greece is the EU member state closest to the island and there are ferry links between the two countries.

No cross-border cooperation has been planned between the two parts of the island of Cyprus. Plans have been made for a cooperation program with Turkey under the Instrument for Pre-Accession Assistance (IPA), but it has not yet been activated. However, a cross-border cooperation program between Cyprus and eastern Greece (especially Crete) was set up under Interreg III and has been renewed in subsequent periods. It covers economic development, transport infrastructure, security and

conservation of the natural and cultural heritage. Named THAL-HOR, it aims to reinforce an optimal planning of the common maritime zone during the period 2014–2020. Cyprus also participates in the Interreg B Mediterranean Program PANORAMED, which links six Mediterranean member states, and in the Mediterranean Sea Neighbourhood Program, which includes non-EU neighbours. As the island is relatively isolated, only one transnational-type cooperation network has been planned. Territorial cooperation in Cyprus is closely intertwined with territorial cooperation in Greece, due to their geographical proximity.

Cyprus faces three issues. First, it has to find a solution to the partitioning of the country, meaning a pacification of the relations between the Greek and the Turkish communities and to find an agreement with Turkey under the lead of the United Nations. Second, it has to find a way to negotiate a shared management with the neighbouring non-member states, Turkey, Lebanon and Israel for the development of offshore gas in the maritime zone with the help of the EU. Last, it has to reinforce its participation to cross-border or transnational framework within the EU.

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Czech-German-Austrian Border



The border between the Czech Republic, Bavaria and Upper Austria is an excellent example of the successful development of cross-border cooperation after the dismantling of the Iron Curtain. For many centuries, the border now separating the Czech Republic and Bavaria – the Bohemian region – has been a political line of division between entities that had however repeatedly concluded alliances. In the past, it was not a clear linguistic border, but rather a dialectal one. But the result of the disintegration of the Habsburg Empire after the First World War in 1919 brought along the emergence of new states, including Czechoslovakia. The border line acquired a new quality, especially the

border with Germany. In the newly founded Czechoslovakia, the official state language became Czech replacing the German language which had been prevalent during the Habsburg monarchy. However, numerous German minorities stayed on the Czech part of the border. The Munich Agreement of 1938 resulted in an annexation of the Sudetenland by the Third Reich, a border area populated by a German speaking population. After the Second World War, almost all German speaking inhabitants (approximately 3 million people) were expelled from Czechoslovakia. This meant a drastic reduction of the population of the border areas in the former Sudetenland, including the Czech part of the current Euroregion Šumava, despite the efforts of the state to resettle the area. Moreover, the geopolitical situation of the Iron Curtain led to the closure of the state borders between 1945 and 1989. The border was strictly guarded by the military and it became a barrier to cross-border contacts. As one of the consequences, the number and density of population significantly decreased in the region. There was therefore hardly any cross-border cooperation until 1990, as the border was closed hermetically; activities were carried out under strict control in order to protect the territory against the neighbouring enemies.

But after 1990, there was a growing interest to understand the neighbours, their life and culture, but also the will to take advantage of the economic openness in order to build up cooperation. Thus, there was a rapid development of cross-border activities starting from the early 1990s, which included the creation of associations of municipalities and institutions that were the basis for future Euroregions. If we monitor the model area in a broader context, we can see it as a part of the transformation from the Iron Curtain into a Green Belt. The Iron Curtain represented a political as well as a functional barrier because the territory was inaccessible for the border population. The main geographical element dividing Czechia on the one side and Germany and Austria on the other side, i.e. the Šumava/Bayerischer Wald mountains, were transformed into a physical barrier although they constitute an object for the preservation of natural heritage and therefore offer a huge possibility for mutual cooperation. Economic disparities remain high, with a wealthier Austrian and Bavarian part on the one hand and a much poorer Czech part on the other. Hence there is a significant cross-border commuting of the Czech labour force to Austria and Bavaria. The region has a polycentric urban organization with no dominant metropolis. The 25 808 euros of Gross Domestic Product (GDP)/per capita exceeds the

European Union (EU) average, but is mostly produced on the Bavarian and the Austrian side of the border.

The trilateral cross-border cooperation on the Czech-Bavarian-Austrian border is realized on two levels: the more recent and bigger European Region Danube-Vltava was initiated in 2012 and is controlled by regions, whereas the Euroregion Šumava-Bayerischer Wald-Mühlviertel, founded in 1994, is managed mostly by municipalities and operates at a smaller scale. From 1994 to 2012, cooperation was therefore coordinated exclusively by the Euroregion Šumava-Bayerischer Wald/Unterer Inn-Mühlviertel. It encompasses five districts in the Czech Republic (Domažlice, Klatovy, Prachatic, Český Krumlov, and Strakonice), seven districts in Bavaria (the *Landkreise* Cham, Deggendorf, Freyung-Grafenau, Passau, Regen, Straubing-Bogen, and Rottal-Inn since 2004), two free cities (the *Freistädte* Straubing and Passau) and four districts in Upper Austria (Freistadt, Perg, Rohrbach, and Urfahr-Umgebung). The Euroregion Šumava-Bayerischer Wald/Unterer Inn-Mühlviertel is composed by three independent entities, which have the legal form of an association of municipalities. The governance authority of the Euroregion takes the form of a trilateral general meeting, which takes place in one of the participating countries at regular intervals. The main actors involved in the Euroregion are municipalities, which influences the way how cross-border cooperation is carried out: the main goal is the implementation of small-scale projects, which mainly address the field of tourism and regional development. To achieve these goals, the cross-border actors have used mainly the Interreg program and its micro projects/small projects funds, which have been administered and distributed by the three secretariats of the Euroregion. These projects helped to reduce many barriers, but their impact was limited by the modest financial allocation for micro-projects (up to 20 000 euros).

In 2012, the regional authorities of the trilateral borderland (at Nomenclature of Territorial Units for Statistics (NUTS) 3 level) decided to create the European Region Danube-Vltava, a cooperation unit covering the territory of the seven founding regions, i.e. Upper Austria, Lower Austria (the regions of Mostviertel and Waldviertel); Lower Bavaria with Altötting and Upper Palatinate on the German side and the regions of Pilsen, South Bohemia and Vysočina on the Czech side.

The official reason for establishing the European Region Danube-Vltava, which is a working community without a proper legal structure, is to overcome cross-border obstacles under the new regional umbrella, which have already been identified at the level of the municipalities. The

founders of European Region Danube-Vltava present it as a region with 6 million inhabitants on an area of 60 000 km² composed of public bodies from three countries, where two languages are spoken (Czech and German). One of the ideas behind the European Region is to create a kind of counterbalance to the metropolitan agglomerations located around Vienna, Munich, Nuremberg, and Prague. The initiative has an ambition to cover a broader cooperation scope than the Euroregion, as it wants to focus on the areas where the regions have more competences and resources than the municipalities. The cooperation focuses mainly in the following areas: research and innovation; cooperation of universities; cooperation of enterprises and the creation of clusters; qualified workforce and labour market; tourism oriented towards nature, health, cities and culture; renewable energy and energy efficiency; as well as mobility, accessibility and transport.

The European Region has its executive office within the Upper Austrian regional government and is equipped with three full-time members. The office is supported by the regional contact points, which were established in the 7 founding regions. A so-called knowledge platform has also been set up for each prospective area.

After 1989, cooperation was mainly driven and managed by unions of municipalities. The Austrian and Bavarian members tend to apply more of a multi-level governance approach to this territory and ask for a greater integration and cooperation at regional scale with the newly developed European Region Danube–Moldau/Vltava, whereas the Czech members have shown a rather hesitant attitude towards this new cooperation entity.

EU funds – Interreg programs – are the most important source to finance cross-border cooperation in the Euroregion. The administration of micro-projects' scheme is the most crucial task of the Euroregion, requires their close cooperation and has helped to create functional cross-border networks, mainly between municipal actors. Tourism and regional development take precedence over all the other fields of cooperation. The European Region Danube-Vltava has high ambitions and wishes to also cooperate in the field of research and development, but it has not been functioning long enough to properly assess its potential contribution.

The basic integrating element of cross-border cooperation is currently the mountain chain on which the border was artificially set up. This natural space creates a basic identity of the Euroregion, even though this common element has been partially broken by different environmental initiatives.

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Czech Republic



The Czech Republic is a Central European state which acceded during the first enlargement of the European Union (EU) to the east in 2004. It has an area of 78 870 km², shares land borders with Germany (646 km), Poland (658 km), Austria (466 km) and Slovakia (252 km) and it is crossed by two large rivers, the Elbe and the Vltava. The Republic was formed in 1993, as a consequence of the partition of Czechoslovakia, resulting in the creation of two new states, the Czech Republic and Slovakia.

The Czech State was formed in the 10th century and in the 14th century, the Kingdom of Bohemia became part of the Holy Roman Empire. It

then experienced a long period of Austrian domination. Following the Spring of Nations in 1848, a Czech resistance movement started to take shape within the Austrian Empire. After the establishment of the Dual Monarchy of Austria-Hungary in 1861, Emperor Franz Josef I granted the Czechs quasi-equality within a largely decentralized imperial system. The history of the Czech Republic became interconnected with that of Slovakia after World War I. Czechoslovakia was formed in 1918 under President Wilson's 14-point program, bringing together the Czechs, Slovaks and Ruthenes from the old Austro-Hungarian Empire. The newly independent state also included a large German and a Hungarian minority. The borders of Czechoslovakia were defined in succession under the 1919 Peace Treaties, but were contested in the interwar period, especially by Nazi regime of Germany, which annexed the Sudetenland in 1938 both for political and military reasons, as the large borderland in the west weakened the defense of its territory. The first secession in the country occurred during World War II, when Slovak nationalists formed an independent state supported by Hitler. The country reunified after the war but was included in the Soviet sphere of influence in 1948. It was not until after the Velvet Revolution of 1989 led by Václav Havel that a democratic regime was restored in 1990. However, the new federal Czech and Slovak Republic was dissolved just two years later in 1992 and it was decided in a peaceful process to partition the country. The formation of the Czech Republic and Slovakia also led to the emergence of a new national border between the two states.

Cross-border cooperation initially developed after the end of the Cold War between Czechoslovakia and its neighbouring countries (1990–1992). In the first phase, Czechoslovakia's objective was similar to that of Poland, namely to use East/West cross-border cooperation at local and regional level to demonstrate that it was willing and able to participate in the process of European integration. As accession to the European Community was not possible immediately for economic reasons, cross-border cooperation was a good way of establishing links with the European Community. The European Commission supported this process by providing funding through Interreg, Poland and Hungary Assistance for Restructuring of the Economy (PHARE) and Technical Assistance to the Commonwealth of Independent States (TACIS). Numerous cross-border organisations and projects then emerged on the German-Czech border, some of which also involved Poland. Thus the first Euroregion between East and West, the Neisse-Nisa-Nysa Euroregion,

was created in 1991 as a trilateral cooperation around the River Neisse (Nisa in Czech). In the same year, cross-border cooperation with Bavaria also started in order to manage the shared natural forest in the Bohemia region (the Bavarian Forest – Šumava National Park). Another two Euroregions were established on the German-Czech border in 1992, before Czechoslovakia was partitioned, namely the Elbe-Labe Euroregion linking two cross-border working communities (the Oberes Elbtal/Osterzgebirge Euroregion on the German side and the Labe Euroregion on the Czech side), and the Erzgebirge/Krušnohoří Euroregion.

Following the formation of the Czech Republic, cross-border cooperation continued without interruption on the border with Germany and was extended to Austria. The Euregio Egrensis was founded in 1993, initially between three cross-border working communities, two on the German side (Euregio Egrensis of Bavaria and Euregio Egrensis of Saxony-Thuringia) and one on the Czech side (Euregio Bohemia). The first Euroregion involving Germany, the Czech Republic and Austria was set up the same year (the Bavarian Forest-Bohemian Forest-Lower Inn Euregio). However, only one bilateral cooperation has been established between the Czech Republic and Austria, namely the Silvia Euregio, which was set up in 2002 as a benevolent cross-border task force.

From the late 1990s onwards, cross-border cooperation was mainly fostered between the Czech Republic and Poland. Several Polish-Czech Euroregions were established at inter-municipal level. The Glacensis Euroregion was set up in 1996 between 70 Czech and Polish local authorities. It was followed by the Pradęd/Pradziad Euroregion in 1997 counting 34 municipalities and 6 counties in Poland in the Voivodeship of Opolskie and 71 Czech municipalities in the Moravian-Silesian and Olomouc Regions. Finally, two more Polish-Czech Euroregions were created in 1998 between municipalities on both sides of the border: the Cieszyn Silesia Euroregion and the Silesia Euroregion. The Cieszyn Silesia Euroregion brought together 12 municipalities in the county of Cieszyn, two municipalities in the county of Bielsko, the municipality of Godów in the county of Wodzisław Śląski and the town of Jastrzębie Zdrój on the Polish side with 16 municipalities in the district of Karviná and 24 municipalities in the eastern part of the district of Frýdek-Místek on the Czech side. For its part, the Silesia Euroregion was based on a cooperation agreement between two associations: the Polish Association of Municipalities of the Upper Oder and the Czech Opava Silesia Association. It links a total of 58 municipalities including the Chamber

of Commerce of the Moravian Silesian Region on the Czech side and 19 municipalities on the Polish side.

Euroregions involving Czech and Slovak partners developed later, from the end of the 1990s onwards. They were mostly established on a trilateral footing and involved municipalities in a third country. Thus, the Pomoraví-Weinviertel-Jižní Morava Euroregion was set up in 1997 on the border between Austria, the Czech Republic and Slovakia. A second trilateral cooperation, the Beskidy Euroregion, was established between Polish, Czech and Slovak local and regional authorities in 2000. Finally, a multilateral Euroregion was also established in 2003 between partners in four countries: Austria, the Czech Republic, Slovakia and Hungary. Due to its geographical location it is called “Centrope”. By contrast, there is only one bilateral Czech-Slovak Euroregion, the White Carpathians Euroregion, which was set up in 2000 and links over 50 partners on either side of the border (municipal and regional associations, towns, universities, chambers of commerce and industry, etc.). This is either due to the fact that the two countries have decided to separate and the border municipalities do not want to embark on structured cooperation at local and regional level, or because they already cooperate adequately and do not feel the need to set their neighbourly relations on a formal footing. Finally, the Czech Republic is also involved in interregional cooperation. The South Bohemian, Plzeň and Vysočina Regions are involved in the macro-region around the River Danube and the River Vltava established with Austria and Germany in 2012: the Danube-Vltava Euroregion.

Overall, the partitioning of Czechoslovakia did not disrupt the development of cross-border cooperation at local or regional level, which has proceeded without interruption since the early 1990s. The Czech Republic is also a good example of post-Cold War cross-border cooperation, which equally developed with eastern and western partners, thus inserting the Czech border regions into a network of fostered neighbourhood relations and a multitude of territorial cooperation projects.

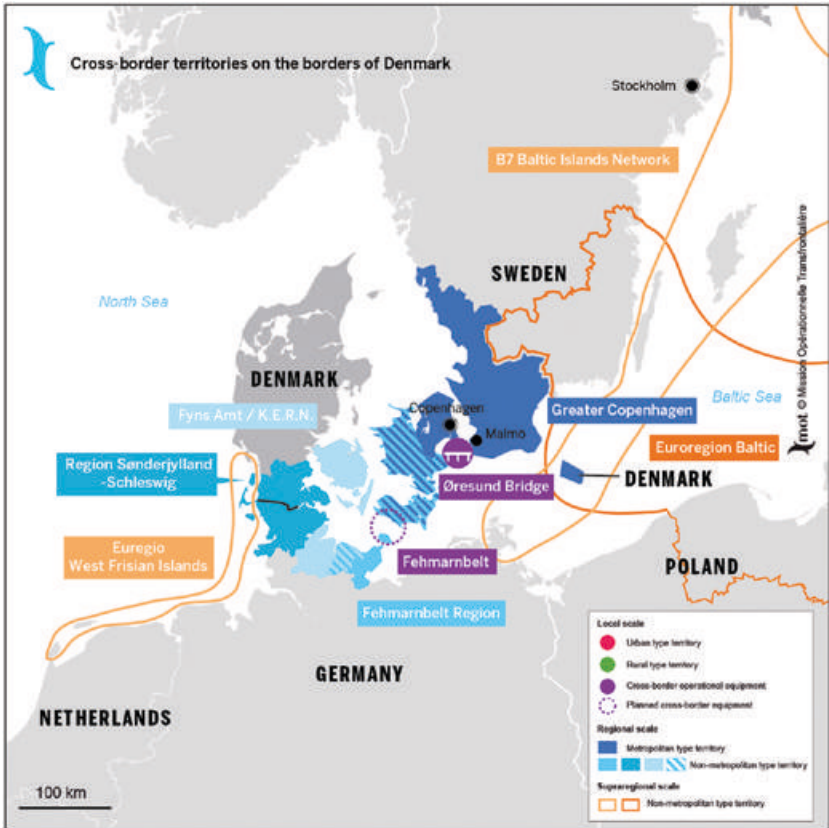
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Denmark



Denmark is a small country (43 000 km²), which is densely populated by Scandinavian standards (130 inhabitants/km²). The state and the nation themselves have an old history; however, the territory has been subject to major changes and only took its current form post-1864. Two autonomous territories are attached to Denmark: Greenland and the Faroe Islands, both of which are Overseas Countries and Territories (OCTs) and not part of the European Union (EU). Denmark comprises a peninsula (Jutland), attached to the continent by a 70 km-long isthmus and over 400 islands, the largest of which (Zealand) includes the capital, Copenhagen. The geographical configuration (a mainland and a

multitude of islands) causes problems in terms of territorial continuity, some of which have been resolved by the state by investing in bridges and tunnels for both road and rail traffic. Over one-third of the country's population lives in the agglomeration of Copenhagen, which lies on Denmark's eastern seaboard close to Sweden, from which it is separated by the Øresund, a strait linking the Baltic Sea to the North Sea. As one of the cities commanding the strait, Copenhagen is both a coastal and a border city, due to its proximity to the Swedish coast about 10 km away. For the record, Denmark has obtained four opt-outs from the EU, the most notable being its non-participation in the European Monetary Union (EMU): hence, the kronet remains the currency of the country.

Denmark has two types of borders. First, it has a land border of only 68 km with Germany. It was established in 1864 following the loss of Schleswig and Holstein, which were ceded to Prussia and Austria. The border continues as a maritime border west through Frisian islands separating the German eastern ones from the Danish northern ones and east through the sea area of Fehmarnbelt. The political border does not coincide with the linguistic border, since there are Danish minorities living in Schleswig. The borders with Sweden and Norway are also maritime borders.

Denmark participates in three Interreg-A programs. The first (Øresund-Kattegat-Skagerrak) links counties in southern Norway, provinces in western Sweden, the northern part of the Jutland peninsula and the island provinces in the east. The second (South Baltic) covers the German and Polish regions on the Baltic Sea, the coastal provinces of south-eastern Sweden and the Region of Klaipėda in Lithuania. The Danish island of Bornholm is included in the program and the regions in eastern Denmark are associated with it as adjacent regions. The third program concerns the border with Germany. The territories eligible for the Syddanmark-Schleswig-K.E.R.N. program are southern Jutland, the Province of Fyn and part of the German federal state of Schleswig-Holstein. The country as a whole participates also to two Interreg-B programs, one on the North Sea and the other on the Baltic Sea.

Cooperation bodies were set up mainly during the 1990s and at the start of the millennium. A cooperation was launched in 1993 in order to strengthen relations across the Øresund strait between the metropolitan region of Copenhagen and the highly urbanised neighbouring regions of Sweden (Scania includes the cities of Malmö, Sweden's third largest city, and Lund, which has one of the oldest universities in northern Europe)

with the objective to establish a fixed link across Øresund, which has been achieved in 2000. Since then, a dual road/rail link has replaced the former ferry service joining the two shores. Although it has a loose governance structure with no legal personality, cross-border cooperation is very intense. In January 2016, the Øresund Committee was transformed into the Greater Copenhagen and Skane Committee (GCSC), with the aim to ensure a better international promotion of the metropolitan area by using the positive image of Copenhagen while strengthening the international transport infrastructures and upgrading scientific innovation. A truly metropolitan region strategy has been established to become a global player, with Copenhagen as the main pole and Malmö as a secondary centre. The aim is also to increase the integration of the labour market and to improve the transport networks between the two coasts, which are linked by a Regional Express Railway (RER) system.

Three cross-border cooperation structures have been set up on the German-Danish border: Sønderjylland-Schleswig in 1997, the Fehmarnbelt Region in 2006 and Fyn Province-K.E.R.N. in 2007. Even though they are named Euroregions, they are essentially arrangements between local authorities (municipalities on the Danish side and towns and districts on the German side, together with a technological network in the case of K.E.R.N.). However, Danish municipalities are very large and have broad powers. The Fehmarnbelt Region is involved in the project to establish a fixed link between the island of Lolland (Denmark) and the island of Fehmarn (Germany), which would improve accessibility between Hamburg and Copenhagen. The construction is supposed to be finished in 2027. The cultural dimension of this cross-border cooperation, which aims to encourage minorities and other border populations to learn the language of the neighbour, is one of their most original features. The last Euroregion, the Waddeneilanden Euregio, was set up in 1999. It establishes cooperation between the Frisian islands of Denmark, Germany and the Netherlands. This island network enables best practices to be shared and cooperation to be based on similar concerns (accessibility and environmental pressures) and a common culture. Finally, the Baltic Euroregion only includes the Danish island of Bornholm, 160 km east of Copenhagen.

All in all, the Danish borders are home to intensive cross-border cooperation. This cooperation is bound up with projects to create fixed transport links (Øresund, Fehmarnbelt) and the desire to establish an island cooperation network. The lie of the land (especially the fact that

it is an archipelagic country) has a decisive influence on cross-border cooperation. In addition, as the cross-border metropolitan region is being established over the Øresund, with Copenhagen and Malmö as its two main centres, the different projects of cooperation will enable the capital of Denmark to reinforce its role as a transport hub and metropolis in the Norden.

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Dublin System for Asylum Seekers

External borders of the European Union (EU) are a space of categorization of migrants to establish their status and therefore their right to enter the EU or to return in their country of origin according to the well-known “Return” Directive. The EU has developed three main categories of migrants: legal migrants, illegal migrants and asylum seekers.

The asylum seekers are subject to the Dublin Regulation of the EU. It is the corollary to the Schengen Convention which guarantees internal free circulation among the EU member states. Indeed, with a system of internal mobility and the suspension of internal border controls, the management of the external border had to be commonly assured. The Dublin Convention was first elaborated on an intergovernmental basis in the framework of the European Community (EC); it has been signed on 15 June 1990 by its member states and entered into force in September 1998. The Dublin Convention was mainly established to define not a common, but a “concerted” asylum procedure for the EU member states. This so-called Dublin system has not been invented to adopt a refugee friendly Community regime, but rather, from a security point of view of the national states, it is part of the security border policy in order to prevent irregular mobility of migrants in the Schengen Area.

Indeed, the Dublin Convention was conceived as an intergovernmental tool, where the EU Council stayed competent and unanimity decision-making was the rule. Its main purpose was to guarantee within the Schengen Area the international principles of the 1951 Geneva Convention on asylum. The main element was to fix criteria to determine rapidly the member state responsible for an asylum claim in order to avoid asylum shopping consisting in determining the most suitable member state for lodging the claim according to personal interests but also by taking into account the length and potential positive result of the procedure. But from the start the Dublin Convention suffered from significant flaws as member states consider that the right to give or refuse asylum is a matter of their own sovereignty. It was therefore difficult to promote more coordination between states within the ambit of the Dublin Convention and that is the reason why the Maastricht Treaty of 1992 paved the way towards an Europeanisation of the asylum procedure. Since 1999, the Dublin Convention has thus become part of the Common European Asylum System which brings together this regulation with other texts dedicated to harmonise national asylum procedures. Significant progress

has also been made by the Nice Treaty in 2001 to determine a more balanced asylum system to take into account the very different national burdens in the reception conditions of asylum seekers and the different national decisions to allow or refuse asylum.

In order to improve the Dublin system, several revisions have been made: the first, in 2003 established the so-called Dublin II Regulation which replaced the Dublin Convention. Being directly applicable without any ratification by national authorities like any other EU acts, the Dublin Regulation was also supposed to induce more uniformity in the field of asylum throughout the EU. To prevent multiple claims, the Dublin II Regulation provided for common criteria to establish the member state in charge of the exam of the claim. The mechanism is sought to be effective as an asylum claim refused by the competent member state is refused for the entire EU. The regulation was applied within the EU and the European Economic Area (EEA) comprising Norway, Iceland and Liechtenstein. The competent member state is determined by a set of criteria for establishing responsibility running, in hierarchical order, from family considerations, to recent possession of visa or residence permit in a member state, to whether the applicant has entered EU irregularly or regularly. If no criteria are fulfilled it is the member state of first entry within the EU, which is responsible of the exam of the asylum claim. It is a means of securing national interests as the system gives each of the member states a collective tool to monitor the flux of refugees with the most suitable state in charge of the entire procedure to safeguard interests of asylum seekers.

Since 2005, the EU institutions have managed to adopt some minimum standards for the reception conditions of asylum seekers and to safeguard their human dignity. The European Asylum Fund has also been developed to enhance cooperation between member states.

In reality, the EU has faced many difficulties to apply the Dublin II Regulation because member states maintained divergent policies in the acceptance of asylum claims but also concerning reception conditions of asylum seekers. The divergence within the EU was the source of secondary movements of asylum seekers between member states, contrary to the Dublin Regulation logic. The European Court of Justice (ECJ) tried to extend the benefit of the Reception Conditions Directive even in the case of transfer of migrants to another member state responsible for the exam of the claim. Europe had also to face important transfers of asylum seekers from member states to Greece which was a country

of first entry for a lot of migrants. The pressure of such movements within the EU, together with the severe economic crisis faced by Greece since 2008 resulted in massive violation of human rights in the camps organized for asylum seekers waiting for the end of the exam of their claims. The European Court of Human Rights (ECHR) in Strasbourg has for example condemned Belgium for the violation of article 3 of the European Convention on Human Rights, which forbids inhuman treatments, for such a transfer, as Greece was not able to look for the exam of asylum claims. The ECJ on its part underlined that member states should use the “sovereignty clause” of the Dublin II Regulation to refuse transfer in case of the systemic violation of the fundamental rights of asylum seekers in the country of first entrance.

The Dublin II Regulation was reformed in 2013 to answer to some of the criticisms of the European Courts. It encompassed a rapid alert system in case of high pressure on a national asylum system which allows to prevent and avoid strong crises. The Council of the EU may decide on this basis a mechanism of solidarity to diminish the migration pressure. But it is only for the European Courts to decide on the possibility to suspend the transfer of any migrants in this framework. The Dublin III Regulation also provides for rights of migrants: right to information of the rules to determine competent member states for the exam of asylum claims, individual instruction of asylum claims, a right to a judicial protection in case of transfer and common criteria to minimize the number of detention decisions in case of transfer. The reform of the Common European Asylum System in 2013 also encompassed a revision of the Qualification Directive in order to have a common definition of refugees but also to develop other forms of temporary protections at EU level. Another directive harmonizes important procedural aspects of an asylum claim. The effective application of the Dublin system is operated on the basis of the so-called Eurodac system which allows for a systematic registering of fingerprints of migrants arriving on the EU external borders. It is a centralized system which has to be consulted by member states in the exam of asylum claims to check any previous claims in other member states. It was supposed to facilitate the proper determination of the responsible state according to the Dublin II and III Regulation. A European Support Office was created to provide technical and operational support to member states and to develop a proper European expertise on asylum questions. However, even the revised the Dublin III Regulation of 2013 did not introduce an explicit repartition

principle of asylum seekers among the EU member states according to a quota system and thus created imbalanced reception conditions of asylum seekers throughout the Union.

The flaws of the Dublin III Regulation came very violently to the surface during the 2015 migration crisis. Following Germany's decision to open its borders for migrants in the summer 2015, when the German Chancellor Angela Merkel announced: "*Wir schaffen das*" (We can manage), national authorities decided to make use of the "sovereignty clause" to voluntarily assume responsibility for processing Syrian asylum claims to avoid any transfer to another member state. The Commission thanked Berlin for a decision of European solidarity. The first effect of this was a de-bordering response by Hungary: Hungarian authorities opened their borders, letting the migrants travel, via Austria, towards Germany, thus avoiding the Dublin rule of the control of refugees at the "first point of entry" into the EU. Solidarity of other member states never occurred and Germany was obliged to reintroduce a strict control of its own borders to diminish the arrival of migrants. The question of compulsory mechanisms of solidarity – i.e. the question of a quota system of fair distribution of migrants among the EU member states – was clearly the core issue to tackle. The Council adopted on 22 September 2015 a temporary emergency relocation scheme to diminish the migration pressure on frontline member states. It was also decided to help these member states to register the migrants and to accelerate their relocation in hotspots. But the crisis was not solved by these means as some countries faced many illegal inflows at their national border (Austria) or were subject to a significant pressure of legal migrants on their territory (Sweden). The EU institutions provided for a temporary suspension of reallocation in these member states in 2015 and 2016.

The decision of provisional relocation has more frontally been contested by Hungary, Poland, Czech Republic, Slovakia and Romania. The European Commission finally seized the ECJ to stop the political tensions with Hungary, Poland, Czech Republic. In April 2020, the Court considered indeed that these member states have violated their EU obligations by their refusal to accept their share of refugees during the migration crisis. The quota system is nevertheless inefficient in reality. No consensus exists on its principle and modalities. The draft Dublin Agreement IV, which would be more stringent on combatting asylum shopping, still does not propose quotas for a fair distribution of the refugees among all EU member states. The proposal of the Commission

in 2017 was to reinforce unification of national laws to eliminate all the legal pull factors between member states and to settle a permanent framework for reallocation of migrants based on the cooperation of member states instead of any sort of quotas. However, efforts to reform the Dublin Regulation since 2017 have so far failed and the reform of the EU asylum policy is still on the agenda of the Von der Leyen Commission.

The problem with the Dublin Regulation has been and still is that it places the burden of management of refugee/migrant flows to the EU member states at the external borders. This has not changed despite the fact that external border management of the EU has been slightly improved since 2004, when the European Border and Coast Guard Agency called Frontex was created. Its task is to monitor migration flows to fight against criminals and terrorists at the EU external land and maritime borders, but despite its reform in 2016, its financial means and human resources stay very limited and are insufficient to deal with the growing pressure of migrants and refugees trying to enter the EU.

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Eastern Partnership



The Eastern Partnership (EP) is a political initiative which is a regional dimension of the European Neighbourhood Policy (ENP). It gathers European Union member states and six neighbouring countries (Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Georgia, Moldova and Ukraine). The idea emerged in 2008 within the European Council. Its launch has accelerated at the Prague Summit in May 2009 following the conflict in Georgia that led to fears of a destabilization of the Caucasus. The Eastern Partnership (EP) is aimed at achieving a political association and a very close economic integration between EU and the six aforementioned countries while strengthening the bilateral relationships built in the ENP. It is a

regional forum which provides the partner countries with a harmonised framework (i.e., a common set of regulations) to cooperate with EU, in a multilateral dimension, in various areas (economic development, international trade, energy efficiency, environment, mobility), betting on a form of smooth Europeanisation.

With the EP, the EU offers to the six eligible countries a contractual relationship, enhanced technical assistance, extensive trade agreements, a liberal visa regime, and cooperation in foreign policy and security domains. In accordance with the European principle of differentiation, the level of approximation of each partner country with the EU depends on the goals set out on a bilateral basis. Each eastern neighbour country must carry out political and economic reforms in several areas: promotion of democracy, strengthening regional security, strengthening energy security, protection of the environment, contacts between civil societies, social and economic development, and reduction of inequalities, among others. Conditions are also reinforced, for example, the EU facilitates the issuance of visas in exchange for a strengthening of the border controls and the fight against illegal immigration in the partner country. The partnership is a renewed effort in the direction of the eastern neighbourhood to encourage alignment on the EU's political preferences (adoption of the *acquis communautaire*). It is also a lever allowing the replacement of the obsolete partnership and association agreements, signed with the former Soviet republics in the late 1990s, by association agreements.

The EP proposal is based on the idea that the ENP is too indiscriminate and not effective enough. This idea is supported by Poland and Sweden who wish to send a strong message that the eastern neighbour countries of the EU are European neighbours, different from the neighbours to the South, and presented as non-European. Doing so, they assume that membership prospects are real only for the European neighbour countries and not for the others and that issues must be then differentiated according to the concerned neighbourhood. In this context, the status of the EP is then ambiguous and its long-term objectives are unclear. The EP can be then interpreted in two ways: for Poland, it is a new attempt to promote the idea of EU membership of some neighbour countries; for other EU member countries, especially those opposed to further enlargements, it is a way for the EU to propose more than the ENP to the eastern neighbour countries, as a form of compensation to the fact that they have no prospect for membership. The partnership has several weaknesses: First, funding is insufficient in the light of the problems

faced by these countries and the lack of prospect of accession does little to encourage these countries to make substantive and painful reforms. Some governments believe that the partnership remains asymmetrical, since to make partner countries converge to EU norms. Also, some countries, such as Azerbaijan, have enough resources and no need to rely on the European support. Furthermore, technical and political relations of the partnership with other regional initiatives (i.e. Energy Community, Black Sea Synergy Community) are not clear nor are the modalities of the multilateral dimension. Besides, some provisions of the EP, namely in relation with its bilateral dimension, are technically not compatible with the strong and structured relationship that exists between certain EP countries and Russia. For instance, a free trade agreement between EU and Belarus would be quite problematic because this country is already a part of a customs union with Russia, Kazakhstan and Armenia. Lastly, the same remark applies to the migration issue. Indeed, bilateral agreements between EU and neighbour countries in this domain are not relevant in every case because a *de facto* freedom of migration prevails between Russia and many former Soviet countries, among which EP eligible countries.

As such, the EP has produced mixed results. In accordance with the principle of differentiation, progresses vary from one country to the other. The more advanced countries in the process are Georgia, Moldova and Ukraine. They have signed association agreements, including deep and comprehensive free trade agreements which allow signatory countries access to the European market in selected sectors and grant EU investors in those sectors the same regulatory environment in the associated country as in the EU. In addition, citizens of these countries may enter the Schengen area without a visa providing the possession of biometric passports. The relations are weaker with other countries. Armenia has not signed an agreement of association, but the entry of its citizens in the Schengen area is facilitated. Relations with Belarus and the Azerbaijan are more distended.

Since the 2000s, the EP and the ENP have been arousing negative reactions in Russia which sees the political activity of the EU in its regional outskirts (except Baltic) as interference in its sphere of privileged interest. The Russian power wonders if the goal of the partnership is to deprive Russia of its area of influence. In fact, it is true that Russia is almost never mentioned in the framework texts that define the spirit and objectives of the ENP and the EP. This silence raises questions about the objectives and the efficiency of the EP. Is it politically possible to

implement any kind of regional action and territorial cooperation in Eastern Europe and the Caucasus without associating Russia? Is it possible to circumvent the Russian power in strategic domains such as trade, energy, environment, etc.? Moreover, the EP is a regional project that telescopes regional integration projects carried out by the Kremlin in the former soviet space. This is one of the numerous causes of the crisis that takes place in Ukraine in 2013.

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Emergency Medical Service (EMS)

Emergency Medical Service (EMS) means the transport of a patient in life threatening danger to the next appropriate health establishment.

Cross-border cooperation of EMS is increasingly established across borders between the European Union's (EU) member states. A main reason is the rising mobility of people within the EU, which is daily routine, in particular in border regions. Nevertheless, a number of obstacles such as language, billing and communication technology still exist.

Health is a national competence and it is bound to its territory. Therefore, each country has its own EMS system and an ambulance may not cross the border in order to rescue a patient. The ambulance staff is trained according to national standards, which are different in the EU member states. Furthermore, the ambulance staff cannot communicate with their colleagues on the other side of the border because the radio systems are not compatible. Cross-border cooperation of EMS requires hence a legal basis making it possible that ambulances and the paramedic staff can cross and rescue a patient on the other side of the border.

There are different forms of legal bases, which are applied depending on the political system of the concerned states. First, there are bilateral framework agreements. They are applied if at least one state with a centrally organized political system is involved. A bilateral framework agreement can refer to cooperation between two states in the health sector in general (e.g. Germany-France) or it can apply specifically to cross-border cooperation in EMS (Germany-Poland, Germany-Czech Republic). Second, there are also specific conventions on cross-border cooperation in EMS. Such a convention is focused on a more regional level and refers either to a specific territory (e.g. Bavaria and the neighbouring Czech districts) or to a specific field of health care (cardiology, paediatric care, emergency supply for a specific region during a specific time, air rescue etc.). It may be based on a bilateral framework agreement in case it exists. Since it puts cross-border EMS cooperation in practice and contains specific rules about staff, drugs, vehicles, billing etc., it is required to authorize ambulances to cross the border using their flashing and siren as well as being equipped with their standard medical equipment, which underlies different laws in each country. It also mutually recognizes the professional qualification of the emergency staff and their professional competences. Third, there may also be specific contracts between EMS

providers and health insurances in order to assure the EMS supply for the border region (e.g. Germany-Luxembourg).

In the course of the EU Interreg-programs, a number of projects are currently being generated in the border regions which aim to find sustainable solutions for practical obstacles (language, technology etc.) for implementing the cross-border cooperation of EMS in practice. Cross-border EMS remains a challenge for the future. It has therefore to be seen as a dynamic process containing the analysis on needs and possibilities from a cross-border perspective, the work on the legal framework as well as the implementation and maintenance of existing cross-border EMS.

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Employment

In Europe, about two million people work in a different country to the one in which they live. This practice of cross-border commuting in Europe has seen a huge growth, increasing three-fold since 1999, and France represents the primary European country of residence for cross-border commuters.

These flows are simultaneously the manifestation of the many interactions at borders, as well as one of the results of differences due to the borders. The development of cross-border work is actually linked to the economic and social dynamics on both sides of the borders as well as differentials such as in property prices or wages.

Cross-border commuting is a growing phenomenon and it raises many issues. The first is a methodological one: How can we define cross-border work? Indeed, here the national and supranational legislations overlap. In regards to social security, the European regulation uses a temporal criterion to define cross-border workers which stipulates at least a weekly round-trip between two member States. From a fiscal point of view, bilateral conventions give a spatial definition of cross-border work and to the country where the taxes have to be paid, either the country of residence or the country of work. For example, the convention between France and Germany defines the status of fiscal cross-border commuter according to a geographical area. In this case, the taxes will be paid in the country of residence. Finally, at the national level, national regulations govern employment such as work conditions and schedules.

Theoretically, the analysis of employment in a cross-border context cannot be limited to an analysis in terms of only supply and demand, because context, practices, regulations and institutions also contribute to the rise of cross-border work. The development of cross-border work is indeed the result of three complementary processes embedded in this context. The first one is a socio-historical process; crossing a border to work is an ancient, social phenomenon which engenders habits and cross-border linkages. The second process is economic; liberalisation of trade exchanges reinforces relationships between countries. Finally, the third process is political; European construction from the 1950's with the European Coal and Steel Community (ECSC), then the European Economic Community (EEC) and finally the European Union (EU) and the Schengen area provide a frame for the free movement of workers.

The economic, social, and territorial impacts of cross-border work are numerous. Cross-border employment requires a consideration of the balance between needs of workers and qualifications from both sides of the border, stabilisation of populations in residential areas with high unemployment rates, local impact of the higher buying power of cross-border commuters, among others. Adverse effects of the development of cross-border work also exist such as, the dissociation between the country where education takes place and the one where people work, and draining of highly qualified people due to the difference of wages.

Border regions constitute a good place to analyse European integration. By giving access to more numerous and diverse supplies and demands, the cross-border context increases opportunities. The status of cross-border worker and the numerous rules or conventions that try to erase borders between countries increase cross-border mobilities. Nevertheless, borders remain markers of national sovereignty. The juxtaposition of different national regulations, as in the case of cross-border temporary work, can create complex situations or opportunistic practices using lawfully the wage or labour cost differences between countries.

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Ems Dollart Region*

The Ems Dollart Region is one of the oldest Euroregions located at the northern part of the Dutch-German border area. Its territory consists of 20166 km² with about 2.8 million inhabitants. Cross-border cooperation in this area got an official status in 1977 based on both a Dutch and a German legal form, the “stitching” association. However, since 1997, its juridical foundation rests on the Dutch-German Treaty of Anholt, which means that public bodies can be member of the Ems Dollart Region as a public sector entity recognized by the Dutch and the German state. As such, the Ems Dollart Region revolves around 100 members located in the two provinces of Groningen and Drenthe on the Dutch side of the border. On the German side, the *Landkreis* Emsland as well as the cultural region Ostfriesland (with its *Landkreise* Leer, Wittmund, Aurich and the *kreisfreie Stadt* Emden) are part of it. Moreover, the *Landkreise* Friesland and Cloppenburg are part of the Ems Dollart Region as well.

The area shares some historical characteristics which favour cooperation across the border. Cultural and linguistic ties, especially between Groningen and Ostfriesland, were stimulated by exchanges between secondary school students from the 1950s onwards. These exchanges helped to overcome the atmosphere of distrust caused by the Second World War and the borderland annexation claims of the Dutch government thereafter. The regional economy on both sides of the border suffered from its peripheral position with regard to the national centres of economic and political power. This problem stimulated during the 1950s and 1960s the exchange of knowledge between the chambers of commerce in Groningen and Ostfriesland, among other economic interest organisations. A cross-border development strategy, however, was hindered by the main instruments of regional policies. At both sides of the border, authorities tried to attract labour intensive industries with the help of subsidies and infrastructure, thus stimulating a zero-sum game between the Dutch and the Germans.

Ideology combined with new economic possibilities resolved this stalemate. Ideology was added by students from the University of Groningen, who were also members of the European Movement. They organised a conference in 1971 and chaired a working group that

* For the map, see article ‘Euregio (Gronau)’.

eventually led to the founding of Ems Dollart Region in 1977. European subsidies, especially from the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF), worked like a classic “carrot” incentive. In the 1980s, cross-border cooperation raised its impact because of post-industrial and endogenous development ideas, resulting in support for the Ems Dollart Region from the national ministries of Economic Affairs. Cross-border development plans were also published. Once the Interreg initiative was launched in 1990, the Ems Dollart Region acted as the official location from which the regional program management of Interreg operates. It profited strongly from the networks and the ideas that were developed before. Interreg gave the organisation a boost in terms of project subsidies and employees. It changed headquarters from the former customs office in the Groninger border town Bad Nieuweschans to a new building, which was completed in 2002 in the same village.

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Energy

The energy sector has experienced profound transformations in the last decades. The liberalization of energy markets and their progressive integration have been accompanied by the development of technical and regulatory authorities, deepening and structuring cross-border cooperation for the proper functioning of a European Energy Union.

The application of the new set of rules is carefully overseen by National Regulatory Authorities (NRAs) in every member states. They must ensure the proper functioning of the market, especially regarding competition rules and the role of Transmission System Operators (TSOs), which must grant non-discriminatory and transparent network access to all market participants. The necessary coordination of the NRAs as well as the uniform application of European Union (EU) energy market rules called for the creation of the Agency for the Cooperation of Energy Regulators (ACER). ACER advises the European Commission and coordinates the technical conditions needed to regulate the cross-border flow of energy. This multilevel governance has resulted in a form of “centralized cooperation” around the EU Commission and ACER.

A more horizontal form of cross-border cooperation has also emerged to ensure the effective integration of an EU energy market. Informal cooperation, such as EU-wide fora on specific topics involving all the stakeholders of the energy sector, has emerged but did not result in regulatory convergence. The Regulation 714/2009 on conditions for access to the network for cross-border exchanges in electricity foresaw the creation of a European Network of TSOs (ENTSO) in the gas and electricity sectors, which task has been to harmonize technical standards of national energy systems to allow the free flow of energy across borders. These standards are negotiated by private actors, directly implicated in cross-border cooperation. Moreover, energy exchanges beyond national borders are encouraged by the European Commission, as an effective solution to energy security issues. It is both an opportunity and a requirement for cross-border cooperation between member states.

The treaty on the functioning of the EU requires member states to act in the field of energy “in a spirit of solidarity”. It is applied in the 2017 Regulation on security of gas supply, which, introduces a solidarity mechanism between member states pertaining to a relevant and interconnected region. In the electricity sector, Commission’s proposal for a new Regulation on the internal electricity market of

2016 set up Regional Operational Centres, whose tasks essentially rely on cross-border cooperation. There, cross-border cooperation serves as a step towards an increased integration at a regional level by European solidarity mechanisms across borders. The revised electricity directive on the internal electricity market introduces the possibility to organise “local energy communities” that can operate on a transnational basis, thus reinforcing cross-border cooperation at different levels.

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Environment

How to define the notion of the environment in relation with transnational cooperation? Its scientific definition, which refers to “biophysical realities” considered as external to humans and societies but interacting with them, is very broad. Nevertheless, a generally accepted definition has progressively been developed in a pragmatic way. In fact, political and civic action, along with programmes and dedicated organisations, have gradually defined, amongst others, what falls within the domain of the environment. A first way of considering the environment in cross-border cooperation would be to identify the objects that are classified under its name. A convergence appears around some major categories: the natural environment and resources, risks, landscapes, climate change, which are defined through the objectives of protection, prevention, management and/or sustainability. European cooperation policies integrate them almost systematically. Environmental issues are included in all cross-border programmes and are considered a priority within interregional cooperation.

But beyond the contents attributed to it, the environment can primarily be considered as a political tool for the construction of cross-border spaces. In fact, it plays an active role in three main ways: the ideal dimension of values, the political dimension of the scope of action, and the geographical dimension of spatial continuity.

First of all, the ideological values attributed to the environment give it a strong symbolic significance. “Environment knows no borders” is a frequently brandished slogan, suggesting that biophysical realities must prevail over artificial political boundaries. The “Peace Parks” bears witness to this, these cross-border protection areas are considered as a lever of peace-making processes thus mobilising the redemptive value of nature. While they have been developed in southern Africa as part of the post-apartheid dynamics, one of the most recent European projects concerns the Balkans, aiming to “rise above the politics that have plagued the region”.

Secondly, the environment constitutes a support for political constructions insofar as it leads to redefining relevant spaces and scales of cross-border cooperation. It brings out new commons and highlights interdependencies within or between ecological systems. Many cross-border cooperation projects are thus defined in terms of ecosystems shared by several countries, to the point of producing new perimeters of transnational policies. The new macro-regions such as the Baltic, Danube,

Adriatic, Alpine Arc, are thus defined on the basis of the perimeter of large natural areas. In this sense, the environment leads to the configuration of spaces of cooperation on a basis close to that of “bio-regions”.

Finally, the use of the environment as a political tool can contribute to the relative disappearance of borderlines. This is the case of active support of cross-border ecological continuities. The creation of natural parks, biodiversity corridors, “green” and “blue” belts allows the circulation of species, from the local level to even continental scales, as witnessed by the “European Green Belt”. The spatial continuity of such areas itself generates sharing in governance, harmonization of regulations, knowledge transfer and, more generally, the elaboration of a common culture of nature.

However, environmental consensus can be difficult to implement. From a political point of view, local interests (in the exploitation of resources for example) or national political and administrative systems (in the organisation of cooperation) can hinder the emergence of the environment as a common good. From a cognitive point of view, the capacity of the environment to build cross-border commons is based on culturally and socially constructed representations. When a nation state affirmed itself, natural borders, for example, were the model of good borders. Cross-border projects are always the expression of power relations, and sometimes reveal unequal capacities to define the norms and values of the “good” environment. Poorly regulated cooperation can thus conceal forms of cultural domination.

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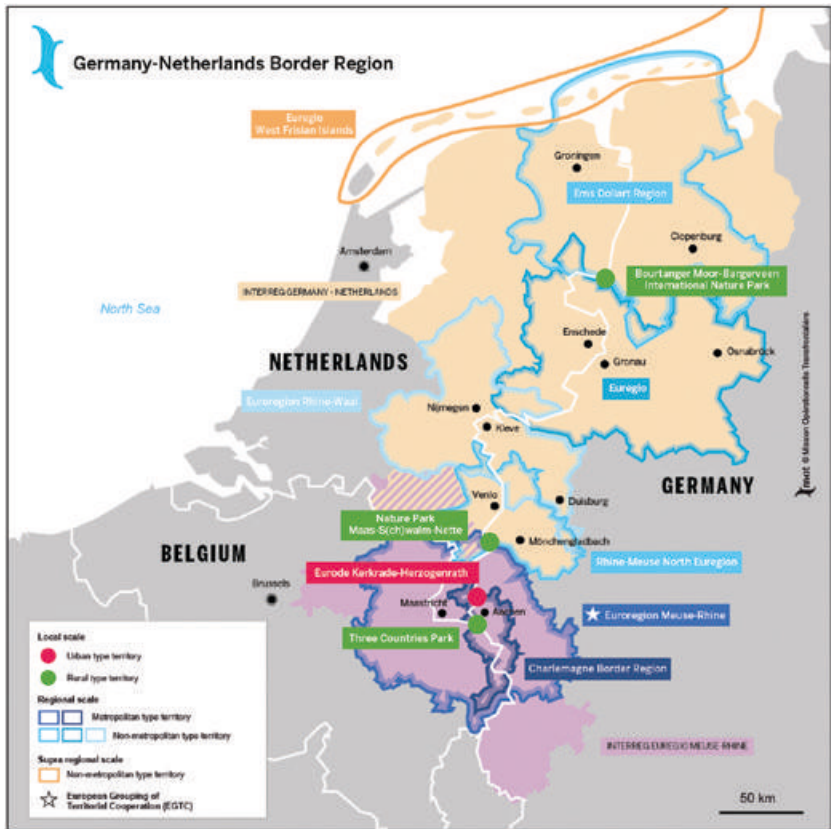
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Euregio (Gronau)



The Euregio in Gronau is a Dutch-German joint body that covers, on the German side, parts of the Federal *Land* of Lower Saxony (the rural district of the County of Bentheim, the urban district of Osnabrück and parts of the Emsland) together with parts of the Federal *Land* of North Rhine-Westphalia (Münsterland) and, on the Dutch side, the districts of Twente and Achterhoek with sections of Noordoost-Overijssel and Zuidoost-Drenthe. It includes 129 towns, communities, and Waterschappen (water boards)—104 on the German side and 25 on the Dutch side. Euregio is located between the major conurbations of the Rhine-Ruhr area and the Dutch Randstad area. The local economic

structure is characterised by agriculture and a preponderance of small and medium-sized companies, plus cross-border tourism.

The Dutch-German border arose in medieval times, even though there was uncertainty as to where exactly it lay until the 18th century. The independence of the Netherlands in 1648 finally defined the territorial boundaries, which became the national border between Germany and the Netherlands upon the founding of the German Reich in 1871. However, business interlinking and exchanges did not decrease due to the economic mono-structure of the textile industry in the region. A decomposition of the region only arose as a result of the conflicts of the 20th century and the mutual resentment of the population, which were only overcome incrementally after the Second World War.

Euregio was founded in 1958 in the German town of Gronau making it the oldest cross-border association. It was created as a joint-initiative between the communities, urban areas and rural districts on both sides of the border. In 1971, the first cross-border commission with its own budgeting authority was set up – the so-called Mozer commission named after its initiator, the German-Dutch politician Hans Mozer – the aim of which was bringing together people on both sides of the border, both in social and cultural terms. This was followed by committees for the economy, the labour market and spatial development. An organisation structure was set up in parallel, a cross-border parliament was installed in 1978 in the form of the Euregio Council and a joint business office was set up in Gronau in 1985.

Euregio has not only belonged to the founding members of the Association of European Border Regions (AEBR) since 1971, but it was the model for cross-border collaboration at the Dutch-German border and other areas. However, up until today, the Euregio name without any geographical indicators is reserved for this first Dutch-German Euregio between the Rhine, Ems, and Ijssel.

Since its very beginning, Euregio has been involved in the Interreg program. Its cross-border regional program for action from 1987 became the blueprint for the Interreg program of the European Community. Euregio organises the management and administration of the Interreg funds for the Euregios in the Dutch-German border area. The ambitious goal of Euregio is to integrate the region into “one” coverage area, through an ever-increasing degree of interlinking at the economic, political, social, and cultural levels, in which the border no longer has a separating effect.

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EuRegion West/Nyugat Pannonia*

The area of the EuRegion West/Nyugat Pannonia was divided by the Treaty of Trianon after the First World War and later by the Iron Curtain. Cross-border relations and contacts between Austria and Hungary emerged even before the official foundation of the Euroregion. The first cross-border contacts were implemented in the 1980s between the Austrian province Burgenland and the Hungarian counties Győr-Moson-Sopron and Vas. A further important step was taken when the Cross-Border Regional Council was established in 1992 which could be seen as a kind of predecessor to the Euroregion. The mandate of the Council lasted until 1998, whereafter the participants decided that cross-border cooperation should be lifted to a higher institutionalized level. Subsequently, the agreement establishing the EuRegio West/Nyugat Pannonia was signed in 1998 in Eisenstadt, the capital of Burgenland and the Euroregion was identified as the main initiator and promoter of cross-border cooperation. The contemporary size of the Euroregion has been achieved in 1999, when the third Hungarian county, Zala, also joined the cooperation. As such, every region of Western Transdanubia is now involved.

This cooperation involves four regions from two European Union (EU) member states, Győr-Moson-Sopron County, Burgenland, Zala County and Vas County. With approximately 986 000 citizens, the Hungarian part of the Euroregion represents a significantly bigger population (around 77 %) than the Austrian part (292 000 citizens, around 23 %). Moreover, the most important towns are located on the Hungarian side, while tGyőr-Moson-Sopron County and Burgenland have the biggest geographical area, whereas the biggest number of settlements can be found in the counties Zala and Vas.

The founding members of the Euroregion identified their main goal as the elaboration of a long-term development program and projects for the EuRegio West/Nyugat Pannonia, focusing on common access to EU funding. The EuRegion underlines the following areas as its main targets for cross-border activities: innovative rural development; recreation and wellness (tourism has significant potential in the area); cultural heritage and cooperation which can support regional economic development; and

* For the map, see article 'Centroe Territory Region'.

the establishment of clusters which may link the existing potentials and support economic interactions. Simply put, the EuRegio West/Nyugat Pannonia aims at deepening and developing cross-border cooperation through expertise and joint coordination of efforts, aims and interests of the partners.

One of its successful projects was the Pannonian competence centre for fire brigades (*Pannonisches Feuerwehrkompetenzzentrum*), implemented between 2000 and 2006. In the past, there had indeed been coordination difficulties between the Hungarian's and the Burgenland's fire brigades, which were mainly fueled by differences in fire-fighting equipment, alarm and deployment plans as well as in training levels. The project therefore aimed at reducing these differences through coordination, simulations and training. Another project aimed at the development of an international health tourism destination. Both projects were implemented within the frames of the Interreg III A program.

It is important to underline that the Euroregion has not been performing any activity for years now, because Burgenland has withdrawn from cooperation within the Euroregion framework. As such, nowadays cross-border cooperation has been functioning between the regions, but not under the banner of the Euroregion.

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EuroAirport Basel-Mulhouse-Freiburg*

Situated on French territory, less than 4 km from the French-Swiss border, EuroAirport is one of the few examples of binational airports in the world. Initially baptised Basel-Mulhouse, it only took the name EuroAirport Basel-Mulhouse-Freiburg in 1987 to underline the proximity of three cities belonging to three different countries. However, the binational character of the airport predates the construction of the Single European Sky in the 2000s, which involves a joint management of air traffic on the European level.

The airport is considered a symbol of French-Swiss cooperation. Shortly after the end of the Second World War, the cantonal authorities in Basel decided to build an airport to meet new traffic requirements. As it was difficult to find a site large enough on Swiss territory and close to the city, the local authorities considered cooperating with the French authorities. An international agreement signed in 1949 created an institution under public international law. The infrastructure was built on French territory according to the following rules: the French state would provide the land for equipment and access infrastructure, while the Helvetic Confederation would finance the operations. This distribution of roles was still in force when the airport was expanded in 1970 and 2002, and when the old terminal was refurbished in 2012. The specificity of the equipment is that it is managed jointly by the French and Swiss authorities. The board of directors is composed of an equal number of members of the two states (8 for each); its President is French, but the General Director is Swiss. Two German observers have been involved since 1987: because the German border is so close, the catchment area is trinational. Concretely, the binational status means that the terminal is divided into two sectors, with custom control between the two. The Swiss part could be acceded by a customs-bonded road without any connexion to the French network, which could be used by private cars and public transportation from and to Basel. The integration of Switzerland into the Schengen area in 2008 made it easier to manage the terminal and resulted in a reduction of systematic controls for passengers transiting from one zone to another.

* For the map, see article 'Eurodistrict Strasbourg-Ortenau'.

Companies based in each of the two national areas are subject to different national laws. The companies with high added value are mostly situated in the Swiss part, which offers more favourable tax conditions than France. A decision by the French Supreme Court, the *Cour de cassation*, contesting the application of Swiss law to the businesses implanted round the airport, has crystallised the relations between the public authorities of the two countries. Besides, some French municipalities hosting those businesses have long pleaded the shortfall caused by the non-payment of business tax to the French tax authorities. The situation became extremely tense when the French state tried to denounce the 1949 international convention which included a fiscal dimension. A new tax agreement was signed in 2017, guaranteeing the application of Swiss law in the Swiss zone and the maintenance of the Value Added Tax (VAT) rate, while dividing corporate income tax equally between the two states.

Noise pollution is another source of tensions. After taking off, the planes make a turn so as to avoid flying over the densely populated Swiss part of the conurbation. The inhabitants of neighbouring French municipalities therefore have a feeling that the international border introduces a discriminatory factor between the French and Swiss parts of the conurbation.

In spite of those tensions, the airport is a development issue for the Upper Rhine, and in particular for the Basel metropolis which is in competition with Zurich on the Swiss territory. The expansion of the airport can be noticed in terms of traffic: its growth was uninterrupted between 2010 and 2019, passing from 4.1 million to about 9 million. The enhanced accessibility of the airport and the extension of its catchment area have prompted the authorities to contemplate diverting the Basel-Mulhouse railway on several hundred metres so as to serve the terminal. The plans for this new link with the airport have a cross-border dimension since it is part of a regional railway system round the Basel conurbation. Amounting to 250 million euros, the project should be completed by 2028; the public inquiry will start in 2020.

EuroAirport appears as the archetypal cross-border equipment, characterised by an intense and continuous institutional cooperation, but it leads to local tensions, which have an impact on bilateral relations. In spite of difficulties, this jointly managed airport is a model for other cross-border regions where a competition opposes various platforms situated on either side of the border.

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Eurocities on the Spanish-Portuguese Border



Institutionalised cross-border cooperation at the local level on the Spanish-Portuguese border has started some years later than at the regional level. Some multi-lateral agreements have been signed between local and/or regional territorial authorities since 2000, such as the “cross-border association of municipalities of the ‘dry border’”, which has been integrated by 20 members, Ciudad Rodrigo (Spain) and Almeida (Portugal) being the two main municipalities. In some cases, bilateral agreements were signed, such as the Working Community Évora-Mérida, although these are not bordering localities. In this regard, it is worth highlighting the intense process of consolidating local agreements making use of the Eurocity label since 2007.

The first Eurocity was created along the Galician-Northern Portugal border in 2007, between Chaves (Portugal) and Verín (Galicia); since 2013, it has become a European Grouping of Territorial Cooperation (EGTC). This Eurocity is situated on the so-called dry Galician-Portuguese border, which consists of the Eastern section of the Galician-Portuguese border – an inland, rural and depopulated area. In fact, this Chaves-Verín association is the only area that could be defined as urban in this “dry Galician-Portuguese border” area. In any case, the municipality of Chaves has 40 672 inhabitants (22 363 in the urban agglomeration) and Verín 13 889 (10 007 in the urban agglomeration) and their Centres are separated by 22 km (the border area itself is mainly rural). This Eurocity project has managed three Interreg projects and has developed different initiatives related to culture (common cultural agenda), education, sports, transport and tourism.

The “Eurocitizen card” should also be highlighted. It allows inhabitants from Chaves and Verín to use some public services (libraries and museums, for example) and enjoy discounts in shops on both sides of the border. Although the population has actively participated in the common activities, it is still felt that more integrated policies regarding mobility, transport, infrastructures and health are needed. These needs are behind the idea of extending cooperation to the surrounding municipalities: the CIM Alto Tâmega (Inter-municipalities community of the Alto Tâmega), and the Mancomunidade de Concellos da Comarca de Verín (Grouping of municipalities of the District of Verín). However, if this happens, with 13 municipalities, could it be still possible to refer to Chaves-Verín as a Eurocity?

Regardless, Chaves-Verín has been an example which has inspired the creation of other Eurocities both on the Galician-Northern Portugal borderline and also on the rest of the Spanish-Portugal border. On the Galician-Northern Portugal border, three Eurocities were created: Tui-Valença (2012), Salvaterra-Monção (2017) and Tomiño-Vila Nova de Cerveira (2018). These three projects are located on the so-called humid border around the Miño/Minho river (“humid” is because it is fluvial). The “humid border” area is a populated and economically active region influenced by the City of Vigo (Galicia), pertaining to the main urban axis from Lisbon (Portugal) to Ferrol (Galicia) linking the main cities located in the Atlantic coast of the Iberian Peninsula: Aveiro, Porto, Vigo, A Coruña, etc. Portuguese municipalities gathered around different associations have been cooperating with the Galician ones through

the intermediation of the Pontevedra Provincial Council; firstly, with the Uniminho agreement and more recently thanks to the new River Minho EGTC (2018). In fact, this EGTC pretends to be the only one in this border area, thus other agreements such as Eurocities would be included under the umbrella of the larger River Minho EGTC without creating new legal structures. If this is eventually the outcome and the Chaves-Verín Eurocity extends beyond the current two municipalities, the resulting map would be, roughly speaking one EGTC for each sector of the Galician-Portuguese border: the “humid border” and the “dry border”.

Tui (16 860 inhabitants) and Valença do Minho (13 804 inhabitants) have historically been connected through the only bridge crossing the Miño/Minho river until the 1990s. Since then, the EU funds have helped to build more crossings over the river. In 1993, a new bridge between Tui and Valença was opened linking the motorways of Portugal (A-3, Porto-boundary) and Galicia (AP-9, Ferrol-boundary) and it now accounts for almost 50 % of total Spanish-Portuguese border crossings. The cooperation agreement creating the Eurocity Tui-Valença was signed in 2012 and common projects are for the moment funded by its own resources, such as shared use of services as the swimming pool in Valença or the edition of a common touristic guide.

Cooperation between Tomiño in Galicia (13 585 inhabitants) and the Portuguese municipality of Vila Nova de Cerveira (9110 inhabitants) started as early as in 1985, with the symbolic signature of a “Friendship Agreement”. In 2004, the bridge linking both villages was built and, ten years later, a reformed agreement was signed, accompanied by a strategic agenda, which technically marked the beginning of cooperation. An Interreg project (2015–2019) sought to develop the content of the agenda dealing with the Minho river as a resource to strengthen cooperation, mobility issues and sustainable development, shared use of public services and economic development. In 2016, participatory budgeting dealing with three areas (culture, education and social action) was developed with common projects having partners from both sides of the border being proposed and then allowing for local people to cast a vote to choose a preferred project. Although this cross-border cooperation area shows strong bonds, it may not be known due to the fact that the branding Eurocity concept has not been used until 2018.

The last Eurocity created on the Portuguese-Galician border is the Eurocity Monção-Salvaterra (18 836 inhabitants the former; 9657 the

latter). Similarly, the 20th anniversary of the bridge construction linking both villages (dated in 1995) was used to sign a cooperation agreement under the name of Eurocity. Since 2017, the headquarters of the Eurocity are located in the former Portuguese border post, mirroring the 2012 Chaves-Verín headquarters situated in the former Spanish border post.

If we look to the Southern portion of the Spanish-Portuguese border we find a context similar to the Minho river: the Guadiana river. In this similarly active economic area, with a strong tertiary sector (trade and tourism) the Eurocity Ayamonte-Vila Real de Santo António-Castro Marim was created in 2013. The agreement was signed in January by the Spanish municipality of Ayamonte (20 714 inhabitants) and the Portuguese municipality of Vila Real de Santo António (19 056 inhabitants). Four months later, Castro Marim (6,543 inhabitants), also in Portugal, joined the Eurocity. Since the construction of the international bridge over the Guadiana in 1991 (highway A-49 in Spain, A-22 in Portugal), this is the second busiest border crossings point on the whole border. Cross-border relations exist far before the Eurocity creation, but this has prompted a common agenda to strengthen links through a technical team that gathers weekly. The project has survived with own resources until 2017, where an Interreg project was granted to the Eurocity and in April 2018, the Guadiana Eurocity, EGTC was created.

Furthermore, on the central section of the Spanish-Portuguese border, just located on the highway (A-5 in Spain, A-6 in Portugal) that connects Madrid and Lisbon, the Eurocity Elvas-Badajoz was created in 2013 and the Portuguese municipality of Campo Maior joined the project in 2015. This is an uneven Eurocity, given that Badajoz is the most important village in Extremadura, with 150 543 inhabitants (127 621 in the urban agglomeration) and Elvas (22 245 inhabitants) and Campo Maior (8365 inhabitants) are much smaller. In fact, Badajoz is concentrating economic activities in the area (for example via new shopping malls) which may end up by a strongly decreasing commercial activity in Elvas. The whole Eastern Portuguese Alentejo is considered functionally dependent on Badajoz. A 2014–2019 Interreg project is running in order to strengthen the capacity building of the Eurocity.

In general terms, these Eurocity projects (with the exception of Badajoz) refer to small urban centres, as the big cities in Spain and Portugal are not located near the border. Four out of six Eurocities are located on the two more active stretches of the whole boundary: the

Miño/Minho and the Guadiana river. The other two correspond with two areas of the “dry border”. In total, four out of six Eurocities correspond to the Galician-Portuguese border, showing the relevance given to cross-border cooperation in this area. In regards to implemented projects, these are mainly related to sport, culture, music and, most significantly, tourism. However, mainly on account of the enduring legal asymmetries and different administrative structures and traditions between European Union (EU) members, strong policies regarding spatial planning (including urbanism), transport and health are still missing. If local cooperation seeks to genuinely overcome local people problems, these latter issues should be seriously addressed by the EU, as well as national, regional and local territorial authorities.

At the local level, it is also worth mentioning the EGTC Duero-Douro, created in 2009, as it is an example of a cross-border structure based on local governments: around 200 public entities are represented in the EGTC, belonging to the Spanish provinces/ Nomenclature of Territorial Units for Statistics (NUTS)³ of Salamanca and Zamora and to the Portuguese NUTS 3 Trás-ós-Montes, Douro and Beira/Serra da Estrela. This EGTC, apart from the mainstream projects related to tourism or culture has been able to develop innovative initiatives in other fields. The project Efi-Douro can be highlighted: a cooperative initiative aiming to supply energy to its members at a low cost and without profit margins.

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Eurocity Guben-Gubin*

The Eurocity Guben-Gubin is a European town-twinning project and an urban area located in the German-Polish border region, separated by the Neisse river. More precisely, the Eurocity is situated in Lower Lusatia (Niederlausitz/Łużyce Dolne) in the Federal German state Brandenburg and the Lubusz Voivodeship in Poland. It is part of the German-Polish Euroregion Spree-Neiße-Bober/ Sprewa-Nysa-Bóbr. The twin city has been proclaimed as Eurocity in 1998.

Prior to the town twinning, this city experienced a turbulent history. The city had been one, until the end of the Second World War after which it was divided. The Oder Neisse border was recognized by the German Democratic Republic (GDR) in 1950 and by the Federal Republic of Germany (FRG) in 1990. In comparison with other European twin cities within the German-Polish border area Frankfurt (Oder)- Słubice and Görlitz-Zgorzelec, the historical centre in the double city Guben-Gubin is located on the Polish side of the border.

The city is embedded in a structurally weak region. This has been especially true for the German side of the city which has experienced depopulation, demographic changes and a high rate of unemployment. Its population decreased from 37 000 in 1985 to 17 500 in 2017. The Polish side of the city shows similar trends regarding the size of its population. Nevertheless, and especially in the 1990's, the cityscape and urban development showed a disparate image. Against this backdrop, in the year of 1998, both city administrations proclaimed the Eurocity of Guben-Gubin as a model project, i.e. a joint project by both town halls which builds on regular meetings of the joint commission of the Eurocity. In this context, they developed a spatial structural plan as a part of it.

When the European Union (EU) began funding cross-border cooperation during the 1990s, the structural plan for Guben-Gubin was further funded by Interreg funds. The structural plan contributed to an urban development framework for the amalgamation of the separated cities of Guben and Gubin, as well as the creation of a unitary townscape through joint planning and management. Moreover, the structural plan is one of six initiatives of the model project Eurocity Guben-Gubin that

* For the map, see article 'Euroregion Pomerania'.

comprehensively should contribute to the compulsory landscape, surface area, transport and infrastructure planning.

As a main achievement of cross-border functional cooperation in the field of public services, the installation of a joint sewage treatment plant can be named. This facility has been built on the Polish side, under Polish law. Besides this concrete measure and “product” in the field of collaboration in trans-border politics, cross-border cooperation can be considered as a symbolic form of cooperation rather than a universal and vivid form of daily cooperation.

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Eurodistrict (Forms)

The term Eurodistrict was used for the first time in a Franco-German cross-border context in a declaration on the occasion of the 40th anniversary of the Elysée Treaty on 22 January 2003. The idea was the “creation of a well-served Strasbourg-Kehl Eurodistrict to explore new forms of cooperation and welcome European institutions.” The declaration did not give any definition or reference to any cross-border and/or European legal form. However, in view of the actions undertaken at the time on the Strasbourg-Ortenau cooperation area, it is clearly a matter of territorial governance with a European symbolism (a similarity with “Districts” in the United States (US) was mentioned).

It was with the creation of the European Grouping of Territorial Cooperation (EGTC) in 2006 that the Strasbourg-Ortenau Eurodistrict found a legal basis. EGTCs are legal entities created to facilitate cross-border, transnational or interregional cooperation within the European Union (EU).

In reality, Eurodistricts can take different legal forms such as Local Groupings of Cross-Border Cooperation (LGCC), EGTCs, associations or working communities without legal personality or financial autonomy. However, it appears that on the Franco-German border, the EGTC has been favoured. Of the five existing Eurodistricts, four have an EGTC-type legal form: Strasbourg-Ortenau (2005), Sarre-Moselle (2010), Palatinat Alsace Mittlerer Oberhein Nord Alsace (PAMINA) (2016), and Freiburg-Centre-Sud Alsace (2020), while the fifth, the Trinational Eurodistrict of Basel (TEB) with Swiss participation (2007), has an associative form.

Only two Eurodistricts are located on other borders, the Franco-Spanish border (Eurodistrict of the Catalan Cross-Border Area) and the Italian-Montenegrin-Albanian border (South Adriatic Eurodistrict). The Department of the Pyrenees-Orientales and the Generalitat of Catalunya have been working together for many years to harmonise and structure the Catalan cross-border area. Taking the example of the PAMINA cooperation since 2003 and referring to the declaration of the 40th anniversary of the Treaty of Elysée on 22 January 2003, the creation of the Eurodistrict of the Catalan Cross-border Area has thus been launched with the shared ambition of eventually obtaining a genuine common legal structure.

The Strasbourg-Ortenau Eurodistrict has a special feature compared to the other Eurodistricts, as it counts the French State among its members. In view of the existing Eurodistricts, their composition and functioning, it can finally be considered that this is not a question of cooperation between agglomerations or local or regional authorities, but that the Eurodistrict, as an institution, is the result of a longstanding cooperation which has first and foremost proved its worth through project partnerships. Taking also into account the territorial scales of the Eurodistricts, we can see that they are administrative entities whose geographical perimeter allows optimal citizen proximity, with the head office being less than an hour's drive away. These findings clearly distinguish between Eurodistricts, which are administrative entities smaller than the regional level, and Euroregions which often radiate on larger territorial scales.

It should be noted that Eurodistricts do not exist as a legal tool in French, German, and European legislation. They are not mentioned in the White Paper on Diplomacy and Territories published in 2017 by the French Ministry of Foreign Affairs, which contains 21 proposals for local and regional authorities. However, they are cited at the Franco-German level in the 2017 Hambach Declaration signed by the two governments and are mentioned twice in the revised Elysée Treaty, the Treaty of Aachen, signed on 22 January 2019. Thus, Chapter 4 dealing with Regional and Cross-Border Cooperation expressly mentions Eurodistricts. By underlining the intention “to facilitate the removal of obstacles in border regions with a view to implementing cross-border projects and to simplify the daily lives of people living in border regions”, Art. 13 (2) stipulates that, “to this end (...) the two countries shall provide local authorities in border regions and cross-border entities such as Eurodistricts with appropriate competences, dedicated resources and accelerated procedures to overcome obstacles to the implementation of cross-border projects, in particular projects in the economic, social, environmental, health, energy and transport fields”. (Art. 14) then follows on recommending that “the two countries shall establish a cross-border cooperation committee comprising such stakeholders as national, regional and local authorities, parliaments and cross-border entities such as eurodistricts and, where necessary, the euroregions concerned.”

Finally, it should be noted that Eurodistricts do not have their own competences, the European EGTC regulation, French and German law do not allow for a transfer of competencies to the EGTCs (i.e., to the Eurodistricts). The proposal of 22 January 2018, in which both

assemblies propose that “the necessary powers belonging to the Länder or Regions should also be transferred mutatis mutandis to the Eurodistricts”, raises two issues: it leads to a change in law and it raises the problem of the powers of French regions, which cannot be assimilated to those of German Länder. The concept of delegation of autonomous powers by governments remains to be studied at the implementation level.

Finally, the EGTC which is governed by a European regulation and which has its headquarters in France (this is the case of all Eurodistricts established as EGTCs on the French-German border) is attached to the open mixed association regime in French legislation, for the provisions which are not provided for in the regulation nor in the convention and the statutes. The open mixed associations are legal bodies under public law, governed by Art. L. 5721–1 to L. 5722–9 of the General Code of Local Authorities.

In conclusion, it can be said that the term Eurodistrict is an appropriate term for administrative cross-border cooperation, the main purpose of which is to facilitate and increase cross-border cooperation for the sustainable and balanced development of a small reference territory, to facilitate the daily life of the inhabitants, whatever the subject concerned. Today, the EGTC is the preferred legal instrument for giving Eurodistricts governance.

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Eurodistrict of Catalan Cross-Border Space*

The cross-border Catalan space is made up of the Pyrénées-Orientales French department and the counties in the Girona province, bringing together 447 municipalities and 13 historic regions on either side of the border. It was founded through the political will of elected representatives from north and south of the border in 2006.

The area covers 10 246 km² and has over 1 200 000 inhabitants. The creation of this space by public authorities on either side of the border is the result of a desire to harmonise and structure this cross-border area through the implementation of shared cooperation strategies. The ultimate goal of this approach was to create a Eurodistrict, in order to offer further funding and resources to encourage new cooperation projects to emerge. It legitimised the existence of the cross-border Catalan space in both political and legal terms, while receiving greater influence and European support.

The Eurodistrict continues to be developed. Piloted by the General Council of the Pyrénées-Orientales and the Regional Government of Catalonia, it should make it easier to establish harmonisation and structuring processes within the Cross-border Catalan Space. Moreover, the technical and financial support offered by this type of cross-border organisation should allow more ambitious cooperation projects to emerge. It is worth highlighting the strong links between the north and the south of the Pyrenees, which are rooted in Catalan language and culture. In November 2010, twenty institutions in the Eurodistrict approved the statutes of a future European Grouping of Territorial Cooperation (EGTC), the “Eurodistrict of Cross-border Catalan Space”, with the objective of developing a common cross-border strategy within the Catalan space. But the lack of formal constitution restricts the objectives of a shared development and structuring strategy for the shared living space in the Eurodistrict.

However, the establishment of a cross-border Micro Project Fund aims to respond to such political decisions by supporting the local parties involved to carry out cooperation actions on either side of the border. This initiative was launched in 2008 in order to meet the needs of associations that can no longer access European funds due to funding

* For the map, see article ‘Andorra’.

restrictions. Accessible to all kinds of local participants, the Micro Project Fund for the cross-border Catalan space helps to foster the establishment of cross-border cooperation dynamics, as well as exchanges between the parties involved. This financial aid enables small projects to be carried out between parties on either side of the border.

Today, the common fund is the primary means of funding for cross-border cooperation that is accessible to associations. This funding generates genuine cross-border cooperation, extending throughout the Catalan Space through regular exchanges between the parties involved. This financial support is crucial. It allows an increase in interactions and projects between inhabitants in the cross-border Catalan space, as well as certain local initiatives to implement European projects aimed at further structuring.

The chosen projects are related to a number of issues: culture, economic development, employment, training, youth and sport, environment, heritage, tourism, and more. It is important to highlight the investment made by the General Council of Pyrénées-Orientales from 2007–2013 onwards. It became the main driver behind cross-border cooperation dynamics. It encourages actions by supporting project leaders in the territory and also carries out cross-border actions in collaboration with its Catalan partner to the south, the Regional Government of Catalonia.

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Eurodistrict Pamina*

In the 1960s, the people responsible for land-use planning identified a need for cross-border cooperation. Regional-scale efforts to intensify cross-border cooperation among Southern Palatinate, Baden and Northern Alsace emerged in 1986 and 1987 from studies and systematic consultations.

On 12 December 1988, a declaration of intent called the “Wissembourg Declaration”, was signed in the French city of Wissembourg by state representatives and local authorities of the territories concerned. The declaration represented the founding act of the cross-border space and made it possible to boost the design and development of different forms of cross-border cooperation. The sub-prefect of Wissembourg, M. Sermie, found a name for it: Pamina. This name, inspired by the heroine of Mozart’s *Magic Flute*, refers to the three main elements of the concerned French-German geographic space: PA (Southern Palatinate), MI (Mittlerer Oberrhein) and NA (Northern Alsace).

The main goal, still shared today, is to make it possible for the 1.7 million citizens of the Eurodistrict Pamina to meet, understand each other and build together the territory where they live and work. Reducing imbalances, erasing inequalities, encouraging meetings, promoting bilingualism: these are the many objectives the Eurodistrict is committed to implement. The Eurodistrict Pamina is also part of the trinational Upper Rhine cooperation.

From the design to implementation, the Eurodistrict has become an essential, non-reversible reality, in particular with the creation, in 2003, of a Local Grouping of Cross-Border Cooperation (LGCC), a joint association under the Karlsruhe Agreement model, which was transformed in 2016 into a European Grouping of Territorial Cooperation (EGTC).

From 1991 to 2008, Pamina received around 30 million euros of structural funds in the framework of Interreg programs and more than 150 projects were realized. Since 2009 the Interreg Pamina program has been integrated into the overall Interreg Upper Rhine program.

Since January 2011, the Eurodistrict has moved to its new premises in the former customs building of Lauterbourg. This symbolic place right at the border allows citizens to get information concerning cross-border

* For the map, see article ‘Eurodistrict Strasbourg-Ortenau’.

issues thanks to an *Informations-und Beratungs-Stelle*, the INFOBEST office. Since 1991, around 2500 applications are treated every year.

Strengthened by multiple networks, such as the Pamina Business Club, Pamina People's University, Pamina Women Association, Pamina Youth Network, Pamina Senior Network and Pamina Rhine Park, the Eurodistrict intends to conduct a policy aimed at promoting European integration while keeping local heritage and cultural, economic, social and linguistic richness.

As on European level we can be guided by the principle “united in diversity”, the Eurodistrict Pamina offers the best chances to pursue the big adventure which makes it a privileged space of human hope, while respecting everyone's rights and while boosting awareness on the responsibility towards future generations and towards our planet.

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Eurodistrict SaarMoselle*

The SaarMoselle region, located on the French-German border, covers a part of the *Département* Moselle and the urban district of Saarbrücken.

There is no physical border in this area and both regions share the same industrial tradition and mining history, which have had long lasting effect on them. The cultural identity of the cross-border region evolved from common roots over the centuries. The Moselle and Saar sides of the Eurodistrict went through the same economic and social changes in the 1960s and 1970s, including the decline of mining and steel industry, and share other common points in relation to culture, history, languages and dialects. Land claims are an integral part of the region's history and its inhabitants often changed nationality throughout the course of history.

The cross-border territorial integration in effect started with the French-German reconciliation following World War II. The status of Saarland, an autonomous state administered by and economically dependent of France, was a key issue between the two countries until the reunification of Saarland to Western German after a referendum in 1955. From the 1950s, cross-border twinning programmes and other bilateral projects were developed between cities. Later, common projects in technical fields were developed, for instance for public services.

At the end of the 1990s, the progress of European construction and the necessary restructuring after the end of mining activities in the region led the municipalities to strengthen cross-border cooperation. The foundation of the association *Zukunft SaarMoselle Avenir* institutionalised their relations. Its objective was to develop cooperation at the communal level and make it more concrete. However, wide differences in legislation and division of competence in France and Germany restricted the possible scope of action in some fields. Considering its objective of bringing Europe closer to the citizen, the association chose to concentrate on the implementation of cultural and touristic projects more specifically aimed at local populations.

In 2005, the expanded territory of the association obtained the status of metropolitan territory after a call for applications from the French Interministerial Delegation of Land Planning and Regional Attractiveness (DATAR) who wanted to support the creation of a metropolis with a European dimension. The French state accepted a cross-border grouping of municipalities to achieve an adequate size.

* For the map, see article 'Greater Region'.

A new stage was reached in the cross-border territorial integration with the creation of the European Grouping of Territorial Cooperation (EGTC) Eurodistrict SaarMoselle in 2010. Its goal is to build a cross-border conurbation which will provide a coherent framework to meet the challenges the territory is facing and address the everyday problems of its citizens, especially those related to the presence of the border. Several projects were developed within two successive global strategies (the “Vision for the Future”, followed by the “Territorial Strategy 2014–2020”), for instance the “Fire Road”, a heritage trail linking several hotspots of industrial culture. The EGTC also enhances economic cooperation between its members with a cross-border economic strategy aiming at giving the region a new image and highlighting its specificities to make it more attractive to businesses, but also to a potential workforce. Common tools and activities are implemented to reach those objectives: online map of business parks, promotional brochure, joint trade fair appearances, studies (cross-border niches, cross-border growth potentials, etc.)

Isabelle Prianon & Floriane Worm

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Eurodistrict Strasbourg-Ortenau



“We support the creation of a Strasbourg-Kehl Eurodistrict, well served by public transport, which can explore new forms of cooperation and host European institutions.”

These words formed part of a joint statement, by French President Jacques Chirac and German Chancellor Gerhard Schröder on 22 January 2003, marking the launch of new plans for a structured space for cooperation between Strasbourg, the European capital, and Kehl, its immediate neighbour on the banks of the Rhine. The initiative came in the wake of earlier plans for a “European District” or “Euroregion”, with

a special status, Centred around the Strasbourg-Kehl metropolitan area aimed at promoting Strasbourg on the European stage and showcasing the unique partnership between France and Germany.

The high-level political statement was issued on the 40th anniversary of the Élysée Treaty, which made no provisions for cross-border cooperation and was the first of its kind to take account of the aspirations of local government leaders on both sides of the border. The plans emerged at a time when the environment was right for local political initiatives – France’s decentralization movement included provisions for territorial experimentation and the European Union (EU) was on the cusp of expansion with new states from East-Central Europe set to join.

Ownership of the project then fell to sub-national partners, who opted to expand the scope of the district on the German side to encompass Ortenaukreis in order to achieve demographic balance and align with the administrative competencies on the French side. The Strasbourg-Ortenau Eurodistrict was created on 17 October 2005 through a cooperation agreement between the Urban Community of Strasbourg, the Ortenaukreis, and the cities of Kehl, Offenburg, Achern, Lahr, and Oberkirch. The French Government and the municipalities’ community of the Erstein canton signed up to the agreement in 2013.

In 2010, the Eurodistrict was established as a European Grouping of Territorial Cooperation (EGTC) under French law. Its general secretariat is located in Kehl, with seven permanent staff members and an annual budget of 850 000 euros. Its main activities are project support, event organisation, thematic fund management, as well as citizen communication and relations. While this remit falls well short of the initial ambition – to create a territory with a similar status to Washington, D.C. – it nevertheless laid the groundwork for balanced, lasting cross-border cooperation and paved the way for partnership in other fields. Once the institutional phase was complete, the Eurodistrict focused its priorities on local transport development, cultural cooperation, bilingualism and Micro Project Fund management for the Upper Rhine.

Recent developments at the European level (plans for a European Cross-Border Convention following the European Commission Communication on cross-border cooperation in 2017) and in France (statement by President Emmanuel Macron signalling an intention to differentiate public policy based on local needs in 2017) might open the way to further development of the Eurodistrict, so that it can live

up to its expected role as an experimental laboratory for cross-border cooperation and citizenship.

To that purpose, there are a lot of expectations towards the newly signed Franco-German Treaty of Aachen of January 2019 which opens possibilities for legislative specific adaptations and common law exceptions for Eurodistricts. In 2018, the Strasbourg-Ortenau Eurodistrict has already adopted an important reform of its statutes so as to simplify the institutional functioning of the EGTC by suppressing the board, reinforcing the prerogatives of the president and opening the council to representatives of the civil society. No one can however assert if these changes, mostly carried by the German partners, will have a positive impact and if they will facilitate the acquisition of “tailor-made” competences as the EGCT finally intends to do.

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Euro-Institut*

The Euro-Institut is a Franco-German non-profit organisation based in Kehl (Germany) whose mission is to facilitate cross-border cooperation in the Franco-German-Swiss Upper Rhine Region. The Euro-Institut is both a concrete example of cross-border cooperation through its operating model and a support structure for cooperation through its activities. The binational aspect extends to the entire functioning of the structure. It has been created in 1993 by the *Land* of Baden-Württemberg, the French Republic, the Alsace Region (now *Grand Est*), the Department of Lower Rhine, the Urban Community (now Eurometropolis) of Strasbourg, the City of Kehl, the Robert Schuman University (now University of Strasbourg) and the University of Applied Sciences Kehl (initiator of the project). The *Ortenaukreis* joined in 1996. Constituting the supervisory board, these members gather twice a year as a decision-making body. The repartition of the votes respects a strict equality between the German and French members. The management and the team are also binational.

At first created under the legal form of a European Economic Interest Grouping (EEIG) through the Interreg I and II programs, it became in 2003 a concrete application of the Karlsruhe Agreement, the first Local Grouping for Cross-Border Cooperation (LGCC) seated in Baden-Württemberg. Its financing is also cross-border, as it is supported by its members as well as by the services it sells.

The Euro-Institut's activities include training, counselling, support, research and networking. While they are addressed primarily to French, German and Swiss public officials, they may also be of wider interest to all stakeholders involved in cross-border cooperation. The training courses are based on pedagogical engineering. These are specifically adapted to intercultural and cross-border challenges such as: bilingual animation, simultaneous translation, etc. Part of the offer is open to everybody, although most of the training is tailor-made, on demand, for specific groups. Training covers both transversal skills (knowledge of political-administrative systems, intercultural management of cross-border projects, tandem language courses, etc.) and thematic policies (spatial planning, culture, education, environment, social policy, health, security, etc.).

* For the map, see article 'Eurodistrict Strasbourg-Ortenau'.

The Euro-Institut also supports actors in their cooperation projects, either by carrying out studies or by personalized medium- or long-term accompanying measures for project teams or working groups. An example of this is the Franco-German Police and Judicial Cooperation Steering Committee, which the Euro-Institut has supported since 2000, and which, in addition to networking activities, offers eight days of training per year. The Euro-Institut was also able, for example, to offer intercultural support to the cross-border employment office based in Kehl. In addition to the evaluations of the Upper Rhine Interreg program, the Euro-Institut has been able to carry out diagnoses in various fields such as employment and health.

Moreover, the Euro-Institut also acts as a project leader at the request of Upper Rhine stakeholders. It hosts two Interreg V A projects, one in the field of scientific coordination and the other on health. In both cases, the aim is to support the players in strengthening and deepening their cross-border activities. In order to guarantee the relevance and efficiency of its work, the Euro-Institut interacts with the other cross-border cooperation structures present in Kehl such as the Secretariat of the Upper Rhine Conference, the *Informations- und Beratungs-Stelle* (INFOBEST) Kehl-Strasbourg or the Eurodistrict Strasbourg-Ortenau.

The Euro-Institut's model is adapted to the Upper Rhine area and is unique in its kind. It is, nevertheless, of interest to many borders insofar as cooperation actors often lack expertise, know-how or interpersonal skills in relation to complex cooperation issues. In this context, the Euro-Institut participated first in the European Forum of Interregional Cooperation (1995–1998) and then in the Interform-Interact project (2005–2008, led by the *Mission opérationnelle transfrontalière*). In order to fully capitalize on its acquired expertise on cross-border cooperation, actor-needs and the bridging-requirements between practitioners and researchers, the Euro-Institut participated in numerous research projects such as the series of publications “Living and researching cross-border cooperation” in cooperation with the University of Strasbourg. On the basis of these experiences and the various contacts it had, the Euro-Institut created the Transfrontier Euro-Institut Network (TEIN) in 2010.

Keeping training as its core activity, the Euro-Institut has been able to adapt to its evolving context by working on increasingly specific themes (i.e. Conference “Digitization of work and impact on health”) and by responding to the most current training needs (i.e. Conference “Reception of refugees and migrants in European societies”). In recent

years, the Euro-Institut has also considerably expanded its support and advisory activities. It also tries to establish a link between the “bottom-up” Europe of cross-border daily life and the “top-down” Europe of Brussels. Notably, it participated in the expert group of the Cross Border Review, an initiative of the DG REGIO aiming to respond to the challenges persisting in border regions.

The limits of its action are structural. According to its statutes, the mission of the Euro-Institut is to promote cross-border cooperation by training and counselling the agents of its members as well as other public organisations. However, as its public financial support is only partial, it is forced to sell its services, which sometimes makes the balance between its public service mission and its survival a fragile one. This precarious funding can hinder the capacity of the Euro-Institut to take initiatives, forcing it to take a step back from the participation in different projects or networks. While the latter are formative activities, they are essentially unpaid. In addition, the members of the Euro-Institut do not cover the entire Upper Rhine area, which can cause tensions and puts into question its legitimacy to act on behalf of the whole region.

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Eurometropolis Lille-Kortrijk-Tournai*

A specificity of the Eurometropolis Lille-Kortrijk-Tournai is its double and original dyad. It is located at the national border between France and Belgium but also at the border between Flanders and Wallonia, two Belgian regions. The context of federalisation and linguistic-cultural disparities in Belgium is meaningful in the governance complexity of the European Grouping of Territorial Cooperation (EGTC).

For more than two centuries, local interactions between France and Belgium have continuously enhanced economic and urban development in this region. With over two million inhabitants distributed over 152 heterogenous municipalities, a flourishing business and tourism sector, a network of innovative Small and Medium Enterprises (SME) and investments in information and communication technology, the Eurometropolis belongs today to the few cross-border areas that tend to concentrate metropolitan functions in Europe. According to the 2007 report of the European Observation Network for Territorial Development and Cohesion (ESPON), the morphological urban area of Lille contains 953 000 inhabitants in its French part and is connected to Kortrijk (151 000 inhabitants) in Flanders and Tournai (67 000 inhabitants) in Wallonia. This urban structure is remarkable for two simultaneous trends: First, metropolitan development takes place in Lille including Belgian border areas. Second, the interconnection of the three urban economies progressively creates a tri-regional area. The complementarity can be illustrated by stable cross-border flows of both workers and students.

The late 1980s, a coalition of political leaders and economic stakeholders committed to cross-border cooperation with the aim of coming out of the shadow of London, Paris and Brussels. Common interest coalesced around the completion of high-speed train network and the upgrading of commercial and business district in *Euralille*. The cross-border cooperation turned official in 1991 with the “Standing Cross-border Conference of Inter-municipal Organisations” (*Conférence Permanente Intercommunale Transfrontalière, COPIT*). A Local Grouping

* For the map, see article ‘French-Belgian Border’: map ‘France-Belgium Border Region’.

of Cross-border Cooperation (GLCT) followed in 2005, before it became in 2008 the very first EGTC in Europe.

The EGTC Eurometropolis Lille-Kortrijk-Tournai was founded under French law as a complex multi-level governance system. The 14 members of French and Belgian states includes: Région Hauts-de-France, Département du Nord on French side, Vlaamse Overheid, Province West-Vlaanderen, Région Wallonne, Wallonia-Brussels Federation, Province de Hainaut, along with five intermunicipal structures on Belgian side, and which together make decisions through a Board and an Assembly. Finally, an agency with allocated human and financial resources implements the strategy. The Conference of Mayors (*Conférence des Maires et des Bourgmestres*) and a Forum of the civil society also play an advisory role.

The Eurometropolis first set an ambitious strategic framework for establishing a cross-border metropolis. It implemented some iconic and long-term projects (e.g., NEXT music festival, or the interconnection of labour markets). Its branding policy to accompany and label cross-border projects sometimes led to misunderstandings because the Eurometropolitan territory does not correspond to the Interreg perimeter. In 2016, the EGTC took a new start with a renewed political commitment, a simplified decision-making process rooted in the statutes, a new directory with a reduced staff and a partnership with a citizen initiative, “Hack the Eurometropolis”. The strategy concentrates on three axes: training and employment, sustainable development, emerging technologies. The governance follows a pragmatic and participatory approach in which the stated aim is to become an interface rather than a manger. This turn might indicate that the Eurometropolis is on its way towards a mature structure with stabilised institutions.

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European City Görlitz-Zgorzelec



The European City Görlitz-Zgorzelec is a town-twinning project located at the German-Polish border. More precisely, the double city is situated in the Upper Lusatia Region that is part of the Federal state of Saxony and the Polish Lower Silesian Voivodeship. Görlitz-Zgorzelec is part of the tri-national Euroregion Neisse-Nisa-Nysa. The double city is the biggest cross-border urban area at the German-Polish border in terms of population. In Görlitz-Zgorzelec live 88 000 inhabitants, on the German side the population numbers about 56 000 while on the Polish side the population is approximately 32 000 inhabitants.

In the last century, there have been several shifting of boundaries in this region. Until 1945, the river Neisse connected both sides as one

city. After the Second World War, the city was divided along the Neisse river and the eastern part of the city was administered by the Polish state and a new city arose. In 1990, the Treaty on Border Confirmation embedded the Oder-Neisse border legally in international law (the German Democratic Republic (GDR) already acknowledged it in 1950 through the Treaty of Zgorzelec). Based on the German-Polish Treaty of Good Neighbourship (1991) and in the course of European integration, both cities cooperated more intensely across borders in the beginning of the 1990s. Conclusively, the double city Görlitz-Zgorzelec has been founded after a cooperation treaty of both cities in 1992 and proclaimed as a European city in 1998.

In the framework of a support initiative by the German Federal Ministry for Education and Research (BMBF) the double city tries to promote the merging of the divided border towns towards a European city within the project “*Stadt 2030*” (City 2030). The European city expects by the label of a European city “positive location marketing effects”. The *Europastadt* GörlitzZgorzelec was founded applying the private legal form of a limited liability company (GmbH) that represents a wholly owned corporation of the City Görlitz. The limited liability company started its work in 2007 and promotes the location marketing, economic development and tourism in the area.

In the context of “Europeanized” town-twinning cooperation, the European city has established two cross-border public transport bus lines (in 1992 and 1999), a cross-border hospital cooperation (1991) and, since 1994, a German-Polish *Kindergarten* based on the Treaty of Town Twinning (1991), on the Cooperation Treaty between Görlitz and Zgorzelec (1993) and, finally, on the Agreement on Cooperative Partnership (1996). Particularly in the 1990s, thence, cooperation across the border was broadly promoted and covered several policy fields, such as health, education, transport and administrative cooperation.

Notwithstanding, these emphasized measures of cross-border administrative cooperation have not yet been extensively transferred to the civil society with regard to social, economic and territorial cohesion. In a study by Robert Knippschild and Anja Schmotz on the German-Polish cooperation with special emphasis on Görlitz-Zgorzelec, it was identified that, “functional interrelations and flows in the German-Polish border region are still weak”. Additionally, other studies point at the socioeconomic and structural asymmetries that still remain between both sides of the border regarding infrastructural shortcomings and

diverging qualities of urban spaces. They are tackled since 2011 by more systematic restoration projects of old city buildings in Zgorzelec which, compared to the “subsidized, renovated, and rich German parts of the Europe City” shall lead to further cohesion of the cross-border city space. Notwithstanding, this shows that the desire to build up a cross-border transnational space within the double city has not yet been fulfilled. The cross-border flows and cooperation are still in a phase of evolvement. Further development within the European integration context could deconstruct boundaries in German-Polish cooperation and foster cross-border interrelations.

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European Community (EC)/European Union (EU) and Cross-Border Cooperation

The European Community (EC) has for a long period not been involved with cross-border cooperation. From the 1950s until the 1980s, cross-border cooperation developed rather independently and in parallel to the European integration process.

This is mainly due to the fact, that the EC considered towns and regions more as economic units for the distribution of regional funds than as autonomous political actors. When the European regional policy was introduced in 1975, the European Regional and Development Fund (ERDF) was therefore solely negotiated between the European Commission and the EC member states, without associating local and regional actors. This perception only changed with the introduction of the Interreg programs in 1990 and the Treaty of Maastricht in 1992, when border regions became directly associated to the European Regional Policy and, via the creation of the Committee of regions in 1994, to the decision-making process of the European Union (EU). The EU's economic approach to border regions was finally enlarged to a more geopolitical view of cross-border cooperation as a tool for democratic stabilization after its Eastern enlargement in 2004, when the European Neighbourhood Policy (ENP) was created.

However, a first initiative from the European Commission to support cross-border regions dates back to the mid-1980s in an area covering three countries (Belgium, France and Luxembourg) that were severely hit by the crisis of the steel and coal industry. The project of the European Development Pole aimed at an industrial reconversion on a cross-border scale and was largely financed by the three States and the European Commission. In January 1985, the President of the Commission, Jacques Delors then declared that in order to achieve the objective of a Single Market, all internal European borders should be eliminated. On the basis of the Delors "White Paper", the Single European Act (SEA) was signed by the 12 EC member states in 1986. It provided for the completion of a Single European Market (SEM) by 1992 and the European Commission assigned a role to cross-border regions for establishing this new "Europe without borders". They became "laboratories" for its implementation. The reform of the European Regional Policy with the creation of the European Structural Funds in 1988 then opened up the possibility for them to play this active part. The Commission decided in May 1989

to support 14 pilot-programs in 5 test regions of the EC, with a total budget of 21 million Ecus destined to finance cross-border projects. The pilot-programs were successful and the Commission decided in 1990 to introduce the Community initiative “Interreg” to support cross-border cooperation in all EC border regions. Thanks to the financial support provided by the European Commission through its various regional policy instruments, cross-border cooperation now played an active role in European integration. Five generations of Interreg programs have been implemented so far: Interreg I (1990–1993), Interreg II (1994–1999), Interreg III (2000–2006), Interreg IV (2007–2013) and Interreg V (2014–2020).

After the adoption of the Treaty of Maastricht in 1992, the EU enhanced the role of the European regions as active contributors to the process of European integration. The introduction of Art. 3B on the principle of subsidiarity (now Art. 5 of the Treaty of Lisbon) resulted from then on in a “multilevel” European governance, involving also the local and regional levels and the Committee of the Regions, which was established in 1994 as a representative body for local and regional authorities allowed them to participate in the EU decision-making process. Indeed, the EU expected that local authorities would play an ever more significant role in the process of European integration, as confirmed by the constant growth in the financial resources made available for the various regional policy programming periods, of which the Interreg initiative was a particular beneficiary.

Since the 1990s, cross-border cooperation has thus been recognized as an essential actor for both economic growth and territorial cohesion in the EU. This integrative function was further strengthened by the establishment of Monetary Union and the introduction of the Euro. The disappearance of currencies and rates of exchange has indeed facilitated mobility inside the EU, and in the end it is in border regions that the successes and failures of European economic integration can best be seen and felt.

Since the adoption of the Lisbon Treaty in 2007, the growing importance of cross-border cooperation in the process of European integration has led to the introduction, of a new objective in European Regional Policy: European Territorial Cooperation (ETC). ETC aims at integration at various scales (cross-border, transnational and interregional) within the framework of decentralized management, using a standard, shared-management approach. As a result, cross-border

regions, now explicitly mentioned in Art. 174 of the Treaty, were no longer just a testing ground for the SEM, they were also intended to play a role in the construction of an integrated social and economic space. This aim of the EU meant that border regions were no longer only be seen as economic areas alone, but also as political actors which must be involved in the policies of the EU. That is why the EU has followed the example of the Council of Europe and created a legal instrument for cooperation between local stakeholders in cross-border regions: The European Grouping of Territorial Cooperation (EGTC), established in 2006, made it possible to set up common legal structures.

The political dimension of cross-border cooperation became also essential for the EU after the geopolitical upheaval Europe experienced in 1989. The EU found itself confronted with new challenges: the challenge of making enlargement to the east succeed; the challenge of (re)defining its relations with neighbouring countries; the challenge of ensuring a role for itself in the stabilization of the European continent, shaken after 1991 by the conflict in the Balkans; and the challenge of defining a post-Cold-War security policy. Following the Treaty of Maastricht in 1992, the EU adopted a Common Foreign and Security Policy (CFSP), but this mainly responded to “classical” threats arising from political conflicts and military confrontations. It needed to be complemented by other good neighbour policies at micro- and macro-regional scales, which could also provide responses to new threats: environmental issues, for example, on the scale of sea or river basins or mountain ranges, required more coordinated action from the member states.

Therefore, a new East-West dimension opened up, giving cross-border cooperation a role to play in the reunification of the European continent. From 1989 onwards, the European Commission supported cross-border cooperation with future candidate states in Central and Eastern Europe via its Poland and Hungary Assistance for Restructuring of the Economy (PHARE) program. But the new geopolitical equilibrium that developed after the dismantling of the Iron Curtain also depended on good neighbourhood relations at the EU’s new external borders. Cross-border cooperation therefore played a part in the Commission’s strategy to ensure “democratic stability” on its periphery. In 1991, it thus introduced the Technical Assistance to the Commonwealth of Independent States (TACIS) program for the management of border relations with 12 countries including Russia. At the moment of its Eastern enlargement, the EU started to envisage cross-border cooperation as a means of stabilizing its external

borders. It adopted the European Neighbourhood Policy in 2004 and introduced two new instruments, the Instrument for Pre-accession (IPA) in order to prepare candidate countries for accession, which included a specific cross-border cooperation program, and the European Neighbourhood Policy Instrument (ENPI), which was designed for external countries that had not applied for EU membership. These two instruments were both dealt with the geopolitical function of cross-border cooperation as a tool of stabilization. Finally, since the 2000th, the EU has also developed macro-regional strategies in key regions in order to help stabilize the European continent, through support for transnational cooperation. The EU has progressively implemented four macro-regional strategies: two based around maritime areas (the Baltic Sea region (EUSBSR) in 2009 and the Adriatic and Ionian region (EUSAIR) in 2012); one comprising a major river basin (the Danube region (EUSDR) in 2011); and one around a mountain range (the Alpine region (EUSALP) in 2013).

Thus, from an economic approach to cross-border cooperation used for the implementation of the internal market, the EU has evolved towards a more diversified strategy of supporting cross-border cooperation for both, internal cohesion and external stability. This strategy also corresponds to the Council of Europe's bottom-up perspective which regards local and regional stakeholders as political actors willing and capable to contribute to European integration.

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European Cross-Border Convention (ECBC)

The proposals for the European Cross-border Convention (ECBC) was initially discussed in 2013 between the incoming EU Presidencies and became then part of the Trio Presidency Program of Italy, Latvia and Luxembourg (second semester 2014 to the second semester 2015) initiating concrete measures fostering territorial cohesion. In parallel, the Governance Committee of the Council of Europe and academic research addressed the principle of mutual recognition in the context of cross-border cooperation. However, the conclusion of the ministerial meeting on 26–27 November 2015 under the Luxembourgish Presidency proposed the ECBC to support border areas, recognizing that their development potential is not fully explored. The Seventh Cohesion Report (2017) estimates that the Gross Domestic Product (GDP) in regions along borders could be up to 18 %higher in comparison to a non-border situation. Inventories such as the Cross-Border Review of EU Commission, the *Mission opérationnelle transfrontalière* (MOT) or the Central European Service for Cross-border Initiatives (CESCI) show an extensive list of examples for administrative and legal obstacles along borders such as, norms and rules for trams, ambulance or other services, or the criteria for the zoning of noise protection areas for wind-parks or the delineation Natura 2000 zones are negatively impacting the development potential along borders. The objective of the proposed procedure and tool of the ECBC is to help find solutions to administrative and legal obstacles in border regions.

Following the ministerial meeting, Luxembourg and France, with the support of MOT, received the mandate to establish a “Working Group to Innovative Solution for Cross-Border Obstacles” composed of national experts to explore further the potential and design of the ECBC in consultation with the Commission, the Committee of the Regions and the European Investment Bank. Their Report was presented in July 2017. The European Commission’s Communication “Boosting Growth and Cohesion in EU Border Regions” published on 21 September 2017 mentions the opportunities of such tool. On 29 May 2018 the Commission made a legislative proposal to the Council and the European Parliament with reference to the ECBC initiative under the title European Cross-border Mechanism as part of the Cohesion Policy package 2021–2027 as contribution to increase the efficiency of Interreg funding.

What is the purpose of the ECBC in detail? In the past 25 years, the context of border-areas in particular in the EU changed fundamentally. The impact of common market enforced by the Schengen Agreement converted these areas from frontiers into areas of intensive exchange of goods and services, as well as increased mobility of citizens and workers. The common market by far is not completed yet, and ruptures are visible particularly at the borders where national competences end, yet EU rules do not apply, and thus managing such obstacles requires bilateral negotiation. This is also true for the use of infrastructures and facilities such as hospitals, emergency services, where it would be less costly and time consuming for citizens to link with or use facilities closer on the other side of the border instead of using national facilities farer away.

In principle, EU funding programs like Interreg are financially supporting initiatives to searching for solutions employing financial incentives in border regions. Institutional solutions were also created to ease cross-border activities; the European Economic Interest Grouping (EEIG) for the private sector, and the European Grouping of Territorial Cooperation (EGTC) in the public sector. However, in areas where the interaction across the border is high, these financial and institutional measures are not meeting the bottlenecks occurring through administrative and legal obstacles.

One could argue that by the time the common market is fully established, these obstacles should disappear. However, looking at the vast range of obstacles along borders it is obvious that not all are important enough to be treated at the EU level. Even more, it seems to be more efficient and appropriate to find local, tailor-made bi- or tri-lateral solutions across the border without activating a harmonization or mutual recognition for the whole of the EU. Indeed, bilateral solutions are already found in particular cases, information systems are set up in a few regions, or the Nordic Council has set up a mechanism to find common market type of solutions for the Nordic space. However, experience so far shows that, if at all solutions are found, they are often depending on political or even personal circumstances, which are far out of the reach and control of those affected by the obstacles. No procedure is available which would allow for raising awareness or at a minimum asking for referral in a structured way, even without guaranteeing whether a solution can be found or not.

These are the gaps that the ECBC proposal is designed to fill. The ECBC will allow for the creation of a “procedure and tool that would

allow local/regional authorities and stakeholders to initiate a fast-track process for addressing administrative and legal obstacles, and would commit the competent authority to support the actors in finding a solution to overcome these obstacles.” The ECBC is a procedure to be initiated bottom-up by local/regional authorities and stakeholders of one country to ask – in the context of an obstacle to a cross-border activity or to a service of general interest – to apply the administrative or legal rules and provisions, that are applicable in the neighbouring country, in a clearly geographically defined area of application along the border in the own country. The proposed procedure and tool offer an approach to overcome cross-border obstacles by checking whether solutions already exist, and if not, offering the new solution documented in the ECBC. The obligation for competent authorities in charge of the application of the norms or rules which are imposing an obstacle would be to either; support the actors in finding a solution, or state why no solution could be found within a certain period of time. Certainly, the possibility needs to be considered, that not for all obstacles a solution can be found due to constitutional, legal or other also political reasons. In this sense, any solution would be of a voluntary nature for EU member states.

The Commission’s legislative proposal on the ECBM is still subject to legislative process at the EU at the time of the drafting of this article.

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European Development Pole Longwy*

The European Development Pole (EDP) is the name of a geographical zone centred on the conversion point of 3 national borders: France (urban agglomeration of the Municipality of Longwy), the Grand-Duchy of Luxembourg (Municipality of Pétange), and Belgium (Municipality of Aubange). Until the late 70's, the area hosted an exceptional regrouping of steel factories. These employed more than 22 000 individuals in the valley of the Chiers, in which urbanization had been developing since the 19th century thanks to the growth of the “Masters of Forge” activities, initially based on the extraction of local iron ore.

This specific geographical zone became the heart of a regional and cross-border structuring project, whose scope of action covered a wide region with fuzzy boundaries up to 20 km around the triple point, affecting about 300 000 inhabitants. Between the late 70's and early 80's, the region was hit harshly by the almost complete closure of the steel factories.

The limited success of the national attempts for the conversion of the region pushed the authorities of the three countries in 1985 to agree on a common objective: the conversion of 3 dead-end roads into a single crossroad. This grew into a Joint Declaration for an EDP and simultaneously developed into a 10-year action program. This program was supported by the European Commission for 5 years and split into 3 national Community Interest Programs. This corresponds to one of the first ERDF operation modes under this format, prefiguring the Interreg Community Initiative which took place soon after.

The program's leading measure, intended to grant exceptional financial support to business investment, derogating from the existing plans, to quickly attract new activities in the area and, therefore, offsetting the huge loss of employment in the steel industry. Transitional activity zones were able to accommodate new businesses from the start of the program. In parallel, the national governments and the Commission made available significant resources to clean up abandoned industrial sites, providing them with efficient and appropriate equipment and services for the new, expected businesses. This created the central international business park of 500 hectares.

* For the map, see article ‘Greater Region’.

The program relied on a common structure for the implementation, management, and promotion of the EDP, described by Jacques Delors in 1988 as the “Laboratory of Europe at 1:1000 scale.” This gathered representatives from institutions of the 3 countries at different levels for its strategy and follow-up. The program’s technical team included a Technical Department of the Luxembourg Ministry of Economy, a French inter-ministerial mission and the Belgian inter-municipal economic development organisation Idelux.

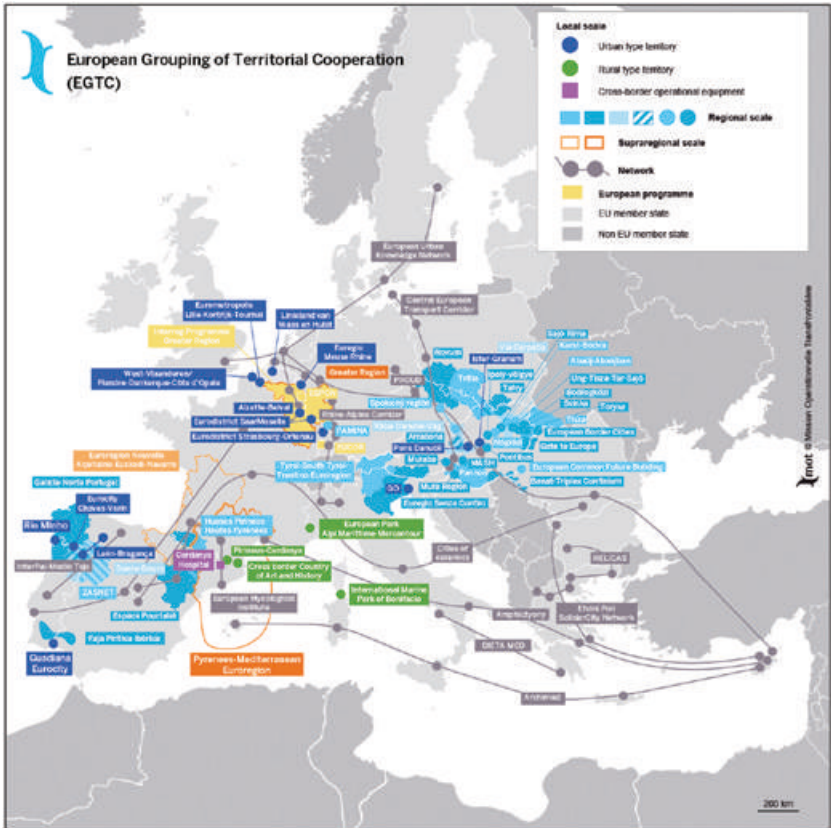
There has never been a consolidated closing review of the program, nor a common assessment. The 1988 reform of the European Structural Funds did not allow the launch of the second 5-year phase of the program, and its financing was diluted into several other projects. From the initial objective of 8 000 jobs to be created within a 10-year period, only 3 639 jobs had been created by the end of 1993. There were found in 47 industrial activities, of which 29 were new ones. The landscape of the Chiers valley had been deeply modified and, in some ways, “normalized.”

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European Grouping of Territorial Cooperation (EGTC)



The European Grouping of Territorial Cooperation (EGTC) is a European legal instrument for facilitating and promoting territorial cooperation (cross-border, transnational and interregional). It makes it possible to set up bodies with legal personality and financial autonomy linking public entities (states, regional and local authorities, etc.), as well as businesses providing public services. This entity can be responsible for the governance of the cross-border cooperation undertaken by the members and run the projects for them with or without financial participation from the European Union (EU).

An EGTC is governed by three main types of provisions: Regulation (EC) No 1082/2006, as amended by Regulation (EU) No 1302/2013 (having increased its autonomy and capacity); founding agreement and statutes provisions; and the national law of the member state in which the EGTC is registered. It must comprise at least an assembly made up of representatives of its members and a director who represents it. Other organs, such as an office or a consultative council, may be set up optionally.

In 2004, the work of preparing a legal instrument has begun under the initiative of Michel Barnier, European Commissioner for Regional Policy and with the broad support of the European Parliament, the Committee of the Regions and the associations of regional and local authorities. This legislative innovation was created by Regulation (EC) No 1082/2006 concomitantly with the programming of the EU structural funds for the 2007–2013 period. It was fully aligned with the development of European cohesion policy that began with the Single European Act (SEA) of 1986. Thereafter, the tool has moved beyond the cohesion policy scope.

By the end of 2019, 75 EGTCs of great diversity had been set up: First, there are EGTCs for integrated territorial initiatives, to assist in drawing up and implementing governance structures suitable for cross-border territories, (e.g. the first EGTC the Franco-Belgian “Lille-Kortrijk-Tournai Eurometropolis”). Second, some EGTCs are acting as managing authorities for operational programs, such as the EGTC – Management of the program Interreg “*Großregion*” or Greater Region. Third, there are EGTCs created with a view to supporting, managing or establishing cross-border projects to benefit the territory and the members of the EGTC, such as the Cerdanya cross-border hospital. And, finally, there are EGTCs relating to networks, such as the European Urban Knowledge Network, which is a platform shared by several European countries for exchanging ideas and experience in the field of urban development.

Under article 5 of Regulation (EC) No 1082/2006, notice of an EGTC’s constitution must be provided to the EU Committee of the Regions before it is published in the Official Journal of the EU. Over time, a real EGTCs “club” has emerged under the auspices of the Committee of Regions. Nonetheless, the EGTC should not be regarded as an indispensable tool for cross-border cooperation, since an EGTC will be set up in response to a specific desire on the part of its members, who agree on the form of cooperation that is the best suited to their joint projects. Other legal instruments are capable of supporting public

projects in Europe, such as the Euroregional Cooperation Grouping (EGC) as well as the Local Grouping of Cross-border Cooperation (LGCC) resulting both from the framework of the Council of Europe Madrid Convention of 21 May 1980.

Member states must however agree to the participation of potential members in their respective countries. The law applicable for the interpretation and application of the convention is that of the member state in which the official EGTC headquarters are located. An EGTC is a very flexible structure, capable of precisely matching the needs of its members within a legal framework provided by the EU Regulation and the national laws concerned. While its activity depends on the stakeholders' decisions (because of the lack of transfer of power), the EGTC remains a structure that is detached from its members, with its own legal personality and budget and which could be defined in order to be able to recruit its own staff directly and conclude legal acts in order to carry out its mandate (public procurement, contracts, etc.).

The decision to create an EGTC is based on an agreement by its members, who thereby share a political wish to engage in a joint partnership or joint projects over a period of time, sufficient to carry out a particular mandate (thus the EGTC that managed the 2007–2013 Greater Region Interreg program had to be wound up at the end of the program; a new one has then been set up for the new programming period), or for an indefinite period (through the permanent establishment of a legal structure).

The first EGTCs to be created highlighted some implementation difficulties directly associated with their cross-border character, such as the application of the law of the country of the registered office for the operation of the grouping. While it seemed logical to have a single body of law to cover the operation of the EGTC's organs, bookkeeping and managing staff based in a member state other than the one in which the EGTC was registered proved to be complicated, as was taking action or undertaking public procurement in a member state where the law differed from that of the country of registration. The first change to the Regulation (EC) No 1082/2006, made by the amending Regulation in December 2013, clarified the way EGTCs work by requiring the agreement to make specific reference to the applicable law. Moreover, Directive 2014/24/EU requires member states to allow the assembly of an EGTC to choose whether to apply the rules of the country of registration or the rules of

another member state where the EGTC carries out its activities to any deals they make.

The EGTCs are concentrated in the European “Pentagon” region (a five-sided figure referring to a west European region passing through London, Paris, Milan, Munich and Hamburg) and also on the Hungarian borders. While the cooperation in the Pentagon area can be explained by the comparatively larger size of the populations involved and their longer history of cooperation (due to linguistic similarity and the structuring of Euroregions as EGTCs), the cross-border networks along Hungarians borders draw up lines of the historical organic region.

Thus, on the border between Spain and Portugal, several EGTCs have come out of long-standing working communities that did not have their own legal personality. The EGTCs on the French borders also reveal the continuity of older, legally structured cooperation initiatives, since the existing example provided by the LGCCs meant that stakeholders were already familiar with the legally formalized cross-border arrangements. The first EGTC was in fact created on the Franco-Belgian border (the Lille-Kortrijk-Tournai Eurometropolis).

Furthermore, one of the most exemplary examples of cross-border cooperation in Europe is considered to be the EGTC Hospital of Cerdanya. Founded on 26 April 2010, the EGTC Hospital of Cerdanya is an operational project. It was established in order to build and operate a hospital capable of providing medical care to about 30 000 people living in the isolated Cerdanya valley, on both sides of the border between France and Spain, since the French and the Spanish populations individually were not large enough to necessitate the building of two separate hospitals. Its members are the relevant health authorities on either side of the border. Created originally for a ten-year period, this EGTC will have its life extended automatically unless any of the members raises an objection.

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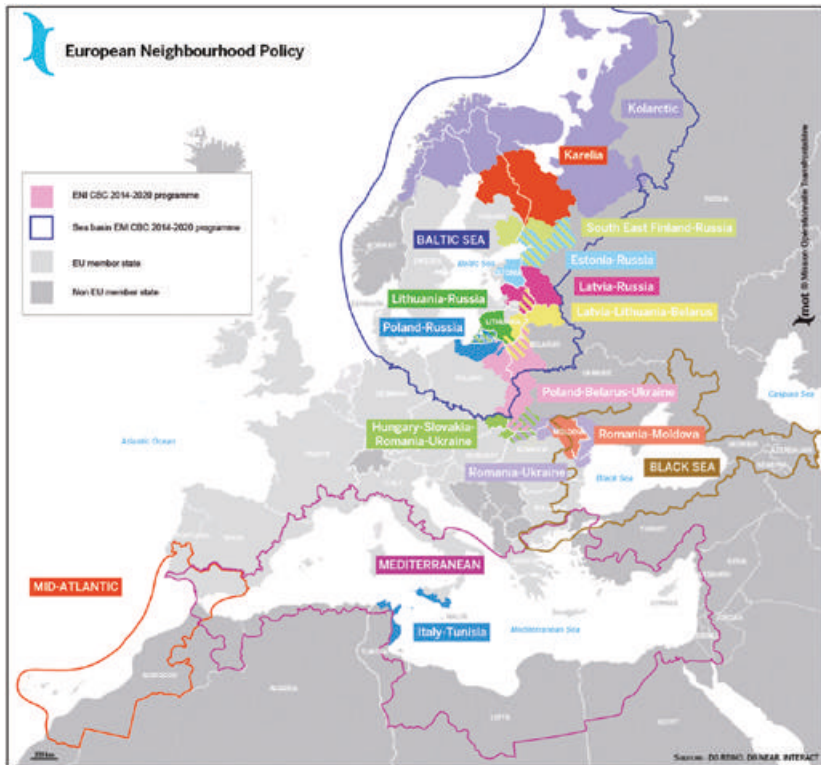
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European Neighbourhood Policy (ENP)



The European Neighbourhood Policy (ENP) of the European Union (EU) is designed to facilitate neighbourhood relations at its external borders. It is aimed both at EU candidate countries and at countries that are not necessarily intending to join the EU and thus also relates to the external borders that are destined to remain so for the foreseeable future.

The ENP is in fact an extension of three former programs: the Poland and Hungary Assistance for Restructuring of the Economy (PHARE) program, the Technical Assistance to the Commonwealth of Independent States (TACIS) program and the Mediterranean Area (MEDA) program. The first two were developed in response to the changes in the geopolitical order that Europe underwent at the end of the 1980s. The third is part of a wider perspective, namely that of the development of the territories

around the Mediterranean Sea. In all three cases, the objective is to establish an area of stability extending beyond the EU and to prevent the external borders from becoming lines signifying marked disparities.

In 1989, the EEC inaugurated the PHARE program with a view to providing financial aid for the economic and political transition of Poland and Hungary, two socialist countries that had been members of the Council for Mutual Economic Assistance (COMECON) and were undergoing substantial political change foreshadowing the opening of the Berlin Wall on 9 November 1989. Negotiations in Poland between the Government and the Solidarność trade union led to partly free elections in Spring 1989 and there was a partial dismantling of the Iron Curtain in Spring 1989 in Hungary. PHARE, which was later extended to other countries, was designed to provide aid for the transition of central and eastern Europe following the end of the Cold War and, from 1994, it became an instrument of the EU's pre-accession strategy for these countries.

The TACIS program, inaugurated in 1991, supported the transition of 12 countries, including Russia, that emerged from the collapse of the USSR in 1991. Its objectives were similar to those of PHARE, but TACIS differed from the former in that it supported the transition of New Independent States (NIS) which were more distant from parliamentary democracy and the market economy and, as located in Asia, considered to be part of another region of the world. From 1991 to 2003, Mongolia was also included in this group of countries. TACIS was replaced by the European Neighbourhood Policy (ENP) in 2007 and supported by a financial instrument, which was at first named the European Neighbourhood and Partnership Instrument (ENPI), and, since 2014, the European Neighbourhood Instrument (ENI).

The MEDA program had the objective of providing financial aid for the EU's Mediterranean Policy, as defined in the Barcelona Declaration of 1995. This EU initiative, which involves a dozen countries on the eastern and southern shores of the Mediterranean Sea, was designed to promote an area of peace and stability and to build a zone of shared prosperity around this maritime area. The point of departure for this policy was the premise that the Mediterranean is a region containing significant disparities in development, which need to be smoothed out in order to avoid the emergence of tensions. The process was reinforced by the creation, in 2008, of the Union for the Mediterranean (UfM), which brings together the 28 EU member states and 15 adjoining countries

(some of which border the Adriatic, such as Albania, Bosnia-Herzegovina and Montenegro).

As regards the ENP, two types of partnerships have been implemented: the Eastern Partnership and the Southern Partnership. They have more or less similar goals, but their implementation methods and approaches are significantly different. Generally speaking, the policy objective is to prevent the EU's external borders from opening up a gulf between the EU and the outside world and to ensure that close relations can develop between the EU and its neighbouring countries. Consequently, this policy seeks to foster not only stability but also prosperity, security and sustainable development. The Eastern Partnership takes the form of programs bringing together six countries and essentially concerns land borders. When it was developed in 2002, it was supposed to involve Belarus, Ukraine and Moldova, but it was then extended in 2004 to the three countries of the Caucasus (Georgia, Armenia and Azerbaijan). Russia participates indirectly in this partnership, through one interregional cooperation program and seven cross-border cooperation initiatives. The border shared by Finland and Russia, which runs for more than 1 500 km, has been the site of cross-border cooperation initiatives since the early 1990s and is a source of inspiration for others. The Southern Partnership has been developed with 10 Mediterranean countries, including the Palestinian Authority. From a legal point of view, the Lisbon Treaty calls for the development of special ties with countries that do not necessarily wish to join the EU. Three programs have been launched covering borders, essentially maritime ones, between EU member states and non-members. Of the three programs, only one is cross-border (Italy-Tunisia), whereas the other two have been established at an intergovernmental level (the Mediterranean Sea and Mid-Atlantic Programs). The Mediterranean Partnership's instruments are principally intergovernmental in nature, whereas in the Eastern Partnership, the presence of both levels reveals the importance of cross-border cooperation and the involvement of partners at different scales.

For the 2007–2013 programming period, the EU employed a single instrument, the ENPI. It was first subject of a strategy prepared in 2006 for the four-year period 2007–2010, and then of a second strategy, developed during the course of the program for the period 2011–2013. The program operated in three stages. First, the European Commission prepared reports on the economic, social and institutional situation in each of the countries concerned. In the second phase, specific action

plans or association agendas were negotiated for each country, laying down the measures to be implemented over a period of three to five years. Twelve such bilateral plans (detailing the assistance to be given by the EU to each country) have been signed to date. The EU requires committees to monitor the progress of the plans and to evaluate their roll-out, and a report on the progress of the neighbourhood policy is published every year. In addition to these bilateral plans, some interregional programs (offering assistance on a particular theme to a number of countries in the geographical area concerned) and cross-border programs (cooperation between regions of EU member states and partner countries on either side of the EU's external border) have also been launched. The European Commission provides financial aid, which can be supplemented by loans from the European Investment Bank (EIB) or the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development (EBRD). As with pre-accession programs, the management of cross-border cooperation programs is premised on the existence of a common framework of shared rules, with the objective of establishing a balanced partnership between the different partners. A project cannot begin until it has been jointly established on both sides of the border. Management is carried out by a local or regional authority situated in an EU member state. Projects must fall within one of the four main strategic areas, namely promoting economic and social development on both sides of the border; overcoming common challenges in the environmental and health sectors and the fight against crime; securing borders; and promoting cross-border activities to bring people closer together.

For the 2014–2020 programming period, three types of cross-border cooperation programs have been developed. The first two involve the Nomenclature of Territorial Units of Statistics (NUTS) 3 regions of EU member states in partnership with regions of equivalent size in the non-member states. The programs are established on land borders or between regions separated by a narrow stretch of water (of a width less than 150 km). From the Norwegian Sea to the Black Sea, via the Baltic Sea, there are 12 cross-border programs principally involving Ukraine, Moldova, Belarus and Russia (including the Kaliningrad Oblast). For the Mediterranean Sea, only one program has been registered, organized around a maritime border (the Strait of Sicily), which brings together the southern provinces of Sicily and the coastal governorates of Tunisia, but does not include Malta, despite the fact that it is situated near the two territories.

Lastly, of the programs established on land borders, the Kolarctic program is an original case in terms of both the area involved (which gives it an interregional dimension) and its geographical characteristics. It covers an area on the northern fringe of Europe, along the shores of the Norwegian Sea and the Barents Sea. These largely forested territories are inhabited by a population acknowledged as indigenous peoples, the Sami in particular. The program seeks to promote cross-border cooperation, one aspect of which consists of combatting isolation and remoteness and fostering economic development in these very thinly settled areas. Norway, which is involved in this cooperation initiative, provides its own funding.

The third type of program brings together NUTS 2 regions of EU member states and regions of equivalent size in non-EU countries around a maritime space regarded both as a border and as a shared resource area. These programs cover the Baltic Sea, the Mediterranean basin, the Mid-Atlantic and the Black Sea. They may, if justified, include adjacent territories for certain actions. Of the 16 programs, two cover extremely extensive areas. The Mediterranean Sea Basin program includes 14 countries adjoining this maritime area. It is a region where the socio-economic contrasts between the northern and southern shores are particularly striking. The countries taking part in the programs have prioritized two broad policy directions out of the themes suggested by the European Commission: promoting social and economic development is one, and environmental management is the other. Within this framework, intercultural cooperation is regarded as a cross-cutting axis.

The Baltic Sea program also covers an extensive area, given that it includes Norway and Belarus in addition to the countries with a Baltic seaboard, as well as several distant Russian and Polish regions corresponding to the river basins of waterways emptying into the Baltic. Since the fight against pollution is one of the objectives targeted, it is important to include the whole range of authorities able to contribute to improving the condition of the environment. This program is linked to the macro-regional Strategy for the Baltic Sea Region (EUSBSR), which extends over a wider area and includes national authorities.

The other two programs are less extensive than those described above. The Black Sea program is designed to strengthen regional cooperation between the countries bordering the Black Sea. The program's perimeter, however, extends beyond the six Black Sea countries, since it also encompasses Caucasian countries (Armenia and Azerbaijan), Moldova and Greece. The issues addressed by the program concern both the

transportation of energy (since this is one of the routes used by tankers shipping the gas and oil produced in Russia and the countries bordering on the Caspian Sea to the rest of the world) and the conflicts in the Caucasus region. In contrast to the other three programs, which already existed during the last programming period, the Mid-Atlantic program only began in 2014. It is centred around Morocco (where it covers part of its territory along the Atlantic coast), the southern regions of Portugal, as well as Andalusia and the Canary Islands in Spain. It covers some of the ground covered by the Madeira-Azores-Canary Islands (MAC) Outermost Region program.

The ENI pursues six main objectives: to facilitate the emergence of a democratic framework; to enable regulatory convergence with the rules governing the single market; to manage the mobility of people; to encourage economic and social development; to establish an atmosphere based on confidence and good relations; and to enhance cooperation at different levels. It is within this last strand that the ENI cross-border cooperation programs fall. They take their inspiration from the cooperation policy of the Interreg programs, but they do not have the same objectives and this distinguishes them from the Pre-Accession Instrument, although they have similar implementation rules. Since partnerships have been developed at different scales, allowing both states and local authorities to be involved, the EU encourages local and regional authorities to share funding and resources and to develop joint strategies. ENP is above all regarded as a means of securing political stability in the areas neighbouring the EU. As such, it falls easily within the framework of European integration with a view to developing a large area of peace, and peace is associated with the idea of prosperity. However, the objective is not merely to develop partnerships but to propagate the political and economic model of democratic systems based on the rule of law, respect for individual freedom, human rights, the autonomy of local authorities and operating a capitalist economic system. For the EU, the idea is firmly to develop a joint approach to the external borders from within the EU and to secure a kind of integration without the countries concerned being members of the EU. This policy is aiming at establishing a new proximity framework of a sort between the EU and the countries on its borders. For the non-EU members, this policy could be considered as a form of imperialism, even it encourages economic development.

In this context, the Eastern Partnership differs markedly from the Southern Partnership. To the east, the concern of ENP is to ensure

good relations with the states situated between the EU and Russia, which have seen their geopolitical situation change upon gaining their independence. These states form a kind of middle zone between the EU and Russia. It is also a transit zone, characterised by the issue of energy transportation. However, although the ENP is intended to bring about and guarantee stability, it seems to be regarded by Russia as an instrument for propagating a political, ideological and cultural model that is detrimental to its interests. To the south, the Mediterranean area is seen as a space marked by fraught or fragile situations. The sea is like a physical discontinuity emphasising economic, political and socio-cultural disparities and marked by migratory tensions. While the eastern border seems to evoke a gradient, the southern border is more perceived as a sharp discontinuity revealing intense differences. Moreover, the ENI has shown its limitation after the revolution of the Arab Spring. Facing conflicts and sharply different situations, the EU had difficulties to respond to these concerns and do define a common long-term strategy shared by all members with the countries of the southern and eastern shore of the Mediterranean Sea. The relevance of this instrument is questioned regarding the prevention of conflicts on this external border and is certainly challenged by an approach based on security issues.

Cross-border cooperation policies are arranged like a set of concentric circles, in which the EU and the European non-member countries already taking part in Interreg programs (Switzerland and Norway) lie at the centre, with the EU candidate countries in the next circle as potentially future members of the centre, ENP states (including Russia) as an associated periphery, and the remaining countries in the world on the outside. However, this arrangement comes up against the fact that the ENP takes account of the differences that exist between individual countries and, consequently, that it is difficult to harmonize practices in the short term across the whole range of programs. Moreover, one could ask whether this policy is capable of reducing existing political and economic disparities, which can sometimes be considerable. The ENI is an instrument to reduce tensions on the external borders of the EU. For the moment, persisting tensions still exist on external borders and one can question the capability of the existing framework like the UfM or the maritime Basin to elaborate a shared vision of a future common development. Moreover, some important issues seem to be ignored, like migration. This means that the ENP should be articulated with other policies and that bilateral agreements would perhaps be useful to

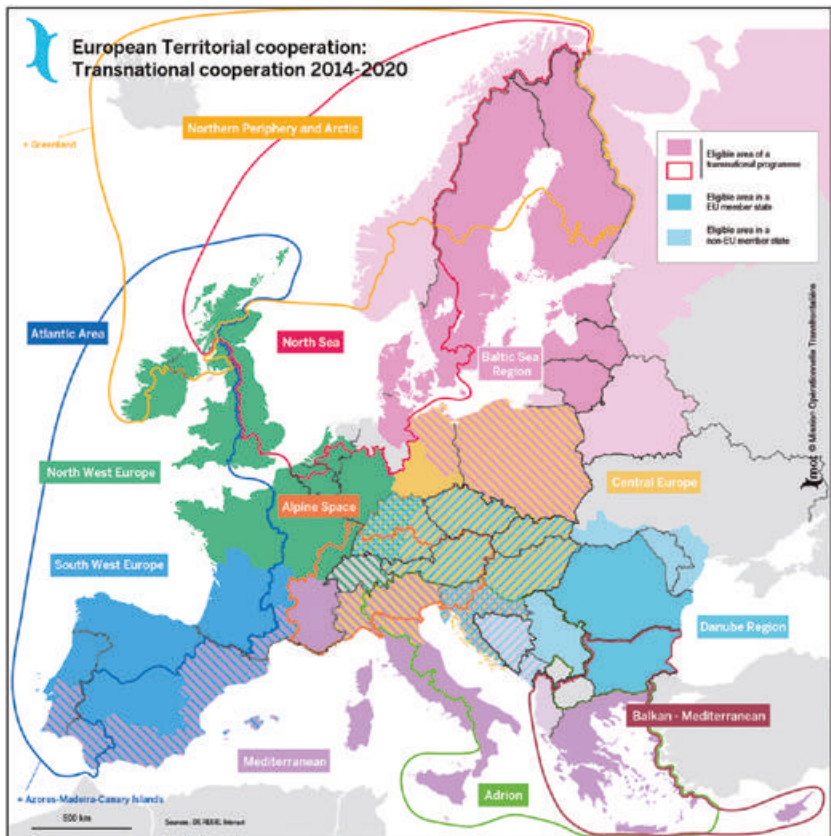
take into account the diversity of situations of all the countries in the Mediterranean area and the eastern area. If for the EU, the ENP appears as a means to have a coherent and integrated policy, it is not the case for the involved states. Developing a partnership could be seen either as an opportunity (of a financial, political or symbolic nature) or as a constraint, or even as a subtle form of domination, depending on the case.

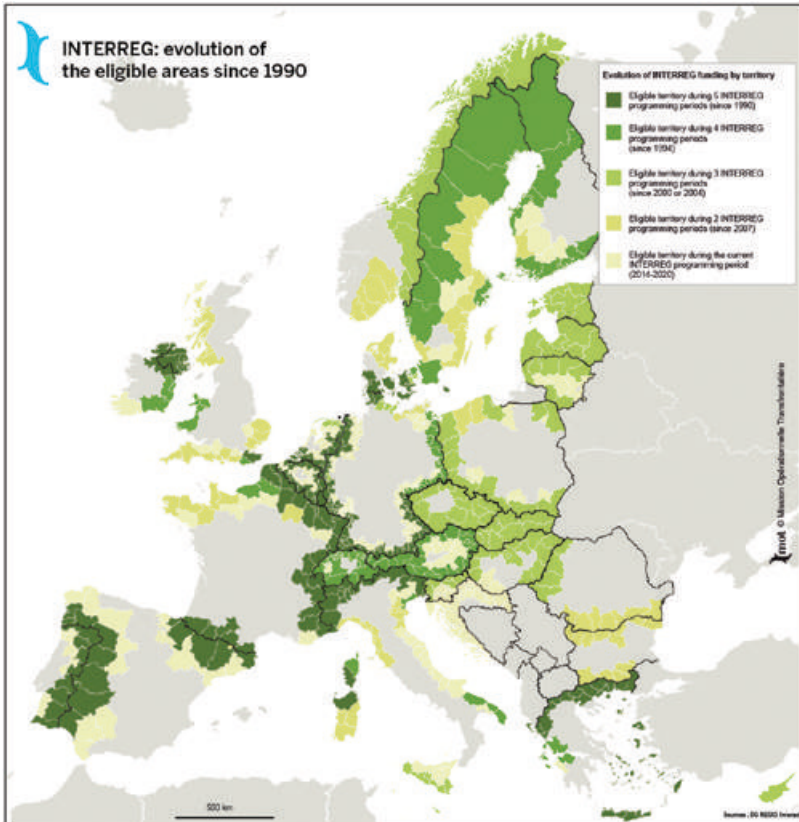
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European Territorial Cooperation (ETC)





Since 2007, European Territorial Cooperation (ETC) has become a fully-fledged objective of the European Union (EU)'s Regional Policy. It has replaced the Community Initiative program (CIP) Interreg, which had been introduced in 1990 by the European Commission in order to support cross-border cooperation at the border regions of the European Community. ETC was linked to the Lisbon Treaty of 2007, which underlined economic, social and territorial cohesion as one of its main objectives and explicitly mentioned cross-border regions in Art. 174. They were intended to play an active role in the construction of an EU integrated social and economic space.

Still continuing to go under the name of Interreg, ETC aims at regional integration at various scales: cross-border cooperation (local cooperation between neighbouring regions separated by a frontier), trans-national

cooperation (cooperation over large areas) and interregional cooperation (networked cooperation on a pan-European scale). It financially supports the three “classical” Interreg strands of cross-border (A), transnational (B) and interregional (C) cooperation, but also adds two new instruments in order to assist regional development along the EU’s external borders: the Instrument of Pre-Accession (IPA) and the European Neighbourhood Policy Instrument (ENPI).

ETC has so far seen two program periods, Interreg IV (2007–2013) and Interreg V (2014–2020). The current ETC period consists of over 100 programs, 60 of which are in strand A, 15 in strand B, 12 under IPA and 16 under ENPI, to which one should add strand C, with Interreg Europe, and the three networking programs already present in Interreg IV (URBACT, INTERACT and the European Observation Network for Territorial Development and Cohesion (ESPON)). It covers all the border areas of the 28 member states, the members of the European Free Trade Association (EFTA) and the neighbouring states of the EU, within boundaries that in some cases have been extended to the point where some countries (Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Slovenia, Slovakia, Sweden, etc.) are entirely or almost entirely covered by the eligible area. This is particularly the case with the countries that have joined the EU since 1995. Compared to previous Interreg programs, ETC has included more maritime regions and this mostly affects those countries that have been involved the longest in Interreg, such as Denmark, France, Italy and the United Kingdom, but also Greece and Sweden. In fact, the European Commission has been taking the maritime aspects of borders more into account, which proves that the border is no longer regarded as a discontinuity but rather as an interface.

ETC has become an essential component of the EU’s regional policy. Overall, fund management and project implementation are often the responsibility of local and regional stakeholders, but EU support is not provided unless the project complies with a certain number of rules and principles. Eligible territories are always cross-border areas (in the sense that they bring together regions located in adjoining countries) but their spatial organisation and the forms that integration takes are often appreciably different. Strand A helps to tie cross-border regions together by supporting local and regional stakeholders in a framework of proximity. Strand B aims to promote cohesion around common spatial planning issues over large areas covering several countries; it encourages the establishment of governance structures in order to draw up strategies

and action plans. Strand C is intended as a cooperation framework for fostering interaction between local and regional stakeholders throughout the EU on a networking basis.

These instances of cooperation at different scales, which make use of different forms of distance management, can be regarded as test beds for European integration, since cooperation requires the stakeholders, who are all grounded in their national territories, to demonstrate inventiveness and establish calm and constructive relations with their foreign partners while at the same time implementing measures designed by the European Commission.

Overall, ETC takes the form of a set of extremely elaborate instruments of integration, which transcend national borders and turn them into interfaces that link territories at scales and around issues that are both different and complementary. By encouraging partnership approaches, they make it possible to go beyond existing national frameworks while still according them due respect. ETC can thus be seen as an EU integration policy that establishes relations between local and regional border stakeholders and the European institutions, while fostering horizontal links across borders.

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Euroregion (Concept)

Euroregion (also Euregio, Euroregion, Europaregion) designates a category of territorial organisations gathering subnational public authorities along adjacent national border(s). This community of interest provides a platform for cross-border exchange along with dialogue and projects between local and/or regional authorities. Its geographical coverage is defined by its members, either based on the extent of cross-border, socio-economic integration or on administrative units. A Euroregion is oriented towards the interests of the cross-border community rather than the interests of each individual member. Its activities are circumscribed to the field of competencies held by its members. A Euroregion therefore does not represent a genuine administrative level. Fields of cooperation cover mostly planning, environment, transport, education and culture.

Given their heterogeneity in terms of name, perimeter, legal structure and organisation, we use the plural for these projects beneficial to citizens and local organisations, while contributing to peaceful neighbourhood relationships in Europe. In terms of organisation, they are established permanently, have separate identity from their members, have their own administrative, technical and financial resources, along with their own decision-making processes. The definition elaborated by the Association of European Border Regions (AEBR) in 1997 remains relevant to characterize them: First, concerning functioning and management: we are dealing with an association gathering local or regional authorities along national borders, sometimes with a parliamentary assembly, or a cross-border organisation with a permanent secretariat, experts and administrative staff. Second, concerning the legal structure: it might be established according to private law based on national associations or foundations from both sides of the border according to the respective law, or according to public law based on international treaties which also regulate the membership of regional authorities.

Euroregions have been at the forefront of local cross-border dialogue in Europe following the Second World War. The first Euroregion was the "Euregio" at the German-Dutch border in 1958. Their emergence is concomitant to other initiatives at local level (e.g., twin cities, and cross-border working communities such as the Regio Basiliensis, Alpe Adria or Rhein-Waal) and European level encouraging cooperation between local authorities. They emerged along the Benelux states, German, French and Swiss borders to then expand along the other

European Union (EU) borders to the whole Europe, at the pace of the enlargement process.

Their development has been partly supported by the Council of Europe and the EU. In the framework of the Madrid Convention and in particular its 3rd Protocol which came into force on 1st March 2013, the Council of Europe allows for the creation of the Euroregional Cooperation Groupings (ECGs). Specifically designed to provide Euroregions a dedicated legal status, only seven states have ratified this protocol (France, Cyprus, Germany, Russia, Slovenia, Switzerland and Ukraine) and no structure of this kind has been created until 2020. In addition, the Congress of Local and Regional Authorities of the Council of Europe supported the creation of large scale Euroregions promoting the development and integration of territories along semi-closed seas such as the Adriatic Sea and the Black Sea (i.e., Adriatic Euroregion et de Black Sea Euroregion).

The Interreg programs and Euroregions have reinforced each other. The creation of the Interreg programs in the 1990s allowed Euroregions to seek funding for projects. This reveals to be crucial for cross-border entities with sparse financial resources. As they are equipped with their own administration, they are sufficiently impartial to host, administer and manage programs in the eyes of the European Commission and of the member states associated to Interreg programs.

The creation of the European Grouping for Territorial Cooperation (EGTC) by the EU in 2006 provides a legal structure dedicated to the facilitation of cross-border, interregional and transnational cooperation. This represents a turning point in legal terms for European cross-border cooperation insofar as it provides a unified EU-wide tool for cross-border cooperation and it also encourages the institutionalisation of cross-border cooperation. However, these aspects are lacking on the side of Euroregions, although nothing prevents *a priori* a Euroregion from adopting the legal status of the EGTC to strengthen its legal capacity while keeping its name.

Euroregions can suffer from a lack resources, visibility, and willingness to implement concrete projects. This can be partly explained by the specificities outlined earlier and by the classic challenges for cross-border cooperation (e.g., asymmetric competencies). However, equipped with a strong knowledge of the cross-border areas, Euroregions are often close to the civil society and to socio-economic actors. In political terms

and symbolically, Euroregions therefore remain crucial structures for cross-border cooperation in the EU. After all, they contribute to create centrality in areas that used to be at the margins.

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Euroregion (Overview)

How many Euroregions are currently active in Europe? How are they geographically and chronologically distributed? How does cross-border governance work? These questions have been widely asked by both the epistemic community and institutions in order to better understand local and regional cross-border cooperation. We argue that Euroregions truly matter: they are a symbol of communal living across borders, give shape to the diversity of the European continent, and are present across most European Union (EU) borders.

While there has not been an official EU compilation of “Euroregional experiences”, there have been some attempts from institutions and academia to collect and categorize these phenomena. Euroregions can vary a great deal in their structure and function depending on factors like the context of the border and the number and typology of involved actors. According to our recent research, more than 300 European territorial cooperation structures are listed in academic and institutional databases. However, since there lacks an official or universally accepted definition of a Euroregion, some of the listed organisations could not be defined as such (like forums of exchanging experiences or intergovernmental panels). Euroregions can be defined as organisations that cover a cross-border territory and/or provide specific services for the population in a border area (i.e., cross-border equipment). The organisation represents a shared desire to cooperate across borders, which is then reinforced by a public institution and ultimately results in joint activities. In the aforementioned study, 267 Euroregional structures have been identified; however, no prior listing or web resource was effectively able to distinguish the “active” from the “inactive” structures (which generally become inactive due to a lack of political and/or financial support). Through heuristic investigation concluded in January 2017, we were able to record 158 active Euroregions generating cross-border cooperation projects, 16 working communities mainly managing EU funds and acting as policy forums, 13 cross-border equipment providers and 40 transboundary parks.

One of the fundamental steps towards understanding the explanatory patterns of Euroregions requires a closer look at their geographical and chronological distribution. The analysis has been applied to 61 selected cases (out of the 158 active Euroregions) for the “Catalogue of Euroregional

Good Practices”. The sample provides a balanced representation in terms of geographical distribution, institutional framework and agents involved.

Since the 1970s, the increasing number of Euroregions is remarkable and we can identify their emergence across three main chronological stages. First, 13 Euroregions were created earlier than 1990, whereby the prevalence of such initial cooperative structures was most apparent in the 1970s (except for the Euregio Gronau created in 1958). These initial cross-border organisations were mainly located in Western and Northern Europe, in which Dutch and German borders are acknowledged as pioneer spaces of cross-border cooperation in Europe (i.e., Benelux, Euregio Gronau, and many twin-towns). These original cross-border structures were usually developed under weak institutional and financial frameworks. Subsequently, 22 Euroregions emerged during the 1990s, primarily in Central Europe, due to the financial subsidies provided by the Interreg programs and the general trends established under the Madrid Convention (1980). These Euroregions appeared predominantly across the borders of the Czech Republic, Slovakia, Poland and the Baltic States. Finally, 26 Euroregions appeared in the first decade of the 2000s evenly distributed along the EU borders, many of which were inspired by the newly established Territorial Cooperation Policy of the EU, a consequence of the reform of the Cohesion Policy in 2007. In this last phase, the increase of Euroregions in Eastern and Southern Europe is particularly remarkable.

The majority of Euroregion organisations cover two sides of just one border (bilateral cross-border Euroregions). However, there are also Euroregions involving three or more states and others which cover areas belonging to non-EU member states. Good examples of multilateral cross-border cooperation structures include the Adriatic-Ionian Euroregion (Croatia, Italy and Greece, plus Albania, Bosnia Herzegovina and Montenegro), the Baltic Euroregion (Denmark, Lithuania, Poland and Sweden plus Russia) and the Carpathian Euroregion (Hungary, Poland, Slovakia and Romania plus Ukraine).

Euroregions generally rely on a variety of legal models for institutionalisation. The main legal instruments adopted consist of Public Law Agreements (29 cases), the European Grouping of Territorial Cooperation (EGTC) (17), Non-governmental Organisation (NGO) status (11) and other formulas such as the European Grouping of Economic Interest (EGEI) or the Local Grouping of Territorial Cooperation (LGTC). Cross-border governance is an essential aspect

of building a Euroregion and is mostly dominated by a strong (and sometimes exclusive) leadership of public actors, who are also the main advocates for cross-border projects. Local and supra-local authorities are leading the Euroregional phenomena in 44 and 41 cases respectively out of 61, whereas regional authorities appear to be less involved. The great majority of these organisations have also a multilevel character, by including territorial agents at different administrative levels.

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Euroregion Alentejo-Algarve-Andalucia (EuroAAA)*

The southern stretch of the Spanish-Portuguese boundary originated from the signature of different bilateral agreements between the kingdoms of Portugal and Castile: Badajoz (1267), Alcañices (1297), and Alcaçovas-Toledo (1479). As a reaction, in order to defend their territories, parallel fortified cities were built along the Guadiana river (Alcoutim-Sanlúcar de Guadiana or Castro Marim-Ayamonte). In any case, it is not possible to refer to a modern boundary between two nation-states until first 1864, with the Treaty of Lisbon, and then 1926, once the Convention of Limits was signed between Spain and Portugal: this agreement was meant to delimitate the boundary from the confluence of two rivers (Cundo and Guadiana) to the river mouth into the Atlantic.

Moreover, and despite the fortifications on both sides of the river, the Guadiana river has historically been an axis for commercial flows, a contact point between Portuguese and Spanish societies: mixed marriages, informal economy, trade or smuggling have been normal patterns on this border. The Guadiana river –which runs through Spain (578 km) and Portugal (140 km) – is only used as the international limit through 100 km of its course. Hence, the extended idea of the Guadiana river as the natural frontier that divides Spain and Portugal has to be dismissed.

Today, three regions are included in the Euroregion Alentejo-Algarve-Andalucia (EuroAAA) which extends from the Atlantic to the Mediterranean Sea basins. The border area between these two Portuguese regions and the Spanish autonomous region of Andalusia can be defined in general terms as a marginal and rural area, although two very different sectors can be identified: A small Southern stretch along the navigable Guadiana river (51 km) and the Atlantic coast (Algarve and Western Andalusia). Here, connection infrastructure is robust, for example the International Bridge over the Guadiana River built in 1991, which links a very modest urban system from Faro (61 073 inhabitants) in Algarve (to Huelva (145 115 inhabitants) in Andalusia. Both cities are situated more than 50 km away from the boundary. Agrarian and industrial activities are important, although tourism is the key economic asset of this area; notably, Algarve gathers half of the total hotel rooms in Portugal. A larger interior northern sector of the border is less structured, with

* For the map, see article 'Eurocities on the Spanish-Portuguese Border'.

low population density, high depopulation, ageing indexes and scarce incomes.

Andalusia is the second largest region in Spain and its more Eastern point is situated more than 600 km away from the international limit. In total, EuroAAA represents 23.5 % of the total Spanish-Portuguese land area and 16.8 % of the population. Hence, although cross-border agreements at a regional policy level deal with the whole Euroregion, real cross-border interactions occur around the areas more connected to the boundary, mainly around the Guadiana river.

As regards the origin of the Euroregion, Interreg programs seem to have played a key role in its inception. Indeed, two bilateral agreements establishing two Working Communities were signed prior to the trilateral agreement: Andalusia-Algarve in 1995 and Andalusia-Alentejo in 2001. In 2002, Spain and Portugal signed the Treaty of Valencia, an international treaty dealing with cross-border cooperation under the framework of the 1981 Madrid Outline Convention. This led to a new trilateral agreement in 2010, in accordance to this international treaty. The former Working Communities were dissolved and a new Working Community Euroregion Alentejo-Algave-Andalucia was created, usually called Euroregion AAA or EuroAAA. Interestingly, Article 16 of this new agreement opened the possibility to constitute a European Grouping of Territorial Cooperation (EGTC), which has not happened until now.

This agreement also established four main topics of cooperation: fostering competitiveness and promoting employment; environment, natural and cultural heritage; accessibility and spatial planning; and fostering social and economic integration. These four topics are exactly the same as the priority axes of the Spanish-Portuguese program for Cross-Border Cooperation (POCTEP) funded by Interreg (2007–2013). Once again, the relevance of European Union (EU) funding is a key to understand cross-border agreements. Until 2007, Interreg projects were mainly focused on infrastructures: three bridges were built over the Guadiana river. For the financial period 2007–2013, Interreg funds have been more focused on social and business issues, in particular tourism.

As it has been the case in other European contexts, the Europe 2020 Strategy impelled a Euroregional strategic document (*Plan de Acción de Cooperación Transfronteriza*) which was adopted in 2012. It provided for the establishment of three geographical spaces for cross-border action: the

border area, the South Atlantic area, and the Euroregion as a whole. This threefold spatial division was linked to the aforementioned aspect of the Euroregion being a large territory: a special attention was placed on fostering cross-border projects mainly in the area more directly affected by the international boundary around the Guadiana River.

EuroAAA is a trilateral structure where differences between Spanish and Portuguese regions are visible. The regional government of Andalusia (the *Junta de Andalucía*) leads cooperation through the General Secretary of External Action, directly attached to the Presidency Department. This also explains its role as lead partner in the Cabinet for Cross-Border Initiatives (*Gabinete de Iniciativas Transfronterizas AAA*), created in 2003. The one-side leadership may result in weak results of cross-border cooperation: for example, a recent publication celebrating 15 years of the EuroAAA, edited by the Andalusia General Secretary of External Action, has only been published in Spanish (not in Portuguese). Key topics for an integrated and articulated cross-border territory, such as spatial planning, are also far from being a reality.

Cross-border cooperation within Interreg programs is still controlled by the regional policy level (corresponding to the EU geographical Nomenclature of Territorial Units for Statistics (NUTS) area 2). With more than 125 000 km² and 9.5 million inhabitants, representing more surface area than the whole Portugal and almost the same population, the border areas and the people of this Euroregion may be forgotten. Border problems can only be solved if cross-border projects focus in the future on more restricted, clearly defined border territories (NUTS 3 and EU Local Administrative Unit (LAU) corresponding to municipalities) and problems associated to them seems absolutely necessary.

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Euroregion Alentejo-Centro-Extremadura (EUROACE)*

The central part of the Spanish-Portuguese border responded in the 1970s to the definition of “underdeveloped”, as journalists Pintado and Barrenechea precisely defined it in their famous book. This territory has historically suffered from its peripheral situation, accentuated during four decades of Iberian dictatorships. The Friendship and Cooperation Treaty signed between the new democratic Spanish and Portuguese governments in 1977 launched a new era of contacts. The closed and guarded boundary started to open, with the 1986 Spanish and Portuguese accession to the European Economic Community (EEC). European Union (EU) structural funds have been of great importance to regions like Extremadura (Spain), Centro and Alentejo (Portugal), categorised under the objective 1 in the 1990s, mainly for infrastructural projects. In addition, Interreg programs were warmly welcomed in order to overcome the barrier effects of the border. However, the regions belonging to the so-called EUROACE are still below national and EU demographic and economic average.

The around 100 000 km² of EUROACE represents 19 % of the Portuguese-Spanish territory, but only 7 % of the population. The Centre Region concentrates more than half of the population (2.2 million inhabitants) and it has a density of 80 inhabitants/km². Extremadura (26 inhabitants/km²) and Alentejo (23 inhabitants/km²) are far behind. The figures are still worse if only bordering municipalities are examined. This border area has been increasingly losing population since the 1980s. It is mainly a rural space with worrying ageing indexes and a low number of young people; there is only one relevant bordering city (Badajoz, in Extremadura with 150 000 inhabitants). Alentejo is a huge depopulated region, with strong outmigration; in the Central Region, population and economic activities concentrate in coastal areas in cities like Aveiro and Coímbra.

Gross Domestic Product (GDP) per capita is around 16 000 euros, which represents 60 % of the EU average. Employment is concentrated in public administration, education, commercial, and restaurant sectors, with some relevance of the primary sector. The economic structure of the area overall is weak with very small companies and a strong reliance on

* For the map, see article ‘Eurocities on the Spanish-Portuguese Border’.

the public sector (Extremadura is the region in Spain with the highest level of public occupation at 25.5 % of its workers, while for example, regions such as Catalonia or the Balearic Islands are around 10 %). Cross-border trade has increased in recent years, mainly related to the primary sector and clothing. It seems that natural resources connected to landscape agricultural products and energy are largely the main tools used to promote the region. It is far from Iberian nodes seeking to take advantage of possible transport lines, such as the desired but never accomplished high speed train line between Lisbon-Madrid, which is only under construction from Madrid to the border (Badajoz).

Institutionalised cross-border cooperation started in the 1990s in parallel with the first Interreg programs. Two bilateral cooperation protocols were signed between the Government of Extremadura and Portuguese Regional Coordination and Development Commissions (CCDR) of Alentejo (1992) and Centro (1994) respectively. Two working communities were established, with three technical and administrative support called Cabinets for Cross-Border Initiatives (*Gabinete de Iniciativas Transfronterizas*, GIT). These bi-lateral cross-border relations converged into a new trilateral structure in 2009, the Euroregion Alentejo, Center, Extremadura (EUROACE) under the 2002 Treaty of Valencia (an international treaty signed between Spain and Portugal under 1980 European Outline Convention on Transfrontier Cooperation between Territorial Communities or Authorities of the Council of Europe). This was the first cross-border structure with more than two regions in the Spanish-Portuguese context and also the first one to be officially named Euroregion. EUROACE takes the form of a *convênio*, constituting a body with no legal personality which substitutes the former two working communities. Main areas of cooperation according to this agreement are: agriculture, natural resources and environment; civil protection, local and rural development and spatial planning; regional competitiveness, innovation and technological development; energy, transport and communications; heritage, culture and tourism; education and employment; youth and sport; and health and social services. In 2010 a EUROACE 2020 Strategy was presented with four main objectives: more territory, more competitiveness, more citizenship, and more EUROACE.

After almost three decades of cross-border cooperation programs, mainly funded by Interreg, there has been a significant number of projects undertaken. An updated review of the activities can be followed through

EUROACE yearbook, available on its website. Some of them seek to have a strong impact in the territory, as the two projects focused on cross-border protected natural areas called *Téjo International* and *Alqueva International*, both of which have a clear touristic approach. In fact, tourism has been one of the key issues for cooperation as the different publications on the subject funded by Interreg show. In addition, a cross-border territorial observatory has been launched, and is available online (OTALEX-C).

Cultural and language activities should also be highlighted such as theatre, music, sport, festivals. In this regard, efforts coming from Extremadura to spread Portuguese culture and language in the region are worth mentioning. The offer of Portuguese language courses is the most determined and long standing in Spanish regions, even more than in Galicia (Galician and Portuguese languages are much closer to each other than Spanish and Portuguese). In fact, the Extremadura regional publication office launched a learning series on Portuguese studies, with more than 30 titles. Besides, projects mainly led by regional authorities through EUROACE and Interreg, several initiatives have come from civil society such as the gathering of entrepreneurs in different forums and fairs including *Feria Hispano-Portuguesa* (FEHISPOR) and *Feria Rayana* (Border Fair).

As it is usually the case in Portuguese-Spanish relations at regional level, the Extremadura region plays a stronger role in EUROACE due to its autonomous capacity for policymaking and an absence of devolved powers in its Portuguese counterparts. In fact, EUROACE can be considered a branch of Extremaduran international relations, led by the General Director for External Action. Interestingly, Extremadura has historically been a very active member of the Association of European Border Regions (AEBR), whose Secretary General, Martín Guillermo, worked previously for Extremadura government. Hence, cross-border cooperation at regional level (EUROACE) is now in place for a long time and will probably continue in the medium term. At the local level, weak demographic parameters of this border area make it complicated to build intense relations between both sides of the border. One exception is the Eurocity Badajoz-Elvas, created in 2013. However, due to significant differences between both municipalities – Badajoz is the most populated city in Extremadura and capital of the province, whilst Elvas, 20 kilometres away, is a small town of approximately 15 000 inhabitants – Elvas could in the end be subsumed by its counterpart.

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Euroregion Baltic



Euroregion Baltic is a solid network in the southern shores of the Baltic Sea, composed of ten members: nine regions of Denmark (Bornholm), Sweden (Blekinge, Kalmar, Kronoberg and Skåne, the latter since January 2019), Poland (Warmia-Masuria and Pomerania), Lithuania (Klaipeda), Russia (Kaliningrad), and the Association of Polish Communes of Euroregion Baltic. These regions opted to form a Euroregion in 1998 which set the basis for long-lasting political cooperation aimed at boosting cross-border relations for economic, social, and political development. The Euroregion Baltic is also the first Euroregion to formally include a Russian partner, proving the possibility to handle sensible cross-border issues or challenges in a friendly and trustful atmosphere.

The Euroregion was formally created on 22 February 1998 in Malbork, Poland through the signing of a founding agreement by local and regional representatives from border areas of six countries: Poland (Elbląg, Gdańsk, Olsztyn and Słupsk), Sweden (Blekinge region), Latvia (Liepaja), Russia (Kaliningrad Oblast), Denmark (Bornholm) and Lithuania (Klaipėda). This kind of cross-border interrelation became a trend in Poland in the 1990s, and it was defined as, “a form of cooperation within cross-border service and employment areas traversed by all kind of flows.”

The political cooperation enacted by the Euroregion Baltic has allowed for the establishment of the South Baltic cross-border cooperation program as joint efforts promoted within the Euroregion made it possible for the programme to be launched in 2007. As a result, the Euroregion Baltic could be developed quickly into a project-based cross-border cooperation focussing on the South Baltic seashores. In fact, as a lobbyist association, it brought into light the necessity of developing a programme that could allocate European Union (EU) funds and take advantage of the full potential of the South Baltic region while allowing for a connection between the Euroregion Baltic, Euroregion Pomerania, and the South Baltic Four Corners Cooperation.

Since its foundation, Euroregion Baltic understood the importance of making use of EU opportunities to ensure the implementation of projects that could help the objectives of economic growth in the region: industry, agriculture, transport, communication, spatial planning, environmental protection, cooperation in the fields of science, education, tourism, health care, etc. Therefore, in 2000 the Euroregion Baltic undertook the management of the Small Projects Fund (SPF) in the frame of the Poland and Hungary Assistance for Restructuring of the Economy (PHARE) program (National Operation Program 2000 – Poland’s Eastern Border). The Small Projects Fund had the mandate to support the Integrated Strategy for the Eastern Border facing the development challenges on both sides of the frontier. Activities provided support on the development of local democracy, planning and development research, economic growth, training for small and medium businesses, human resources. To face the challenges met by local governments, in particular, that hampered the submission of applications in the Small Project Fund, the Association of Polish Communes of Euroregion Baltic committed to construct platforms for networking and to provide training programs and projects. Despite the difficulties, the SPF was of high importance in the development of the Euroregion’s eastern border,

also for the fact that the eligible applicants were based in the Polish part of Euroregion Baltic.

Besides the experience as co-managing authority for the PHARE program, Euroregion Baltic has always been promoter of capacity building thanks to the implementation of important projects like Euroregion Baltic 2002+ (revision of the statutes and common vision for the future); Seagull DevERB (draft of a Joint Development Program for social, environmental and cultural sustainability in the region, territorial cohesion, economic growth and competitiveness); and Seagull II (long-term development Strategy and annual Action Plans, trainings and seminars on the main EU policies and programs). In the programming period 2007–2013, the Euroregion Baltic followed the same path with the capacity building project, whose background relies on demand for funding cross-border cooperation among local public authorities, publicly-owned corporations, regional public authorities, universities and Non Governmental Organisations (ONGs). The project consortium provided support in strengthening the capacity of the target groups to prepare, submit, and implement projects for the Interreg South Baltic Program. Following in this manner, the Euroregion Baltic is now the lead partner of the Umbrella project, whose scope is to provide specific knowledge and skills in the implementation of goals and cross-border cooperation for local and regional entities in the South Baltic Region, an important tool to deliver better and sustainable policies at the local level.

Due to the fast development of the Euroregion Baltic, an International Permanent Secretariat was established in 2004 to work as a semi-independent entity for the Euroregion, but hosted by the Association of Polish Communes of Euroregion Baltic (Elbląg, Poland). The same year another vital decision for the financial sustainability of the organization was the introduction of membership fees from the member states. The financial liquidity was essential to ensure that the Euroregion Baltic will continue to be able to expand its scope and activities. Moreover, the Euroregion Baltic adopted and has been working with the following structure: a Presidency which rotates every year and is given to each of the member regions; an Euroregion Baltic Executive Board formed by nine members (one from each of the nine regions); and a Youth Board.

The Euroregion Baltic Youth Board was established in 2007 after a recommendation from the Euroregion Baltic Board and approval from the Euroregion Baltic Council. The Youth Board is also formed by nine youth members from each of the nine regions participating in Euroregion

Baltic. It manages a budget, which allows it to be able to design and co-finance concrete projects. To this end, the Euroregion Baltic is among the first Euroregions to fully include and involve youth representatives in their decision-making process. Other working groups were also established (e.g., innovation/Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs), rural development; tourism development, transport infrastructure, social dimension, water forum, energy forum, Kaliningrad environment, and People-to-people cooperation). However, to date only the Water Core Group is active.

Gradually, the Euroregion Baltic has been taking concrete initiatives such as the Euroregion Baltic Water Core Group to boost macroregional cooperation in the broader area of the South Baltic Sea to address various challenges. The goal of the group is the realization of tangible measures and policies aiming to good ecological and chemical status in the Euroregion Baltic waters, as a base for sustainable development of the area. The Euroregion Baltic Water Core Group consists of members from all nine regions, in six different countries. The different members bring experience and information into the Water Core and it is essential that this knowledge is transferred back in the home regions.

The annual Action Plan of Euroregion Baltic reflects the expectations and ambitions of the Euroregion Baltic's stakeholders through transnational and cross border cooperation, while at the same time allows a better reporting on the achievements of the last year. The Euroregion Baltic action plan 2019 was adopted on 13 February 2019 at the beginning of the New Lithuanian presidency and is built around three main types of activities; Lobbying activities in order to represent and promote common interests, implementation of strategic initiatives and projects, and exchange of activities, to identify collaborative approach to common challenges.

The Euroregion Baltic puts very high in the agenda the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and Euroregion Baltic 2030 Agenda focuses on joint initiatives aiming at strengthening and promoting cooperation among the local and regional authorities of the parties of the agreement, as well as contributing to the sustainable development of the Baltic Sea Region (BSR). The localization and implementation of SDGs in the BSR will be effective only if it is followed from a top-down as well as a bottom-up governance approach. Nevertheless, the SDGs is an excellent tool to frame strategic documents and a mechanism that can be used to develop practical projects that can

make a very positive impact on the local level. Medium or small political organisations, such as the Euroregion Baltic, can play a very important role towards the achievement of the SDGs by raising awareness among people and by bringing together different stakeholders.

Moreover, the organization gives a special emphasis on youth participation, especially through Capacity building for Youth Policy and Strategic Transnational Cooperation (CaSYPoT). CaSYPoT is an ambitious project that was approved and granted by Interreg South Baltic in 2016 involving universities, politicians, and youth, enhancing youth participation in the decision-making process in selected municipalities around the Baltic sea. The project is targeting youth for raising their voice, participating in city councils, deciding for their matters and benefiting from youth policies.

Recently, through the framework of CaSYPot the Euroregion Baltic introduced the Youth Strategy for Euroregion Baltic 2020+. The strategy is based on the results and analysis of the research that has been conducted among young people in Sweden, Lithuania, Poland and Russia's Kaliningrad. It seeks to tackle the major challenges that young people face in the area by providing the conceptual tools and recommendations to local stakeholders to design policies that will better include and empower the youth in the local, regional, national and translational level.

Looking towards the future the scope of the Euroregion Baltic is to enhance political cooperation by bringing territorial interests at European Union (EU) level. An example is the Position Paper on Cohesion Policy that presented a strong position for the continuation of the Interreg South Baltic, of which the Euroregion Baltic has been one of the initiators. Additionally, the Euroregion Baltic will seek to overhaul the youth participation in the area through various projects targeting the youth (CaSYPot, SIA4Y, YCGN) and to revitalize the Euroregion Baltic Youth Board in order to become more functional and effective. Green and Blue growth is among the main priorities of the Euroregion Baltic in the area through a smart specialization tool-kit that will be used as a way for obtaining concrete results.

Transport accessibility and improvement of commuting in the South Baltic is among the focus areas as well, especially through the successful implementation of the Interreg South Baltic and EU Strategy for the Baltic Sea Region's flagship project Interconnect. Interconnect brings together municipalities and regions in the South Baltic Sea Region, seeking

to reduce the usage of cars by citizens by providing attractive public transport solutions and a more efficient, sustainable, and convenient public transport service for regional, national, and cross-border travellers.

Last, the organization will continue developing transnational and macroregional strategies that will result in concrete actions to bring about a positive impact in the region. In the coming years the Euroregion Baltic aims to play an important role in regional forums by engaging in multi-stakeholder partnerships. To this end, its strategical partners are the Baltic Sea States Subregional Cooperation and the Union of the Baltic Cities in the field of youth cooperation, the Conference of Peripheral Maritime Regions (CPMR)'s Baltic Sea Commission for the regional aspects of the SDG implementation, and the Council of the Baltic Sea States in the field of youth and sustainable development activities identified in Baltic 2030 Action Plan.

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Euroregion Beskydy*

The Euroregion Beskydy was established in 2000 as the last Euroregion founded at Czech-Polish border, gathering Czech, Polish and Slovak members. Originally a Polish-Slovak construction, the Czechs joined after some months. The Euroregion covers an area where three West-Slavic languages are spoken: Czech and Slovak, due to the common history of Czechoslovakia, are mutually understood, whereas Polish is more distant – however, in general, the language barrier is rather minor. There is almost no mental barrier between Czechia and Slovakia.

The name of the Euroregion comes from the Beskids mountain range, which is shared by all three countries and characterizes the entire territory of Euroregion. The Euroregion covers 6343 km² with approximately 1 385 000 inhabitants living in 181 municipalities, including 843 000 Poles, 295 000 Slovaks, and 246 000 Czech citizens.

Members of Euroregion are mainly municipalities from the three sides of the border, but on the Czech side it also includes regions and on the Polish side districts. The Euroregion is created by three independent entities bearing the legal form of association of municipalities and districts. The governance authority of the Euroregion takes the form of a bilateral general meeting.

Geography is a real challenge for the Euroregion. Despite gathering members from three countries, there is no direct access to the Polish-Czech border territory because the bilateral Czech-Polish Euroregion Tesin/Cieszyn Silesia is located between them. As the Czech and Polish members of the Euroregion are more distant from each other, their bilateral cross-border cooperation is more complicated.

A similar situation can be observed for most Czech-Polish Euroregions which are controlled by municipalities, influencing the management of cross-border cooperation. Their main goal is the implementation of small-scale projects, which mainly address the fields of regional promotion, culture, and sports. Hence, cross-border actors have used mainly the Interreg program and its micro projects/small projects funds, which have been administered and distributed by the Czech and Polish sides of the Euroregion for the Czech-Polish program. The other two programs, the Slovak-Czech and Polish-Slovak ones, have organised micro projects

* For the map, see article 'TRITIA'.

distribution differently and the Euroregional secretariats have different or no role in their direct implementation. The real contribution of the Euroregion towards eliminating barriers in cross-border cooperation is less significant than in other Czech-Polish Euroregions. This is caused by the fact that the total allocation for the micro projects is much lower than for the other five Euroregions situated on the Czech-Polish border. The possibility to administer the micro project fund was the main motivation for establishing this Euroregion as a trilateral construction with Czech participation. In conclusion, it can therefore be maintained that the Euroregion is partly an artificial construction created with an ambition to manage the Interreg funds.

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Euroregion Cieszyn Silesia*

Cieszyn Silesia is a special region of the Polish-Czech borderland. Originally, the land belonged to the Great Moravian Empire and before 991 it was part of Poland. At the turn of 1289–1290, Cieszyn Silesia achieved the status of the separate Duchy of Teschen, which, was incorporated in 1327 into the Bohemian Kingdom. In 1653, when the Piast dynasty came to an end, the Habsburg dynasty took ownership of the Duchy and it remained in their hands until 1918. At that time a conflict arose between the two new states founded after the demise of the Austro-Hungarian Empire and the territorial reduction of Germany: Poland and Czechoslovakia. Cieszyn Silesia was the subject of contestation and on 28 July 1920, it was divided in two parts, following a decision from the Conference of Ambassadors in Spa, Belgium. The consequences of this artificial division of a historically, ethnographically and socially unified region was that thousands of Poles found themselves located in Czechoslovakia – a fact which has significantly influenced mutual Polish-Czech relations resulting in animosities, grudges and conflicts. The intensification of Polish-Czech relations occurred in the divided region after 1989 enabling the establishment of the Cieszyn Silesia Euroregion.

The Euroregion is situated in the borderland area in southern Poland and the north-eastern Czech Republic, in the proximity of Slovakia. It covers an area of 1730 km² and has a population of 672 000, with 360 000 living on the Czech side and 312 000 on the Polish side. The River Olza is a natural axis in the territory; Cieszyn and Czech Cieszyn (Český Těšín) are situated on its banks and both towns form together the core of the region.

Cieszyn Silesia is also one of the youngest Euroregions in Poland. The agreement on its establishment was signed on 22 April 1998 by the Olza Association of Development and Regional Cooperation and the Regional Association of Czech-Polish Cooperation of the Cieszyn Silesia (*Regionální sdružení pro česko-polskou spolupráci Těšínského Slezska*), which changed its name in 2008 to Regional Association of Territorial Cooperation of the Cieszyn Silesia (*Regionální sdružení územní spolupráce Těšínského Slezska*). The Polish side of the Euroregion comprises 16 municipalities of the Silesian Voivodeship and one district, the Cieszyn District. The Czech side encompasses 42 municipalities united in three associations, 12 companies and 8 Non-Governmental Organizations (ONGs).

* For the map, see article 'TRITIA'.

The Cieszyn Silesia Euroregion has many objectives: exchange of experience and information concerning region's development and labour market; the cooperation in development planning; solving of common problems with transportation, traffic and communication as well as citizens' security; solution of shared problems concerning ecology and natural environment; cooperation in the scope of prevention and elimination of natural disasters consequences; cooperation in the sphere of economy and trade; development of tourism and passenger traffic, including further improvement of cross-border traffic; campaigns supporting the development of culture, education and sport, in particular the exchange of information concerning these activities; cultural exchange and protection of the shared cultural heritage; cooperation of rescue services and mountain rescue services as well as cooperation between schools and youths.

The institutional structure of the Cieszyn Silesia Euroregion is composed by the Euroregion Council and the Euroregion Secretariat. The activities of the Euroregion cover many areas of cooperation and European Union (EU) funds management (Micro Project Fund) was and still is one of them. Between 1999–2015, the Euroregion co-financed 455 cross-border projects within the Micro Project Fund for a total sum of 4 479 000 euros. The Cieszyn Silesia Euroregion has also been running its own projects. Until now, there have been more than 50 initiatives implemented in the field of tourism, environmental protection, infrastructure, integration, and international cooperation. Interregional cooperation (with the Eurodistrict Palatinat- MIttlerer Oberrhein- Alsace (PAMINA) and entities associated in the Transfrontier Euro-Institut Network (TEIN) based on knowledge transfer and best practices has become a key issue for the Euroregion, resulting in the setting-up of the Polish-Czech-Slovak Euro Institute as well as the “Enjoy Cieszyn – the Two Shores Garden” (*Ciesz się Cieszyńem – Ogród dwóch brzegów*) program implemented together by Cieszyn and Czech Cieszyn.

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Euroregion Danube-Kriş-Mureş-Tisa (DKMT)*

The Danube-Kriş-Mureş-Tisa (DKMT) Euroregional cooperation links the borders between Hungary, Romania and Serbia which were created after the First World War with the Treaty of Trianon in 1920. The Euroregion covers around 60 000 km² and gathers 4.5 million inhabitants.

Cooperation was officially established in 1997 when its founding document was signed in Szeged by the representatives of 44 Hungarian and Romanian counties and the Autonomous Province of Vojvodina. The initiative was taken by the counties Csongrád in Hungary and Timiş in Rumania in 1992, after the fall of the communist regimes, by undertaking bilateral cooperation through the Regional Cooperation Protocol Danube–Mureş–Tisa. At the end of 2017, the Euroregion gathered six regional governments.

The perimeter includes a variety of borders. Borders between Romania and Hungary represent an internal European Union (EU) border without being part of the Schengen Agreement. The border with Serbia is an EU external border with much lower permeability. Thus, one of the biggest challenges of cooperation is to manage different border regimes and different levels of permeability. Minorities also appear as a significant element, especially the presence of the Hungarian minority in Romania and in Serbia and consequently, the existing cultural and linguistic vicinity directly supports the effective functioning of cross-border interactions.

The strategic plan of the Euroregion DKMT underlines the capacity to generate better competitiveness through several objectives: improving financial absorption capacities, reducing the peripheral effect of the counties through coordinated and joint development; supporting the quality of life of its inhabitants; promoting dynamic development to stabilize democratic constellation, strengthen interpersonal contacts, and remove the existing prejudices.

The Euroregion DKMT is among the most successful cross-border cooperation structures in Central and Eastern Europe and has a unique perspective. Several cooperation projects had a real impact on the region, e.g. the HUSRB Szeged-Röszke-Horgos-Subotica railway line and “Across

* For the map, see article ‘Balkans’.

the Tisa”. Both projects developed new border crossing points on the Tisa river (both for passenger and freight traffic) and made preparatory activities in order to declare the Tisa as an international waterway. The Euroregion DKMT is currently implementing two Hungarian-Serbian strategic projects: “Colourful Cooperation” is going to boost the common cultural life of the Hungarian-Serbian border area, while in the framework of “Dream Railway”, the technical documentation of the Subotica-Baja railway line will be elaborated. The Euroregion implemented several other projects including the development of cross-border tourism routes, the creation of a cross-border informational website in three languages, and the organization of regional conferences.

One of the biggest opportunities for the Euroregion DKMT is the cross-border integration of a non-EU territory with border regions of EU member states and. At the same time, the harmonisation of the needs of each member is still a big challenge for the Euroregion.

In conclusion, the Euroregion DKMT appears as an active, effective, and successful subject of cross-border cooperation which was able to overcome several obstacles such as different border regimes and the coordination of the EU *acquis* and the Serbian legal system.

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Euroregion EuroBalkans



Cross-border cooperation in the Western Balkans started to develop later (during the early 1990s) than in other European regions, especially in Western Europe. On 26 October 2002, 66 mayors signed the protocol on the establishment of the Euroregion Eurobalkans – Niš-Sofia-Skopje in the border region between Bulgaria, Macedonia and Serbia. With the support of the EastWest Institute and the Council of Europe, the mayors of Bulgaria’s capital Sofia, Macedonian capital Skopje and the Serbian town of Niš signed the Eurobalkans statute in Sofia in September 2003. This statute gives the region the opportunity to apply for different projects with an overall objective to foster economic cooperation and to

provide a peaceful life to their citizens. Thirty municipalities from Serbia, twenty from Bulgaria and sixteen from Macedonia have joined.

These three countries have a colourful and intertwined history which makes the background of this Euroregion very interesting, particularly when considering that Serbia and Macedonia were part of a single country until the 1990s, namely the former Yugoslavia. Regarding this, it is not unusual to notice close relations between people from these areas.

The triangle between Niš, Skopje and Sofia is familiar to most of the Western European citizens, at least as a cross-road when travelling on one of the main trans-European routes to Greece, Turkey or the wider Black Sea. Still, the war in the former Yugoslavia had serious negative impact on the relations among the people from the conflicted areas, as well as on the development of border zones. War threats and a decrease of economic standards caused alienation among people from the conflicted areas. However, the triangle has not been directly affected by the war, thus the level of trust between people across borders is still high, compared to other Balkan areas. Subsequently, the potential for cross-border cooperation and economic development is also high.

The Eurobalkans spreads out on 60 000 km² with three main centres and a population of nearly 5 million people. The Serbian part of the Euroregion covers a quarter of Serbia's territory and it has a population over 1.4 million people (29 % of the Euroregion population). The Bulgarian section includes the following regions: Blagoevgrad, Pernik, Kyustendil, Sofia area and the City of Sofia, Plevan, Vratsa, Vidin and Montana. The area in Macedonia includes the municipalities of Skopje and the following municipalities: Berovo, Delčevo, Kriva Palanka, Kumanovo, Novo Selo, Pehčevo and Veles.

The basic objective of the Eurobalkans is to organise and coordinate the activities of cross-border cooperation in the fields of economy, ecology, culture, science, and education. These activities are implemented in order to achieve the necessary conditions for the integration of the given space, regional development, and good communication between neighbours.

This area has an extremely important geostrategic position and one of the goals of cross-border cooperation was to build the infrastructure. Regarding this, the biggest geostrategic advantage of Euroregion Niš-Sofia-Skopje is its geographical position, primarily due to the Pan-European multimodal Corridors IV, VIII and X. One of the most significant problems is, however, the lack of necessary financial support,

as well as inadequate infrastructure, the problem of border crossing, etc. The first major project was planned to be the construction of Niš-Sofia highway and the Skopje-Sofia railway.

Cross-border cooperation between local authorities and Non Governmental Organisations (ONGs) in the field of culture, education, science, economy, was planned to be established within the region. The plan was to formulate strategic projects in the fields of regional policy, development of Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs), inward investment, youth education, and cultural cooperation. The region needs better communication and cooperation between neighbours to overcome mutual animosities and prejudices which have resulted from historical heritage, especially when it comes to the region of the western Balkans. Moreover, there is a need to strengthen democracy and the development of operational regional/local administrative structures, to overcome peripheral conditions and isolation, as well as to promote economic growth and living standards.

The first step toward the intensification of the cross-border cooperation in the region was in the form of an international conference which was held in Niš on 17–19 September 2001. The conference was organised on the initiative of the mayors of Niš, Skopje and Sofia. At the conference, intensification of business cross-border activities was presented as vital for the whole region. A year after, the Protocol was officially signed October 2002 in Skopje. The University of Niš, the Ss Cyril and Methodius University in Skopje and the University Saint Kliment Ohridski in Sofia signed the Protocol on trilateral cooperation, which aimed at creating the Regional Academic Centre and Commission for harmonizing educational programs.

Economic forum Sofia-Skopje-Niš, held in February 2002 in Sofia, made it possible for many companies to represent their scope of activities, to exchange their experiences, and to intensify mutual cooperation. After this forum, the Steel Committee was formed in July 2002, as a result of the agreement between the representatives of the mechanical industry from Niš, the Makstil company from Skopje, and ironworks Kremikovci from Sofia.

In order to improve the whole cooperation process, working groups were formed aiming at finding mutual solutions in the field of regional economic development, environmental protection, culture, education, and media.

The agreement in Bulgaria which was signed in 2010 by the mayors of Niš, Skopje, and Sofia, Milos Simonovic, Yordanka Fondakova and Koce Trojans, was aimed at activating and intensifying the cooperation within the Euroregion. Signing the agreement represented the next step toward developing a common region and creating the conditions for a good life for the inhabitants of this area.

Unfortunately, the idea and the process of cross-border cooperation within the area, which began to become very ambitious, stalled due to the change of political climate and the fact that Eurobalkans has never established an organisational structure that would ensure sustainability of the initiative. Therefore, the Euroregion Eurobalkans is not active today, regardless of the fact that it is the first and the biggest Euroregion in this area, gathering 66 municipalities from three countries, and that numerous conditions persist—such as the insufficient development of border areas, isolation of people in border regions from the prosperous centres, and/or tensions after war—which necessitates cooperation and establishment of cross-border structures to support it.

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Euroregion Galicia-Região Norte*

Located in the north-western corner of the Iberian Peninsula, the Euroregion Galicia- Região Norte, commonly known as Galicia-North of Portugal or Galicia-Northern Portugal, covers the autonomous region of Galicia (Spain) and Região Norte (Portugal). This territory has been perceived historically as consistent, with a common background, such as the Roman province of *Gallaecia* (set in the 3rd century Common Era (CE)) and the Kingdom of the Suebi with the same name (4th-5th centuries) that persisted in complex manner across the Early Middle Ages. This kingdom was later the origin of Portugal, with the self-proclaimed kingdom in 1139 by Afonso Henriques. The Treaty of Alcañices in 1297 between Castile and Portugal supports the idea that the Spanish-Portuguese boundary is allegedly one of the oldest in the world; nevertheless, a modern idea of a boundary as a fixed international limit, such is the general case in Europe, dates from the 19th and even the 20th century. This common historical background makes that Galicia and Região Norte share cultural, symbolic, and linguistic elements (although sociologically considered today as different languages, Galician and Portuguese are, from a philological and linguistic point of view, conceived as one and the same).

With the river Douro as a limit in the South, the cross-border region has around 50 000 km² (21 288 km² in Região Norte and 29 574 km² in Galicia) and a population of approximately 6.5 million inhabitants (around 3.7 million in Região Norte and 2.8 million in Galicia). Its population is concentrated mainly on the coast, along the urban axis that goes from Ferrol-A Coruña in the North until Porto in the South (which has connectivity towards Lisbon) and is commonly called Atlantic Urban Axis. The average density of population is 127.1 inh/km², although it is much higher in Região Norte (171.4 inh/km² vs. 93.7 in Galicia).

Both regions have benefited from the entry of Spain and Portugal in the EEC in 1986 with cross-border exchanges heavily increasing since then and several joint businesses and companies have formed and established part of their operations across the border resulting in a considerable number of cross-border workers. However, there is still a lack of a real cross-border labour market because of persisting legal

* For the map, see article 'Eurocities on the Spanish-Portuguese Border'.

barriers. Road improvements, mainly the bridges that cross the Minho river (most of them built in the 1990s thanks to Interreg funds), have increased cross-border flows. Despite representing barely 20 % of the total border, the area is home to 42 % of all Spanish-Portuguese border crossing points and accounts for up to almost 47 % of the total road flows between both countries.

Galicia is an autonomous region and Região Norte is a deconcentrated entity directly attached to the central government in Lisbon. This causes a gap in terms of devolution between both territories. However, contacts between territorial authorities at different levels have been constant since the early 1980s. In fact, as early as in 1982 the first conversations between Galician and Região Norte political authorities took place, only five years after the Spanish-Portuguese Friendship Cooperation Treaty of 22 November 1977, which opened up a new era of Iberian relationships once both Portuguese and Spanish dictatorships ended. Possibilities to obtain European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) support were discussed during the 1980s and the first cross-border structure of the Spanish-Portuguese border was created in 1991: the Working Community of Galicia-North of Portugal. This Euroregion has also been the first one in the Iberian Peninsula to build up a European Grouping of Territorial Cooperation (EGTC), the protocol agreement for which was signed in 2008, and the Galicia-North of Portugal EGTC began in 2010. However, the EGTC has not substituted the Working Community, as the former is meant to be the technical branch of the Euroregion while the latter is considered as more of the political forum.

At local level, four “territorial communities” were created between Galician and Portuguese border municipalities to be included as members of the Working Community. Although these territorial communities have not been officially closed, they are losing relevance as a forum for discussion due to new cross-border structures created in recent years (mainly, Eurocities). Eixo Atlântico also plays a pivotal role. As an association of 35 Galician and Portuguese municipalities it is very active on urban issues and included in the Working Community structure as a specific commission in 2000.

Beyond the formal umbrella of the Working Community, and in areas located on the border, three kind of experiences are worth mentioning: First, the 4 Eurocities: Chaves-Verín, (created in 2007, which is an EGTC since 2013), Tui-Valença (2012), Monção-Salvaterra (2017) and Tomiño-Cerveira (with bilateral agreements concluded since

2004 and which has been officially named Eurocity in 2018); second, the association “Uniminho”, created in 2006 and formed by bordering Portuguese municipalities and the provincial council of Pontevedra; third, the Minho River EGTC, designated in February 2018 in an area very similar to Uniminho, its partners being ten Portuguese municipalities (represented by the Inter-Municipal Community Alto Minho) and 16 Galician municipalities (represented by the provincial council of Pontevedra).

In this respect, it is important to bear in mind that local authorities in Portugal retain more powers than their Galician counterparts, especially since the Spanish Act 27/2013, which has significantly affected the autonomy of most local governments in Spain. Furthermore, and very important for cross-border cooperation, Portuguese municipalities constitute legal Inter-Municipal Communities (under the Portuguese Act 75/2013), while in Galicia these territorial associations between municipalities are impeded by the Spanish Act 27/2013 and, most commonly, local governments turn to provincial councils to cooperate with Portugal (being a territorial level between municipalities and devolved regional governments, maintained against strong criticisms by the Spanish government).

Besides these cross-border agreements between territorial authorities, various agreements have been signed between economic actors, such as the Galicia-Região Norte Business Club (1997) and the Cross-border Development, Cooperation and Enterprises Services Centre (1998). Common social, cultural and sport events are frequently organized, such as the Atlantic Axis Games and the Galician-Duriense Games. A radio initiative (*Ponte nas Ondas*) has to be highlighted, a cultural and pedagogic association willing to preserve Galician-Portuguese culture through different educational projects. In fact, this association led a Galician-Portuguese intangible heritage candidacy for the Immaterial World Heritage, rejected by UNESCO in 2005. Another active association is *Arraianos* (“border people”), which publishes its own review and has an active online blog.

In terms of higher education, in 2002 the six universities of the Euroregion signed a protocol to create the Euroregional Studies Centre Foundation (FCEER), seeking to coordinate common projects and activities. The Iacobus program is also a kind of Euroregional “Erasmus”, funding cross-border mobility between teachers, researchers and administrative staff from universities since 2014.

Galicia-North of Portugal Euroregion is considered to be a guide for other cross-border bodies in the Iberian Peninsula. It is commonly referred to in political terms and also in the media, although none of the official agreements uses the term “Euroregion”. The differential allocation of powers at regional and local level in Galicia and Portugal continues to be a barrier for cooperation. However, this fact has never stopped common projects, because there is always a bypass to follow. For the time being, three EGTCs exist in the Euroregion, one at regional level between Galicia and Região Norte and two at local level. The Chaves-Verín EGTC, located in the so-called dry border (the Eastern inland Galician-Portuguese border), seeks to include new members, which would be in the future the counterpart of the Minho River EGTC, situated along the “wet border” (the Western fluvial Galician-Portuguese border).

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Euroregion Glacensis*

The Euroregion Glacensis was the first bilateral Euroregion established on the Czech-Polish border in 1996. Its members are municipalities from both sides of the border, i.e. Polish districts (powiaty) and Czech regions. It encompasses the whole territory of the Hradec Králové and Pardubice regions and the northern part of the Olomouc regions, as well as five districts of the Lower Silesia Voivodship. The latter corresponds to the historical region of Klodzko which was annexed by Prussia in 1763 et remained German until the end of the Second World War. Called Glacensis in Latin, it gave the name to the cooperation entity.

The physical geography makes a clear division between both countries, as the mountain ranges of Krkonoše and Orlické hory create a physical border. As it was the case for many border regions of the Czech Republic and Poland, the German speaking population used to live there since their expulsion in 1945–1946. Even if they were partly replaced by Poles moving from the territories annexed by the USSR, the population change was not as significant as it was, for example, in the Euroregion Nisa. Czechoslovakia and Poland belonged both to the communist bloc, where the borders were a barrier characterised by coexistent societies with almost no cross-border interactions until 1989.

The Euroregion covers an area of 5249 km² (two-thirds on the Polish side) with around 770 000 inhabitants living in 150 municipalities. It has a polycentric urban organization without any metropolis. Two languages are spoken in the Euroregion, which constitutes a language barrier to cooperation. The Euroregion is also composed of two independent entities bearing the legal form of an association of municipalities and districts. As most Czech-Polish Euroregions, the Euroregion Glacensis is controlled by municipalities, and this clearly influences the way cross-border cooperation is managed. The governance authority of the Euroregion takes the form of a bilateral general meeting. Its main goal is the implementation of small-scale projects, which address the field of promotion tourism and regional development. Hence, cross-border actors have mainly used the Interreg program and its micro projects/small projects funds, which are administered and distributed by both secretariats of the Euroregion and which constitute the main task of

* For the map, see article 'Czech Republic'.

Euroregion. These projects helped to reduce many barriers, but their impact was limited by the modest financial allocation for micro projects (20 000 euros).

The main success of the Euroregion so far were the joint projects in the field of tourism promotion. These projects, mainly financed by Interreg funds, substantially helped to animate cross-border flows of tourists and enabled the construction of tourism infrastructure.

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Euroregion Ipel’- Ipoly*

The Ipel’- Ipoly Euroregion was founded in 1999 by the mayors of Balassagyarmat in Hungary and Šahy in Slovakia, including four further municipalities and six civil society organizations from Šahy, where the secretariat was established. The geographic scope of the cooperation covers the wider area of the river Ipoly’s middle section, targeting all together 232 settlements and nearly 210 000 inhabitants. The Hungarian language is commonly used on both side of the border. On the basis of 2011 census, Hungarian was identified by 63 % of the population as their mother tongue, while 32 % of the population identified Slovak. Subsequently, the Hungarian population and language have a high influence.

The objective of the Euroregion is to preserve the natural and cultural heritage of the river valley and to improve the status of the environment by supporting sustainable use of natural resources and preserving traditional culture. Concerning the organisational structure, the Euroregion holds a dual framework. Two organisations, Ipoly Unió in Hungary and Ipelská únia in Slovakia had been registered with legal personalities in the two countries signing an agreement on joint operation. The General Assembly is the main deliberative and policy-making body of the Euroregion. Its mandate lasts for four years, electing a 12-member board of directors, six members of which are municipal and Non-Governmental Organizations (ONGs) representatives.

Projects of the Euroregion include the reconstruction of the bridges over the river Ipoly/Ipel’. Two bridges have been built so far and a third one is in the preparation phase. The association is also lobbying for the reconstruction of the Ipoly/Ipel’ valley cross-border railway line.

Thanks to the support of different funds, the initiative provided for research, plans and strategic documents, mainly on the topics of sustainable landscape, energy and water management of the cross-border region. With the support of the Leonardo Program, the association financed archaeological excavations, placed signs and information boards along the trails of the wetland wildlife. Another important project was the establishment and management of a network of town twinnings in the Neogradiensis and Ipel’/Ipoly Euroregions within the framework of

* For the map, see article ‘Hungary’.

the Hungary-Slovakia Cross-Border Cooperation Program 2007–2013. In partnership with the Danube-Ipoly National Park in Hungary, the Euroregion connected the trails of the two sides of the border, and set up a visitor centre with a joint exhibition on the natural values of the region with other tourist investments, such as the four gates of the National Park and a conference room, all projects financed by the Hungarian-Slovakian (HUSK) Cross-Border Cooperation (CBC) Program 2007–2013.

The most recent project targets the development of a cross-border water tourist system along the river Ipoly/Ipeľ supported by the Slovakia-Hungary Interreg V-A program. During the last years, the intensity of the cooperation slightly decreased in one of the oldest Euroregions of central and eastern Europe due to the lack of human resources, but it still remains operational with a new seat in Vinica in Slovakia.

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Euroregion Krušnohoří/Erzgebirge*

The mountains of Krušnohoří /Erzgebirge, dividing since 9th century Czech and Saxon territory, gave a name to this cooperation. The territory of the Euroregion covers 4733 km², with the Czech part being insignificantly bigger. There are around 720 000 inhabitants – 55 % of which live in two districts; Kreis in Germany and Czechia. It has polycentric urban organization with no dominant metropolis. The Czech part of the region was exploited for its heavy industry during the whole of the communist period and is among the most polluted parts of Europe mainly due to extensive brown-coal mining.

People who lived in Czech-German border areas spoke German until 1945 when the German-speaking population was expelled from Czechoslovakia and the territory was resettled by people from other parts of the country. These changes created a territory with two languages after World War II and where the spirit of non-cooperation on regional level prevailed. Although both countries belonged to the communist bloc, the borders were a barrier and could have been qualified as coexistent borders, where the border functions primarily to filter transborder flows while the parties maintain contact and cooperate when required to solve common problems.

The bilateral Czech-German Euroregion was established in 1993 and was one of the first Euroregions with participation of Czech actors. It belongs among the first cooperation entities created by the regions from both countries of the “old” European Union (EU) and post-Soviet bloc – although the Saxon part of newly created Euroregion belonged to the former German Democratic Republic. Members of Euroregion are mainly municipalities of the Czech side and two districts (Landkreis) on the German side. The Euroregion is created by two independent entities and the highest authority of the Euroregion is a bilateral general meeting.

The main issues shared by both parts of the Euroregion is depopulation. Therefore, Euroregional authorities cooperate through joint projects to make the region generally more attractive for both inhabitants and visitors. As it is the case for all other Czech-German Euroregions, their main activity is the implementation of small-scale people-to-people projects, which mainly address the field of tourism and general regional

* For the map, see article ‘Czech Republic’.

development. Local cross-border cooperation actors have used mainly the Interreg program and its microprojects/small projects funds, which has been administered and distributed by both secretariats and constitutes the main part of Euroregional activities.

Hynek Böhm

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Euroregion Meuse-Rhine*

The Euroregion Meuse-Rhine (EMR) is a cross-border partnership between five regions in three countries. The Netherlands is represented with the southern part of the province of Limburg, Germany with the Zweckverband Region Aachen and Belgium with the provinces of Limburg and Liège and its German speaking community. The total population of these regions adds up to about 4 million with more than 280 000 companies and five universities. With respect to its socioeconomic situation, the territory is rather diverse, with relatively prosperous cities such as Maastricht and Aachen, but also others such as Liège and Heerlen which are still recovering from economic challenges following the closing of the coal and steel industry.

Cross-border work has been historically an important element of the economy. The number of cross-border workers is estimated at 30 000 – 40 000 or 1.5–2 % of the total population. The EMR is different from other Dutch-German Euroregions where municipalities and local governments are usually leading stakeholders. With three languages spoken in the cross-border territory (Dutch, German, French), the Euroregion's cultural diversity is exceptional. The partner regions perceive, for instance, linguistic diversity as a major benefit. They initiated several initiatives for schools to promote neighbouring languages (for instance the concept of Euregio Schools).

The origin of the Euroregion can be traced back to 1976 when the heads of the respective regions signed a preliminary agreement, marking the foundation of a working group. This was followed by an official mandate in 1980, initially only signed by the German and Dutch partners. However, the Belgians and the European Commission followed soon thereafter. In 1991 the Euroregion was legally turned into a “Stichting” according to Dutch law, which means an organization without a profit objective. This made it a unique case, since most other Dutch-involved Euroregions have the legal form of a cross-border public body. In 2019, the organization was transformed into a European Grouping of Territorial Cooperation (EGTC). As part of the ongoing transformation process a new governance structure will be developed with the aim to

* For the map, see article ‘Euregio (Gronau)’.

better integrate various cross-border networks and the municipalities under the roof of the EGTC.

The Euroregion Meuse-Rhine is not intertwined with the wider Interreg Germany-Netherlands or Flanders-Netherlands projects, but instead has its own individual Interreg program (currently Interreg V EMR Program 2014–2020). The coordination of this programme between German, Dutch, and Belgian (Flemish, Walloon and German speaking) stakeholders is more complex than of other Interreg programmes.

In 2013, the EMR formulated a strategy named EMR 2020. The formulation of this strategy is by the EMR itself seen as an unprecedented step to deepen cooperation and was meant to strengthen the role of the EMR as an exemplary European region. This should happen through the means of removal of obstacles, the development of innovative solutions, networking, and moderation. In 2019, the EMR partner regions started a process to update the strategy for the years after 2020. The strategy up to 2020 revolves around five core themes: economy and innovation; the labour market, education and training; culture and tourism; healthcare; and security. It also included four transversal themes: mobility and infrastructure; sustainable development; territorial analysis; advocacy and regional promotion. These transversal themes are cross-sectoral and are an important aspect of any core theme as with every action regarding the core themes, the transversal themes should be taken into account.

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Euroregion Nisa-Nysa-Neisse*

In 1991, the trilateral cross-border co-operation on Czech-Polish-German borders was one of the first cooperation entities created between countries from western and eastern Europe – although the German part of newly created Euroregion Nisa-Nysa-Neisse belonged to the former German Democratic Republic. Its creation was symbolic, as it represented the first experience with the cross-border co-operation under the Euroregion umbrella for both former communist countries Poland and Czechoslovakia. The territory of Euroregion covers 12 956 km² and there are around 1 560 000 inhabitants living in 376 municipalities of the Euroregion. The distribution of inhabitants is rather equal with around 560 000 inhabitants on both the German and Polish side and some 440 000 on the smallest Czech side. It represents a polycentric urban organization with no dominant metropolis.

The whole territory of the Euroregion had been for a long time inhabited by a German speaking population, which was expelled from Poland and Czechoslovakia. The territory was then resettled by Slavic speaking newcomers. These changes created a territory with three languages after World War II, where the spirit of non-cooperation on regional level prevailed, although all these countries belonged to the communist bloc.

The members of the Euroregion are mainly municipalities of the Czech side, municipalities and districts of the Polish side and two districts (*Landkreise*) on the German side. The Euroregion is created by three independent entities, bearing the legal form of association of municipalities (Czech side), municipalities and districts (Polish side) and two districts and marketing association (German side). The highest authority of the Euroregion is a trilateral general meeting, composed from political representatives of its member municipalities and meeting generally twice a year.

Equally as it is the case for most Czech-Polish Euroregions, mainly municipalities influence the way how cross-border cooperation is conducted. Implementation of small-scale people-to-people Interreg funded projects, which mainly address the field of tourism and general regional development, is the main task of the Euroregion and it is done

* For the map, see article 'European city Görlitz-Zgorzelec'.

by its all three secretariats. These projects have helped to break many barriers, but their reach was limited by the modest financial allocation for microprojects.

The borders before 1989 created a barrier which could have been qualified as 'coexistent'; a border primarily for filtering of transborder flows while the parties maintain contact and cooperate when required to solve common problems. The mutual cross-border cooperation established in 1991 and the implementation of Interreg programs has helped to construct a certain level of trust among cross-border stakeholders in the Euroregion, which is more important due to a high number of newcomers to the Polish and Czech parts of the Euroregion after 1945. More important is the fact that the citizens perceive the Euroregional cooperation as a positive element and contribute to the shared trilateral territory, which can be evidenced by the high number of joint projects in the field of education.

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Euroregion Nišava*

Euroregion Nišava is a network of legal entities on both sides of the border, represented by the Association “Ponisavlje” from Pirot (Serbia) and the Association “Nišava” from Sofia (Bulgaria). The Euroregion Nišava was founded with the support of the partner organisations, i.e. the Hans Seidel Foundation, a German non-profit organization founded by the Bavarian conservative party CSU and the citizens’ reading room PIRGOS Udruženje, an association based in Pirot. The agreement on the formation of the Euroregion Nišava was signed in June 2005. The Euroregion Nišava encompasses 10 municipalities, 4 from the District of Pirot from Serbia (Babušnica, Bela Palanka, Dimitrovgrad and the city of Pirot), and 6 from the province of Sofia from Bulgaria (Božurište, Dragoman, Godeč, Kostinbrod, Slivnica and Svoge). It covers a territory of around 4770 km² and gathers a population around 163 000 inhabitants.

The Euroregion Nišava is located in the heart of the Balkans two Trans-European Transport Networks pass through the territory of the Euroregion: Orient/East-Med connecting the ports of the North, Baltic, Black and Mediterranean Seas; Rhine-Danube connecting the Rhine river with the Black Sea through continental Europe. Another important axis is going through the area connecting Istanbul to western Europe: the Balkans route was the main axis taken by refugees and migrants during the so-called migrant crisis in Europe in 2015, which corresponds to a former roman road (the Via Militaris), which connected Europe and Asia.

The objective of the Euroregion Nišava is to increase the understanding and tolerance between neighbours and citizens through building *of* partnerships between the District of Pirot in Serbia and the Sofia Province in Bulgaria. The basic mission of the Euroregion is the support and coordination of regional development and institutional cross-border cooperation

The activities of the Euroregion concentrate on six priority fields tourism, agriculture, infrastructure, environment, youth, culture, and sports. Moreover, *it* the Euroregion has a mission to overcome the problem of isolation of border areas though different activities such as reducing differences in living standards, facilitating sustainable development, environmental protection, harmonization of legislation.

* For the map, see article ‘Euroregion EuroBalkans’.

Objectives of cooperation are to improve transport infrastructure (highway construction and modernization of the Bulgarian border and railway), modernize border crossings, encourage economic development and cooperation to protect natural resources.

Observed from the perspective of cross-border cooperation, the current level of decentralization, and its implementation within the framework of pre-accession assistance, provides municipalities with the opportunity to initiate and participate in numerous projects that support their own development, or at a minimum, focus on solving some of the current problems of the local community.

The ratification of the Madrid Convention by the Republic of Serbia in 2016 provides the necessary framework which allows for the improvement of cross-border cooperation as well as for socio-economic development in border regions. After its ratification, the Euroregion Nišava has launched an initiative to establish the European Grouping of Territorial Cooperation (EGTC) Eurobalkan, which will include cities and municipalities from Serbia, Bulgaria, and Romania. Legal harmonization in Serbia will enable local public bodies to participate in EGTCs. Initiated in 2017, this process led to the creation of Central European Service for Cross-Border Initiatives Balkans (CESCI Balkans).

The cross-border area has to face several difficulties, like its remoteness and its great distance from major European markets, intensive depopulation (except for the Sofia area), asymmetry in providing information, differences in legal systems, unequal status within the structures of the European Union (EU), insufficient cooperation between local and central administration, underdevelopment, and indifference of local authorities.

To conclude, Nišava Euroregion opens the possibility for municipalities to exchange information, experiences, best practices, develop and implement joint activities and projects, and it provides a solid contribution to regional stability which is highly necessary for the Balkans.

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Euroregion Pomerania



The Pomerania Euroregion was established in December 1995 after five years of preparation as a union of local government units from Poland and Germany. It was extended to Sweden between 1998 and 2013 when it was joined by the Swedish community of municipalities of Skåne. It is located at the mouth of the river Oder to the Baltic Sea and has a maritime aspect, as both Poland and Germany border the Baltic Sea. The Pomerania Euroregion includes on the Polish side the western municipalities of the current West Pomeranian Voivodeship – a total of 96 local government units, cities, communities, and counties forming the Association of Polish Municipalities Euroregion Pomerania with its

headquarters in Szczecin. The Euroregion on the German side includes the cities of Stralsund, Greifswald, and Neubrandenburg as well as some districts belonging to the federal state of Mecklenburg-Vorpommern and to Brandenburg. All of them are members of the *Kommunalgemeinschaft* Euroregion Pomerania e.V. with the headquarters in a small town Löcknitz. In total, the Pomerania Euroregion currently covers an area of approximately 35 500 km² and a population of approximately 2.7 million inhabitants. An important aspect of the Euroregion's functioning is the position of Szczecin as the biggest city and the historic centre of the region as well as the proximity of the Berlin metropolis. Szczecin is also the headquarters of the Council of the Euroregion Pomerania, which is comprised of representatives from both countries.

The name Pomerania goes back to the historical region of Pomerania, which was the part of the Kingdom of Prussia since 1721 and part of the German Reich since 1871. After the end of World War II, the parts of Pomerania east of the Oder–Neisse line were included within the Polish state. In the mid-1990s as the Euroregion of Pomerania was established when the Polish–German border was at the same time the external border of the European Union (EU) until Poland became its member in 2004. This means that at the time the Euroregion included territories out of the EU.

The Polish–German border, which goes through the centre of the Pomerania Euroregion was established in 1945 by the terms of the Potsdam Agreement. The German population fled from its eastern part *of it* at the end of World War II and was either expelled in summer 1945 or forcibly removed in the post-war period. At that time, the area was resettled with new Polish inhabitants, who were in part also expellees from Polish eastern territory. After the cruelty of the Nazi occupation of Poland and the expulsion of German civil population Polish–German relations were very difficult. For 40 years the Polish–German border was with the German Democratic Republic (GDR) established in 1949 and both countries became part of the Soviet communistic bloc. The border was not recognized by the Federal German Republic, with only the Görlitz agreement of 1950 confirming the Oder–Neisse line as the border between the GDR and Polish People's Republic. The official propaganda named it the “frontier of peace”. Despite this, the border remained mostly closed until 1989–90, heavily guarded and required a visa to cross during the majority of the period. Only during 8 years, between 1972 and 1980 the border was opened for visa-free travel. An agreement signed in 1967

allowed Polish inhabitants of the region to be employed in the GDR and it has to be seen as the first step in cross-border cooperation. However, it was only after the end of the Cold War, the German reunification, and the reestablishment of a democratic Republic of Poland in 1990 that neighbouring relations could be developed freely on the local and regional level.

An important framework was built by the signing of the German–Polish Border Treaty (1990) and the Treaty of Good Neighbourship and Friendly Cooperation (1991). This political upheaval meant significant changes across all areas of life for the German-Polish border region. The inhabitants of the border region welcomed the re-opening of visa-free movement with great hope. However, two opposite moods dominated in the western periphery of Poland and eastern Germany in the 1990s. On the one hand, most Germans were afraid of the consequences of free movement of Polish traders and alleged car thieves into the newly united German market, while the Polish side was concerned of the danger of German expansion (especially economic). On the other, positive sentiments were widespread, which drew from a conviction that the historical moment constituted a unique opportunity for the economic and cultural revitalization of the border area. The feverish bustle surprised everyone, but also laid formal barriers, legal gaps and obstacles of cooperation open, which required quick solutions. Regional and local politicians, authorities, journalists, and the media as well as the residents themselves contributed to the mutual social approach movement and designed a new reality for the border region. Two important dates in the history of this border are the 1st May 2004, when Poland joined the EU, and the 21st December 2007 when Poland signed the Schengen Agreement and border controls disappeared.

The abolition of border controls enabled residents of the Euroregion Pomerania to cross the border comfortably and frequently. It has led to a massive intensification of contacts between the inhabitants in the last 20 years not only in terms of shopping or tourism, but also in cultural and business cooperation. The uniqueness of the Euroregion is that the economically growing on the city of Szczecin offers attractive jobs, while the communities on the German side have lower costs of living, particularly in real estate, due to the outflow of population to large cities. Therefore, these areas have become known as the ‘bedrooms’ of a dynamically developing Szczecin. German rural communities are seen as an attractive place of permanent residence for Poles not only because of

lower living prices but also due to the friendly administration, cultural events, better health care and social security system than exist in Poland. The main obstacle remains the language, though German communities try to ensure a bilingual service to attract new inhabitants.

The Germans often travel to Szczecin and other border shopping centres on the Polish side, particularly for hairdressers and beautician services, but also to refuel their cars and to go to a restaurant. The Poles use Berlin's cultural program and the airports, which are closer than any airport in Poland and offer a wide range of flights. In recent years, tourist interest has also increased with Germany is promoting itself as a tourism destination and Poles increasingly traveling to German for this purpose.

Recent research on the socio-economic potential of Polish-German cross-border relations carried out by the Northern Chamber of Commerce (Północna Izba Gospodarcza) in Szczecin in 2017 shows that 40 % of Polish inhabitants of Western Pomeranian Voivodeship have friendly perceptions of Germans, while 37 % have neutral attitudes, and only 5 % have negative perceptions. Conversely, 62 % of Germans believe that the West Pomeranian Voivodeship is an attractive place to live. Differences in the level of earnings and purchasing power between Poles and Germans is an important asymmetry of the borderland, but it does not concern all social groups. Well educated Poles employed by Szczecin companies are often more affluent than German pensioners, the unemployed, or low-qualified personnel, while many Polish companies also get rich on cross-border trade with Germany.

The Euroregion Pomerania plays an important role in this socio-economic development. Its aim is strengthening the economic, social, and territorial cohesion, making it possible to set-up bodies with legal personality and financial autonomy linking public entities. The Euroregion manages EU funds for the development of regional cooperation under the European Grouping of Territorial Cooperation (EGTC), which is the continuation of several editions of the Interreg program. Joint projects are implemented in the fields of economy, education, infrastructure and environmental protection. In addition, the Euroregion is also the coordinator of youth cooperation as a central unit of the Polish-German Youth Cooperation.

One of the main achievements of the Euroregion is cross-border cooperation designed to protect natural spaces on the river Oder. To achieve this, the Lower Oder Valley International Park was created in

1992 as a shared German-Polish nature reserve and includes a Special Protection Area for birds and unique plants.

The Pomerania Euroregion, through its location on the Baltic Sea and the Szczecin port as well as road connections from east to west and the connection with Berlin, is extremely important from the point of view of communication in the entire Baltic region and northern Europe. One of the main problems in this aspect seems to be the sluggishness in modernizing the rail connection between Berlin-Szczecin, which is currently only set to be completed by 2024.

All sub-regions included in the Euroregion Pomerania, except Szczecin, are characterized by peripheral character, lower population, lower income, and higher unemployment than in other parts of Poland and Germany. The activities of the Euroregion are aimed at increasing the quality of life for residents on both sides of the border and taking advantage of the unique opportunities that this peripheral border location brings.

Although the economies of both countries are closely interconnected and there is freedom of movement for people and goods, it cannot be said unequivocally that residents of the borderland see themselves as members of a single social system. The dominant orientation of borderlanders is towards the heartland of their respective countries. The belonging to the national group remains in the foreground. Even if the specific circumstances of the transnational border region strongly influence the daily life of most of its residents, the identification with the region and the borderland is secondary. The idealistic picture of a fully integrated borderland is still not the reality of the Euroregion Pomerania, even if relations between the inhabitants of both sides of the border are likely at a high point in their long history.

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Euroregion Pomoraví/Weinviertel/Záhorie*

The trilateral Czech-Austrian-Slovak territory was part of Habsburg monarchy until 1918, after 1945 its both main parts – Czechoslovak and Austria – were on the different sides of the Iron Curtain. The border was controlled by the military which made cross-border contacts complicated and severely limited development for the both parts of the border region. The trilateral Euroregional cooperation on the Czech-Austrian-Slovak border began later than cooperation on the rest of the Czech and Austrian borders. The Euroregion itself was founded in 1999, which was later than Euroregions on Czech-German borders. This can be attributed to generally colder Czech-Austrian relations in the 1990s and the fact that Austria joined the EU only in 1995. Another reason for relative later establishment of the Euroregion can be seen in the negative attitude of semi-authoritarian Slovak Mečiar's government towards Euroregional co-operation (1992 – 1998 with a short break in 1994).

The main feature of the region is the Morava River, creating Czech-Slovak and later on Slovak-Austrian borders. Three languages are spoken Czech, Slovak, and German. The language similarities and joint history undamaged by the 'velvet divorce' of Czechoslovakia support Czech and Slovak cooperation. The region is full of economic disparities, with wealthier Austrian and poorer Czech and Slovak parts, hence the significant cross-border commuting of the Czech and Slovak labour force to Austria.

The entire territory of the Euroregion is 11 525 km². There are around 1 152 000 inhabitants living in 224 municipalities of the Euroregion, 735 000 Czechs, 172 000 Slovaks and 245 000 Austrians. Its members are mainly municipalities. The Euroregion is created by three independent entities bearing the legal form of association of municipalities and districts. The highest authority of the Euroregion is a trilateral general assembly.

The Euroregion is controlled by municipalities, which influence the way in which cross-border cooperation is conducted there. Therefore, their main goal is the implementation of small-scale projects, which mainly address the promotion of the region and culture. For this, the cross-border actors have used mainly the Interreg program and its

* For the map, see article 'Centroe Territory Region'.

micro-projects/small projects funds, which has been administered and distributed by Czech and Austrian side of Euroregion (the Slovak-Czech program manages microprojects centrally for the whole border and Austrian-Slovak has not started that at all). The real possibility of the Euroregion to implement more strategic initiatives is therefore questionable, as it has more complicated access to manage the Interreg sources.

In this sense, cooperation achievements are more bi- than tri-lateral. The main cooperation focus is eco-tourism, nature, and cross-border environmental cooperation. For example, between Czech and Austrian national parks protecting the territory along the both banks of border Thaya/Dyje river. However, the current cooperation phase can probably be best described as stagnation, which is also documented by a missing/non-functional Euroregional webpage or website providing more information on cooperation.

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Euroregion Pradziad/Pradęd*

The Euroregion Pradziad located in the Polish-Czech border area comprises the communes and districts of the Opolskie Province (Poland) and the communes of the Jeseník and Bruntal Districts (Czech Republic). The majority of the Euroregion is located in the territory of Poland (5200 km² and 673 000 inhabitants), while the Czech part covers 1900 km² and has a population of 126 000. The Pradziad Euroregion area is inhabited by fewer than 100 Czech nationals on the Polish side and approximately 400 Polish nationals on the Czech side. The Euroregion's name derives from the highest peak in the Jeseníky – Pradziad (Pradęd).

The Polish-Czech border in the Euroregion Pradziad is one of the most permanent historical borders in Europe. The borderline was determined in the Peace Treaty of 1763 between Prussia and Austria. The states on either side of the border have shifted over time, from a Czech-German border following World War I, to become the Czech-Polish border after World War II. Under communist regimes in Poland and Czechoslovakia the border was severely controlled, with even local border traffic from residents of the border villages becoming restricted. It is still a border with quite few border crossing points, with low population density and mountainous terrain.

Initially on the Czech initiative, Polish-Czech integration projects were implemented in 1991, such as conferences of Polish-Czech representatives of the border communes. The first step to establish the Euroregion was a declaration made during a conference in Jeseník (28 September 1991) concerning the establishment of a joint region. In 1992, the Polish-Czech Cross-Border Cooperation Local Government Committee was appointed and on 26 June 1996 a cross-border cooperation agreement was signed. The framework agreement concerning the formation of the Pradziad Euroregion was signed one year later in Jeseník. Originally the Euroregion comprised 60 Czech communes and 9 Polish ones. At present, the Euroregion's structure is made of 115 local government members, of which 44 are Polish (39 communes and 5 districts) and 71 are Czech (towns, communes and five supporting members). Part of the Euroregion's territory is also covered by the European Grouping of Territorial Cooperation (EGTC) TRITIA.

* For the map, see article 'TRITIA'.

The Euroregion's structure has a dual character. The Parliament and the Presidium are joint institutions with national institutions such as the General Meeting, the Euroregion Council, the Revision Committee, the Secretary and working groups. The seat of the Polish Euroregion office is in Prudnik, while the Czech office is in Vrbno pod Pradědem. The joint Parliament is the highest authority of the Euroregion, with the Presidium responsible for the management of current affairs.

The Euroregion's scope of activities comprises those related to the development of tourism, border checkpoints, cross-border technical infrastructure (roads, spatial management plans), environmental protection, cultural and sport exchange, integration and economic growth. Jointly with other Polish-Czech Euroregions, the Pradziad Euroregion is characterized by efficient acquisition of European Union (EU) financing within the Polish-Czech Interreg program for the implementation of soft micro-projects as well as investment projects. The largest infrastructural projects initiated by the Euroregion or with its support include the opening of the first full-service road border crossing Trzebina – Bartultowice in 2002.

The major obstacles in the integration process of the Euroregion communes are infrastructural barriers (the lack of cross-border public transportation, an underdeveloped regional or inter-regional road network) and social capital barriers (low level of knowledge of the neighbour's language, lack of interest in cross-border cooperation among non-governmental organizations, enterprises and public institutions, low level of the Euroregion inhabitants' awareness of the tourist offer in the neighbouring country). Therefore, one of the priorities of the Pradziad Euroregion's current strategy is to promote a joint tourism brand around which developmental and integration initiatives, including culture, education and sports, would be implemented. Emphasis is also being placed on the construction and modernization of the cross-border transport infrastructure and the development of a joint labour market.

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Euroregion Pro Europa Viadrina*

The Euroregion Pro Europa Viadrina is a cross-border European region encompassing the eastern part of the German federal state Brandenburg (districts Märkisch-Oderland/ Oder-Spree and district-free city Frankfurt) and the northern part of the Polish Lubusz Voivodeship (28 municipalities) separated by 150km of the Odra river. In total, the area covers 10 200 km² with slightly more territory is situated at the Polish side of the border. By contrast, the population higher on the German side (about 430 000) than on the Polish side (385 000).

The Euroregion was founded on 21 December 1993 with a cooperation agreement of a German-Polish sponsoring association. In parallel, a development and action plan was developed in cooperation with a variety of actors in the region. The cross-border governance institution incorporates two supporting associations: *Mittlere Oder e.V.*, which comprises 15 member organisations in Brandenburg including public, private, territorial, academic and social entities; and the Polish *Stowarzyszenie Gmin Polskich Euroregionu Pro Europa Viadrina* with 31 members which are mostly territorial authorities. Therefore, this cross-border body involves local authorities as well as functional and representational bodies from the entrepreneurial and civic sector.

The organisational structure of the Euroregion is defined in the cooperation agreement and consists of a council, the presidency, a secretariat and sector-specific working groups. The Euroregion shares two branch offices in Frankfurt (Oder) and Gorzów Wielkopolski which are 80 km distant and which has been described by scholars as an obstacle in the communication between the Polish and German side.

The main objectives of the Euroregion Pro Europa Viadrina is the deepening of neighbourly relations through joint events and bilingual promotion, improvement of the infrastructure in the border region, extension, and deepening of economic contacts through fairs, exhibitions, the foundations of joint ventures, improvement of the environmental situation and the deepening of cultural and sports contacts. One of the main functions of the Euroregion is to manage and coordinate the Small Project Fund (SPF) of the Brandenburg-Poland Cooperation Program of Interreg-VA. The core activities of the Euroregion between 2014–2020

* For the map, see article 'Euroregion Pomerania'.

are to promote a common identity and European ideals, boost tourism and economic development, as well as the strengthening common infrastructure, public services, and supporting education and innovation in the Viadrina region.

As with the other three German-Polish Euroregions, the Euroregion Pro Europa Viadrina is facing strong political, historical, and cultural barriers. Therefore, the Euroregion has been established as a political project of reconciliation, which together with the prospect of simplifying the process of acquiring EU regional funding, has been the main motives to apply this new Europeanized institutional form for cooperation. Until the mid-2000s, cooperation between both supporting associations functioned well, despite some communication problems between members. Regardless, the Euroregion has created several successful cross-border partnerships between districts, schools, kindergartens and cities (like Frankfurt (Oder) – Słubice). Today, the main obstacles in the Euroregion are linguistic boundaries and socioeconomic development gaps as the cross-border region is structurally weak and scarcely populated. Recent results from the European Parliament elections in 2019 also indicate an ambivalent picture. While in Lubuskie the citizens mainly voted for pro-European parties, in Brandenburg an EU sceptic party was selected as the strongest party. Therefore, it is safe to say that cross-border cooperation in the Euroregion Pro Europa Viadrina is still facing several challenges.

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Euroregion Rhine-Waal*

The Euroregion Rhine-Waal is located across the German-Dutch border and consists of 55 member organizations comprised of 31 Dutch municipalities and 24 German local governments. With a total population of over 4,8 million and 557 inhabitants per km² it is a very densely populated area. Its main urban centres are Arnhem, Nijmegen and Ede in the Netherlands, and Moers, Duisburg and Düsseldorf in Germany. The area encompasses the entire Dutch province of Gelderland, parts of the provinces Noord-Brabant and Limburg, and the German districts of Kleve, Wesel and the cities of Düsseldorf and Duisburg.

What is today called the Euroregion Rhine-Waal has a history that precedes the current national borders. In ancient times, the region was characterized by containing part of the border of the Roman Empire. The area south of this border was part of the Roman Empire, while the north was home to Germanic tribes. The area of the current Euroregion is largely compatible with that of the Duchy of Guelders, which existed between 1339 and 1795. Only in 1813, in the backdrop of the Napoleonic wars, the current national borders were largely defined. Some small areas were annexed by the Netherlands after World War II, but given back to Germany in 1963. Today, the common history is still reflected in the local dialect, which is understood on both sides of the border.

Modern cross-border cooperation started in 1963 when German and Dutch officials held a meeting centred on the construction of a border-crossing highway. Cooperation was intensified in the 1970s with the establishment of the Rhine-Waal Working Group and the Rhine-Waal Region Council. In these years, cooperation was institutionalized gradually. A major step was taken in 1993 with the Dutch and German signing of the Anholt Treaty. From then the region was officially known as Euroregion and became what is known as the first public cross-border body in Europe. This enabled local governments and other relevant actors to engage into European Union (EU) financed cross-border partnerships. Rhine-Waal (together with the other Dutch-German Euroregions) is currently part of the Interreg V Program Germany-Netherlands running from 2014 to 2020. The goal of this program is defined as “to be amongst

* For the map, see article ‘Euregio (Gronau)’.

the smartest, most sustainable and most integrated top-regions in Europe.”

The head office of Rhine-Waal is located in Kleve and therefore operates under German law. Rhine-Waal has the legal status of a cross-border public body (*Nederlands-Duits openbaar lichaam/öffentlich-rechtlicher Zweckverband*) based on the 1991 Treaty of Anholt.

Member organizations are German local governments of varying types and Dutch municipalities. However, more government bodies are involved such as chambers of commerce on both sides of the border, the German superregional body *Landschaftsverband Reinland* and the Dutch ministries of economic and domestic affairs. The area of the Euroregion is open to expansion with other local governments or public bodies that feel connected to the Euroregion free to apply for membership.

The main body of the organization structure is the Euroregion Council. This council consists of representatives from the member organizations and of three advisory commissions: the commission for cross-border understanding, the commission for economic affairs and the commission for finance and projects. The chairman of the Euroregion is chosen from the Council. The daily administration is in the hands of the chairs of the Euroregion and the commissions. The main task of this administration, consisting mainly of local mayors, is to execute decisions made by the Council. The tasks of the Euroregion are defined in its statute as to promote, support and coordinate cross-border cooperation. The areas of cross-border cooperation are defined as: economic development; education; traffic and transport; spatial planning; sports and culture; recreation and tourism; environment and waste management; nature preservation; social affairs; healthcare; emergency response; telecommunication; and public order and safety.

Some of these areas are mainly about economic development. This is reflected in the first main goal of the Strategic Agenda of Rhine-Waal, which is sustainable economic development. To achieve this, cooperation between business and scientific institutions across the border is encouraged. One sector that is characteristic for the region is agri-food, with several cross-border projects having been established in the sector over the years. However, Rhine-Waal is an economically strongly diversified region and other areas of cooperation include; environment, energy, logistics and transport, high tech industries, creative industry, tourism and life sciences. Part of sustainable economic development is

the integration of the labour market. For instance, a border info point has been established to provide cross-border workers or students with necessary information regarding social legislation, taxes, etc. In this way, employees and employers are encouraged to find matches on the other side of the border. It is estimated that 20 000 people commute across the border each day for study or work purposes.

Asides from pure economic development, the second key issue for Rhine-Waal is to improve its soft skills, which concerns matters such as accessibility, education, tourism, inclusion, healthcare and safety. Essentially, these soft skills are about creating an attractive region to live and work. Means to achieve this include supporting cross-border public transport, education in the neighbouring language, establishment of cross-border healthcare services and cross-border cooperation of police and fire departments. Most of the successful cross-border cooperation projects have focused on medium and small-sized businesses, educational institutes and the cultural sector. The Euroregion enables these actors from both sides of the borders to work together and to set up many cross-border projects; with 148 Euroregional cross-border projects being documented from 2008 onward.

There is yet potential for deeper cooperation, however. The Euroregion attempts to promote the idea of living a united cross-border community. This can be done by the integration of the public sector and by the joining of certain services across borders. However, although steps are being taken in this direction, it is clear that significant challenges are still to be overcome. These challenges are brought up in the Euroregion's Strategic Agenda. For example, the cross-border public transport network has much room for improvement. National transport plans and public procurement procedures are still obstacles, as in the case of healthcare due to differences in Dutch and German legislation. Even though a cross-border network of hospitals and other relevant actors has been established, there is much work to be done.

To conclude, it can be said that the Euroregion Rhine-Waal represents (in Euroregional terms) a long history of cross-border cooperation. The establishment of the cross-border public body was an important step forward and has enabled many actors to set up different projects in a wide range of areas. With that said, challenges remain. While businesses and education institutes do already benefit from the Euroregion, there is much work to be done in fields such as public transport and healthcare.

Overall, the Euroregion Rhine-Waal is playing its part in overcoming border barriers, but only to a limited extent. There is a long way to go before we can speak of a region that fully transcends national borders.

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Euroregion Sajó-Rima/Slaná-Rimava*

The Euroregion Sajó-Rima/Slaná-Rimava was established on 7 July 2000 along the Hungarian-Slovak border, covering nearly 6000 km², 324 Slovak and 125 Hungarian municipalities, and nearly one million inhabitants. Present members include organisations from Borsod-Abaúj-Zemplén County in Hungary (the Council of Borsod-Abaúj-Zemplén County, regional settlement and development associations, municipalities) and the districts of Rimavská Sobota, Rožňava and Revúca from Slovakia which are among the less developed regions in both countries. The Euroregion is jointly operated by a Slovakian and a Hungarian municipality-based agreement.

The Euroregion organises events to encourage economic development and business cooperation, namely Gömör Expo on the Hungarian side, and the Gemer Expo on the Slovak side. The Expo is a Slovak-Hungarian economic exhibition and market. The event is completed with a series of other events, including the Inter-Gömör Culture Days which aims to build closer cooperation between citizens and cultural organizations. The Euroregion has also taken part in several projects (e.g. education for sustainable lifestyle in the border region) and has played a major role in building town twinning partnerships.

In 2013, four cities, Ózd and Putnok from Hungary and Rimavská Sobota and Tornaľa from Slovakia, located in the central part of the Euroregion, established the Sajó-Rima European Grouping of Territorial Cooperation (EGTC). The EGTC, in contrary to the Euroregional cooperation of a larger scope, is focused on urban centres with a total population of approximately 75 000 inhabitants close to the border. In order to tackle the unemployment more efficiently, the EGTC initiated the meeting of the leaders of concerned labour organisations and centres. It took on the coordination role regarding the professional cooperation initiatives of the given centres and the joint tendering in the Slovakia–Hungary cross-border cooperation program. The EGTC has not won any cross-border projects so far, but elaborated its integrated territorial development strategy which sets up three intervention packages: careful landscape use (strengthening of landscape harmony, strengthening of self-sufficiency); employability development and welfare (development of

* For the map, see article ‘Carpathian Euroregion’.

human capacities, social developments); preservation and strengthening of identity (building of territorial identity; territorial marketing). The actions were formulated in order to give answers to the challenges connected to high unemployment and the decline of traditional land use.

The Euroregion and the EGTC, both, have to navigate in an unfavourable environment because of the relative lack of financial resources, the worse economic performance, the lack of human capital and the difficulty to enforce the interests compared to border regions of Western Europe.

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Euroregion Silesia*

The Euroregion Silesia is one of the six Euroregions located on the 796 km long Polish and Czech border. On 20 September 1998, the Euroregion was established pursuant to the agreement signed by representatives of the *Stowarzyszenie Gmin Dorzecza Górnej Odry* (Association of Municipalities of the Upper Oder River) and the *Regionální sdružení pro česko-polskou spolupráci Opavské Slezsko* (Regional Association for the Czech-Polish Cooperation Opavian Silesia), which changed its name in 2003 and since then it has been called Euroregion Silesia.

The Polish part of the Euroregion Silesia is situated in the Upper Oder River Basin and it covers the Racibórz Valley and some parts of the Głubczyce Plateau, the Rybnik Plateau, and the Ostrava Valley. Its total area is 1 243 km² with a population of 482 000 people. The Czech part of the Euroregion Silesia is located in the Opava and Moravice Rivers Basin and its population of 289 000 people inhabit the area of 1 562 km². The Euroregion Silesia consists of 22 Polish municipalities of Silesian and Opole Provinces and two Polish contributing members as well as 50 Czech municipalities of Moravian-Silesian Region and five Czech contributing members (a university, a chamber of commerce, a cultural and educational organisation, and local action groups).

The main tasks and aims of the Euroregion Silesia include protecting the natural environment and solving mutual environmental challenges, supporting tourism development, and cross-border cooperation in collaboration with youth, schools, and other institutions with a common concern for cultural heritage. It also includes cultural development, education, sport, and appealing for an exchanging of information and experience concerning the labour market, boosting economic and commercial cooperation, preventing and mitigating the effects of natural disasters, stimulating the development of the cross-border region, and supporting the idea of European integration and identity. The Euroregional authorities consist of the Presidium of the Euroregion, the Chairperson of the Euroregion and Euroregional Working Groups.

The Euroregion's activity is concentrated on the administration of programs which support cross-border Polish and Czech cooperation

* For the map, see article 'TRITIA'.

locally. Since it was established, the Euroregion Silesia has managed a Small Project Fund as well as Micro Project Fund of three cross-border programs. Today, it is responsible for managing and administering the Micro Project Fund within Interreg V-A between the Czech Republic and Poland. One of the long-term priorities of the Euroregion is supporting and stimulating cross-border cooperation among schools of all levels. Since 2011, the Euroregion has published its own periodical titled Bulletin of the Euroregion Silesia, while another significant part of the Euroregion's activity is promotion and education in the field of tourism.

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Euroregion Siret–Prut–Nistru*

The Siret–Prut–Nistru Euroregion, consisting of 36 382 km² and covering a population of almost 4 million inhabitants, was established on 18th September 2002 to facilitate the cooperation between the counties Iași, Neamț and Vaslui of Romania and the counties Ungheni, Lăpușna and Chișinău of the Republic of Moldova. On 4th December 2002, two additional Moldovan counties joined the grouping (Orhei and Soroca). The Euroregion acquired legal personality through the establishment of an association, which was signed in 2005. The association has its seat in Iași and gathers, with the exception of four districts (Cahul, Cantemir, Ocnîța, Taraclia), all the Moldavian district councils of the area, the municipality of Bălți, Gagauzia from Moldova and the county councils of Iași, Vaslui and Prahova from Romania. The official language of cooperation is Romanian since it is the official language in both countries, but native languages, like Russian or Bulgarian, can also be used and ad-hoc solutions are applied to translate them into Romanian.

The main cooperation focus of the Euroregion is the collaboration of public administrations from both sides of the Prut River. Cooperation involves a very wide spectrum of areas and fields of interest such as: economy, infrastructure, environment, tourism, agriculture and rural development, human resource development and social services, education, information society, culture, etc.; all in line with the development guidelines of the members.

The most important body is the Council of Legal Representatives of the territorial units also called the Forum of Presidents. It is composed of the presidents from the counties and districts. The management structure of the association is comprised of a president, vice presidents, and a steering committee with an executive director.

One of the major initiatives carried out by the Euroregion was the “Cross-border Economic Forum”. This permanent project allowed to build economic contacts and to develop economic cross-border relations at the eastern border of the European Union (EU). Further initiatives of the Euroregion include activities such as the International Scientific Conference, enabling academic and student contacts, the Media Forum, which is a forum for cross-border cooperation and European

* For the map, see article ‘Romania’.

integration. Other relevant activities include exchange of experience in administrative, cultural and socio-economic fields; building partnerships in regional and urban development; mediation activities; facilitation of twinning partnership between towns and municipalities throughout the Euroregion; a common information platform for the identification of opportunities, as well as financing and partner search. Moreover, several workshops, symposiums, study visits, conferences, fairs and other events prove the high intensity of this cooperation.

Both central governments cooperate with the Euroregion: there were already three inter-government meetings which took place in Romania and one in the Republic of Moldavia. The Euroregion has an outstanding role at the eastern borders of the EU by encouraging partnership agreements, policy and strategy development, project elaboration and implementation along the borders of Romania and Moldova, as well as representing its members on regional and European levels. Despite fluctuant political environment in the Republic of Moldova, the Euroregion has never stopped its activities and cooperation.

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Euroregion Spree-Neisse-Bober*

The Euroregion Spree-Neisse-Bober/ Sprewa-Nysa-Bóbr is a European cross-border region on the German-Polish border. It is situated between the Euroregions Pro Europa Viadrina in the north and the trinational Neiße-Nisa-Nysa in the south. More precisely, the territory of the Euroregion Spree-Neisse-Bober covers the German district Spree-Neiße, the district-free city of Cottbus and the southern part of the Polish Voivodship Lubuskie. The name Spree-Neisse-Bober refers to the three rivers that are traversing the Euroregion in the German and Polish Lusatia.

The Euroregion encompasses a total population of 860 000 inhabitants on a territory of 9793 km². While on the German side, there live 220 000 citizens on a territory of 1812 km², on the Polish side there are 640 000 residents on 7981 km². Therefore, compared to other cross-border regions at the German-Polish border like the Euroregion Pro Europa Viadrina, the Euroregion Spree-Neisse-Bober is more asymmetric in terms of territory and population. Nevertheless, the total amount of population of the Euroregion Spree-Neisse-Bober is similar to the total amount of population of the Euroregion Pro Europa Viadrina.

The Euroregion was founded on 21 September 1993 and has been, therefore, the second Euroregion at the German-Polish border region after the Euroregion Neiße-Nisa-Nysa (founded 21 December 1991). The objectives of the Euroregion are to overcome inequalities in the border region, develop a regional identity, and to bring together people on both sides of the border in a joint economic region with improved and equal living conditions. The Euroregion also promotes the enhancement of an international spirit, tolerance, European integration, and international understanding (*Völkerverständigung*) in the cross-border region. The Euroregion follows an inclusive approach as the Slavic minority of the lower sorbs (*Niedersorben*) lives on the German territory and is represented in the member structure of the Euroregion as the umbrella association DOMOWINA is part of the members.

The internal organisation of the Euroregion is based on two columns; the German side Spree-Neiße-Bober and the Polish side Sprewa-Nysa-Bóbr. The German Spree-Neiße-Bober incorporates an executive board and a general assembly that is comprised by 27 association members.

* For the map, see article 'Euroregion Pomerania'.

The members encompass several towns, municipalities, and districts, and the regional (German) Chamber of Commerce and Industry, saving banks (*Sparkasse*), European Sports Academy, Brandenburg Technical University in Cottbus-Senftenberg, regional trade union confederation, and economic associations. Conversely, on the Polish side of Sprewa-Nysa-Bóbr, the internal organisation includes the president of the Euroregion, the convent, and council and is organized in a municipal association covering 57 members.

The German-Polish Euroregion Spree-Neisse-Bober/ Sprewa-Nysa-Bóbr has become one of the pioneers for the German-Polish convergence by utilizing, as James Scott expresses it, “the symbolisms of binational cooperation as a response to historical traditions of conflict and prejudice”. Yet, the cooperation across borders is still encountering several obstacles with regards to linguistic, cultural, and historical boundaries, and a low recognition of cross-border cooperation by the Euroregion with the public. Additionally, recent “re-nationalization” processes underway might make cross-border cooperation and societal interactions more difficult. In the context of European integration, German-Polish cooperation is in an early stage of progress compared to long-term cooperation at the western German borders which has been ongoing since the 1950s and 1960s. Hence, further interactions through ongoing cooperation might still lead to coalescence in the Euroregion Spree-Neisse-Bober.

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Euroscepticism in Cross-Border Regions

The European Territorial Cooperation Policy finds its roots in a desire shared by political leaders after the Second World War to overcome the wounds of history and to help to bring societies closer together. To accomplish this aim, the strategy has been to progressively dismantle the obstacles to interaction that borders engender, based on the idea that cross-border flows are drivers of stability, prosperity, and unity. Exchanges have boomed, driven by the numerous opportunities offered in the context of “de-bordering”. However, while cross-border cooperation initiatives are numerous, the counter phenomenon of Euroscepticism took shape and progressively gained momentum, especially after the results of the referenda on the ratification of the European Constitutional Treaty that took place in France and in the Netherlands in 2005. Euroscepticism is a contested notion, generally defined more as a discourse than an ideology. It encompasses a wide range of potential attitudes, from principled opposition to the European Union (EU) and European integration, to a dissatisfaction with core EU policies.

Hans-Jörg Trenz and Pieter De Wilde define Euroscepticism as, “an expression of reactive identities towards European integration.” The reluctance towards the European project has been observable since the summit of the Hague in 1948 and the opposition between unionists, in favour of intergovernmental cooperation, and federalists, in favour of the establishment of a European Federation at a supranational scale. However, expressions of Euroscepticism, such as those which appeared in the 1980s in the UK, expanded rapidly, particularly following criticisms of the functioning of the European Economic Community (EEC) by influent political leaders, such as former UK Prime Minister Thatcher (e.g., her speech in 1989 in Bruges). However, Euroscepticism has not developed everywhere with the same intensity, showing a strong dependency on the spatial contexts.

Numerous authors have already investigated the reasons why some people are more responsive to Eurosceptic trends than others. These reasons are first of all driven by fear of the unknown, suspicion of neighbours or concerns about the enlargement of the EU. Disillusions, frustrations and the feeling of exclusion from the benefits of economic growth can also explain some Eurosceptic postures. But Euroscepticism is also sometimes favoured by those outside the EU, such as those who fear the growing strength and influence of a united Europe. Eurosceptic sensitivities are

also largely depending on the individuals, their background and the level of attachment to their country and its institutions.

For Liesbet Hooghe and Gary Marks, people sensitive to populist arguments from the right wing tend to be more Eurosceptic if they think that their nationalism is incompatible with the process of European integration. At the opposite of the political spectrum, radical left sympathies are often opposed to an EU that they perceive as being driven by an elite, capitalist agenda. For these authors, these further from centre, non-governing political parties are actually closer to general public opinion than mainstream, governing parties with regard to European integration.

Euroscepticism is particularly interesting to study in cross-border regions since the latter can be considered as laboratories of the process of European integration and allow people to experience the effects of an open border. So far, it seems that people who live in border regions are less prone to Euroscepticism than those who live in more central regions, since the benefits of the European integration process appear more concrete for them. However, perceptions and behaviours vary depending on the border area. Theresa Kuhn distinguishes between the “identitarian” and the “utilitarian” arguments to explain positive attitudes of people living in border regions towards European integration. The identitarian argument is based on the idea that spatial proximity between border populations favours interconnections which decrease prejudices and promote mutual understanding and tolerance, even if it could be contrarily argued that spatial proximity and contact can increase the process of differentiation and of “othering”.

According to the utilitarian argument, people in border regions are more favourable to Europeanisation policies than those who live in more central regions if the opening up of borders concretely improves their quality of life such as increasing their work or consumption opportunities. On the other hand, Euroscepticism may also potentially increase in border regions with social groups who suffer from constraints, competition or nuisances induced by the cross-border exchanges. The households who struggle to find affordable housing in their region due to property prices being forced up by cross-border workers with higher purchasing power or the retailers who suffer from cross-border competition are among these groups who can consider that cross-border integration has more disadvantages than advantages.

These elements contribute to explain why Euroscepticism remains strong in some border regions even if cross-border cooperation approaches have allowed to activate concrete opportunities and to multiply exchanges beyond borders.

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EU Strategy for the Adriatic-Ionian Region (EUSAIR)*

The EU Strategy for the Adriatic-Ionian Region (EUSAIR) is the third macro regional strategy that the European Union (EU) has developed in 2012, after the macro-regional strategies for the Baltic Sea Region (EUSBSR) in 2006 and for the Danube Region (EUSDR) in 2011. Only one other macro-regional strategy was adopted by the EU thereafter for the Alpine region (EUSALP), in 2015.

The EU's macro-regional approach represents an attempt to respond and adapt to the economic, political and social upheavals that have occurred since the end of the 1980s and to the successive enlargements that have since then taken the EU from 12 to 27 member states in 2007. In the face of globalization, increasing global flows and the liberalization of trade at the global level, as well as the change in the geopolitical order that followed the fall of the Berlin Wall in 1989, the EU found itself confronted with new challenges. These included the challenge of (re)defining its relations with neighbouring countries and of ensuring a role for itself in the stabilization of the European continent, shaken after 1991 by the conflict in the Balkans. But it also meant defining a post-Cold-War security policy able to respond to new threats that were not only military in nature but also environmental (climate protection), economic (monetary crises) and humanitarian (people trafficking, migration flows, etc.). Following the Treaty of Maastricht in 1992, the EU adopted a Common Foreign and Security Policy (CFSP), but this mainly responded to "classical" threats arising from political conflicts and military confrontations. It needed to be complemented by other good neighbouring policies at micro- and macro-regional scales, which could also provide responses to other threats. Environmental issues, for example, on the scale of sea or river basins or mountain ranges, required more coordinated action from the member states.

The EU is not the only European organization to take an interest in a macro-regional approach and the idea to set up a macro-region around the Adriatic actually stems from the Council of Europe. Among the two macro-regions which have gradually been established around maritime areas with the support of the Council of Europe, the Adriatic Euroregion (2006) was the first one, followed by the Black Sea Euroregion (2008).

* For the map, see article 'Macro-Regional Strategies and Sea Basin Strategies'.

The Council of Europe was therefore involved in the creation of macro-regions before the EU, but the idea behind them was clearly distinct from the EU's macro-regional strategies: the structures of macro-regional cooperation were intended to promote democratic stabilization in the areas concerned, and were closely linked to the general strategy of the Council of Europe to disseminate the fundamental values of the organization (human rights, democracy and the rule of law). The macro-regional cooperation initiatives of the Council of Europe also placed great importance on the participation of local and regional authorities and the Congress of Local and Regional Authorities was responsible for their implementation.

For the EU, macro-regional strategies are developed in a slightly different perspective. The European Commission defines a macro-region as a grouping of entities covering several member states or regions, which share certain characteristics and which come together to cooperate on matters of common interest. Macro-regions differ from cross-border Euroregions by virtue of being multilateral and by the fact that, in general, it is the member states themselves that are the principal actors. They are also intended to strengthen cooperation among the countries in the areas in question in order to reinforce the economic, social and territorial cohesion of the European space; this aim resembles the objectives of transnational cooperation specified in the Interreg programs. This integrated approach means that macro-regional strategies are able to respond to transverse spatial planning issues, such as environmental protection or the fight against climate change. By promoting horizontal coordination between different European policies, these strategies bring genuine added value to the EU, by transcending the usual territorial limitations. Several features also distinguish macro-regional strategies from instances of classic cross-border cooperation. The first is that these cooperation initiatives involve broad geographical areas with a certain degree of physical unity (river basins, maritime areas and mountain ranges), and they are multilateral (in that they involve at least three EU member states). Secondly, their legal and administrative structure is clearly defined: they are established at the behest of the European Council and on the basis of EU legislation, and they generally come with an action plan adopted by the European Commission and then approved by the European Council. Lastly, these strategies must follow three principles, also called the three "no's", which are no new European legislation, no new European institutions and no new EU funding. Three levels of governance are involved in

managing macro-regional strategies. First, the European Commission and an intergovernmental group of coordinators monitor their general implementation. Second, national points of contact are responsible for administration in each state. Third, sector experts and coordinators in each priority region manage the strategies at regional level and the implementation of the projects.

Each macro-regional strategy has its own history. The EU Strategy for Adriatic-Ionian Region (EUSAIR) was originated from request made by the European Council to the European Commission in 2012. It was therefore not a bottom-up initiative like, for example the EU Strategy for the Danube. With four non-EU countries (Albania, Bosnia-Herzegovina, Montenegro and Serbia) and four EU member states (Greece, Croatia, Italy and Slovenia), EUSAIR contributes to the further stabilization and integration of the Western Balkans. EUSAIR addresses mainly economic, social and environmental diversity and the fragmentation of the Adriatic-Ionian region. One of the issues at stake of this strategy is to make states cooperate which have been previously in conflict and where the reconciliation process has not yet been fully achieved. Five of the participating countries have in fact been set up after the dislocation of Yugoslavia and one of them, Bosnia-Herzegovina, is a federation of republics between which there still exist some tensions. The general objective of the EUSAIR is “to promote economic and social prosperity and growth in the region by improving its attractiveness, competitiveness and connectivity”. The Commission adopted a communication together with an action plan in 2014, based on consultations with local stakeholders and taking account of experiences garnered from the two earlier macro-regional strategies (the Baltic Sea Strategy and the Danube Region Strategy). The Strategy was endorsed by the European Council on 24 October 2014.

But the EUSAIR cannot be dissociated from its maritime basin, which is seen as area of cooperation between countries and infra-national authorities around maritime areas and oceans. Eight maritime basins are included in the EU’s integrated maritime strategy, which has been developed since 2007 and the Adriatic and Ionian Seas is one of them (the others concern the Atlantic Ocean, the Arctic Ocean, the Baltic Sea, the Black Sea, the Mediterranean, the North Sea and the maritime areas of the outermost regions). As for the Baltic Sea, the maritime basin of the Adriatic and Ionian Seas has been subsequently integrated into the macro-regional strategy for the Adriatic-Ionian Region. Launched in

December 2012, the maritime strategy for the Adriatic and Ionian Seas was intended for all the member states bordering those seas and forms part of the EU's global maritime strategy.

The EUSAIR, as the other macro-regional strategies, increase the EU's ability to intervene in the field of spatial planning, regarded not in terms of hard planning or master plans but as an integrated approach, comprising a truly strategic dimension (a place-based approach or soft planning, with horizontal coordination between sectoral policies and vertical coordination between regions, countries and the EU). In other words, these measures increase the EU's ability to create territorial cohesion by complementing the planning policies of the member states.

However, the principle of the three "no"s also restricts the capacity for implementation, given the absence of financial support from the EU. Therefore, in the regulatory framework for the 2014–2020 programming period, the EU has been calling for more systematic links between transnational territorial cooperation programs (Interreg) on the one hand, and coordination between macro-regional and maritime basin strategies on the other. EUSAIR has indeed been coordinated with the new framework for the EU's 2014–2020 programming period which allows it to benefit from not only the usual funding but also funding from the Western Balkans Investment Framework and the European Investment Bank. The cooperation programs of the macro-regional strategy, which have limited amounts of funding by comparison with the regional programs of cohesion policy or the resources of the member states themselves, are therefore rediscovering their role as catalysts, as they were originally perceived, and prompting countries and regions to take cooperation seriously by including it at the heart of their strategies and programs (beyond the context of Interreg). Moreover, assessments have shown that these strategies have complemented the bottom-up approach characteristic of Interreg initiatives with a top-down approach.

The EUSAIR, although launched on the intergovernmental level, has therefore been developed in an innovative, integrated manner, combining bottom-up and top-down approaches. Like the other macro-regional strategies, it responds to a need to link territories located within the EU with territories located outside its external borders, with a view to managing spaces that are united by a physical feature and subject to the same environmental pressures. Only a multilateral approach can respond to these challenges.

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EU Strategy for the Alpine Macro-Region (EUSALP)



The EU Strategy for the Alpine Macro-Region (EUSALP) was launched in 2016: it aims to address so-called common challenges in order to support territorial cohesion. The governance system comprises three pillars and nine action groups that address, amongst others, economic development, climate change, energy challenges and transport/transit issues. The 48 regions (of the 7 participating nation states) play a strong role in this setting.

The EUSALP covers an area that is already characterized by a strong “institutional thickness” of territorial cooperation on different levels. The Lake Constance Conference and the High Rhine Commission are

examples for the first wave of cooperation that were of intergovernmental and rather sectoral character in the beginning. Others had a more general focus and allow “high politics” on the regional level. The *Arbeitsgemeinschaft* (ARGE) ALP is the most prominent example. Many of the younger cooperation formats can be traced back to EU policies, in particular the Euregios whose main focus lies in the implementation of cross-border cooperation programs, including the prominent European Grouping of Territorial Cooperation of Tyrol, Southern Tyrol and Trentino.

There are few regions in Europe that show a comparable institutional diversity and density of cooperation frameworks. There are several reasons for this situation:

Firstly, the Alpine region is historically characterized by many borders. There has never been an Alpine state or a united political institution. For a long time, the (mountainous) fringes and peripheries of larger states met in the Alpine mountains. This is also why there is only a limited correlation of national borders with cultural differences like language, regional belonging, historic relationships etc.

Secondly, the current political situation is characterized by a high political complexity as three types of political systems meet in the Alpine region: As a first type, France, Italy and Slovenia have a rather centralized political system, even if these countries are very different: France has undertaken considerable efforts to strengthen the regional level; despite a rather centralist system in Italy the so-called autonomous regions have considerable mandates; Slovenia does not have a regional level in the political sense. As a second type, the Alpine region involves three federalist countries with a rather powerful regional level. Even if the differences between the countries are large – Swiss cantons and German or Austrian federal states (*Bundesländer*) are hard to compare – the general multi-level governance shows parallels. The third type, the two small states Liechtenstein and Monaco do not have a regional level in between the national and the local level, so there is a rather small number of experts responsible for European and cross-border issues that are of crucial importance for the states that are very much interwoven with their neighbours.

Thirdly, territorial cohesion remains a topic: It is true that the Alpine region is a relatively strong region in the socio-economic sense. It brings together relatively strong states and strong regions within these

countries (e.g. South Tyrol, Upper Bavaria). At the same time, some parts have strong trends of outmigration and structural change, often in mountainous regions and in some border regions.

Cooperation formats help to bridge the political differences and help to address the complexity. In parallel to the cross-border level, three cooperation formats focus on the Alpine region on the *transnational* level:

The Alpine Convention was signed in 1991 and has a perimeter aligned on municipal level based mainly on morphological arguments, i.e. comprising mountainous parts. The Alpine Convention is based on a framework treaty signed by all Alpine countries and the European Commission. Most of the signatories have also signed the sectoral protocols that are part of the international law. The main focus lies on the protection of the Alps and sustainable development.

The perimeter of the Interreg Alpine Space Program (ASP) goes far beyond the mountain area and also includes the surrounding metropolises and their 'hinterland.' The EU program has a similar but not identical perimeter as the EUSALP. The program started in 2000, offering funding for regional cooperation projects in transnational consortia. Formally, Switzerland and Liechtenstein are not EU members, but they are closely involved into EU politics and they also take part in the Interreg program.

This macro-regional implementation process has political implications: From the perspective of the Alpine Convention, the EUSALP puts a vast new political perimeter on the agenda. Some see this reterritorialization process as a threat to protection policies. From the perspective of the Interreg and cohesion funds, macro-regions bear the potential for political strengthening and effective projects, in particular when the alignment of domestic and sectoral budgets to macro-regional objectives can be achieved. Generally speaking, the main potential lies in addressing functional interlinkages between the different kinds of territories.

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EU Strategy for the Baltic Sea Region (EUSBSR)*

The Baltic Region is chronologically the first of the four European Union (EU) macro-regions. Founded in 2009, it has often been described as a laboratory for transnational governance or a source of inspiration for future initiatives. It has also contributed to the evolution and generalization of the macro-regional tool since Danuta Hübner, then Commissioner for Regional Policy, participated in the dissemination of the concept of “macro-region” in 2008, using it regularly in several communications, documents and internal notes. The configuration of the Baltic space echoes the ideal of cohesion pursued by the EU since the mid-1990s. The area has significant territorial disparities (existence of northern sparsely populated margins but also a core, called the Baltic Blue Banana, composed of a strip joining the main metropolises from Hamburg to Helsinki, with Copenhagen and Stockholm), common challenges, specific geographical features around an eponymous sea, potential interfaces offered at the eastern border of the EU. Since the fall of the Iron Curtain, the public bodies of the bordering countries and the European institutions have transformed the Baltic Sea in a performative space: in nominating it systematically and presenting it as obvious, they made its existence achievable for all the actors. The Baltic Sea macro-region combines both a large amount of umbrella structures that must be channelled, and strong strategic issues requiring urgent solutions and transnational coordination of spatial management: risk of a biological death of the sea, incompatibility of transport and energy networks between the two former blocks, multi-level marine spatial planning. Even if the EU macro-regional strategies are somewhat recent, the Baltic Sea Region has now a long cooperation history and several platforms play an important role at different scales, such as the Council of the Baltic Sea States (CBSS), the Baltic Sea Parliamentary Conference (BSPC), or the Baltic Sea States Sub-regional Cooperation (BSSSC).

However, the idea of transversal structuring has already been introduced beforehand. As early as in 2005, Christopher Beazley, a British Member of European Parliament (MEP) and member of the “Baltic-Europe” Inter-Group in the European Parliament, published a report calling for a new “Strategy for the Northern Dimension in an Enlarged

* For the map, see article ‘Macro-Regional Strategies and Sea Basin Strategies’.

European Union”. It was followed by the parliamentary resolution “A Baltic Sea Strategy for the Northern Dimension” presented in November 2006 by Alexander Stubb, at that time Finnish MEP. In December 2007, the European Council thus called for a European Strategy in the Baltic Sea “connected” with the Northern Dimension. The EU Strategy in the Baltic Sea Region (EUSBSR) was finally adopted first, in June 2009, by the European Commission and the, in October 2009, by the European Council after an open consultation of the riparian stakeholders (i.e. mainly regional authorities and national and supranational networks of local and regional actors).

While the EU Strategy for the Danube Region (EUSDR) or the EU Strategy for the Adriatic-Ionian Region (EUSAIR) include a large number of EU non-member states (Ukraine, Moldova, Montenegro, Albania), the final text of the European Commission established a clear distinction in the Baltic Sea Area between the strategy itself, which concerns only the internal EU Affairs, and the external Affairs which are regulated by the “Northern Dimension”. Russia, Norway and Belarus are thus only associated partners, which limits the achievement of the objectives set by the EUSBSR – as long as security and geopolitical issues are left aside – and hinder the strategic interactions with the North Sea and the Arctic. The Crimean crisis in February and March 2014 has strengthened this division, making it financially difficult for Russian actors to participate in projects enabling the implementation of the strategy. The accession of Poland and the Baltic states in the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO) in 1999 and 2004 respectively and their integration in the EU in 2004 has caused new tensions with Russia. The Russian pressure on the eastern part of the Baltic Sea has however accelerated during the year 2007, just before the economic crisis, as can be observed by Moscow’s reactions to the removal of the Bronze Soldier in Tallinn (a monument erected in memory of the Soviet soldiers of World War II which was still a true symbol of identity for the Russian community living in Estonia and for the Russian government), the subsequent economic sanctions imposed by the Russian administration and companies or the occurrence of cyber-attacks against Estonia which are suspected to have been initiated by Russian secret services. The Ukrainian crisis has finally led to an escalation of intimidations between NATO, the EU, the United States, Russia and China. Hybrid conflicts in the Baltic Sea thus lead to multiple vulnerabilities directly affecting territorial cooperation.

According to the website of the macro-region, the key ambitions of the EUSBSR are divided into three objectives: saving the sea, connecting the region and increasing prosperity. The political networks involved have attempted to overcome the existing structural disparities between the western and the eastern part of the region, to face common challenges (such as sea pollution, efficient management of natural resources, research of alternative energy sources, sustainable transport), to foster economic growth, to enable interterritorial strategies and to use pooled financing to create greater coherence among different projects. The Interreg Baltic Sea Region Program or the Nordic and European Investment Banks (IEB) co-finances several EUSBSR flagship projects. The EUSBSR is supposed to allow for a more optimal and more coherent use of the funds allocated by the EU and to target program projects around clear guidelines.

In 2017, ministries, state agencies, universities, research institutes and private actors were more involved in pilot-projects or pilot sub-projects than municipal or regional authorities (when considered alone or in proactive networks like the Union of Baltic Cities). The most active local actors, i.e. municipalities, harbour authorities, universities, research centres, foundations and companies, are located around the Gulf of Finland and its hinterland (Tallinn, Riga, Helsinki, Stockholm, Turku, Tartu), mostly on the north shore situated along the Baltic “Blue Banana”).

The Baltic Sea macro-region is a combination of networks of actors and projects, which has created interterritorial trajectories to meet the challenges of a necessary territorial continuity, one of the main objectives of the EUSBSR. This leads to rescaling processes and the emergence of a new geography of in-between with variable geometry, even if the major actors involved are located in the EU. In fact, it combines two contradictory orientations: a functional/place-based approach under the classical leadership of states and their ministries (national coordinators, policy area coordinators) and, without any institutional framework, nor financial and territorial support, it enables the reinforcement of intermediary spaces at different scales (urban regions, cross-border cooperation, transnational platforms).

However, the EUSBSR has difficulties in achieving its objectives at this transnational scale. The absence of Russia and Belarus as full members does not help to solve the main regional issues, particularly the environmental ones. For example, 184 sites do not dispose of functioning water treatment plants in the Leningrad oblast in Russia. The absence of

local actors (municipalities, regions) among the Policy Area Coordinators (PACs) affects subsidiarity and local empowerment. The local population is not informed about the objectives of the strategy and therefore is weakly involved in the projects. The single spatial emblem to the macro-region is a monument erected in Klaipėda in Lithuania, which indicates on the ground the distances separating the city from the neighbouring countries. The diversity of the geostrategic policy issues of each state is also an obstacle to the achievement of a common strategy of the Baltic region. The Baltic states and Finland are still interested in deepening their relations with Asian countries especially in tourism, trade and transport. The creation of an Arctic Corridor extending towards the Via baltica and the Rail baltica could be a common issue, but no coherent strategy has been emerging from it so far. Despite the broker role of Sweden, preventing the escalation of tensions in the Baltic Sea, the difficulties to implement common projects like Rail Baltica therefore still remain.

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EU Strategy for the Danube Macro-Region (EUSDR)*

Austria, Baden-Württemberg and Romania initiated the development of an EU Strategy for the Danube Region (EUSDR) following a lengthy stalemate of shipping along the Danube in 2008. It was encouraged by the first European Union (EU) macro-regional strategy in 2007 in the EU Baltic Sea Region.

In 2009, the European Council asked the European Commission to develop a strategy for the Danube Region. After an intensive consultation period, the European Commission presented a strategy draft document and an Action Plan in December 2010. In the General Affairs Council in April 2011, the member-states endorsed the strategy. Subsequently the European Council endorsed the EUSDR in June 2011. The Danube macro-region covers the 10 riparian States of the Danube (Germany, Austria, Slovakia, Hungary, Croatia, Serbia, Rumania, Bulgaria, Republic of Moldova, Ukraine) as well as the four countries of the wider Danube water catchment area (Czech Republic, Slovenia, Montenegro, Bosnia Herzegovina). Therefore, its delineation is based on one hand on territorial-administrative aspects, addressing the territory of EU member and non-member states; and, on the other hand, on functional aspects, covering the natural geographic area of the Danube river.

The EUSDR aims to address the region's main challenges such as environmental threats, untapped shipping potential, the lack of road and rail transport connections, energy connections, uneven socio-economic development, uncoordinated education and research systems, as well as shortcomings in security through better coordination and cooperation. The main goals of the collaboration are to better connect the Danube region, protect the environment, build prosperity and strengthen the institutional capacity and security in the area, and the strategy document is accompanied by an Action Plan, which is regularly revised.

To achieve these overall goals, the Danube macro-region provides a two-tier governance structure. The first tier is represented by an overall coordination level. This level encompasses the political coordination committee of national coordinators with the European Commission. The second tier is represented by 12 priority areas in which member states representatives collaborate together with relevant Non-Governmental

* For the map, see article 'Macro-Regional Strategies and Sea Basin Strategies'.

Organisations (NGOs) and Governmental Organisations (GOs). Member states identify concrete obstacles, targets, and support the development of relevant projects, as well as develop agenda-setting strategies to influence national and EU policy decisions. These thematic areas are coordinated by so called priority area coordinators who represent the link to the political coordination level of the national coordinators. Most priority areas have developed working groups to involve a broader set of stakeholders relevant to specific topics.

Since its endorsement in 2011, the EUSDR received considerable attention by administrations, politicians and academics. The Danube region underwent considerable changes due to the downfall of the Iron Curtain, the Balkan and Kosovo wars, and the European enlargements in 2004 and 2007. Against this background, one main achievement is that it represents the first initiative targeting this perimeter. EU funding schemes took up the macro-regional logic: the Danube Transnational Program 2014–2020 covers the region and integrates European Regional Development Fund (ERDF), European Neighbourhood Instrument (ENI) and Instruments for Pre-Accession (IPA) funds. The added-value of macro-regional cooperation is difficult to measure. Due to its strategic character the EUSDR aims to provide support for better alignment of funding and coordination in this complex multi-level governance settings as causality between activities and territorial developments remains vague. In view of its political support and the high-level attendance of annual conferences, the EUSDR has triggered substantial communication between relevant stakeholders.

Franziska Sielker

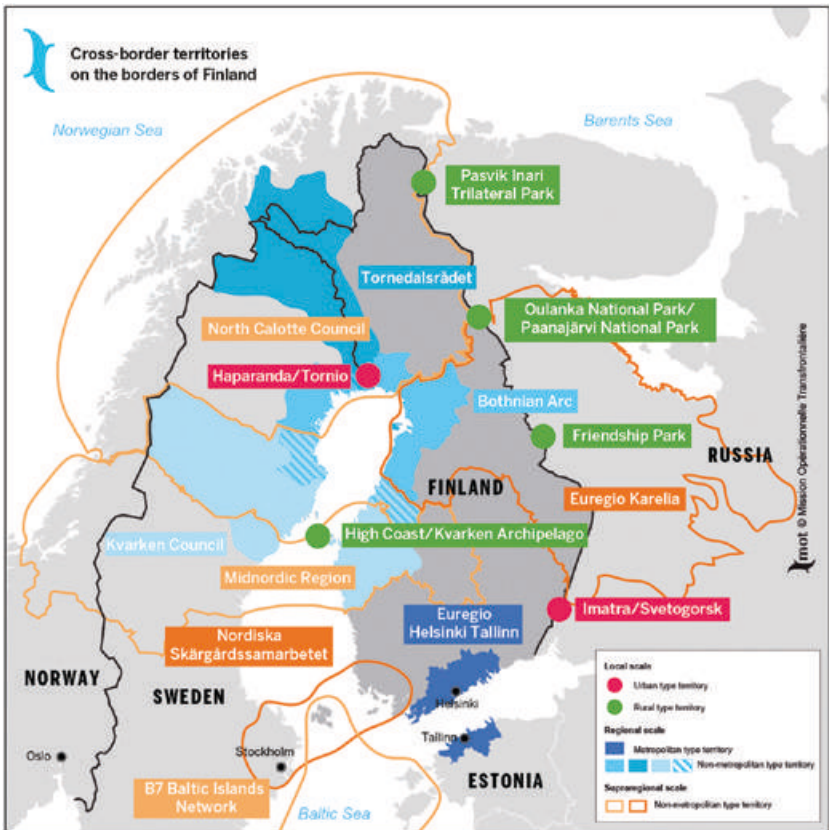
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Finland



Finland is the most sparsely populated member state of the European Union (EU) (15 inhabitants per km²). Unlike Denmark and Sweden, it is a relatively new state which was formed following its emancipation first from Sweden and then from Russia. The land which now corresponds to Finland belonged to Sweden between the 12th and the 19th century. The county of Finland was annexed by Russia in 1804 but remained largely autonomous. At that point the capital was moved from Turku, on the west coast, to Helsinki, on the southern coast, closer to Russia. Finland gained independence in 1917, in the aftermath of the Russian revolution, but was invaded by the USSR in 1944. After World War II, the USSR

recognized the independence of Finland under the Paris Treaty (1947), on condition that it remained neutral. The result of “finlandization”, i.e. a strictly controlled neutrality, was that the country was unable to benefit from the Marshall Plan or to participate in cooperation projects with countries in the western bloc. Finland’s land borders were fixed in the 17th century with Norway (457 km) and in the 19th century with Sweden (614 km). However, the border with Russia and then the USSR was subject to change. When the Paris Treaty was signed, a large part of Karelia was returned to the Soviet Union. Finland lost about 10 % of its pre-war territory. After World War II, Finland was the only country in western Europe to share a border with the USSR and that gave rise to a special relationship.

With the advent of glasnost in 1985, the USSR became more open towards Finland and the country joined the European Free Trade Association (EFTA) in 1986 and the Council of Europe in 1989, before applying to and becoming a member state of the EU in 1995. However, it did not renounce to its neutral status. The fall of the Iron Curtain initially weakened the Finnish economy, which was highly dependent on its large neighbour. Finland also has a border in the north with Norway which is an external EU border. The border with Russia (1340 km), which is an external border of the EU, is the longest an EU member state has with this country. The border with Sweden became an internal land border when the two countries joined the EU. Much of the population in the western part of the country, close to the Gulf of Bothnia, where there is a large Swedish minority, is bilingual. To the south, the Gulf of Finland forms the dividing line between Finland and the Baltic states.

Successful cooperation between Finland and Russia has been established under the Technical Assistance to the Commonwealth of Independent States (TACIS) program inaugurated in 1991 and, later, from 2007 onwards, the European Neighbourhood and Partnership Instrument (ENPI), which was renamed European Neighbourhood Instrument (ENI) in 2014. Alongside the programs with Sweden and Norway, there are three cross-border programs which cover the border from north to south: Kolarctic/Russia, Karelia/Russia, Southeast Finland/Russia, plus an Interreg B Baltic Sea program.

In addition to cooperation arrangements with Sweden, which predate EU accession, original cooperation structures have been established with Russia. The first was the cooperation established in the region of Pasvik-Inari between Russia, Norway and Finland following a meeting between

the three countries' national authorities in 1991 to discuss environmental protection and management problems. Nature reserves were created in each country. The municipalities have been involved in this cooperation since 1999 and new projects have been developed within the framework of the European Neighbourhood Policy (ENP) program since 2006. In 1992, a partnership was also set up between the cities of Imatra in Finland and Svetogorsk in Russia, which are only five kilometres apart. However, it was only after 1995 that cooperation really started to develop, with projects being financed, first under TACIS on the Russian side and the European Regional and Development Fund (ERDF) on the Finnish side, and then under the ENP. Even if the cooperation between both cities is a resource for development, the definition of a real common strategy is very difficult, not so much because of their location on an external border but mainly due to the imposition of EU sanctions against Russia in response to the annexation of Crimea in 2014.

The second cooperation project, the Helsinki-Tallinn Euregio, is a highly original project set up in 1999 between the two national capitals, which lie just 65 km apart, across the Gulf of Finland. Since the fall of the Iron Curtain, the two cities have been linked by ferry services that can make the crossing in ninety minutes several times a day. All kind of exchanges have increased considerably, even though the economic balance is still tipped in Finland's favour. These two towns are the only real metropolises in their respective countries and they both host most of their international activities. The creation of the Euregio Helsinki-Tallinn, a cross-border association with a joint administration council between the two capital regions, is the outcome of this constant increase of mobility between them, which requires regular coordination between the stakeholders. The Nomenclature of Territorial Units for Statistics (NUTS) 3 regions link the province of Uusimaa and the city of Helsinki in Finland and the county of Harju and the city of Tallinn in Estonia. Transport scenarios between the two regions have also been prepared. Cooperation has gradually become more complex and new objectives have been set to create complementarities, with a view to generate economies of scale and to increase innovation, in order to foster joint growth and to promote the regions together. The partnership between these regions has also encouraged initiatives by other public and private actors. The cooperation which has been established is similar, although on a different scale, to that established between Copenhagen and Malmö across the Øresund.

The Karelia Euroregion links three Finnish regions and the Republic of Karelia in Russia. Karelia is an historic region, which has given rise to a shared culture on either side of the border. In the beginning, cooperation mainly concerned environmental issues and cultural aspects, but it is now more focusing on economic development and transport infrastructures. Finally, the Bothnian Arc, created in 2002, links local authorities along the Gulf of Bothnia in Sweden and Finland.

Cooperation between Finland and Russia has been strengthened by ENP cross-border programs, thanks to the special relationship that Finland had with the USSR during the Cold War. The projects developed in urban areas bear witness to close cooperation. A cross-border metropolitan region is emerging between Helsinki and Tallinn, which is all the more remarkable given that these two main centres are separated by a large seaway.

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rail traffic since the Channel Tunnel opened in 1994. The particularity of France is that, due to its Overseas Departments and Territories inherited from the colonial past, its longest border is actually situated outside Europe: the 730 km border with Brazil. It also has a 510 km border with Suriname in French Guiana and borders with Canada on Green Island, close to the archipelago of Saint Pierre and Miquelon, and the Netherlands on Saint Martin in the Antilles. Finally, France also shares maritime borders with Oceania, Africa and America.

The history of France's borders is undeniably linked to the long history of continental Europe. France played an important role in the 19th century, by disseminating ideas born out of the French Revolution in 1789, which stirred up a desire on the part of the people of Europe to identify themselves as nations and establish national territories as the sovereignty limits of their nation state. It is also bound up with a past marked by numerous territorial conflicts between European powers. The territorial rivalries between France and the United Kingdom up to the 19th century were violent, and France's border conflicts with Germany and Italy were no less so. The different territories of Alsace-Moselle have been tugged back and forth between France and Germany, changing national affiliation several times until most of them were attached to France by the 1648 Treaty of Westphalia (1871, 1918, 1940, 1945). The border between Italy and France has also been disputed: Corsica was annexed by France in 1769, whereas Savoy and the County of Nice did not join France until 1860. The post-World War II French borders were finally fixed under the 1947 Paris Treaties.

France's cross-border regions have developed in three main phases. The first started in the early 1960s and mainly concerned the Franco-German border, but also the borders with Switzerland and Luxembourg. France's first cross-border cooperation developed along the Rhine and the Moselle in Alsace and Lorraine, two regions long disputed between France and Germany. The creation of Franco-German regional cooperation structures can therefore be seen as a step in the reconciliation process launched in parallel by the two national States at a bilateral level. Thus the first cross-border association was the Regio Basiliensis, created in the Franco-German-Swiss area around Basel in 1963, coinciding with the signing of the Élysée Treaty by Konrad Adenauer and Charles de Gaulle the same year. Two other Franco-German Regios were subsequently created, the Upper Rhine Regio (1965) and the Freiburger Regio (1985), which merged in 1995 into the Regio TriRhena. At regional level, cooperation

in the Upper Rhine area was institutionalised when an intergovernmental agreement was signed in Bonn in 1975 between France, Germany and Switzerland. The cross-border partners of the area were the Federal states of Baden-Württemberg and Rhineland-Palatinate, the region of Alsace and the two cantons of Basel (and from 2000 five more cantons in north-western Switzerland). From 1991 onwards, this cooperation was managed by the Upper Rhine Conference. Finally, the Trinational Metropolitan Region of the Upper Rhine was created in 2010 in order to put proper multilevel governance in place. It was also designed to involve the local cooperation associations which started to emerge after 2000, especially the four Eurodistricts that have been created in the region. The first, the Strasbourg-Ortenau Eurodistrict (2005), was launched by Jacques Chirac and Gerhard Schröder during the 40th anniversary celebrations of the Élysée Treaty in 2003. It was followed by the Regio Pamina (converted in 2005), the Freiburg/Centre and South Alsace Region Eurodistrict (2005) and the Basel Trinational Eurodistrict (2007).

Cross-border cooperation in the area between Lorraine, Saarland, Luxembourg and the Palatinate developed along similar lines under the name SaarLorLux. A legal basis was adopted for this cross-border cooperation in 1980, when an intergovernmental agreement was signed in Bonn between the three States involved. In 1995, the area was renamed the Greater Region (*Grande Région*) and sometimes referred to as SaarLorLux+ in order to take account of its extended geographical scope. It grew over the course of time, with the inclusion of three Belgian federated entities in 2005. At local level, the Greater Region is also divided into several inter-municipal units: the Longwy European Development Pole (PED) founded in 1985, the SaarMoselle Eurodistrict founded in 1997 and changed to a Eurodistrict and European Grouping for Territorial Cooperation (EGTC) in 2010, and the Ecocity of Alzette-Belval established in 2009 as a public development agency between the Region of Lorraine and the southern region of Luxembourg.

A second phase of cross-border cooperation in France started in the 1980s and primarily involved regions close to the mountain ranges of the Alps, Jura and Pyrenees. That cross-border cooperation was driven by the national governments, who gradually set up cross-border working communities. For example, the Franco-Genevan Regional Committee was set up in July 1973 between Swiss Cantons and French Departments and Prefectures. The working communities and conferences established in the 1980s tended to focus on cooperation between local and regional authorities, especially

following the first French decentralization law passed in 1982. A first cross-border working group, the Permanent Intercommunal Cross-Border Conference (COPIT) was set up between Lille, Tournai and Kortrijk as soon as in 1981, in the framework of the Channel Tunnel project. After the democratic transition in Spain and the establishment of the autonomous communities there, regional cooperation also became possible on the Franco-Spanish border. The Pyrenees Working Community was founded in 1983 between French Regions, Spanish Autonomous Communities and the Principality of Andorra. This was followed by the creation of the Western Alps Working Community (*Communauté de Travail des Alpes Occidentales* COTRAO) in 1983 (uniting Swiss, French and Italian entities) and the Jura Working Community in 1985 (the future Trans-Jura Conference). Finally, the Lake Geneva Council was created in 1987 (between Swiss Cantons and French Departments). Based on these initial forms of collaboration with foreign neighbours, cross-border cooperation was stepped up in the 1990s, and extended to other actors. The Mont Blanc Cross-Border Conference (the future Mont Blanc Area), was set up in 1991, and two other conferences were subsequently set up in 2000: the Franco-Italian Alps Conference (CAFI) and the Conference of the High Valleys. This second phase of cross-border cooperation also gave rise to the concept of joint management of natural spaces. The first European nature park (Alpi Marittime-Mercantour) was established in the Alps in 1987. It was followed in the mid-1990s by other collaborations on the French-Spanish and French-Belgian borders (Ordesa y Monte Perdido and Hainaut Cross-border Nature Parks).

The Interreg program, launched by the European Commission in the early 1990s, gave to some border areas in France the external impetus that they needed to develop their cross-border cooperation. It marked the start of the third phase in cross-border cooperation in France in places where local initiatives had previously been rare, such as on the northern border with the United Kingdom. Following the first generation of Interreg programs (1990–1995), cross-border cooperation between France and its neighbours increased and intensified at all levels: national, regional and local. Landmark projects were implemented, such as the first international marine reserve of Bouches de Bonifacio launched in 1992 between Corsica and Sardinia. Thanks to strong regional identities (Catalan and Basque), local and regional partners on the French-Spanish border spawned numerous cross-border bodies and projects like the Basque Eurocity of Bayonne-San Sebastián in 1993, the Pyrénées-Cerdagne cross-border Community of Communes in 1996, the Bidasoa-Txingudi

Cross-border Consortium in 1998, or the Catalan Cross-border Area Eurodistrict project in 2008. In the 2000s, Franco-Spanish cross-border cooperation gave rise to structures and projects which were increasingly important from both an institutional and a legal perspective. The Region of Aquitaine (France) and the Basque Autonomous Community (Spain) started to collaborate in the 1990s by setting up a joint cooperation fund, which would eventually become the Aquitaine-Euskadi Euroregion in the form of an EGTC in 2011. The Pyrenees-Mediterranean Euroregion was also set up in 2004. At a more local level, there was a first framework convention signed between France and Belgium on cross-border health cooperation, but the flagship project is the Cerdanya cross-border hospital project, which was institutionalised as an EGTC in 2010.

Euroregions and Eurodistricts were set up on other French borders in the 2000s. The Lille-Kortrijk-Tournai Eurometropolis, which had been already institutionalised in 1991, was established as an EGTC in 2008. Another EGTC was set up in 2009 in the region from West Flanders to the Flandre-Dunkerque-Côte d'Opale area. One remarkable project between France and Switzerland was the urban agglomeration of Doubs set up in a mountain region of feeble density, which was then converted to an EGTC in 2014, and the Local Grouping of Cross-border Cooperation (LGCC) of Greater Geneva which was established in 2013.

In contrast, cross-border cooperation between France and the United Kingdom has remained poorly developed, especially at the institutional level, even after the opening of the Channel Tunnel linking in 1994. Whether it is because neither state has a federal structure and local and regional authorities lack any legislative power or because the British prefer flexible, non-institutionalised forms of cooperation, the only important cooperation forum is the Channel Arc, which was set up in 2003. However, this is more an interregional than a cross-border cooperation arrangement. All in all, France's borders are home to a plethora of cooperation arrangements at various levels, which have developed either bottom up (from local authorities) or top down (from the French state and neighbouring federated or Federal states). This has given rise to a multilevel cooperation model, which differs from one border to another and which illustrates the awareness of the need for cross-border cooperation on the part of authorities at all levels, and, ultimately, the need for coordinated action between those levels.

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Frankfurt-Słubice*

The twin city Frankfurt-Słubice is a town-twinning project and urban area at the German-Polish border comprising the cities Frankfurt and Słubice that are separated by the Odra river. Within the agglomeration live about 80 000 inhabitants – most of them on the German side (about 60 000 inhabitants). The twin city is situated in the federal German state Brandenburg and the Lubusz Voivodeship in Poland and is part of the Euroregion Pro Europa Viadrina.

The city has been unified until 1945. The *Frankfurter Dammvorstadt* was part of the city situated on the Eastern side of the Odra River. After 1945 the city has been divided and the Eastern part became a separate Polish town named Słubice. The border remained closed for long time and especially the Polish side has been a scarcely populated frontier zone. After the recognition of the German-Polish border along the Odra-Neiße river by the German–Polish Border Treaty of 1990, the population of the Polish side is increasing while Frankfurt (Oder) has shrunk by nearly a third of its population after 1990.

The border region has revealed different asymmetries regarding territorial and population size, socioeconomic standards, demographic development, and commuting with huge gaps between both cities, especially in the 1990s. Additionally, a high unemployment rate and xenophobia partially fostered tensions between the population on both sides of the border. At the same time, the cross-border town hosted several thematic initiatives symbolizing the twin city as a European city. In 1993, the joint research institution Collegium Polonicum in Słubice was established by the European University Viadrina in Frankfurt (Oder) and the Adam Mickiewicz University in Poznań. Another topical cross-border institution is the Investor Center Ostbrandenburg (ICOB) established in 1996 that represents a cross-border marketing institution for the industry and economic location in the cross-border urban agglomeration.

Since the 1990s agreements on cross-border cooperation of both cities have been created. For instance, the collaboration agreement between Frankfurt and Słubice (1993) appointed regular and frequent meetings of the two mayors and installed a joint city council. Additionally, the Integrated Concept for a Strategy Frankfurt (Oder)-Słubice 2003 defined

* For the map, see article 'Euroregion Pomerania'.

common projects, while the Program for a Common Development and Cooperation of the Cities Frankfurt (Oder) and Słubice (2004) approached joint measures to tackle unemployment. Finally, a common concept for marketing and tourism has been created as well as the double city has been participating in the EU network City Twins from 2004–2006 in the European network of twin cities City Twin Association (CTA).

In 2010, after concluding a town-twinning Interreg project the joint institution of both city administrations Frankfurt-Słubice Cooperation Center has been established and combines both city administrations and guarantees monthly meetings of both mayors. The cooperation structure is legally based on the town twinning agreement signed 28 June 2011. The main objectives of the cooperation centre are to enhance sustainable cross-border urban and economic development as well as research and development and to establish the twin city as an international centre of education. In a 'future conference' applying a participatory method by including 200 citizens in the negotiation process, the plan of action 2010–2020 was established and adopted. On Europe Day 9 May 2019, the city councils agreed upon the action plan for 2020–2030 with 40 goals in the fields of company foundation, cross-border model city, networked infrastructure, high quality of life. Concrete output, in terms of realized public cross-border projects, include a cross-border public bus transport line, the installation of a joint managed district heating system, and German-Polish kindergartens.

In conclusion, compared to the Eurocities Guben-Gubin and Görlitz-Zgorzelec founded in 1998, the Frankfurt-Słubice Cooperation centre has been comparatively established late, but nonetheless has achieved worthy results, being active in a variety of fields that address education and neighbour language, culture, sports, public transportation and tourism.

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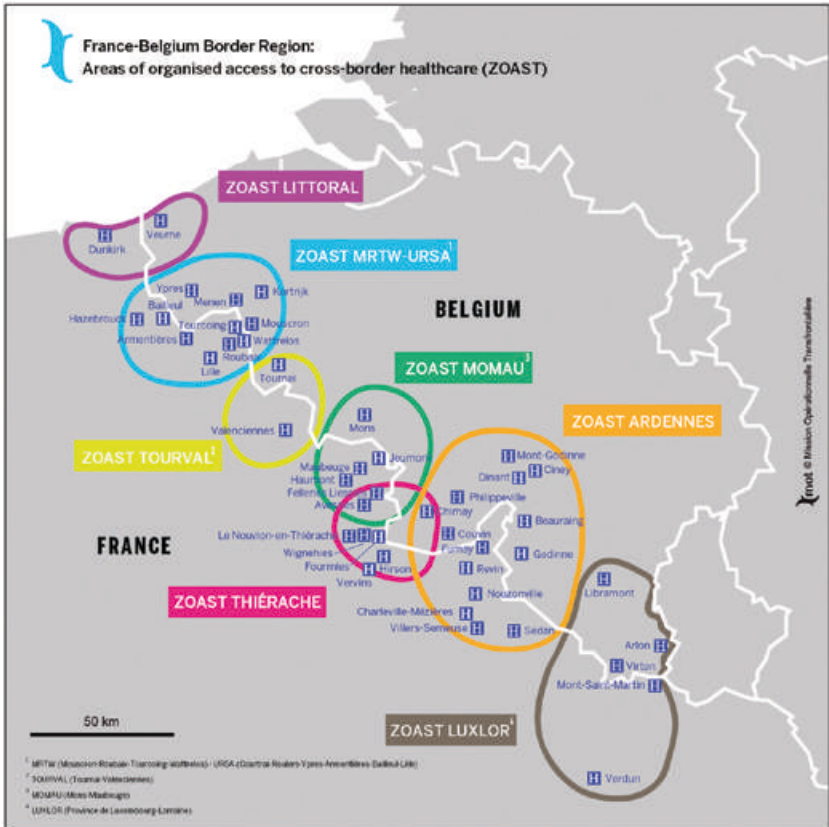
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French-Belgian Border





As the limit between two founding members of the European Economic Community (EEC), the French-Belgian dyad is often presented as the archetype of an open, porous border. However, the reality is more complex.

This sinuous line measuring 620 km, one of the longest borders between France and a neighbouring country, does not coincide with any major topographic obstacle, which makes it the opposite of a “natural border”. Between the North Sea and the Grand Duchy of Luxembourg, three transnational topographic units can be observed: from West to East, the Plain of Flanders, the hills of Avesnois and Thiérache, the Ardennes Mountains. Two zones of settlement roughly appear on both sides of an imaginary line from Charleroi to Maubeuge: the western part, characterized by strong densities, includes many urban Centres,

with some cross-border agglomerations like Lille; the larger, more rural eastern part, includes middle-sized towns, and even villages. The water system reinforces cross-border continuity: the Scheldt and the Meuse river, which flow into the sea, have their sources in France and coincide almost nowhere with the border. Finally, the linguistic border, between Flemish and French does not overlap with the international border, even though the decline of the Flemish dialect in France over the 20th century has resulted in a form of discontinuity between Dunkirk and Lille.

According to Firmin Lentacker, “the construction of the border owes more to history than geography”. Another original aspect of this dyad is that it was institutionalised before the Belgian State was created: the Treaty of Kortrijk (1820) was signed by the kingdom of France and the Austrian empire as part of the reconfiguration of Europe after the Treaty of Vienna (1815). The modern border was first drawn in the 17th century, while Louis XIV was fighting the United Provinces. It was modified several times between the Treaty of the Pyrenees (1659) and the Treaty of Utrecht, which first allowed a relative stability and the building of many fortifications, now an important part of the cross-border heritage. The process was completed by the foundation of Belgium in 1830 and the independence of the Grand Duchy of Luxembourg in 1867, both being considered buffer-states between the European powers.

Though constantly innervated by strong interactions, the border draws its legitimacy from national constructions. The rapid industrialization of Northern France in the second half of the 19th century resulted in a massive immigration from Belgium. After 1905 and the French law of separation of Church and State, several religious congregations settled in Belgium, where they opened nursing homes and denominational schools. The two world wars consolidated the common fate of the two sides of the border, as the scene of bloody battles in 1914–18, and occupied territories in 1939–45. Even the creation of the Belgian-Luxembourgish Economic Union in 1921, and the establishment of Benelux in 1948 (customs union with the Netherlands) have not really induced any estrangement, especially as France and Belgium both entered the European Economic Community in 1957. The federalization of the Belgium state, institutionalised in 1993, may have emphasized the border-effect, since the linguistic specificities were then reasserted.

The permeability of the border is mainly visible in its more densely populated part. As with other borders, the different flows are those of cross-border workers (35 000 in 2015) who go to Flanders or to Lille, but

also for purchases and leisure. The pupil flows are a particularity: everyday, several thousand young people attend primary and secondary Walloon schools. Belgian universities also attract many French students, not necessarily from the North of France, accounting for 8 % of enrolment, that is, about 17 000 students. Besides, fiscal policies, as elsewhere, have an influence on cross-border mobility: the real-estate taxation rate being more favourable in Belgium, thousands of French people have settled across the border. Those two kinds of flow do not only affect the cross-border area according to the logics of proximity, but also the whole Belgian territory. Globally, the linguistic continuity between Wallonia and France induces a familiarity which makes exchanges easier. On the other hand, work flows are stronger with Flanders, because of its flourishing economic situation.

Border crossing, exchanges and cooperation are therefore intense in this dyad, and that was already true before the birth of the Interreg programs.

The European Development Pole (PED) founded in 1985 functioned as a laboratory and a source of inspiration for the Interreg programs that were still to come. It was a concerted answer to the crisis of the trinational steel-working area, in Belgium, France and Luxembourg. This example of local cooperation supported by the European Commission is now part of the Greater Region, a cooperation zone created in 1995 by four states: Belgium, France, Germany, and its leader, Luxembourg. On the coast, another cooperation was born in 1991, incorporating regions and counties from three states: Belgium, France, and the United Kingdom. Initially created by the two latter countries as part of the Channel Tunnel project, the Euroregion was founded as a convention after three years of cooperation; it gathers the Nord-Pas-de-Calais region, the county of Kent and the Flanders and Wallonia regions in Belgium. Though institutionalised as an innovative European Economic Interest Group (EEIG), the Euroregion was dissolved in 2004 because of insufficient involvement from the British public bodies.

Within the Euroregion, three types of cooperation were born on the local level. The first one concerns the Dunkirk region and the urban part of the Belgian coast, where the Interreg program has allowed to strengthen some long-existing links. In 2005, a platform gathered the local communities of the West Flanders region, the Dunkirk Urban Area and the intercommunity structure of the Mills of Flanders area. The Dunkirk-West Flanders-Opal Coast European Grouping for Territorial

Cooperation (EGTC) was created in 2008, gathering the different public authorities involved on all levels; it aimed at facilitating the implementation of French-Belgian projects. A similar logic can be observed in the Lille cross-border urban area, where cooperation started in 1991 with the creation of the Cross-border Intercommunity Permanent Conference (Copit) forum which brought together the Lille Urban Community (LCU) and five Belgian intercommunity structures. In 2006, the Copit acquired the status of a Local Grouping for Cross-border Cooperation (LGCC), and became the first EGTC on the European level in 2008, under the name Lille-Kortrijk-Tournai Eurometropolis. Another original form of cooperation was established in 1983 between two regional parks, the Scarpe-Escaut park in France and the Scheldt Plains nature park in Belgium; in 1996, it launched the “Hainaut cross-border regional park”. The creation of an EGTC should help reinforcing a cooperation whose main points are the preservation of landscapes and the harmonization of environments.

Various French-Belgian working groups are regularly initiated so as to solve the problems caused by the border. A convention between police services was signed as early as 2001 in the frame of the European area of freedom, security and justice; one year later, the Brussels Convention provided a legal frame to cross-border cooperation. Between 2005 and 2007, a parliamentary working group consisting of 12 legislators (6 French, 6 Belgian) convened in order to find practical solutions to their common difficulties. Finally, we may mention the Tournai custom and police cooperation agreement (2013), which used a comprehensive approach of security in the French-Belgian cross-border area. Healthcare is an emblematic aspect of such cooperation, which pre-existed European intervention. With the encouragement of the European Commission, healthcare cooperation has been implemented by tiers since the 1990s. During Interreg I, a convention was signed in 1994 between the hospitals in Mouscron and Tourcoing, both within the perimeter of the Copit. After experimenting with a first cross-border free zone in Thiérache, a social security card accepted by both healthcare systems was brought into use. A framework agreement for healthcare cooperation was signed by the French and Belgian governments in 2005, to provide a better access to care through resource pooling; seven areas of organised access to cross-border healthcare (ZOAST) were created between the coast and the Ardennes. This dynamic is unique in Europe, and has been completed by other cooperation agreements in the medical and social services sector.

More specifically, concerning the Interreg programs V-A, the dyad is covered by three zones: the Two Seas, coinciding with three Flemish provinces, the Hauts-de-France region, some Dutch provinces and British counties; the France-Wallonia-Vlaanderen zone, associating the Hauts-de-France and Grand Est regions to the aforesaid Belgian regions; and the Greater Region.

Generally speaking, this border is a good example of “crucible border”, characterized by numerous interactions, in spite of persisting asymmetries or even tensions, for instance in the treatment of environmental problems, the prevention of risks or terrorism. The linguistic border nowadays seems more strongly marked within Belgium, and Flemish is more and more frequently taught on the northern part of the French side.

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Frontex

Frontex is an agency of the European Union (EU), the objective of which is to ensure the management of operational cooperation at the EU's external borders. It was established in 2004 under the name "European Agency for the Management of Operational Cooperation at the External Borders of the member states of the European Union" and its acronym is Frontex. It plays an important role in compiling and analysing information, coordinating joint operations at the external borders and supporting the member states of the Schengen Area. On 6th October 2016, Frontex (the acronym is still in use) became the "European Border and Coast Guard Agency". The agency's headquarters are located in Warsaw, Poland.

With the establishment of the Schengen Area in 1995 and after its integration into the EU Treaty framework in 1997, the member states chose to open up their borders by abolishing fixed controls in order to encourage intra-European flows and the free movement of individuals. At the same time, the external borders of the Schengen Area have been strengthened to ensure that internal choices work properly. Thus, from the end of the 1990s, the Spanish enclaves in Morocco, Ceuta and Melilla had their borders reinforced by successive fences and surveillance equipment in order to prevent illegal crossings of people. Occasionally, agreements between states on both sides of the external border have been signed to strengthen control, such as the Touquet Agreement in 2003 for the control of the flow of people across the Channel and in particular the Pas-de-Calais Strait. Cooperation between EU member states concerning police and judicial matters was also included into the Treaty of Amsterdam of 1997. From then on, a common unit to the member states brought together immigration, border and asylum experts in seven specialized centres. With the EU Directive 2004/2007, the European Council officially recognized these groups to form the Frontex Agency on 26 October 2004.

In 2016, under political pressure linked to migratory flows, When Frontex evolved with the EU Directive 2016–1624 to become the European Border and Coast Guard Agency, its resources were strengthened. There was an increase in its budget from 98 million euros in 2014 to 333 million euros in 2019, as well as a reinforcement of staff which should increase from 1500 employees currently to 10 000 by 2020, mainly by integrating employees made available by the member states for

various periods of time. Since 2016, the agency also has the capacity to decide for itself to intervene in any member state of the EU, even if the state concerned is reluctant. In twenty years, the issue of controlling the external borders of the Schengen Area has gradually become structured to respond to external pressures, both in terms of the flow of goods and the flow of illegal persons. Political and media pressure have contributed to this process of tightening controls. Also, in 2016, the EU has adopted a new Customs Code promoting the monitoring of goods with centralized Community customs clearance that facilitates the fluidity of trade while strengthening controls.

Today, Frontex's main objective is to control and limit the flow of people. Resources are therefore primarily dedicated to the strengthening of teams and equipment by intervening jointly with the national teams. For example, Italian customs officers are accompanied on certain operations by border guards and coastguards from other member states. Frontex's material resources have increased considerably and the agency now has its own vehicles such as helicopters and fast boats. Interventions take on multiple forms. Since 2016, these interventions allow for search and rescue operations, particularly in the Mediterranean Sea, the reinforcement of control teams and the reception of migrants in order to register them in the database known as the Schengen Information System (SIS), with the digitization of fingerprints corresponding to the European standards of the biometric passport. Given the influx of illegal migrants, Frontex's support has become essential for those states that are obliged to manage considerable flows of migrants.

The computer system shared by the member states records all persons entering and leaving the Schengen Area. At the same time, visa applicants in the EU member states' consulates are systematically registered, regardless of whether the visa is accepted or refused. This makes it possible to follow up on individuals, particularly those whose visa application has been rejected by a consulate and who would attempt an illegal crossing. This system also allows for partnerships with other states, including the US Customs and Border Protection. Thus, customs officers transmit the data of European nationals when they leave the Schengen Area if their intended place of residence is in the US.

In addition, Frontex plays an increasingly important role in coordinating European public strategies and fighting international crime and terrorism at borders. It collaborates with Europol and Eurojust, which does not prevent states from having their own agreements between them

to increase the efficiency of their border guards and coastguards. Frontex also has the task of helping states to organize the return of illegal migrants when a court decision has been taken. It places its specialized teams at the disposal of the member states to provide support for the return to the countries of origin. Besides, the agency is a tool for analysing risks at borders (Eurosur) for the EU member states.

Lastly, it offers research and development services for surveillance, tracking and intervention technologies that contribute to the construction of smart border policies on the periphery of the Schengen Area. The agency's knowledge and expertise enable it to provide training for national teams, particularly in relation to collaboration between transnational European teams.

The changes in the organization and resources of the Frontex Agency, particularly since 2016 and the new EU Customs Code strongly underline the Europeanization of the means to fight against illicit trafficking and illegal cross-border migration flows. By reinforcing the coordination of actions at the external borders crossed by 700 million European and non-European citizens in 2018, the agency contributes to the emergence of a European cross-border area. However, these transformations have also suggested the concept of a "Schengen fortress", which does not prevent many migrants from taking immeasurable risks in crossing the borders of the EU.

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Geopolitics of Borders

Borders are geopolitical objects *par excellence*, since they express the interaction between politics and territorial matters. Whatever their origin, borders coincide with the limits within which sovereignty can be exercised and are one of the parameters of political identity as a framework for the definition of citizenship. They are institutions, registered in international treaties. They are the location where functions of governance (control and security) and taxation can be performed, even though they have become less visible in the more integrated space of the European Union (EU), a unique experiment in the world, and even though such functions are more often performed in ports of entry (airports) than in the custom-houses where outer envelopes can be entered.

Beyond history and geopolitics, borders also pertain to anthropology, which invites us to recognize the polarization of human space clearly expressed in ancient mythologies, with dual configurations including a reassuring, closed and stable inside and a disquieting, open, mobile outside: Hestia and Hermes, a pair of opposed and complementary deities. Those symbolical markers are indispensable for nations, which need an inside in order to interact with an outside.

Without this duality, how could one feel a member of a political community, be it a nation or a group of nations, which can decide its own fate? “To be ourselves, we have to project towards the others, to find our natural extension in them and by them. If we remain locked within our identity, we lose ourselves and cease being. We know and construct ourselves through contact, exchange, relations with the others” according to the historian of Greek Antiquity Jean-Pierre Vernant, whose short text written on the 60th anniversary of the Council of Europe (2009) was engraved on a brass plate affixed on the Europe-Bridge between Kehl and Strasbourg, crossing the Rhine, an old frontline turned into peaceful border. Those words perfectly encapsulate the value of cross-border action, which does not negate interstate limits, but transforms them into a resource to federate differences.

And yet, the democratic management of borders is contested by various bottom currents, going from rejection to obsession. Contradictory opinions coexist under the banner of rejection. Let us mention three of these. The most common form is the “borderless world” of globalizers who aim at product standardization and the totally fluid circulation of goods, an objective which is now expressed in the tax-optimization strategies of

Google, Apple, Facebook, Amazon and Microsoft (GAFAM). Another version is advocated by the proponents of “no border”, the generalized right to immigrate justified by a radical universalism “which claims that our planet is exclusively inhabited by individuals who must be free to settle where they like according to their interests. Which implies that political communities can no longer define their relations with the outside”. Finally, there is also the refusal to discuss the geopolitical configurations of an enlarged EU, a process which has neither ending nor ends and which stands for external policy. But could we construct an external policy if we do not agree on a common definition of the exterior? Hence the hazards of the EU’s relation with Turkey. How could we feel members of a supranational political community if we do not know where the inside ends and where the outside begins?

As opposed to such rejection of limits, the past decade has seen the development of an obsession characterized by the discourses and practises of hardening (walls, barbed wire, enclosures of all kinds). The inside becomes closed to the outside, with neo-national practices which, though illusory, attract part of the voters who consider they have much to lose in opening situations, seen as a threat to their fantasy identity. The perception of an excessive opening to the globalized sea breezes can explain this backward movement, or at least this reassertion of borders, not only because of security challenges and migration issues. How can we respond, if not with fences which go against a sustained cooperation effort? How can we avoid disqualifying free movement, one of the bases of European construction?

A possible approach consists in recalling that civilized borders are no longer barriers or archaic vestiges, but a linear set of crossing points which must be both open and controlled. Moving the cursor to the balance point between responsibility and solidarity is a delicate exercise which deserves a peaceful democratic debate. Faced with the sound and fury of the world, making borders visible again may heal a (sometimes imaginary) cultural anxiety. Is that enough? The dialectics of enclosure and opening operates on the long term: from frontlines to borders (or the other way around, in the case of crises), from lines of sovereignty to interfaces, from fences to passageways. In Europe, borders are similar to the nations they envelope: their continuous negation has led to a brutal return of the repressed, under the shape of protection and security requirements.

In our Western societies, saturated by images of the sound and fury of the world, shaken by the calling into question of ethical, political, social landmarks and of the very need for rules and laws, populist leaders have developed a rhetoric of borders, dismissing the need for boundaries. The demand for a protector state grows stronger and spatial borders often come to be perceived as absolute protections. In reality, citizens need laws and limits to dispense with walls, as a metaphor meant to heal anxieties.

Political scientists now agree that there is a major divide in the political offer between open and closed societies. To my mind, the reappearance of boundaries rendered invisible by economic globalization has an eminently positive dimension when it recalls the part played by states, nations and political constructs in the history of mankind. Symbolical markers are necessary to any form of collective life, including and especially in order to open up and take advantage of the interactions made possible by an interconnected world.

A collective consciousness can exist only if we are able to situate ourselves in time and space. Otherwise, we condemn ourselves to acosmism, the denial of the world, characteristic of those people who never had to confront otherness. If we can no longer distinguish between the inside and the outside, how could we open up to others in order to better act together?

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Luxembourg (138 km), France (451 km) and Switzerland (334 km); and in the east with Poland (456 km) and the Czech Republic (646 km). Germany also shares maritime borders with five states: with the United Kingdom (18 km) and the Netherlands (336 km) in the North Sea, with Sweden (55 km) and Poland (456 km) in the Baltic Sea and with Denmark (706 km) in both.

The history of Germany's borders is complicated due to the change of its territory through time. This is first linked to the fact that the unification of Germany took place gradually over the 19th century: it began in 1848, but was not actually accomplished until 1871, when Bismarck proclaimed the German Empire (then comprising 23 German states). Second, the subsequent history of Germany's borders is largely marked by the territorial consequences of the two World Wars. After the First World War, the loss of territory to France (Alsace-Lorraine), Belgium (Eupen, Malmedy), Denmark (North Schleswig) and Poland (Poznań and Upper Silesia) was seen as an injustice and a humiliation. Germany's new borders were challenged and German revisionism helped Hitler to come to power in 1933, after which he went on to seize back the lost territories and to occupy practically the whole of continental Europe during the Second World War. After his defeat, Germany was then in a unique situation: in 1945, it was occupied by the four victorious Allied Powers (the United States, the United Kingdom, France and the USSR) and, in the absence of a Peace Treaty, its borders were not definitively settled. France recovered Alsace-Lorraine, Poland gained the territory of East Prussia, and the USSR gained the Western part of Poland beyond the Curzon line and the city of Königsberg (now Kaliningrad). The Allies failed to agree on a definitive solution for the future of Germany, and in 1949, two German states were established: the Federal Republic of Germany (FRG) in the west and the German Democratic Republic (GDR) in the east. They were separated by the Iron Curtain, part of which the Berlin Wall, built in 1961, came to symbolize the division of the world into two opposing ideological blocs for over 40 years. For the FRG, this intra-German border was extremely sensitive, leading to a specific policy of support to the borderlands including West Berlin. Germany was finally reunified in 1990, and its borders were only then definitively ratified by an international treaty, mainly confirming the Oder-Neisse line as the definite border with Poland.

This very particular situation of Germany has influenced the development of post-World War II cross-border cooperation. During the

Cold War, local and regional initiatives were in fact mostly limited to the FRG. In the GDR, only timid relations developed in the so-called double cities (i.e. Guben-Gubin, Görlitz-Zgorzlec). Overall, the primary objective of cross-border cooperation for the Germans was reconciliation with their neighbours to the west and east. Two phases can be identified: the first began in the 1950s and involved the western neighbours of the FRG; the second, which had to await the end of the Cold War in 1989, developed on the southern, northern and eastern borders after the reunification of Germany.

Cross-border cooperation began in 1958 with the creation of the Euregio on the border with the Netherlands. This association brought together more than 100 Dutch and German border communes. For its founding father, Alfred Mozer, the aim of cross-border cooperation was to reconcile the people of Europe: it was essential to “overcome borders”, which were the “scars of history”. This cross-border reconciliation was all the more effective since it took place at the level nearest to the people, between local authorities. Other cross-border associations of this sort were subsequently created along the German-Dutch border, namely the Rhine-Waal Euregio (1971), and the Rhine-Meuse-Nord Euregio (1978). At the regional level of cooperation, the Ems Dollart Region was founded in 1977. A first trilateral association was then established in 1976: the Meuse-Rhine Euregio, which included German, Dutch and Belgian entities. 1998 saw the creation the association Eurode Kerkrade-Herzogenrath which links two municipalities in the region of Cologne and in the 2000s two cross-border nature parks were created: the *Drielandenpark*, set up trilaterally with the Netherlands and Belgium, and the Maas-Schwalm-Nette natural reserve (with only the Netherlands).

The process of reconciliation also took place alongside the Franco-German Rhine border (between Baden-Württemberg, Rhineland-Palatinate and Alsace) in conjunction with Switzerland, and in the area between Saarland and Lorraine, together with Luxembourg. In the Upper Rhine Region, cross-border cooperation started in 1963 with the creation the Regio Basiliensis, whose geographical boundaries extended over the cities of Basel in Switzerland, Freiburg im Breisgau in Germany, and Colmar in France. The pioneers of this cross-border association were acting in the context of the Franco-German reconciliation of the Élysée Treaty signed by Konrad Adenauer and Charles de Gaulle on January 22nd, 1963. The Regio Basiliensis was supplemented on the French side by the Upper Rhine Regio (1965) and on the German side by the Freiburg Regio

(1985). Ten years later, the three of them merged into a single body, the Regio TriRhena. In the area between Lorraine, Saarland, Luxembourg and the Palatinate, the beginning of the SaarLorLux cross-border cooperation project (in 1969) was less linked to the process of bilateral reconciliation because it was rather a response to the crisis in the steel industry, which hit this mining region extremely hard and caused similar economic problems on all sides of the border, making cooperation necessary. This led to the creation of two commissions in 1971, one at intergovernmental level and the other at regional level. Subsequently, a legal basis was established for cross-border cooperation in these two areas by means of international treaties. In the Upper Rhine Region, the intergovernmental agreement signed in Bonn in 1975 established an intergovernmental and two regional commissions. In 1980, a second intergovernmental agreement was signed in Bonn, this time for the SaarLorLux area. The two cross-border regions subsequently underwent similar development. In the Upper Rhine Region, the Upper Rhine Conference was established in 1991 to manage cooperation at the level of the regional executives. The SaarLorLux area was renamed the Greater Region in 1995 and its geographical boundary was extended in 2005 with the inclusion of three Belgian federated entities. Cooperation was further strengthened in the 2000s: in 2010, the Trinational Metropolitan Region of the Upper Rhine was created and at the local level, four Eurodistricts have also been set up: the Strasbourg-Ortenau Eurodistrict, the Regio Pamina (both converted into European Groupings of Territorial Cooperation EGTC)), and the Freiburg Region/Central and Southern Alsace Eurodistrict in 2005, followed by the Basel Trinational Eurodistrict in 2007. For its part, the Greater Region was converted into an EGTC in 2010 in order to provide management for the Interreg operational program. At the local level, the Saar-Moselle Eurodistrict was also established on the basis of an EGTC.

The second phase of cross-border cooperation started after German reunification and involved the borders to the south, north and east of the country. Cooperation in southern Germany had already begun in 1972 with Austria, Switzerland and Liechtenstein, with the establishment of the International Lake Constance Conference. But this cooperation was consolidated in 1997 by the creation of the Lake Constance Euregio. Four other Euroregions, whose principal feature is their informal or associative character, have been set up in the mountain areas alongside the German-Austrian border: the Salzburg-Berchtesgadener Land-Traunstein Euregio

in 1995, the Via Salina Euregio in 1997, the Zugspitze Euregio and the Inntal Euregio in 1998.

To the north, cross-border cooperation with Denmark intensified from the mid-1990s thanks to the funding of the Interreg program. On the German-Danish border, despite an ongoing process of recognition of minorities on both sides since the 1950s, attempts at reconciliation were still necessary, particularly in the region of Schleswig, where the population was still suffering from the border changes after the two World Wars. In order to foster reconciliation, the Sønderjylland-Schleswig Euroregion was established in 1997 by German and Danish local and regional actors. In addition, the German, Dutch and Danish island municipalities of the Wadden Region in the North Sea created the Wadden Euregio in 1999, enabling them to undertake a maritime version of cross-border cooperation. In 2006 the Fehmarnbelt Region was then set up which launched a large scale project, the Fehmarnbelt tunnel, which should form a link under the Baltic Sea between Denmark and Germany. Finally, cooperation was also launched in 2007 by the Danish Region of Fyn and the K.E.R.N. technological Region in Germany.

The post-Cold war period was marked above all by the first examples of East-West cross-border cooperation. The scars of history along the Polish and Czech borders were deep and the events of the 20th century had caused significant population migrations, especially after World War II. Moreover, the inhabitants of the border areas no longer had a historic link with a border that was kept sealed from 1945 to 1989. A process both of reconciliation and economic cooperation was therefore necessary to prevent disparities becoming deeper and to promote European integration. The establishment of the border on the Oder-Neisse line after the Second World War had split some municipalities and towns into two parts, which now sought cooperation: the first Eurocity, Guben-Gubin, was established in 1991 on the German-Polish border. It was followed in 1993 by Frankfurt (Oder)/Ślubiice and in 2007 by the Europastadt Görlitz-Zgorzelec. The first Euroregion (Neisse-Nisa-Nysa) was also set up in 1991 on the river Neisse border between the German, Polish and Czech sides. Cross-border cooperation between Bavaria and Czechoslovakia was launched that same year, when the Bavarian National Forest Park joined the Czech Šumava National Park. Subsequently, three Euroregions were created on the German-Czech border involving local actors from Bavaria, Saxony and Thüringen on the German side: the Elbe/Labe Euroregion (1992), the Erzgebirge/Krušnohoří Euroregion (1992)

and the Egrensis Euroregion (1993). In 1993 a Euroregion was also set up between Austria, Germany and the Czech Republic: the Bavarian Forest-Bohemian Forest-Lower Inn Euroregion. This trilateral cooperation was intensified in 2012, when the Danube-Vltava Euroregion was established by local and regional actors from the three countries. Finally, The Pomerania Euroregion, which was formed in 1995 between German and Polish municipalities, was extended in 1998 to local authorities in Sweden.

Today, Germany engages in cross-border cooperation on all its borders and the processes of reconciliation in all directions have fused together in a great variety of cross-border initiatives, helping to heal the scars of history and create joint cross-border living spaces.

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Gorizia – Nova Gorica*

The twin towns of Gorizia and Nova Gorica are located on the border between Italy and Slovenia. From an administrative perspective, the cooperation area extends to three municipalities, Gorizia in Italy and Nova Gorica and Šempeter-Vrtojba in Slovenia. The area may be considered as a conurbation of 72 811 inhabitants distributed on a territory of 335 km².

Gorizia area was under the influence of the Habsburg empire from the 15th century up to World War I. With the Rapallo Treaty in 1920 following the First World War, the area was transferred to Italian administration. The end of the Second World War marked the beginning of a difficult process of establishing the border between Italy and Yugoslavia. All through the Iron Curtain period, the development policies of the two countries aimed to establish and consolidate two new parallel 'centralities' which could counteract the effect of dividing the once unitary system. This implied, the establishment of a new town, Nova Gorica, on the Yugoslavian side of the border while on the Italian side of the border this implied the top-down establishment of a service-based economy.

In its first years of existence the border was perceived as impermeable on account of its highly symbolical weight (e.g. due to the juxtaposition of the "ideological" border with the administrative one). However, since these early years, citizens and communities acted as agents/push-factors for cooperation through transborder agricultural activities, family visits, etc. In 1955 the Udine Treaty regulated the mobility of persons and goods. The Italian minority in Slovenia and the Slovenian minority in Italy, played (and still do) a central role for promoting cooperation. Three main phases of cooperation can be identified since the signature of the Osimo Treaty in 1975, which constitutes the main legal framework for cooperation.

In the first phase between 1975 and 1991 (the independence of Slovenia), the border generated a need to create services and structures able to balance an atypical border effect (i.e. proximity of and potential frictions between two opposing ideologies, rather than by the distance from a national centre). For Gorizia, this implied the allocation of state funds and subsidies meant to strengthen a community perceived both as

* For the map, see article 'Italy'.

vulnerable and strategic. Gorizia's population was almost doubled by the presence of military personnel stationed on the border to counteract any potential conflict during the Iron Curtain years. Large scale cooperation projects were mainly focused on the water and energy supply, as well as on the management of the transborder Isonzo River and Corno Creek.

A second phase of cooperation, from 1991 to the entry of Slovenia in the European Union (EU) in 2004, was characterised by the need for a new development vision. Both cities were facing a traditional border effect concerning the centre-periphery dynamics within their respective national states in which both of them were at risk of being subsumed by nearby national economic centres. The need for identifying a joint cross-border centrality became evident. Furthermore, the opportunities brought by the Interreg and Poland and Hungary Assistance for Restructuring of the Economy (PHARE) programs allowed for the evolution of cooperation and the establishment of joint working groups between the Friuli Venezia Giulia Region and Slovenia (2005).

The third phase of cooperation was characterised by a high number of dedicated cross-border cooperation initiatives promoted both by the local authorities and by civil society organisations (e.g. cooperation between cultural and sport associations as well as scientific conferences on cross-border cooperation organised by the Institute of International Sociology of Gorizia (ISIG)). The need for a structured governance system led to the establishment of the European Grouping of Territorial Cooperation (EGTC) Gorizia – Nova Gorica – Šempeter-Vrtojba (EGTC GO) in 2011, active in the fields of transport, urban planning, energy, health, sport, culture, and education. Since 2015, the EGTC has become the sole beneficiary and implementing authority of the European Community Integrated Territorial Investment (ITI) (total grant of 10 million euros) which focuses on two sectoral projects, the Isonzo-Soča Cross-Border Park and Healthcare Project Salute-Zdravstvo.

In conclusion, although cooperation prospers at both institutional and civil society levels, the collective consciousness of the border communities seems still heavily influenced by the memories of the tragic events of the two world wars and by the decades long ideological contraposition. This could be considered one of the most delicate and important border obstacles yet to be overcome. The recent presentation of a joint candidature of Nova Gorica Municipality with its twin town Gorizia to the European Capital of Culture 2025 initiative (Slovenia is one of the countries from which the European Capital of Culture

will be chosen) could represent the way forward towards overcoming a symbolic border obstacle by means of a symbolic action of a highly binding nature.

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Greater Geneva – le Grand Genève*

Greater Geneva (*le Grand Genève*) is a territorial cooperation project which aims at building a cross-border urban agglomeration of nearly one million inhabitants including the Swiss canton of Geneva and the district of Nyon together with 120 French border municipalities (212 municipalities in total). The exceptional nature of this cross-border cooperation derives from its peculiar geographical context and the ambition of the project. Enclosed within narrow territorial limits conferring to the city-state the status of quasi-enclave, Geneva has for a long time cultivated its development through its relationship with the wider world. In doing so, the city-state has tended to neglect its connections with its hinterland. From the 1970s, the growth of international and financial activities in Geneva combined with a control of its urbanization limiting the construction of housing induced an anarchic suburbanization of the neighbouring French territories. As a result, the intensification of cross-border daily labour flows engendered the formation of a metropolitan area functionally integrated but politically fragmented.

The first cooperation initiative triggered by this mismatch was the financial compensation agreement signed in 1973 between Paris and Bern. This initiative followed the financial requests of French border municipalities to meet the costs of suburbanization induced by Geneva's economic growth. A year later, the Franco-Genevan Regional Committee (*Comité Régional Franco-Genevois*) representing the French state, the departments of Ain and Haute-Savoie, and the canton of Geneva established permanent commissions on several cross-border issues. However, progress was slow and it is paradoxically the refusal of Swiss citizens to integrate the European Economic Area (EEA) during the Federal voting of 6 December 1992 that led the Genevan authorities to become aware of the risk of isolation from the rest of Europe and therefore of the necessity to engage in closer cooperation with their French counterparts.

The following decade was marked by the progressive recognition of the cross-border urban agglomeration as a relevant planning scale. An important milestone was reached in 2007 with the creation of

* For the map, see article 'Trans-Jura Conference'.

the Franco-Valdo-Genevan Agglomeration Project with the financial support of the Swiss Confederation. Since then, the agglomeration project has been updated twice (once in 2012 and again in 2016) and has benefited from significant federal and regional funds from both countries for the construction of cross-border transport infrastructure and urbanization projects. The flagship achievement is the construction of the missing link connecting the two ends of the French and Swiss rail networks (Geneva and Annemasse) and called Cornavin – Eaux-Vives – Annemasse (CEVA). This cross-border infrastructure has endowed the Geneva metropolitan area with an express network (Leman Express) that serves 45 stations over 230 km of railways. From an institutional point of view, the consolidation of the cross-border agglomeration was pushed a step further in 2013 with the implementation of a new mode of governance granting more autonomy to the local stakeholders vis-à-vis their regional and national supervisory authorities. The Local Cross-Border Cooperation Grouping (LCCG) which replaces the Agglomeration Project Steering Committee is a Swiss public law body with legal capacity and budgetary autonomy. In the meantime, the metropolitan dimension of Geneva over the cross-border region was asserted symbolically through the choice of Greater Geneva (*Grand Genève*) as a new name.

After ten years of intensive cooperation, Greater Geneva represents one of the most ambitious cross-border cooperation projects in all of Europe. Boosted by unequal demographic and economic growth, the cross-border metropolitan area presents a high level of functional integration with more than half a million people crossing the border every day in both directions. In response to this challenge, the local political elites have developed a shared spatial vision of the territorial development. However, the still weak sense of belonging among its inhabitants and enduring social and political tensions, fuelled by a regionalist-populist movement against cross-border workers, underlines the ongoing process of territorial construction which requires a greater inclusion of the population and unwavering political support. It is to tackle this challenge that the ambition of the Greater Geneva was further strengthened in 2018 to transition from an agglomeration project to a territorial project that aims at improving the quality of life within the cross-border metropolitan area.

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Greater Region



The territory of Greater Region (65 400 km²) includes the State of Luxembourg, the Belgian region of Wallonia, the German Länder of Saarland and Rheinland-Pfalz plus the French region of Lorraine, part of the French Grand Est region and groups 11 million inhabitants from different national, regional, and urban identities. The region originates from the management of a cross-border industrial basin. Following the European Coal and Steel Community (ECSC), whose policy was implemented largely in this space, an Intergovernmental Commission assembling the French and German states was initiated in 1969 and

later joined by the state of Luxembourg to tackle the steel and mining industry crisis.

In 1971, this Intergovernmental Commission created a regional commission whose mission was to deal with a series of issues involving Saarland, Lorraine, and Luxembourg. The work of both commissions was limited to a territory including the SaarLorLux zone plus the German regions of Trier and Western Palatinate in 1980. Five types of changes have been taking place since then: First, the institutionalization of cooperation has intensified, including the creation of the Summit of Executives in 1995 composed of the associated public authorities which set common working priorities. Second, the presence of regional public councils and civil society representatives has been reinforced in the governance. Third, the cross-border region was extended to Wallonia in 2005. Fourth, the cross-border co-operation has been boosted by the presence of European Union (EU) funding and especially Interreg programs. Finally, the Greater Region has been characterized by an exponential increase of cross-border and work-related flows polarized by Luxembourg and to a lesser extent by Saarbrücken. In fact, the Greater Region has become the most important region of concentration of the cross-border workers in the EU with 225 000 individuals, or 70 % of workers being employed in the Grand-Duchy (2016). The management of these flows has been one of the key drivers of cross-border cooperation in terms of spatial planning. It has often revealed the centrality of the Luxembourgish state in the cross-border governance and also the presence of strategic, cultural, and institutional obstacles to the cooperation in terms of economic development.

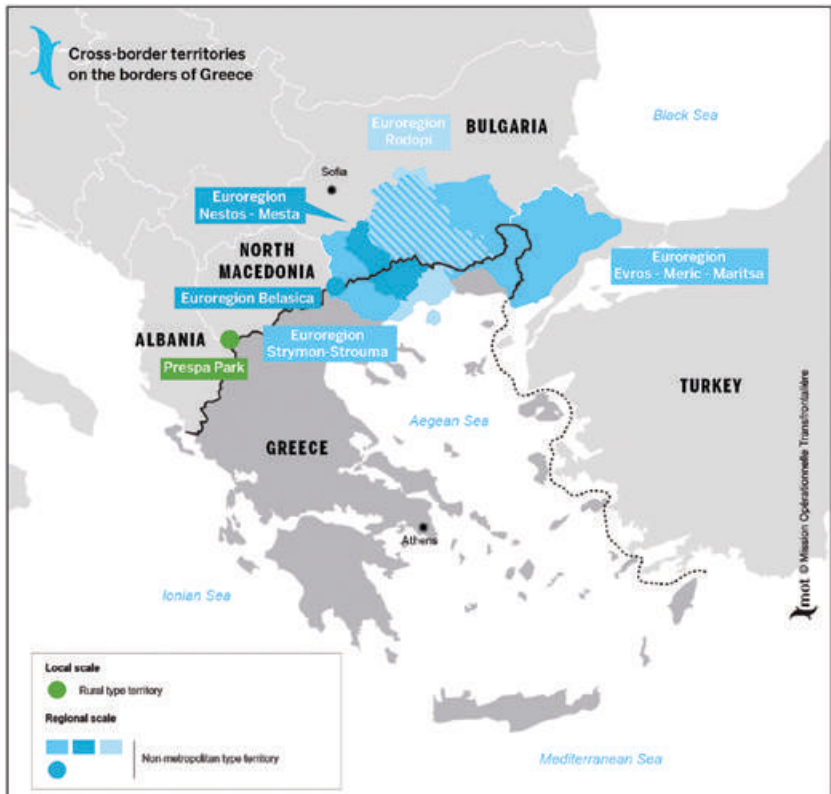
The intensity of cross-border job related mobility in the Greater Region has depended on standing border economic differentials. Furthermore, this European region has been ruled by public authorities whose institutional territories can include different job basins like for instance Wallonia and Rheinland-Pfalz. This spatial inadequacy between the job-related and institutional spaces of the Greater Region plus the increasing disparities in terms of tax revenues between Luxembourg and its neighbouring public partners can be a source of challenges in this European region in the years to come.

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Greece



Greece has a population of 10.7 million and covers an area of 131 000 km². It comprises both a mainland, where the main towns are situated, and an impressive number of islands, of which Crete is the largest. This territorial configuration is similar to that of Denmark, a country where cooperation is highly developed on its maritime borders. Greece lies close to Turkey, a regional power which is a European Union (EU) candidate member state. That proximity will therefore need to be taken into consideration.

Greece gained its independence at the London Conference of 1830 after fighting a ten-year war of independence against the Ottoman Empire,

with support from the European powers, France, United Kingdom and in particular Russia. The country was initially restricted to Attica and the Peloponnese. The territory of Greece expanded continuously in the second half of the 19th century and early 20th century. This expansion occurred on both the mainland and the islands. After the Balkan Wars (1912–1913), in which it gained Macedonia, Epirus and Crete, the territory of Greece looked very much as it is now. The 1920 Treaty of Sevres, signed in the aftermath of World War I, sought to dismantle the Ottoman Empire and recognize nationalist movements. Greece was granted new territories (Thrace and the Smyrna region in Asia Minor) but lost them again in 1923 under the Treaty of Lausanne, which laid down the borders of the new Turkish Republic. The boundary drawn between the two republics resulted in the displacement of hundreds of thousands of people and the will of homogenization of their territories by making the cultural border coincide with the political border. These migrations also affected other countries, including neighbouring Bulgaria. The last territories to be incorporated in Greece were the Dodecanese islands in 1947. The integration of these islands off the Turkish coast and under Italian rule since 1912, completed the expansion of Greece.

The most densely populated area is along an arc linking Athens and Thessaloniki around the Aegean Sea, followed by the Ionian seaboard to the west. Apart from Crete, the islands are small and sparsely populated and this causes problems in terms of territorial continuity and management. When it joined the European Economic Community (EEC) in 1981, Greece had a peripheral location and had no land continuity with any other member state. From its position on the doorstep of the Middle East, it was separated from its neighbours to the north and north-west by sealed borders (Bulgaria was behind the Iron Curtain, Albania had an autarchic regime and Yugoslavia looked more towards western than southern Europe). Relations were also complicated with Turkey, which contests Greek sovereignty over the Aegean islands and is occupying the northern part of Cyprus since 1974. Today, Greece shares two borders with EU member states (a land border of 475 km with Bulgaria and a sea border with Italy) and borders with three EU candidate states (a sea and a land border of 282 km with Albania, a land border of 246 km with the Republic of North Macedonia and a border with Turkey divided into a land border of 208 km and a sea border in the Aegean sea, which is contested by the Turkish government). Last, Greece has also two external sea borders with Libya and Egypt. Greece had a dispute with the Former

Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia (FYROM) about the name of this state, but in 2018, the two states signed the Prespes Agreement which led to the change of the name into North Macedonia and thus settled the issue. Several minorities are also living in Greece, mostly Roma, Turkish, Macedonian and Albanian.

The border regions of Greece were classed as eligible territories under the very first Interreg program in 1990. Aside from the program with Cyprus, Greece participates in two other Interreg A programs, with Italy and Bulgaria. Added to these are three Instrument for Pre-Accession Assistance (IPA) programs: the Greece-Albania program, the Greece-Republic of North Macedonia program and the Greece-Turkey program, which never really started. All the prefectures on Greece's land borders are eligible, as are the prefectures on the Ionian seaboard (facing Italy) and the Aegean seaboard (facing Cyprus).

Due to its location in south-eastern Europe, Greece is the only country involved in two transnational neighbourhood programs, namely the Mediterranean Sea Program and the Black Sea Program, which include seven other countries in addition to Russia and Turkey. Finally, Greece is part of the Adriatic and Ionian macro-regional strategies with Italy and other Adriatic countries.

Five Euroregions, not all of which are fully delimited yet, are dotted along the northern land border of Greece, which was sealed until 1989. The Mesta-Nestos Euroregion, the initiative for which dates back to 1992 first enabled Bulgaria to establish a partnership with an EU member state. Two Non-Governmental Organizations (ONGs), one on each side, together formed the cooperation organization with the issue of creating a common management on water resources. It links the regional district of Thrace and East Macedonia in Greece with the region of Blagoevgrad on the banks of the River Mesta in Bulgaria. Other Euroregions were established in the early years of this century. The first, the Rodopi Euroregion, overlaps with the Mesta-Nestos Region and links an association of 21 Bulgarian municipalities in 4 districts and the Greek Delta Rodopi regional cooperation organisation, which comprises six local and regional authorities and a chamber of commerce and industry. A year later, another project was launched (Evros-Maritsa-Meric), linking Bulgarian, Turkish and Greek authorities. This was the first Euroregion initiative to involve Turkey. One last Euroregion was established with Bulgaria, namely the Strymon-Strouma Euroregion. Four other Euroregions, again with somewhat imprecise boundaries,

have been initiated on the borders with the former FYROM and Albania. Cross-border cooperation projects have therefore sprung up recently on borders which were long sealed, either because no relations existed (as with Albania and Bulgaria) or because they were marked by tensions and disputes (in the case of Turkey). Cooperation now takes place across internal EU borders (with Bulgaria) and across external borders with EU candidate countries (Albania and North Macedonia).

Due to its peripheral situation in Europe in the Mediterranean Area, Greece shares with Italy some similar stakes. As Italy, it is located on a migration route, not a south-north route with Africa, but between Asia and Europe, which crosses Turkey and the Balkans. Tensions are still visible on borders with several neighbouring countries, especially Turkey, while the demarcation is still contested by this latter in the Aegean Sea. Since recent years, Turkey has introduced new claims, whereas at the same time, the border is still under pressure due to migrations flows coming from the Middle-East. Several European hotspots, places where migrants are identified, registered and selected for being relocated, have been created in Greek Islands (Chios, Kos, Leros, Lesbos, Samos).

Cross-border cooperation is not much developed including with Italy and Bulgaria, which are both EU member states. All in all, it could be a means to reduce tensions and border disputes, which are still a great issue for Greece, especially on the sea borders: the exploiting and the protection of resources need a shared vision in order to be effective.

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Health

Before the Single European Act (SEA), health was addressed only indirectly at the European Union (EU) level. Multiple crises and other health challenges demanded a more coordinated health policy. Art. 129 of the Maastricht Treaty (1992) created a legal basis for this area, European public health programs were established, and the DG for Health and Consumers set up in 1999.

Later on, the Lisbon Treaty (2007) and particularly its Art. 168 has defined that “a high level of human health protection shall be ensured in the definition and implementation of all the Union’s policies and activities” (Title XIV). Even if it restates the primacy of member states in such a policy, this article has also introduced a new trend in terms of the development of cross-border cooperation on health. The Directive on Patients’ Rights in Cross-Border Healthcare adopted in 2011 resolved the problem of reimbursement of healthcare provided outside the patient’s member state of affiliation and multi-annual health programs have been proposed to achieve a common European health strategy. In this context, “cross-border” is related to the fact that patient mobility is ensured and access to safe and high-quality healthcare facilitated in the EU and not specifically as a component of cross-border cooperation.

The adoption of European rules to coordinate social security systems and the application of freedom to provide services in the field of healthcare are two additional steps developed to encourage the mobility of European workers and citizens and a healthcare access in the EU in various forms. Even if this mobility is particularly important in the border regions, other kinds of cooperation have proposed innovative arrangements for increasing access to and improving quality treatment and healthcare in cross-border areas.

Since 1992, the Interreg programs (a current tool of the European Territorial Cohesion Policy) have provided support and technical assistance to local partners in numerous fields, especially in health. At the Franco-Belgian borders several kinds of health projects have been developed in the context of Interreg. We can list healthcare cooperation including inter-hospital agreements or the creation of interoperable French and Belgian social security card readers (Transcards), organized zones for cross-border access to healthcare, cooperation on medical emergency or in the medical-social sector.

These diverse initiatives have led to the signatures of Franco-Belgian framework agreements to define the aims of cross-border cooperation on healthcare or on the medical-social sector, to delineate the included activities and to stabilize the cooperation. Elsewhere in the EU, various types of cross-border cooperation projects on health have been undertaken. The well-known Franco-Spanish hospital in Cerdanya (Spain), inaugurated in 2014 and managed by a European Grouping of Territorial Cooperation (EGTC), includes both Spanish and French staff and patients. TRISAN and Cooperation and Working Together (CAWT) are two tools for structuring and coordinating cross-border health projects. The first is a tri-national centre connecting French, German, and Swiss operators; the second is a partnership between the North-Eastern and North-Western Health Boards in the Republic of Ireland and the Western Health and Social Service Board in Northern Ireland. Other projects connect hospitals, lead to exchange of equipment, expertise, know-how and networking.

In all these examples, cooperation occurs with the support of Interreg programs. Indeed, even if borders may seem quite easy to cross, local or even national constraints prevent a truly “cross-border” healthcare. Even if European member states remain competent for organizing and financing health care and medical-social services, an EU Health Policy is emerging. In the cross-border context, cooperation on health provides practical solutions for specific problems, such as isolated areas, medical deserts or asymmetric supply. This continues depending mainly on bilateral or trilateral agreements but can also be used as a lab to experiment processes or innovations in order to test future Europe-wide proposals.

The analysis of several cross-border cooperation cases on health reveals the weight of administrative and financial constraints since social security systems, budgetary considerations or even security measures remain nationally determined. Cultural obstacles remain, even when operators or authorities speak the same language. Regardless of any collective enthusiasm, individual leadership or proactiveness of operators, cross-border cooperation on health remains a long process, easy to constrain or to stop, as it is the case for cross-border action as a whole.

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High Rhine Commission*

The High Rhine Region comprises the area of the Rhine valley from Lake Constance to Basel and consists mainly of small and medium sized municipalities. Until almost 200 years ago, the western part of the High Rhine Region formed a single cultural, linguistic and political entity under Habsburg rule. Since the Rhine has become a state border, the German and Swiss sides have undergone independent developments; nonetheless, there have always been diverse cross-border interdependences.

As cross-border facility, the High Rhine Commission (HRC) promotes de German-Swiss cooperation on the High Rhine since 1997. The partners include the cantons of Aargau and Schaffhausen, the state of Baden-Württemberg, districts of Lörrach and Waldshut, the regional association High Rhine-Lake Constance, as well as the planning associations Fricktal Regio and Zurzibiet Regio. The canton of Zurich is represented as an observer in the High Rhine Commission. The roots of the HRC cross-border cooperation lay in the so called *Rheinanliegerkonferenz*, a regional conference hosted in 1991 and functioning as a platform for regional topics and projects.

The HRC organizes contact and exchanges between politicians and professionals from various disciplines and promotes encounters between the citizens via a Small Project Fund. The objective is to strengthen and to further develop the region through German-Swiss cooperation.

The topics treated by the HRC are encounters, education and knowledge transfer, tourism and mobility. Especially for small meetings between citizens, the Small Project Fund of the HRC is an important support instrument. For bigger projects, the funds of the EU regional program Interreg Alpenrhein-Bodensee-Hochrhein are indispensable and backed-up by funds from Liechtenstein and Switzerland.

In the area of education, there has been cross-border teacher training and conferences for school principals organized. The participants benefit from the exchange of different methods and approaches that are used to solve basically the same challenges (e.g., digitization, heterogeneity). In the area of mobility, a project for climate-friendly commuting has been initiated. This is due to the large number of commuters driving from Germany to Switzerland. In the area of tourism, cooperation is also

* For the map, see article 'Switzerland and Cross-Border Cooperation'.

supported, since the mutual commercialization and creation of tourist offers benefits for both sides of the Rhine. The initiated cooperation between three regional natural reserves that created a common bike tour, could serve as an example.

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Hospital of Cerdanya*

The Hospital of Cerdanya (officially Hospital de Cerdanya – Hôpital de Cerdagne) is conceived as the first cross-border hospital in Europe. It represents an essential health-care facility for the 33 000 inhabitants of the Cerdanya valley, a cross-border micro-region located in the Eastern Pyrenees with a long trajectory in local cross-border cooperation. This territory is administratively split into two parts: the Upper Cerdanya (Occitanie Region, France) and Lower Cerdanya (autonomous community of Catalonia, Spain) which share a small plateau of 200 km², unique in the Pyrenean Region.

Historically, the Upper Cerdanya population lacks appropriate health-care facilities, which were instead located either 60 kilometres from the valley in Prades, or 100 kilometres away in Perpignan. The closer hospital was in the border municipality of Puigcerdà in Lower Cerdanya. Despite the geographical proximity, cross-border flows to the Puigcerdà hospital were scarce, mainly due to the lack of a Spanish-French general agreement on cross-border health issues before 2008, as well as the negative perception on the Spanish healthcare system. However, when the road connection between Upper Cerdanya and Prades was cut due to adverse weather conditions in 1996 and 2001, the Puigcerdà hospital assisted several patients from the French side. Such events presented the opportunity for changing these perceptions.

In 2001, local and regional authorities considered the idea of a new joint hospital in Puigcerdà. In 2003, the regional administrations, together with their respective healthcare agencies, signed the first cross-border cooperation agreement. The feasibility study, funded in 2003 by the Interreg IIIA, led to the realisation of the executive project, co-funded by the Spain-France-Andorra Poctefa program 2007–2013 (18 million euros). The new joint managing authority adopted the EGTC status to simplify future bureaucratic and legal issues. After years of delay, the hospital opened its doors in September 2014. Thanks to the innovative medical assistance and treatment approaches (e.g., multilingual personnel, who are sensitive towards the French health-care culture), the 2019 official statistics appear encouraging: more than one third of hospitalizations and childbirth come from Upper Cerdanya. The

* For the map, see article 'Andorra'.

hospital, which is already specialized in mountain medicine, represents the core of the future health district of Cerdanya by networking public and private health-care services of the valley. The daily management of the hospital represents a challenging experience in terms of cross-border governance. As a result, important legal obstacles like the repatriation of deceased French nationals to France and the recognition of French newborns, have already been overcome in 2017 through the French-Spanish bilateral agreement in the Malaga Summit. In 2016, the European Committee of the Regions awarded the Hospital of Cerdanya with the European Grouping of Territorial Cooperation (EGTC) Award, *Building Europe across Borders*. Recently, the *b-solution* project, promoted by the European Commission's DG REGIO and managed by the Association of European Border Regions (AEBR), provided expert's support to tackle administrative obstacles. It is expected to speed up mutual recognition of healthcare professionals' qualifications and to enable cross-border emergency health care interventions. Lastly, during the Covid-19 Pandemic, the Hospital of Cerdanya showed its resilience to temporary border restrictions by continuing to assist French patients.

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Hungary



Hungary joined the European Union (EU) in 2004, and formed part of the second wave of enlargement following the fall of the Berlin Wall (together with most of the other eastern European States). Hungary covers an area of 93 030 km² and its territory is crossed by the two rivers Danube and Tisza. It shares borders with Austria (366 km) to the west, Serbia (151 km), Croatia (329 km) and Slovenia (102 km) to the southwest, Romania (448 km) to the southeast, Ukraine (103 km) to the north-east and Slovakia (677 km) to the north. The border between Austria and Hungary acquired particular importance at the end of the Cold War as this was the route via which inhabitants of the German

Democratic Republic fled in the region of Sopron. It was therefore the first “filter border” along the Iron Curtain.

The Kingdom of Hungary was founded by the Magyars in 1001 and later fought over by the Habsburgs and the Ottomans. Following the Battle of Mohács, the Ottomans occupied Hungary from 1526 to 1686, when the Habsburgs liberated the country and brought it under Austrian dominion. The 1848 anti-Habsburg uprisings were quashed and, but in 1867, the Hungarians obtained a large autonomy by the way in which the two kingdoms were united under the dual Austro-Hungarian monarchy. However, the Empire collapsed at the end of World War I, it was dissolved in 1918 and then replaced by seven states (Austria, Czechoslovakia, Hungary, Italy, Poland, Romania and Yugoslavia), the borders of which were laid down in the 1919–1920 Peace Treaties. Hungary’s borders were established by the 1920 Treaty of Trianon, under which the country lost 71 % of its former territory. Hungarian irredentism in the interwar period pushed the authoritarian leader Miklós Horthy into an alliance with Nazi Germany in order to reclaim lost lands, especially southern Slovakia in 1938, Subcarpathian Ruthenia (Ukraine) in 1939, Transylvania (Romania) in 1940 and Vojvodina (Yugoslavia) in 1941. However, Hungary was occupied by Germany in 1944 and then liberated the following year by the Soviet army. The Trianon borders were re-established after World War II and Hungary also lost land to Czechoslovakia. As a consequence, after World War II, many Hungarians found themselves residents of neighbouring states, sometimes with an officially recognized status of a minority (in Rumania or in Yugoslavia). Moreover, Hungary found itself behind the Iron Curtain when a communist regime was established in 1948, but it was also a key in bringing down this Iron Curtain in 1989: on 1 January that year, it opened the Austro-Hungarian border. As a result, more and more East German citizens crossed to the West via Hungary and Austria and, ultimately, the Berlin Wall came down. From 1990 onwards, Hungary was quick to establish a democratic regime.

As in other former Soviet bloc countries in Eastern Europe, after the dismantlement of the USSR, cross-border cooperation offered for Hungary an opportunity to participate in European integration before actually joining the EU. The European Commission’s Interreg, Poland and Hungary Assistance for Restructuring of the Economy (PHARE) and Technical Assistance to the Commonwealth of Independent States (TACIS) programs provided the funds needed for the economic

development of those countries, whose border territories were the first to benefit. Cross-border cooperation projects became a way of mitigating the economic differential between regions in the West and in the East. However, for Hungary, cross-border cooperation also fulfilled another function: it enabled Hungarians to establish new relations with the Hungarian minorities living in neighbouring countries, especially in Romania and Slovakia.

Thus, since 1993, Hungary has been a member of the Carpathian Euroregion, set up as a regional association between Hungarian, Polish and Ukrainian local and regional authorities, which was later also joined by authorities in Romania (since 1997) and Slovakia (since 1999). The first trilateral cooperation with Romania and Serbia was set up in 1997: the Danube-Kris-Mures-Tisa Euroregion, also known as DKMT, which was established between local and regional authorities in Romania and Hungary and the Serbian province of Vojvodina. This is the most active Euroregion on the Hungarian borders; it is also a founder member of the Consultative Council of the Euroregions of the Visegrad Countries and a member of the Association of European Border Regions (AEBR). A second trilateral cooperation started in 1998 with Croatia and Bosnia-Herzegovina: The Danube-Drava-Sava Euroregion was initiated by economic stakeholders including the Chamber of Commerce and Industry of Pécs-Baranya in Hungary and the chambers of commerce of the County of Osijek-Baranja in Croatia and Tuzla Canton in Bosnia-Herzegovina, as well as local and regional authorities in all three countries. Finally, two other trilateral cooperation arrangements were launched in 2000, one with Romania and Ukraine (the Interregio between the communities of Satu Mare on the Romanian side, Szabolcs-Szatmár-Bereg on the Hungarian side and Transcarpathia on the Ukrainian side), and one with Croatia and Slovenia (the Dráva-Mura Euroregion).

At a bilateral level, Hungary's first cross-border cooperation was with Austria, in the West/Nyugat-Pannonia Euroregion established in 1998 between the Burgenland and the counties of Győr-Moson-Sopron, Vas and Zala in Hungary. In 2002, bilateral cooperation also started on the border between Hungary and Romania with the Hajdú-Bihar-Bihar Euroregion. However, most of the cross-border working communities in Hungary and Austria were set up with other neighbouring countries. The two states were both only involved in one important macro-regional cooperation set up in 2003, namely the Centroepe Region (Vienna-Bratislava-Brno-Győr), established with the Czech Republic and

Slovakia, which covers a very large area linking the provinces of Vienna, Burgenland and Lower Austria on the Austrian side, the regions of South Moravia and South Bohemia on the Czech side, the regions of Bratislava and Trnava on the Slovak side and the counties of Győr-Moson-Sopron, Vas and Zala on the Hungarian side. This cooperation was however initiated by the Austrian side, namely the Land of Vienna which sought to assert its role of leadership as a new metropolis in the heart of Central Europe.

Most of Hungary's bilateral cooperation is situated on the border with Slovakia. In 1999, the Ipeľ-Ipoly Euroregion was established by the Mayors of Balassagyarmat on the Hungarian side and Šahy on the Slovakian side. It was extended to include four more municipalities and six civil society organisations in Šahy and then to the entire middle section of the River Ipoly. In the same year, the Euroregio Vág-Duna-Ipoly was created a little further west in the same region. Two cooperation arrangements between border towns have also been launched in that area: one between Komárno and Komárom, and one between four twinned towns in the Ister-Granum region. That cooperation commenced in 1999 with the rebuilding of the Mária Valéria Bridge over the Danube, which had been destroyed by the Nazi regime. It was later consolidated under a bilateral agreement in 2000, became a Euroregion in 2003 and was finally replaced with a European Grouping of Territorial Cooperation (EGTC) in 2008. Two other Slovak-Hungarian euroregions were created in 2000, namely the Košice-Miskolc Euroregion and the Sajó-Rima/Slaná-Rimava Euroregion, which was again initiated by the Mayors of Putnok on the Hungarian side and Tisovec on the Slovak side. Besides, in January 2001, the Podunajský Trojospolok/Hármas Duna-vidék Euroregion was set up between the municipalities of the Hungarian county of Győr-Moson-Sopron and the municipalities of the Slovak regional association Csallóköz-Mátyusföld. This Euroregion covers the territory of approximately 298 municipalities. Finally, the Zemplin Euroregion (based on a memorandum on an interregional development alliance for the region of Zemplin which was signed in 2004) links numerous associations of municipalities, towns and regional development agencies on both sides of the Slovak-Hungarian border and is very active in organizing cross-border events, such as Euroregion days, the Zemplin exhibition and the Szomszédolás Zirc ('Visit Your Neighbours') festival, financed by the Community Interreg program. Some of the Euroregions between Hungary and Slovakia are not as successful: for example, the Eurorégió Neogradiensis, established

in 2000 on the basis of a memorandum of understanding signed in 1999 was more or less defunct after 2003. In all, however, Hungary has been an important player in setting up numerous Euroregions and cross-border cooperation projects, a lot of them having been transformed into EGTCs and the state shows one of the highest rates of cooperation agreements with a cross-border legal basis.

For Hungary, cross-border cooperation is an important tool to develop links with Hungarian communities who live on both sides of the national border, and this in a peaceful context, by developing relations with the authorities in the neighbouring states, with the overall objective of mutual recognition. With over 2 million Hungarians living in the surrounding states set in relation to a Hungarian population of merely 9.2 billion inhabitants, this constitutes an important national political objective which goes far beyond that of cross-border territorial cooperation.

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Imatra – Svetogorsk*

The border twins Imatra (27 000 inhabitants) and Svetogorsk (16 000 inhabitants), located at the southern stretch of the Finnish-Russian border approximately 250 km from Helsinki and 200 km from St. Petersburg, are a result of the redrawing of the Finnish-Soviet border following the Second World War. During the process, a pulp and paper mill in the Finnish community of Enso was taken by the Soviet Union as part of the Moscow Armistice of 1944. As a result, Enso was renamed Svetogorsk, which was resettled with residents from other regions of the USSR (the Finnish population was evacuated to the Finnish territory). Imatra emerged from several settlements that remained on the Finnish side of the border and subsequently grew into an industrial town on its own (e.g. pulp and paper, steel). After the Second World War, the border between the two cities was closed. From the 1970s onwards, under bilateral trade agreements between Moscow and Helsinki, the modernization of the Svetogorsk pulp and paper mill was undertaken by Finnish construction companies utilizing Finnish workers and technology. To people not involved in this reconstruction project, the border remained an unsurmountable barrier with regard to interaction.

Its barrier effect changed only with the collapse of the Soviet Union at the beginning of the 1990s when crossing the border became possible for local citizens within the limits of a tight visa regime. However, uncertainties surrounding permits and regulations remained until the setting up of an international border crossing point in 2002. Cross-border traffic has since increased rapidly and shopping tourism particularly in Russia to Finland direction has become an important and visible component of cross-border connections between the two countries. Annual border crossings grew from about 600 000 in 2003 to 2.5 million in 2013. Due to a decreasing value of the Ruble and a consequent drop in Russian shopping tourism to Finland, the number of border crossings was 1.5 million in 2017.

Imatra-Svetogorsk today represents the only instance where two towns face each other in close proximity across the 1340 km long Finnish-Russian border, which since 1995 has also been an external border of the European Union. After the collapse of the Soviet Union, representatives of

* For the map, see article 'Finland'.

local and regional administration in both Finland and Russia recognized the border as a potential resource for local and regional development. This recognition served as a driver for cross-border cooperation initiatives initially under the bilateral Neighbouring Area Cooperation Program, which was running from 1992 to 2012 and was funded entirely by the Finnish Ministry of Foreign Affairs. After Finland's European Union (EU) accession, this borderland also became eligible for EU cross-border funding instruments, first as an administratively complex combination of Interreg and Technical Assistance to the Commonwealth of Independent States (TACIS) programs and later the EU's dedicated external neighbourhood programs; European Neighbourhood Policy Instrument (ENPI) (2007–2013) and European Neighbourhood Instrument (ENI) (2014 – 2020). These cross-border cooperation programs aim to develop socio-economic connections between the border regions of Finland and Russia in order to attract investments and increase welfare for its citizens. Imatra-Svetogorsk is part of the South-East Finland-Russia cross-border cooperation programming area. Cooperation has been both promoted as well as limited by the significant asymmetries in terms of both socio-economic development and population. The welfare gap on the Finnish-Russian border was significant, particularly during the 1990s. However, this gap has since narrowed, and much attention is paid by stakeholders on the Finnish side to the opportunities offered by St. Petersburg and its surrounding area in terms of collaboration, markets, and population.

In addition to interregional cooperation funded from the above-mentioned cross-border cooperation instruments, Imatra and Svetogorsk are also distinctive in the respect that they have initiated town-twinning activities based on their physical proximity across the Finnish-Russian border. The twin city label, which is to some extent symbolic, represented both an aim to better utilize the border setting as a resource but also, “a search for uniqueness and an aspiration to raise the place's profile in both national and international contexts”. For this purpose, the two communities entered a cooperation agreement in 1993. Initially, during the 1990s and early 2000s, twin city initiatives were focusing on benefits derived from cost differentials. However, the ambitions to establish, for example, cross-border business parks and even industrial production facilities on the Russian side of the border did not materialize due to a lack of support from the Russian central government and local administrative uncertainties. From the early 2000s onwards, this led the twin cities to abandon this approach in favour of an exclusive focus on people-to-people

and administrative cooperation in twin city activities—often financially supported by the above-mentioned cross-border cooperation funding instruments.

This shift in focus is clearly illustrated by the choice of topics of the Annual Twin City Seminars that were organized from 2000 to 2005 with the aim to fill the Twin City with content: industries and cities on the border (2000); cross-border entrepreneurship (2001); the border ajar – trade amidst upheavals (2002); health and welfare on both sides of the border (2003); joint seminar with the FP5 EXLINEA border research project (2004); and media, democracy and the perception of the border in the EU and Russia (2005).

In recent years, activities under the twin city label have waned perceptibly. On the one hand, Imatra has started focusing on cooperation with the regional centre of Vyborg, 60 kilometres away, and the St. Petersburg metropolitan area. On the other hand, the departure of the former mayor who was one of the key actors behind the twinning agreements, as well as the effects of municipal merger have contributed to decreased commitment to and organizational capacities for cross-border twinning in Svetogorsk.

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Infobest*

On 10 January 1991, on the basis of the Wissembourg Declaration of Intent signed on 12 December 1988, the Department of Bas-Rhin, the French State, the Alsace Region and the two *Länder* of Baden-Württemberg and Rhineland-Palatinate inaugurated the former customs building in Lauterbourg to house the first authority for information and advice on cross-border issues in the Upper Rhine. The creation of this body took place in the context of the establishment of the European Union (EU)'s internal market in 1993, with new opportunities for citizens and businesses resulting from the free movement of goods, persons, services and capital. At that time, it was considered that the need for information and advice resulting from these fundamental freedoms would be of a temporary nature pending the convergence or even harmonisation of national legislations. However, border problems have not decreased as planned by the European Commission, but have rather increased. Mobility for individuals leads *de facto* to the problem of adapting legislation and decision-making systems that differ between France and Germany.

After two years, the example of the Lauterbourg office proved its worth and was transposed in 1993 to Kehl-Strasbourg, Vogelgrün and Palmrain. The name *Information und Beratung-Stelle* (INFOBEST) was born from the creativity of Christian Häfliger, the former director of the Regio Basiliensis who was in charge of the Palmrain project on the German-French-Swiss border at the time.

These four INFOBEST have one thing in common: they have all been financed by the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) of the Interreg program. Approximately 50 km apart, they form a real cluster in the Upper Rhine in terms of citizen proximity. On average, they respond to between 3000 and 6000 requests per year. Their mission is to compile, process and disseminate information likely to support and facilitate cohabitation in private and professional life in a cross-border territory. This includes information on living and working conditions in the neighbouring country, on administrative procedures and the competences of public or private actors, information on the impact of the completion of the single European market and European integration, as

* For the map, see article 'Eurodistrict Strasbourg Ortenau'.

well as direct answers to questions from individuals, associations, public actors and companies. INFOBEST has also created partnerships with Eures-T, employment centres, pension funds, health insurance funds, family insurance funds, notaries' associations and tax services. They all organise cross-border information days on average twice a year.

Since the creation of the INFOBEST Palatinat Mittlerer Oberrhein Nord Alsace (PAMINA) in 1991, the founding members decided to offer a free service to private or public users. Thus, the INFOBEST network still offers free information and advice services for all citizens, who represent about 90 % of the clientele, on a model based on complementing, rather than replacing, competent authorities in this field (even if they do not generally cooperate with each other). At this level, we refer to the notion of orientation towards the appropriate interlocutor and INFOBEST's role as an interface with these administrations. However, the subject remains sensitive, particularly in terms of labour and tax law.

The services offered by INFOBEST are not comparable to the services provided by the trade union-based organisations for the defence of cross-border workers, which were created in the 1970s. However, the subject remains sensitive, in terms of competition or complementarity, or even legitimacy in relation to the information provided but also on the notion of the defence of cross-border workers. Indeed, the INFOBEST network is also recognized for its expertise by national and even European public authorities. As such, it is solicited by ministries but also by French, German and European parliamentarians. Thus, the network intervenes upstream before the adoption of laws, regulations or directives creating obstacles at borders. This expertise is often claimed by trade union organisations defending cross-border workers.

INFOBEST PAMINA also stands out from the other INFOBESTs since it has joined in 2004 the PAMINA Eurodistrict and consequently acquired legal personality in the form of a European Grouping of Territorial Cooperation (EGTC). The mission of monitoring and initiating projects disappears in favour of the PAMINA Eurodistrict while the other three INFOBESTs retain this role of territorial animation, keeping their governance based on a simple partnership agreement. In cooperation with the Euroregion Silesia and Slask Cieszyński – Tesinske Slezsko, the INFOBEST model was also transferred to the Polish-Czech border in 2004 at the offices of the vacant customs platform in Cieszyn (Upper Silesia).

Over the years, the INFOBEST network has acquired a certain reputation at European level. Following an online public consultation available in all EU languages in 2017 and after research and exchanges with stakeholders, the European Commission has identified a number of problems faced by people living in border regions. Despite the Interreg programs since 1990, obstacles and difficulties at the borders have thus largely increased and have not improved the daily lives of the inhabitants. On the basis of this observation, a European Commission Communication therefore cited the example of the Upper Rhine INFOBEST network for “providing reliable and comprehensible information and assistance” on all aspects of cross-border life, including employment and education.

The Upper Rhine INFOBESTs are now firmly rooted in the daily lives of citizens. Their expertise will be of use in the work to be carried out by the cross-border cooperation committee of the Treaty of Aachen, in particular on the identification of obstacles at the Franco-German border. In this context, the INFOBEST network, with the support of the PAMINA Eurodistrict, was selected as part of the B-Solution call for projects launched by DG REGIO for its project to reduce obstacles related to healthcare reimbursement. The resulting action protocol will then be transposable to other internal borders in Europe.

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Instrument for Pre-Accession Assistance (IPA)



The Instrument for Pre-Accession (IPA) is an instrument of the European Union (EU) designed to facilitate cross-border cooperation across its external borders. It is intended for candidate countries which are seeking to accede to the EU in the short or medium-term and therefore relates to borders that will in time become internal.

The Poland and Hungary Assistance for Restructuring of the Economy (PHARE) program was designed to provide aid for the transition of the countries of central and eastern Europe following the end of the Cold War (with the dismantling of the Iron Curtain), and from 1994, it became an instrument of the pre-accession strategy for these countries. The objective

was in one sense economic, since it was a question of facilitating the transition from a planned economy to a capitalist economy; but it was also political, since it involved promoting the emergence of democratic regimes based on the rule of law. All the countries that joined the EU between 2004 and 2013 received aid (with the exception of Malta and Cyprus).

In 2000, PHARE was converted into an integrated pre-accession program, with the 2004 enlargement in mind. In this context, it was supplemented by two new instruments: the Structural Instrument for Pre-accession (ISPA) and the Special Accession Program for Agricultural and Rural Development (SAPARD). The former was designed to prepare the candidate countries to manage especially the European Regional Policy, while the latter was to prepare them for the Common Agricultural Policy (CAP). The need to prepare the candidate countries to manage European funds and to secure transition gave rise to the establishment of the IPA. Art. 49 of the Treaty on European Union (TEU) provides that a would-be candidate country shall respect the criteria of the Copenhagen European Council of June 1993, namely the adoption of democratic governance with stable institutions, the establishment of the rule of law, respect for human rights, freedom, equality, the protection of minorities and, lastly, the existence of a market economy and the obligation to abide by the rules of the TEU. Since 2007, two types of countries have been able to benefit from the IPA: candidate countries (Albania, the Republic of North Macedonia, Montenegro, Serbia and Turkey) on the one hand, and potential candidate countries (Bosnia, Kosovo and Herzegovina, which is applicant since February 2016) on the other. The difference between the two categories depends on the degree to which negotiations with the European Commission have progressed. The IPA enables the EU to provide support for programs between member states and pre-accession states, programs between one pre-accession state and another, and also programs between pre-accession states and other adjoining states that are not members of the EU. The IPA is divided into five component parts: technical assistance and institution building; cross-border cooperation; regional development; development of human resources; and rural development. Only the first two are open to all partners. The IPA Cross-Border Cooperation (CBC) program, which covers cooperation initiatives between member states and beneficiary countries as well as cooperation among the candidate countries themselves, plays an essential role, since it encourages partners situated

on either side of a common border to share management tasks and to develop a transitional approach. This consists in applying the same rules and jointly managing budgets. The objective is to have a single managing authority, situated in a member state, in order to increase harmonization and integration. However, it remains possible to decentralize some of the management to the neighbouring country if establishing a single authority might create difficulties between the partners. The approach is to combine principles with a pragmatic approach, while encouraging the use of similar practices, with a view to increasing cohesion along these borders.

The IPA replaced several previous programs (PHARE, ISPA, SAPARD, the Community Assistance for Reconstruction, Development, and Stabilisation (CARDS) program and the financial instruments for Turkey) for the 2007–2013 programming period, which led to greater coherence, mainly due to more integrated management. There is coverage of cooperation in the areas of education, culture, employment, transport and the environment. For the 2014–2020 programming period, IPA III continues to focus on future enlargements. In this period, there is provision for 12 programs between the EU and the candidate countries, covering cross-border regions in south-eastern Europe from the Adriatic Sea to the Black Sea. Apart from Greece, which is involved in three programs (with Albania, the Republic of North Macedonia and Turkey), the member states concerned are all recent members, having joined in 2004 or 2007. The transition from candidate country to member state has altered the structure of some programs. With the accession of Croatia in 2013, for example, some borders became internal and were therefore able to benefit from the European Regional and Development Fund (ERDF). The IPA essentially involves countries in central Europe and recently erected borders (those resulting from the break-up of the former Republic of Yugoslavia), as well as Turkey. Two cross-border cooperation programs with Turkey (Bulgaria-Turkey and Greece-Turkey) have however not been ratified. Management broadly follows the existing rules of the structural funds.

In short, the cooperation policies developed on the external borders of the EU under the IPA banner involve states already undergoing the accession process. As a consequence, these programs are governed by similar rules as the Interreg programs. The IPA is clearly a transitional instrument that should enable stakeholders in the candidate countries to become accustomed to the European Commission's management

rules. In this framework, the external borders concerned are expected to eventually become internal borders, as soon as the candidate states have joined the EU.

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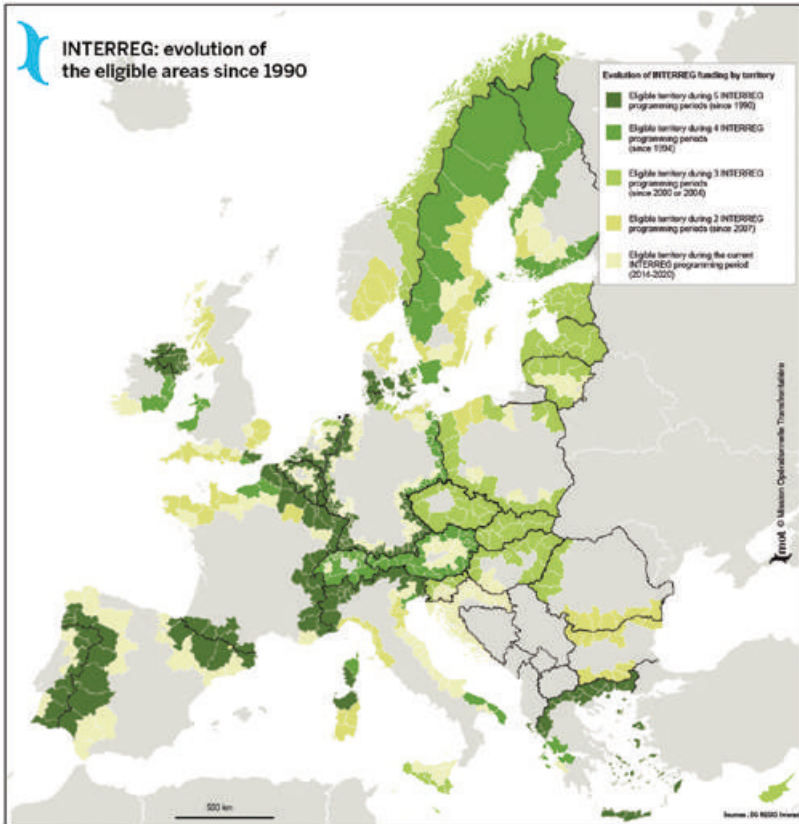
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Interreg



Interreg is an instrument of the European Union (EU) through which the territorial cross-border cooperation has been transformed from a spontaneous local phenomenon into a structured EU program. This transformation is the result of a gradual process that took place within the framework of the development of the European integration process since the creation of the European Economic Community (EEC) in 1957.

What cross-border cooperation and the European integration project had in common was the ambition to transcend national borders, which were viewed as an obstacle to the creation of a unique space sharing the same historical, cultural, social and economic characteristics. The two

phenomena have influenced each other over the years, with the European integration process playing a crucial role in the institutionalization of cross-border cooperation and cross-border cooperation initiatives having contributed to a *de facto* integration among European people and territories beyond national borders. Early interest by the EEC towards the internal border regions and cross-border cooperation as an instrument for the development of these territories and for the European project itself was strictly linked to the objectives of creating a common economic space. The rationale behind this idea was that in the new EEC framework, internal border regions would lose their peripheral and disadvantaged status, while at the same time they would assume an important role in unifying the area. The first studies and cross-border initiatives financed by the European Commission (EC) and the European Investment Bank (EIB) date back to the 1960s. At the same time, the political commitment of the European Parliament (EP) towards regional issues became more intensive, with a particular attention devoted to border regions and cross-border cooperation. Simultaneously, local and regional actors set up several informal cross-border projects and structures all over Europe, better known as Euroregions and working communities. These initiatives increased and improved in the years that followed, in part also due to support coming from the Council of Europe and from European associations such as the Council of European Municipalities and Regions (CEMR), the Association of European Border Regions (AEBR) and the Assembly of European Regions (AER).

Notwithstanding, the EEC political and financial priorities, the lack of alignment among the Community's institutions, the differences in the decentralization processes of each member State and the external international influences meant that a structured program supporting cross-border cooperation was only launched in the mid-1980s. The crisis in the steel industry, which affected the border areas of Luxembourg, Belgium and France alike, prompted the European Commission to come up with a new initiative. The creation of the European Development Pole in 1985 was seen as a joint response to the redevelopment of a tri-national area. Thirty-five years after the Schuman Declaration, it was once more coal conversion and steel production that provided the impulse for an innovative European initiative to emerge. The agreement signed by the three countries brought them into a partnership with local actors in the same institutional initiative. This initiative paved the way for more general consideration. The Association of European Border Regions had

already actively lobbied in favour of European financial support to border regions, but it was the adoption of the Single European Act (SEA) in 1987 and Structural Funds landmark reform in 1988, which opened up the possibility for border regions to become laboratories for the completion of the Single European Market (SEM). It was part of the Commission's strategy to use the European Regional Policy for the implementation of the SEM in 1992 and was intended to reduce the obstacles to mobility that the national border represented. According to this reform, funds would focus on five priority objectives, one of which explicitly mentioned EEC's internal border regions, among those affected by industrial decline (objective 2). Outside of mainstream programs, 15 % of the fund's resources were devoted to "Community Initiatives", a new instrument aimed at encouraging cooperation between member States on matters of common interest. As cross-border issues were considered particularly relevant from a Community perspective, an "Interreg Initiative Program" was launched as one of the first Community Initiatives implemented in 1989. It received the largest amount of financial resources; 38 % of all available funding for the period 1989–1993, totalling 800 million European Currency Unit (ECUs). Its objective was to prepare EEC border regions for the completion of the European single market. The European Commission selected 14 pilot projects, located primarily in the EEC six founding member States as eligible for funding amounting to 21 million ECUs under Article 10 of the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF). Although modest, these trials were considered a success and smoothed the way for the establishment of the Interreg program in 1990. Interreg introduced a territorial dimension into the European Regional Policy by identifying the border regions of the EU-12 member States as territories whose geographical location gave rise to specific characteristics. It sought to involve local and regional stakeholders in eliminating barriers to the free movement of goods, people, capital and services, by allowing them to develop cross-border projects. Consequently, these stakeholders also took part in the process of European Integration, as much as the EEC member States themselves. That has enabled border territories to shed their position as peripheral regions in their respective countries and to gain a pivotal position in the context of European multi-level governance.

The main objective of Interreg was the promotion of cross-border cooperation in several sectors including commerce, enterprises, agriculture, energy, infrastructures, transports, environment, communication, health,

education, vocational training, research, tourism and involving different levels and subjects such as local, regional and national authorities, sector associations, public institutes, economic and social stakeholders, and civil society. After a pilot phase (1988–1989), Interreg was set up officially in 1990 and five editions have been implemented since. Its relevance and budget have grown with each EU financial framework, in accordance with EU priorities, treaties, reforms and enlargements.

Although it covered a limited area, the first Interreg I program (1990–1993) incorporated a wide range of border regions in terms of their populations, activities and development. The borders of Benelux and the border between France and Germany were very active at that time, in contrast to others that were still marked by their peripheral character and the limited knowledge that stakeholders had of each other (as in the Iberian Peninsula, Greece and Ireland). A major innovation concerned the creation of two new dimensions of the program, specifically Interreg II B, which was devoted to the completion of cross-border energy networks; and Interreg II C dedicated to regional planning. Moreover, the external dimension of territorial cooperation acquired crucial importance, according to the perspective of further EU enlargements. Therefore dedicated cross-border cooperation sections were created within the following programs devoted to acceding member and associated countries: the Poland and Hungary Assistance for Restructuring of the Economy (PHARE), the Technical Assistance to the Commonwealth of Independent States (TACIS) for border regions of Russia adjoining Finland, the Mediterranean Area (MEDA) for Mediterranean countries and Community Assistance for Reconstruction, Development, and Stabilisation (CARDS) for Western Balkans countries, which have been unified since 2007 in a single instrument, namely Instrument for Pre-Accession (IPA) Cross-Border Cooperation (CBC).

During the following programming periods, Interreg was officially structured into three different strands: cross-border (A), transnational (B) and interregional cooperation (C). Interreg III (2000–2006) was part of the EU's Lisbon Strategy to become the most competitive region in the world by 2010 and the territorial strategy outlined by the EU in the European Spatial Development Perspective (ESDP) in 1999. It covered all the internal and external border regions of EU-15 and then EU-27 after 2005 and therefore also addressed the Eastern enlargements in cooperation with the cross-border cooperation sections of the financial instruments dedicated to the third countries. The 2006 EU Cohesion

Policy reform introduced two important innovations regarding cross-border cooperation. First, territorial cooperation was no longer considered as a “Community Initiative Program” but became one of the three main objectives of the EU Cohesion Policy, under the title European Territorial Cooperation (ETC). Second, a specific legal instrument, the European Grouping of Territorial Cooperation (EGTC), was created in order to facilitate territorial cooperation and to overcome some of the legal and administrative problems experienced by local and regional actors. These innovations characterized Interreg during the following programming, but Interreg IV (2007–2013) also saw some changes in the functional program organization: the three Interreg strands A, B and C kept their roles, but Interreg B was now responsible for transnational cooperation (dealing with spatial planning problems in 13 spatial ensembles), whereas Interreg C sought to promote interregional networks at the European level by means of four programs (Interreg IV C, URBACT, INTERACT and the European Observation Network for Territorial Development and Cohesion (ESPON)). Also, two new instruments were put in place to assist regional development along the external borders were the Instrument of Pre-Accession and the European Neighborhood Policy Instrument (ENPI). Interreg V (2014–2020) was part of the EU’s Europe 2020 Strategy. It aimed to promote both smart and sustainable growth and a diverse and inclusive society. Interreg V took the form of over 100 programs, 60 of which were in strand A, 15 in strand B, 12 under IPA and 16 under ENPI, to which one should add strand C, with Interreg Europe and the four interregional network programs already present in Interreg IV.

Today, Interreg covers all the border areas of the EU member states, the members of the European Free Trade Association (EFTA) and the States bordering the member States. The objective of the program has remained constant while the EU has grown from 12 to 28 member states (27 from 31 January 2020 after Brexit). Four generations of 5 year programs have been initiated and completed since 1990. Each generation of Interreg programs has taken account of successive enlargements of the EU by including on each occasion an ever-greater number of eligible areas, which are here called “cross-border regions”, a term enshrined in the Treaty since 2007. The extent of these cross-border regions has increased in step with the various enlargements, and also that certain non-EU countries have been widely involved in the process, particularly Switzerland since Interreg I and Norway since Interreg III. Moreover,

several regions figuring in the first two phases of Interreg have seen their areas enlarged, particularly in Interreg IV and V. Finally, maritime regions are now also included as eligible areas; this mostly affects those countries that have been involved the longest, such as Denmark, France, Italy and the United Kingdom, but also Greece and Sweden. At the end of each programming period, a stock-take of activities is performed, the results of which are then taken into account in redefining programs for the following phase. Furthermore, each program is considered in conjunction with other aspects of European policy.

The evolution of the Interreg program shows how its creation can be viewed as a turning point of the history and development in cross-border cooperation across Europe. Interreg represented the first important result in the long process towards the institutionalization of cross-border cooperation within the EEC framework. Interreg also marked the beginning of a new phase of the European territorial cooperation characterized by structured programs that have been continuously reinforced, both financially and legally. Since 1990, Interreg programs have become more intensive and more complex. Their succession over time can be seen as the expression of an original policy of European Integration, transforming EU borders from lines of separation into interfaces. Cross-border regions have become spaces for interaction, marked by the existence of enduring links which are intended to become permanent. The European Commission has thus applied an approach of “positive integration” (the establishment of supranational regulatory systems) rather than only one of “negative integration” (the removal of barriers between national territories). Interreg programs can thus be viewed as a success, in that they have helped diminish the role of the border as a place of tension, reduced people’s ignorance about their neighbours and in certain significant cases they have brought about reconciliation, rapprochement of even regional integration.

Interreg, however, is not in a position to ensure the cohesion of cross-border regions by itself, principally because its financial resources are limited, so it is unable to eliminate all differentials across frontiers. Moreover, major barriers continue to exist between cross-border regions and tensions have not completely disappeared, especially where economic differentials remain great. Finally, Interreg projects are essentially institutional in nature, involving mainly local and regional authorities, whereas economic actors or representatives of the civil society rarely play an active role in it, due to a lack of eligibility for funding, of time or of

human resources required to prepare the rather complex administrative applications. They even often remain a marginal issue for the local and regional authorities and are not always central to their concerns. But overall, the increasing relevancy, complexity and budget of Interreg is a quasi-unique case among EU programs, offer further evidence of its importance. It has tangible value in terms of contributing to the gradual transformation of European border regions from areas division and tension into more integrated and collaborative spaces and enhancing cooperation between diverse ranges of actors at all levels, that have gained a pivotal position in the context of a new multi-level governance approach to European integration. As the regional policy Commissioner (1995–1999) Monika Wulf-Mathis affirmed by the end of the first Interreg program period in 1996: “The Interreg Initiative played an important role for a surplus-value of the European idea”.

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Interregional Cooperation

Territorial cooperation between cross-border regions is a cornerstone of a united Europe, bringing it closer to its citizens. Nonetheless, not all 295 European regions (281 Nomenclature of Territorial Units for Statistics (NUTS) 2 regions in the European Union (EU), 7 in Norway and 7 in Switzerland) border on another country and can take part in cross-border cooperation and policy exchanges.

More regions can work together in larger transnational areas such as the Baltic Sea, the Alps or the Mediterranean; however, only in Interreg Europe, the interregional cooperation program, public authorities from all European regions can take part. Local, regional, and national public authorities work on improving their policies in the quest for their citizens wellbeing. Interreg Europe is an accelerator for regional development which can allow for opportunities to work within pan-European network of experts, exchange experience and learn what works best in terms of policies and approaches.

Interreg Europe aims at improving the performance of regional development policies and programs through policy learning and capacity building in all relevant organizations. It does this in two ways: Policy makers can work together in a multiannual project and each can also benefit from thematic expert services offered by the program's Policy Learning Platform. In a project, policy makers take up to three years to exchange experience and share best practices in order to develop an action plan for their region. They share their experiences with partners from other European regions and local stakeholders who are often instrumental to the implementation of the planned actions. For two more years, they follow their action plan and inform the program on the progress of implementation. Project partnership must include organizations from at least three different countries, two of which have to be from the EU. The Platform also offers a good practice database, networking opportunities, and thematic advice both to those involved in the projects and those interested in the program's policy topics. The Platform also helps interested regions organize a peer review of specific policy challenges.

Interreg Europe is one of the four C-strand programs of the European Territorial Cooperation (ETC) goal, known as Interreg. It is one of the two goals of Cohesion Policy co-financed by the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF). The C-strand/interregional cooperation

programs focus on territorial data and evidence within the framework Observation Network for Territorial Development and Cohesion (ESPON), technical assistance to ETC programs (INTERACT), and Urban Agenda (URBACT). The other strands of cooperation are cross-border (Interreg A) and transnational (Interreg B). First pilot schemes, such as the Exchange of Experience and the *Programme d'action concertée temporaire pour les entreprises* (PACTE), RECITE I & II, or ECOS-Ouverture I & II, tested interregional cooperation and the European-wide exchange of experience among cities and regions in the 1990s. Over the six years between 2000–2006, Interreg III C had four interregional cooperation programs, each responsible for a geographic zone in Europe (north, south, east and west). They gave public authorities the opportunity to improve the effectiveness of their regional development and cohesion policies. Since 2007, the four programs have merged and public authorities from the EU, Norway, and Switzerland have been exchanging experience, sharing best practices, and building their capacities within one interregional program based in Lille, France.

Interreg Europe is the only pan-European Interreg program with 30 partner states steering its implementation. Its territorial span provides a unique opportunity to apply and test various harmonization measures across all countries. While this diversity can be useful, national particularities can also make interregional cooperation challenging. Since 2014, the program is more thematically focused, with four strategic topics open for policy learning and sharing: research and innovation, Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs) competitiveness, low-carbon economy, the environment and resource efficiency. Notably, some important topics which were previously covered, such as Information Technology (IT) or climate change, were left out.

Interreg Europe is ambitious in its objective to improve structural funds programs. Engagement of managing authorities in the program builds up their capacity to work in pan-European networks and partnerships. It also provides thematic input to their policy work. Yet, according to the program's experience, it remains challenging for managing authorities to take direct part in the cooperation. Lack of awareness, lack of internal resources or limited language skills often prevent them from getting more involved in the policy learning activities. However, despite obvious challenges, interregional cooperation has a high return on investment. The returns on small investment in a project can lead to a large leverage effect on the use of other funds in the region. For example, less than

2 million euros of funding for a three-year project among 13 partners provided Italy with the know-how to better manage the 300 million euros available for financial instruments promoting innovation and SME competitiveness in Lombardy Region.

The goal of cohesion and reduction of regional disparities is at the program's heart. The projects mix partners from more and less developed regions and from diverse corners of Europe. The win-win character of the cooperation ensures that all participating regions benefit from the interregional policy learning. A recent evaluation study on the effects of interregional cooperation found that interregional cooperation projects work and lead to policy changes with long-term impact. The key barrier to changes was found in the lack of support by local decision makers. Interreg Europe projects involve local stakeholders now to gain their support and bring inspiration home.

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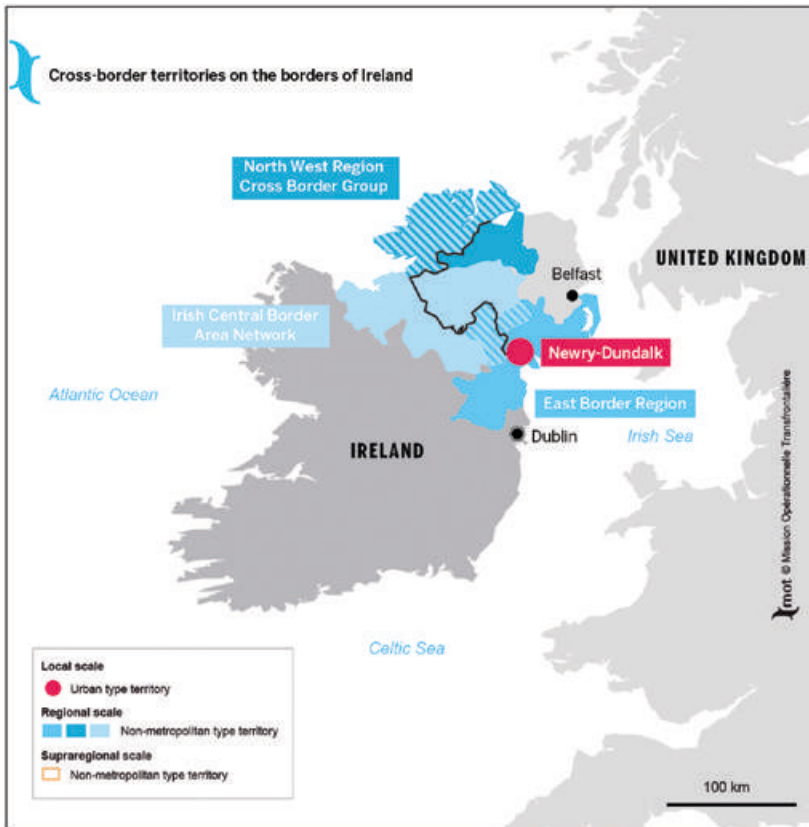
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Ireland



Located on the western periphery of Europe, Ireland and its 4.8 million inhabitants are well integrated into the EU. Ireland is a member of the euro area and one of the oldest member states of the EU. Its accession together with the United Kingdom (UK) in 1973 resulted in the establishment of the European Regional and Development Fund (ERDF) in 1975. In fact, Ireland was still fundamentally a rural country at that time, with low living standards compared to the countries of continental Europe. That led to one of the first two objectives of regional policy being laid down: to provide help to regions lagging behind. Thus, it was one of the main beneficiaries of regional policy funds between the

1970s and the 1990s, before its Gross Domestic Product (GDP) increased dramatically. The country's population density is only a quarter of that of the United Kingdom and the population is unevenly distributed across the country. The most densely populated regions, which are also the most demographically dynamic, lie in the east and south, closest to and with the best links to the UK and continental Europe. The western part of Ireland, other than the regions of Limerick and Galway, is very remote country.

The history of Ireland is closely intertwined with that of its only neighbouring country, the UK, and relations between them still bear the marks of a troubled past. Ireland was invaded several times during the Middle Ages. The English crown first established itself there in the 12th century but it was only in the 16th century, during the Tudor reign, that the territory was annexed and colonised. Numerous Protestants moved to the island with the aim of keeping its Catholic population, which was always ready to fight, under control. The great famine of 1845 to 1849 decimated the population and resulted in large-scale emigration. The island lost approximately 40 % of its population in the space of a few years. The western, more rural, areas were permanently affected by this demographic disaster. The island was resolutely nationalist and this resulted in political demands.

Ireland shares a maritime border with the UK in the Irish Sea and a 499-kilometer-long land border with Northern Ireland, a British territory. It is the result of the latter's independence process and the partition of the island. In the second half of the 19th century, various movements vainly demanded the independence of the island. The project of Home Rule advocated by autonomist movements was discussed as early as 1906. It was opposed by the Anglican inhabitants of Ireland, who lived mainly in the North of the island, and who signed the Ulster Covenant in 1912. This document, which gathered nearly 470 000 signatures, rejected the creation of an autonomous power in Dublin, while defending the civil liberties of the Protestants. In 1920, the Government of Ireland Act instituting two parliaments and two governments, one in Dublin, another in Belfast, established a partition between Northern Ireland (where most Protestants were concentrated) and the rest of the island, where the inhabitants were mainly Catholics. The land border allowed to contain the opposition between the separatists and the loyalists and maintained Ireland within the UK, but did not solve the heart of the problem. Dominion status was granted in 1922, after a short war. In the

same year, a common circulation law, the Common Travel Area (CTA) was signed by the two states, facilitating the settlement of citizens of each state in the adjacent one. During several decades, tens of thousands of Irish citizens settled in the UK. The independence of Ireland became total in 1937. The relation between the two states was one of asymmetry, due to Ireland's lower level of development and its former colonial status, but was also marked by tensions linked to the demands made by Eire on Ulster. The latter enjoyed autonomous status and had its own parliament, Stormont, which was largely dominated by Protestant unionist parties.

Those tensions led to a conflict in the late 1960s. Several Catholic associations were founded, advocating a better recognition of their rights, in the wake of the civil rights movement in the United States. The demonstrations organised in Belfast in 1968 were brutally repressed by the special police units of Northern Ireland. The British army intervened but could not put an end to the tensions. The conflict regained momentum in 1972, after 13 persons died on "Bloody Sunday" in Derry (Londonderry). The British government imposed Direct Rule, managing the country from London and limiting the powers of the Stormont Parliament. Retaining Ulster within the UK resulted in the militarisation of the conflict and of the land border with the Republic of Ireland, as well as, paradoxically, a growing distance from the rest of the UK whose inhabitants more and more associated that territory with insecurity and non-respect for the rule of law. Between 1968 and 1998, the conflict counted more than 3000 casualties and injured many people. Various attempts to resolve it having failed, a cease-fire was concluded in 1994, but only after the Good Friday Agreement was signed in 1998 did the tensions begin to subside. The agreement allowed to create common institutions for the whole island and to adopt a new statute of autonomy for Northern Ireland, linked with a "communitization" of functions and political power. Besides, the agreement stipulated that the status of Northern Ireland could change if a majority of the population was favourable, which opened the possibility of a reunification of the island. The document also provided for the recognition of a victim status and a demilitarisation of the border. The general appeasement reflected a normalisation of the border within the EU, even though it was only in 2008 that armed groups laid down their weapons and even though Belfast is still divided by "peacelines", i.e. walls separating nationalist and unionist neighbourhoods. As a result, the border zone of Ireland is classed as a peripheral region in which there has been little investment.

Ireland is involved in three Interreg V cross-border cooperation programmes namely the North-West Europe Programme, the Atlantic Area Programme and the Northern Periphery Programme. Aside from the two cross-border programmes—Northern Ireland, the Border Region of Ireland and Western Scotland and Ireland-United Kingdom (Wales)—there is a third programme entitled Special Support Programme for Peace and Reconciliation in Northern Ireland and the Border Region (PEACE). The objective of this four-year programme, launched in 1995, was to promote political stability with a view to boosting economic and social development and to bring about reconciliation between communities in Northern Ireland and the border region of Ireland. The programme was extended to 2006 under the name Peace II and was renewed for the period 2007–2013 as Peace III and for 2014–2020 as Peace IV. The programme focuses on education and training and the pooling of services. Generally speaking, the border zones of Ireland are sparsely populated and poorly served. Numerous initiatives have been launched in order to foster reconciliation and support new services based on a common vision. The programme is managed by the Special EU Programme Body (SEUPB). The Centre for Cross-Border Studies has been created in 1999 in Armagh, in Northern Ireland and in Dublin with the aim to do scientific analysis on changes in the cross-border area and propose training programmes for target groups (detainees, displaced persons and victims of violence), who are expected to formulate projects with a view to fostering reconciliation.

Three cross-border regions have been established. The first, the East Border Region (EBR), was initiated in 1976 during a meeting of representatives of the counties held to discuss a new bridge over the River Newry. This organisation links 6 local authorities of the south of Northern Ireland and 3 of Ireland. The aim of this cooperation network is to boost economic growth in agriculture, industry, tourism and trade on the cross-border East Coast corridor. As part of that effort, the towns of Newry and Dundalk, which lie about 20 km apart on the road between Belfast and Dublin, started considering joint projects back in the 1970s. Strategic proposals on transport, training, pooled services and the environment have been tabled since 2006 within the framework of a Twin City region project. The second, the North West Region Cross Border Group (NWRCBG) in the region of Derry (Londonderry), links five counties since 1975. A cross-border City-region project has been elaborated, in which Derry represents an economic development centre for the north-west part of the island. The third is the Irish Central Border

Area Network (ICBAN) set up in 1995, which links the counties to the west of the first region. These three cross-border regions are members of the Association of European Border Regions (AEBR).

The withdrawal of the UK from the EU is a real challenge for Ireland. Its peripheral situation might be reinforced, while most of its exchanges with other EU countries transit through the UK and by the fixed link across the Channel. Besides, Brexit might weaken the Good Friday Agreement signed in 1998. More than any other EU country, Ireland has an interest in the agreement allowing a close relationship and that is the reason why Ireland largely argued the case for it with the European authorities. The Irish Republic and the EU want to avoid the reintroduction of a material border between the two Irelands, since they fear a renewal of tensions between Northern Irish communities. The withdrawal of the UK from the customs union and the single market might result in the reintroduction of tariff and regulatory barriers and the implementation of new controls. The EU has therefore suggested the creation of a “backstop” to keep Northern Ireland within a common regulatory area until a permanent solution can be found. This solution was opposed by the UK, because it questioned its territorial integrity.

The agreement negotiated between the EU and the UK in Autumn 2018 was rejected several times by a majority of MPs, which made it necessary to postpone the withdrawal date to 29 March 2019, then to 12 April and then again to 31 October 2019. In July 2019, the Prime Minister Theresa May resigned and was replaced by Boris Johnson. After some stalling, the negotiations restarted and resulted in a compromise after the meeting of the British and Irish Premiers, Leo Varadkar and Boris Johnson, on 10 October 2019. The document recommended that Northern Ireland should form a common regulatory area with the EU, with the same production standards. At the same time, Ulster should be part of the British customs union and apply the same VAT rates. Controls would effectively take place between Northern Ireland and the rest of the UK, no border thus being created between the two Irelands. Having a constitutional veto on the withdrawal agreement once implemented, the Northern Irish Parliament would be consulted on the matter every four years. To prevent any single party from deciding for the whole population, the veto right would only apply if supported by several parties. The European Council of 17 and 18 October 2019 validated the new agreement, which takes up 80 % of the arrangement of the previous text.

Though rejected by Westminster on 19 October 2019, which meant a new postponement of the withdrawal date to 31 January 2020, it was voted by the new Parliament elected on 12 December (after its dissolution decided by the British Prime Minister). If the procedure follows its normal course, the withdrawal of the UK will become effective on 31 January 2020 and the two parties have until 31 December 2020 to negotiate a permanent agreement. Many points are still in abeyance, like the question of standards.

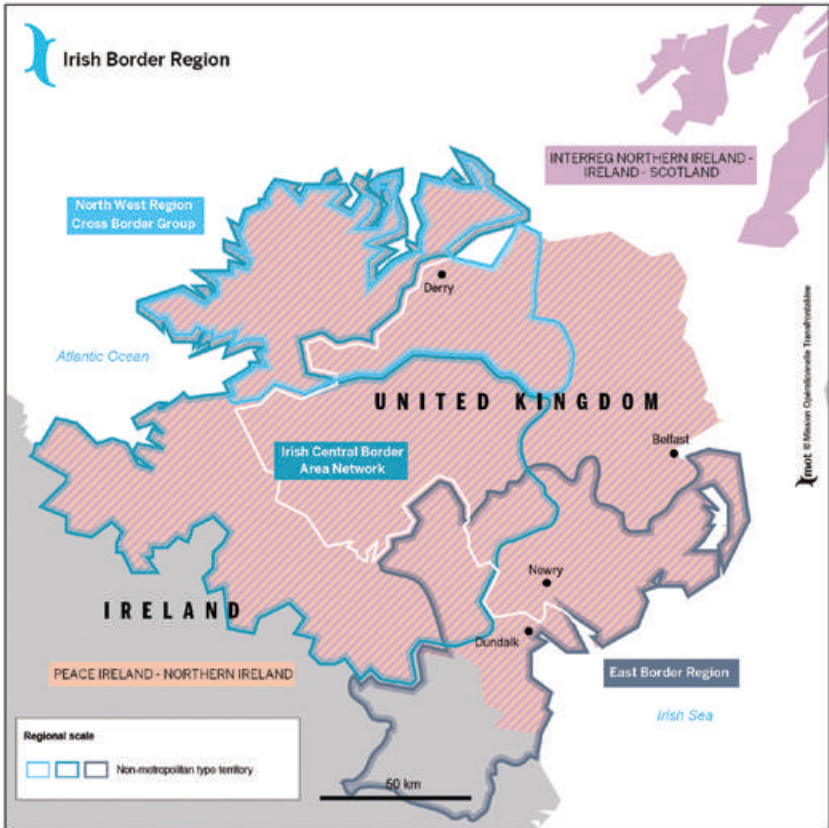
The EU, and Ireland in particular, is concerned that the UK might adopt less constraining standards, a positioning and differentiation strategy that would give the UK a comparative advantage in several economic sectors. Beyond socio-economic issues, the question of the reunification of the island is now open and apparently no longer opposed by the UK. This does not mean that it is inescapable, nor that the relation between the two countries will remain peaceful. From that point of view, cross-border cooperation, which started in the 1970s, is at stake on the land border as much as on the sea border.

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Irish Border Region



The island of Ireland is situated on the western periphery of Europe, which prior to the Anglo-Irish Treaty of 1922, was an integral part of the United Kingdom (UK). After many years of social and political unrest, the Government of Ireland Act 1920 partitioned the island. The War of Independence (1919–1921) concluded with the Anglo-Irish Treaty of 1922, creating the Irish Free State; the six northern counties remained in the UK. After a bitter civil war (1922–1923) between anti-Treaty Republicans and pro-Treaty Free State forces the Free State remained a Dominion within the Commonwealth until 1937. The Republic of Ireland Act 1949 severed the last links to the Commonwealth.

The intertwined legacies of Partition and the Civil War defined and poisoned Irish politics and society for almost a century. Until recent decades, an extremely conservative Catholic Church dominated social and political life in the south. In the north, political control remained firmly in the hands of (mainly Protestant) supporters of the union with Britain and the monarchy; the Catholic minority was largely excluded from access to social services, employment, housing (and therefore the right to vote).

The late 1960s saw the emergence of the civil rights movement in Northern Ireland. In 1969, the repression of the civil rights movement led to a resurgent armed Republican campaign against the British state which was met by an escalation in the British military response. In the half century since the start of the Irish “Troubles”, over 3 600 people have been killed, more than 45 000 people injured and an estimated 88 000 households affected by the loss of a close relative. As a result of the conflict, 50 000 households reported someone sustaining injuries, while over half the population of Northern Ireland knew someone who had been killed, and around 11 000 people were displaced from Northern Ireland to the south – and all of this on an island with a total population of approximately 6.6 million.

The 340 km long Irish border has always been at the heart of the conflict, both symbolically and literally. The region was the most militarised area of the European Union (EU) and the most militarised part of Europe west of the Berlin Wall. Road closures, violence, and militarisation had a deeply disincentivising effect on cross-border contact, breaking traditional social linkages. The last British Army observation post on the border remained until 2006.

The Irish border region is generally defined as those counties that comprise the EU Interreg program eligible area, with a total population of just over 2.5 million. Core economic and social weaknesses include a low-value economic sector, high unemployment, underqualified workforce, low business formation rate, depressed tourism levels, and poor educational, research and development, and innovation rates. There are also areas of significant poverty and deprivation, health inequalities, remnants of the legacy of the conflict in Northern Ireland, environmental problems, and numerous additional barriers to cross-border cooperation. Cross-border cooperation among public bodies and between public bodies and other sectors continues to be fragmented and weakly institutionalised. While many of these characteristics are shared with

other border areas in the peripheral regions of Europe, the conflict has particularly exacerbated the region's social, economic, and environmental problems.

Although cross-border cooperation continues to be fragmented and weakly institutionalised, it has made a very significant contribution to underpinning the peace process and supporting political stability and economic regeneration in the border region. Cross-border cooperation tackles a range of problems that are a direct legacy of the conflict, including the breakdown in cross-border relationships, isolation of border communities, and overall social and economic decline. Cross-border cooperation brings added value to peacebuilding and reconciliation by addressing core conflict issues. Cross-border cooperation in the context of the island of Ireland has evolved as a result of two primary public policy imperatives; the EU Cohesion Policy and the Belfast/Good Friday Agreement.

The European territorial cooperation programs, Peace and Interreg, have made the largest financial contribution (almost 2.8 billion euros) to normalising cross-border cooperation among local authorities, public agencies, and civil society organisations. Interreg A program have been, "particularly relevant to the eligible border areas in the island of Ireland where violence (had) exacerbated existing problems of peripherality, low incomes, high unemployment, a high dependency on agriculture and a lack of any strong industrial tradition." The Peace program, in particular, helped sustain the peace process at times when formal structures were stalled or suspended. The availability of EU funding has facilitated people and organisations to take risks in cross-border cooperation that they would not otherwise have taken. An evaluation of Peace II funded cross-border projects concluded that they were able to engage a deeper level of reconciliation than would otherwise have been possible. One of the most valuable outcomes of the EU programs has been the facilitation of multi-level cross-border networks. The requirement built into the programs for partnership working has effected a real change in culture for civil society organisations, giving them a new access to decision-making. The programs have had important impacts on local governance by putting cross-border cooperation at the heart of the policy debate and encouraging and supporting active citizenship.

The 1998 Belfast Agreement or the Good Friday Agreement (Belfast/GFA) comprises two inter-related documents: a multi-party

agreement by most of Northern Ireland's political parties (the Multi-Party Agreement); and an international agreement between the British and Irish governments (the British-Irish Agreement). It has three interrelated strands: establishing a power-sharing Executive and a legislative Assembly in Northern Ireland; establishing the North South Ministerial Council and six North South Implementation Bodies with cross-border executive functions; and establishing the British-Irish Council and the British-Irish Intergovernmental Conference. Parties to the Agreement committed to uphold high standards of civil, economic, and social rights in Northern Ireland. The Agreement is annexed to a treaty between the two Governments (The British-Irish Agreement xv) under the terms of which they undertake to support and implement the Belfast/GFA. The British-Irish Agreement came into force on 2 December 1999.

Under the Belfast/GFA, the North South Ministerial Council (NSMC) was established to develop consultation, cooperation, and action on matters of mutual interest within the competence of the administrations, both North and South, on an 'all island' and cross-border basis. The NSMC brings together the Irish Government and the Northern Ireland Executive, and meets at both the ministerial level and plenary format (a full meeting of the two administrations on the island). The NSMC has a remit for shared work in six areas of cooperation. Common policies and approaches are agreed to in the NSMC and put into effect by relevant departments and agencies separately in each jurisdiction. Additionally, six North-South bodies operate on an all-island basis under the policy direction of the North-South Ministerial Council. Since the conclusion of the Belfast/GFA in 1998, it has been necessary to pursue a series of successive political and legal agreements to consolidate the peace settlement provided for in the Agreement and to address crises of political confidence in Northern Ireland. Continuing political disagreements in Northern Ireland meant that there was no devolved power-sharing executive, Northern Ireland Assembly or meetings of the North South Ministerial Council for three years from January 2017 to January 2020. At the time of publication, continued political stability remains to be proven. A 2006 report by Paddy Hillyard and others gave a stark warning that only seems increasingly relevant; "Only a minority of peace agreements survive more than a decade. In the absence of comprehensive efforts to transcend social divisions, armed conflicts frequently re-occur."

The political differences that brought about the collapse of the institutions have been intensified by the tensions arising from the 2016 Brexit referendum. The impacts of the actual withdrawal by the UK in relations on the island and between Ireland and the UK will be additionally damaging. Over the past two decades, cross-border cooperation, peacebuilding, and governance have been intrinsically linked. As the Irish Government has noted, “EU involvement has allowed for the realisation of projects that may otherwise have become mired in political disagreement. Removal of this constructive influence and of the funding itself would have a significant impact on the ongoing reconciliation work in Northern Ireland and the border region.” Much of this cooperation is embedded in the common framework of EU law and EU policies that applies across the island of Ireland at present. The Irish Minister of Foreign Affairs Simon Coveney commented, “[...] north/south co-operation is based on both jurisdictions being part of the same union, and operating to the same rule book. In the absence of that, north/south co-operation, on a balanced basis, seems very, very difficult to design [...] without devolved government [...] that seems to me to be impossible.”

Ruth Taillon

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Ister-Granum*

The Ister-Granum is a European Grouping of Territorial Cooperation (EGTC) established in May 2008, as the second grouping registered as the EGTC in the EU, was formed around the Hungarian Esztergom (30 000 inhabitants) and the Slovak Štúrovo (11 000 inhabitants) and the reconstructed Mária Valéria bridge, connecting the two cities. The bridge exploded in 1944 and reopened in 2001 has fundamentally changed the situation of the twin-towns. Hungarian language is predominantly spoken on both sides of the border. The Slovak part of the EGTC is a region that can be considered as territory with stable and compact majority of Slovak citizens with Hungarian nationality.

In three years, the border crossing traffic increased 40 times compared to the 1990's when a ferry had to ensure the connection between the two banks of the Danube. The number of daily commuters reached 6000 in 2007 and the bridge offered the opportunity for institutionalised cooperation.

In May 2000 two twin-towns signed bilateral agreements on regional cooperation followed by two neighbouring small-region level associations in October of the same year. The Euroregion was established in November 2003, involving 100 local municipalities, two thirds of which are from Hungary. The name of the cooperation originates from the ancient Greek name of the Danube (Ister) and the medieval Latin name of the river Garam / Hron (Granua) falling into the Danube at Štúrovo.

During its history, the Ister-Granum Euroregion became a brand stretching beyond the borders of the grouping. The midterm strategic plan of the Euroregion was presented at the European Parliament in 2005. The value of the implemented projects reached 3 million euros, but the social impact of the cooperation was even bigger: a cross-border folklore festival, an air show day, a youth club, a pleasure-boat, a football cup, the winemakers' cross-border association and that of the hunters of the Euroregion have also been bearing the name "Ister-Granum". The involvement of the civil sector was one of the strengths of the Euroregion which had a bilingual quarterly civil review, a civil on-line portal, a civil parliament, and a cross-border network of service providing offices for Non-Governmental Organisations (NGO)s.

* For the map, see article 'Slovakia'.

In 2008, the Euroregion was replaced by the grouping because the new legal framework of cross-border cooperation ensured more effective institutionalised and legal frameworks for cooperation across the borders. The founding ceremony was held on 5 May 2008 in the royal castle of Esztergom in the presence of Luc Van den Brande, the President of the Committee of the Regions. 86 municipalities joined the EGTC from among 102 working together within the Euroregion that time. The actual number of the members is 82 consisting of 42 Hungarian and 40 Slovak members. Working language of the grouping is mainly Hungarian, because the representatives of the members fluently speak Hungarian, but majority of the employees of the grouping fluently speak Slovak as well.

The decision-making body of the EGTC is the General Assembly of the Mayors. The Mayor of Esztergom and Štúrovo play the role of the President in a rotating system supported by a Board of 4–4 members. The working organ of the EGTC is managed by the director in Esztergom.

The operation of the EGTC is financed from membership fees (20 Hungarian Florins (HUF) or 6.5 eurocents per inhabitant), from services provided and projects.

The EGTC is systematically developing a cross-border system of local product markets (currently it is including more than 350 producers), an integrated cross-border tourist destination system including attraction and service development, a cross-border enterprise-logistics zone, and people-to-people cross-border integration.

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Italian-French Land Border*

The Italian-French borders are both terrestrial and mountainous, covering 515 km from the triple point France – Italy – Switzerland (Mount Dolent) until the shores of the Mediterranean at the level of Menton (France) and Ventimiglia (Italy), and maritime between islands Corsica and Sardinia and the mainland and has been described as a “liquid plain” (*plaine liquide*). This article will address specifically the Italian-French land border.

The construction of this border as an international border is recent. It dates back to the separation between the Kingdom of Sardinia and France in the 19th century and was modified in 1860 by the attachment of Savoy and the County of Nice by the Treaty of Turin to France. Its final delineation only took place in 1947, which resulted in the attachment of Tende and La Brigue to France.

The Franco-Monegasque border is much older (1297). It also changed in 1861 with the attachment to France of Menton and Roquebrune (“free cities” of the Principality of Monaco since 1848). The Principality was thus reduced by 90 % of its area, now totaling 1.97 km².

These delineation changes are still fresh in collective memories, as are the traces of contemporary conflicts, such as occupation by the military forces of Mussolini. All along this border line national and local identities are differentiated. But at certain moments of cooperation or confrontation, a “buried Italianity”, reappears.

The cross-border relationship is above all intercultural through the contradictory uses and perceptions of the different functions of borders. The vocabulary testifies to this, as people speak about *frontière* on the French side, but about *confine* on the Italian side. According to European programmes, the cooperation covers an area of 53.3 km² for 5.6 million inhabitants. On the French side it includes Savoie and Haute-Savoie (Région Auvergne Rhône-Alpes), the Hautes-Alpes, the Alpes de Haute-Provence, and the Alpes-Maritimes (Région Provence-Alpes-Côte d’Azur – Région Sud), and on the Italian side the Regiona Autonoma Valle d’Aosta, provinces of Turin and Cuneo (Piedmont Region), and the province of Imperia (Liguria Region). It covers 1840 municipalities

* For the map, see article ‘Italy’.

(90 % of them with less than 5000 inhabitants) and 2 metropolises, Turin and Nice.

There are several areas where the region excels, in particular tourism, economic development, innovation, infrastructure and access to crossing points, accessibility of services in urban centres, protected habitat and natural areas, and availability of renewable energy sources. Challenges for the region include; ageing and territorial imbalances, youth unemployment and precarious employment, low investment levels in research and development and resultant poor performance of Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs), poor coordination and integration of tourism industry, high concentration of cross-border traffic, lack of integration of employment policies, exposure to natural and technological risks, lack of coordination of territorial planning policies, and lack of comparable statistical sources and homogeneous data.

Until 1990, cooperation was a marginal practice (without a major large-scale programme): town twinning, relations of proximity for local issues, more political actions (European federalist movement) but without specific legal support and without financial incentives. The first significant cooperation dates back to 1983 with the creation of the Western Alps Working Community (*Communauté de Travail des Alpes Occidentales*, COTRAO). It was followed in 1987 by the creation of the European natural park Alpi Marittime/Mercantour.

From 1990 onwards, under the impetus of the Interreg Community Initiative Programme (CIP) and then the Rome Agreement (November 1993), which created a legal framework, projects slowly emerged in an asymmetrical process in each of the member states. Some examples include the protocol between the cities of Menton and Ventimiglia (November 1990); the *Espace Mont-Blanc* (November 1993); the *Eures Transfrontalier Eurazur* (May 1995); the *Conférence des Trois Provinces* (March 1997); the *Conférence des Alpes Franco-Italiennes* (June 1998) and the *Conférence des Hautes Vallées* (2001). In 2007, the Euroregion followed and replaced the COTRAO and in 2013 the European Grouping of Territorial Cooperation (EGTC) Mercantour National Park in France and Alpi Marittime Regional Park in Italy were created.

Since 1991, 550 million euros in grants have financed nearly 600 projects, of which 141 (60.9 million euros) for Interreg I (1991–1993), 268 (159 million euros) for Interreg II (1994–1999), 152 (161 million euros) for Interreg III (2000–2006) and 196 (€131 million euros) for Interreg IV (2007–2013).

The specificity of the 4th programming period (Alps Cooperation Transfrontier, ALCOTRA) is the definition of three types of projects: simple projects, 84 in total which account for 53 % of the budget; six strategic projects involving local authorities and the state, representing 17 % of the budget; and 42 Integrated Cross-border Plans (ITP), totaling 30 % of the budget. More than two-thirds of the project leaders are located in Italy, with less than a third in France due to a proactive positioning of the Italian partners and the existence of an Italian rotation fund. Public actors are the main beneficiaries of funding (50 % on the French side). Even more than at other borders, the nature of Franco-Italian cooperation is that it is based on the initiative of local authorities which use European funds to finance actions in their fields of competence on a cross-border scale. The main themes are: culture (20 %), environment (17 %), and tourism (13 %). Other less important themes include transport (5 %), health and social issues (6 %), support for SMEs (9 %) and education-training-employment (9 %).

The general objective of the 5th programming period (2014–2020) is to improve the quality of life of populations, sustainable development of the territory's cross-border economic and social systems through cooperation on the economy, environment, and services to citizens. The non-European Union (EU) border between the Principality of Monaco and France has been made eligible for the Alcotra programme only for the period 2007–2013.

The Italian-French border territories are spaces of friction in which the changes engendered by the economic globalization, European integration, and processes of decentralization and local autonomy are often badly experienced, particularly in daily life. Contrary to a common expression borders do not fade away but rather see their functions evolve, both in terms of their outlines and in their divisive powers (i.e., mobility of people, ideas, capital and goods within the Schengen Area). These developments have largely not been anticipated and little thought has been given to these externalities – a fact also true for territorial organizations. It is still reasoned in symmetry of institutions whereas the operability of projects requires to think in symmetry of competences. In the two nations the relations between territorial authorities and the nation-state are very different, as well as those with the sphere of private actors.

In the historical context of the construction of European territories, the use of cross-border cooperation in this area is characterized by singularities and weaknesses, typified by complex (mountainous) areas of intervention; limited economic and functional interdependencies

(no cross-border metropolis); asymmetric and highly evolving political-administrative systems; a weakness in the dissemination of cross-border technical expertise in project territories; a predominance of institutional actors (excessive financial windfall effect); a complexity of programming procedures; a reduction in public contributions; and a weak strategic and political vision from public actors.

On the one hand, these cross-border policies can provide positive responses to new territorial challenges by contributing to the construction of innovative and creative spaces that reflect the dynamics of integration. In these very constrained places that border areas are, we see appearing spaces of institutional creation, and thus of freedom. This is particularly also the case in France, with the emergence of the concept of “territorial diplomacy” as a public policy tool.

On the other hand, many believe, that “Interreg thinking” is now exhausted, especially among the most experienced protagonists of such cooperation. Apart from the windfall effect, there does not seem to be much prospect for new programs in the absence of shared transnational and interterritorial strategies. Also, with the heavy trend towards a decline in public interventionism and the capacity to co-finance projects, the support mechanisms which have been in place up to now, might be threatened in the future.

The evolution of border functions is a long-term phenomenon and the impact of which on the management of border territories is currently poorly controlled. At times, the issue of the “return of borders” reappears, but the historical model of borders is inexorably exhausted. The current forms of local cross-border cooperation have not yet achieved their objectives of popular support. The question of the meaning of public action, (i.e. that of the cross-border character, the “cross-frontierality”) therefore returns inexorably.

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Italy



Italy is one of the largest member states of the European Union (EU). This founder member of the European Economic Community (EEC) has approximately 60.5 million inhabitants, which is comparable to France and the United Kingdom. However, it was established as a nation state much later than those two countries. The territories on the peninsula were only officially united in 1861, although it was another ten years before all the possessions of the Papal states were incorporated. That made it possible to move the capital to Rome, which had both the advantage of being located roughly in the centre of the new country and the legitimacy conferred by its glorious history. Nevertheless, the

Republic of San Marino has remained independent. Located between the provinces of Marche and Emilia-Romagna, not far from the Adriatic Sea, it is now an enclave in the territory of Italy and one of the third smallest micro-state of the world (61 km²). During the first World War, Italy took first a neutral position before joining the Triple Entente in 1915. Being on the winner side, Austrian territories (Trentino-Alto Adige/South Tyrol, the Istrian peninsula) were assigned to Italy by the Treaty of Saint-Germain in 1919 in accordance with the theory of irredentism that claims national sovereignty on all territories where Italian was spoken (even if in minority). After World War II, Italy being this time on the defeated side, lost several territories. Istria became the “free territory of Trieste” by the Treaty of Paris of 1947, the name of the city which was until 1919 the maritime port of the Austro-Hungarian Empire. In 1954, the eastern part was given to Yugoslavia while the western part, with Trieste became Italian.

Italy is still marked by a gap between the economic and social development level of the regions, which was inherited from its pre-unification structure. There is a clear divide between the north, with its powerful industrial cities concentrating the headquarters of globalized firms and research centres, and the south (Mezzogiorno), with its high unemployment rate, activities of low added values and inequitable land structures. Unfortunately, since the beginning of the millennium, the territorial differences have not diminished.

Italy is densely populated (203 inhabitants per km²) and has very few sparsely inhabited areas. The territory comprises a long peninsula running from north-west to south-east, the southern part of which is somewhat subdivided, as well as two large islands (Sardinia and Sicily) and several small islands. Most of its borders are therefore maritime borders. The Adriatic Sea separates Italy from the EU member states Greece, Croatia and Slovenia (with which it also shares a land border) and from the candidate countries Bosnia-Herzegovina, Montenegro and Albania. The Mediterranean Sea serves as a border with Spain and France (Corsica) to the west and with North Africa (Algeria, Tunisia and Libya) to the south. That border is particularly sensitive, as it is not only a political border but also a line marking a serious development divide. Although shorter than its maritime border, the land border separates Italy from four other countries, namely (from west to east) France (515 km), Switzerland (740 km), Austria (430 km) and Slovenia (232 km). The border follows the Alps and has all the appearances of a natural border,

but it is interrupted by valleys and crossings, some of which are very busy and part of trans-European networks. In fact, far from being a barrier, the Alps are a space linking northern Europe and southern Europe, which is crossed by heavy traffic in transit. There are also numerous cross-border interactions in parts of the mountain range or its foothills, which result in considerable movements of people for work, trade and leisure. Finally, the political border does not coincide with the linguistic border and cross-border linguistic communities exist. French is spoken in the Valle d'Aosta, German is spoken in Trentino/South Tyrol and Slovene in Friuli-Venezia-Giulia. In these three cases, the local authorities have enhanced autonomous powers. The land border therefore crosses a quite varied territory, with densely populated areas and cross-border agglomerations with heavy short- and long-distance traffic alternating with less populated areas. Northern Italy forms part of the economic heart of Europe (the “backbone” or “pentagon of European cities”) which straddles the Alps. The contrast between the maritime border and the land border is not just physical; there is a sharp contrast in terms of economic divides, exchanges and political relations.

Italy engages in intensive territorial cooperation with its neighbours; however, this cooperation has developed differently depending on the type of border. The fact that the territories eligible for cross-border cooperation stretch from the Alpine provinces to the Adriatic coast and the provinces of Liguria, Tuscany and Sardinia on the Mediterranean is the result, first, of progress in European integration and, second, of the adoption of the Instrument for Pre-accession Assistance (IPA) and the European Neighbourhood Policy (ENP). The Italy/Tunisia program is the only cross-border cooperation program to have been adopted under the European ENP for the Mediterranean. It links five provinces in Sicily and nine governorates in Tunisia and covers the economic dimension and innovation transfer, cultural aspects, and the environment. Special attention is paid to border security and its efficient operation. The Adriatic Cross-Border Cooperation Program adopted for 2007–2013 was part of the IPA. Named ADRION for 2014–2020, it is now an Interreg B program linking four EU member states (Croatia, Greece, Italy and Slovenia) and potential candidate countries (Albania, Bosnia-Herzegovina and Montenegro). The IPA program for 2014–2020 links provinces in south-eastern Italy with Albania and Montenegro. Eight bilateral Interreg A programs have been adopted for 2014–2020 between Italy and its neighbouring states, namely Austria, Croatia, Greece, France

(Alps Cooperation Transfrontier ALCOTRA) and Maritime (France), Malta, Slovenia, and Switzerland (actively involved in Interreg programs from the outset, although not an EU member state). In addition to cross-border cooperation, Italy is also involved in a total of four Interreg B transnational programs (the Central Europe program covering the northern part of the peninsula, the Alpine Space program, the Mediterranean program, which covers the entire country, and the Adriatic-Ionian) and two macro-regional strategies (the Alpine Macroregion and the Adriatic and Ionian macro-region). Finally, there are six working communities covering the Alpine border: from west to east they are the *Communauté de Travail des Alpes Occidentale* (COTRAO), the Lake Geneva Council, the Valais-Valle d'Aosta Council, Regio Insubrica, the *Arbeitsgemeinschaft* (ARGE) Alp and Alpe-Adria.

Alongside these various programs and institutions, there are several cooperation bodies in place operating on different scales; most were not initiated until the 1990s or the 2000s. The first such initiatives covered spaces with a strong natural element in need of protection. A cooperation project was initiated in 1987 between two national parks, the Mercantour National Park in France and the Alpi Marittime Nature Park in Italy. A charter was prepared in 1998 and the body, named Alpi Marittime-Mercantour European Park became a European Grouping of Territorial Cooperation (EGTC) in June 2013. A second initiative concerned Mont-Blanc, which straddles the border between France, Switzerland and Italy and has a high symbolic dimension. Thus the Mont-Blanc Cross-Border Conference was set up in 1991, linking the Canton of Valais in Switzerland, the autonomous region of Valle d'Aosta in Italy and an intermunicipal cooperation structure named the Pays du Mont-Blanc in France. A similar approach was taken for the *Bouches de Bonifacio*, an international marine reserve, a project covering the Bonifacio Strait between Corsica and Sardinia, which dates back to 1992. The French and Italian States are partners in the project, which in 2012 resulted in the creation of an EGTC. Two other initiatives in the Alps deserve a mention. First, the Julian Alps Transboundary Ecoregion between Italy and Slovenia, which was given a "EuroParc" label in 2007, certifying active cooperation between two nature parks separated by a border. In the western part of the Alps, the High Valleys Conference links since 2007 several nature parks and intermunicipal bodies in Italy and France.

As on other borders, cooperation started at local level in a cross-border agglomeration. Cultural cooperation was initiated in the 1970s

between Gorizia in Italy and Nova Gorica in what was Yugoslavia and is since 1991 Slovenia. Cross-border cooperation abated following the independence of Slovenia, before being relaunched in the late 1990s. The two towns have been engaged in cooperation projects since 2001, covering higher education, urban planning and management of the water courses separating the two towns. An EGTC was established in 2011 in order to strengthen cooperation between the two towns and a Slovenian municipality. More recently, a strategic plan was realized with the aim to reinforce the attractiveness of the whole urban area and to increase mobility and share the healthcare resources. Nova Gorica is also candidate to host the European capital of culture for Slovenia in 2025 with a common program with Gorizia.

In addition to these cooperation initiatives at local level, several bodies have been established at regional or supra-regional level. The Regio Insubrica, founded in 1995, is a working group linking the Canton of Ticino in Switzerland with four Italian provinces with the main objective to resolve problems relating to the border, the Chiasso border crossing being on one of the busiest roads across the Alps linking the Rhine region of Europe with the Po Valley. The Tyrol-South Tyrol-Trentino Euroregion linking the province of Tyrol in Austria with two Italian provinces since 1998, is based on the existence of the German-speaking community. Here, an EGTC was also set up in 2011. The Senza Confini Euroregion between Italy and Austria is the only Euroregion, which still exists: it was converted to an EGTC in 2012. The other Euroregion, the Franco-Italian Alps Conference (CAFI) which was founded in 1998 was dismantled several years ago. Finally, two cross-border spaces have a supra-regional dimension. The first, the Adriatic-Ionian Euroregion links local and regional authorities on the Adriatic coast. The second, the Alps-Mediterranean Euroregion, linking regional authorities, has to be converted to an EGTC but this latter has never been created and since then, the cooperation no longer exists.

All in all, Italy is broadly engaged in cross-border programs on various scales. This cooperation involves both EU member states and non-EU countries (through the IPA and ENP). The purpose of these cross-border cooperation frameworks is generally to manage shared natural and territorial resources and most of them have been established at local or regional level. However, initiatives started to be put on a formal footing in the 1990s, later than on the Franco-German or Scandinavian borders. Yet, there has been a marked move towards institutionalization since the

end of the first decade of this century, with the creation of several EGTCs at both local and regional as well as supra-regional level.

Italy faces three issues on its borders. First, the external European border with northern Africa is under pressure. The Mediterranean Sea became a notable region of South-North international migration due to the major economic gap between both sides, the geopolitical upheavals in North Africa (and especially the revolution in Libya) and the transformation of this maritime space in a EU's sharp external border. ENP should be of crucial importance in articulation with cooperation between EU member states and the European Commission. Secondly, integrated transnational spatial planning strategies have to be implemented on ecologically fragile areas like the Alps and the seas to reduce environmental impacts. Last, cross-border cooperation at local and regional scale should be actively pursued to avoid the renewal of irredentism, which could lead to the increase of tensions with other European countries.

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Lake Constance Region (Bodensee)*

The Lake Constance Region is certainly one of the most interesting cases of intra-European borderlands. This region comprises three nation states meeting at the second largest lake in Europe and also involves the fourth state, Liechtenstein, which is situated only 50 km away from the lake. On the one hand, the political situation is striking as the exact location of the border is politically unclear; on the other, and probably because of this unclear situation, the region is one of the pioneers and role models of cross-border cooperation.

The Lake Constance Region is characterized by strong natural elements such as the Rhine River, the Alpine mountains in the south, and the middle mountain ranges in the north. At the same time, the region is characterised by very successful, innovation-led socio-economic development. The region is largely monolingual (German) and organized in a polycentric way with a relatively high degree of urbanisation based on secondary cities, with the exception of Zurich, approximately 70 km south-west of the Lake.

Unlike other European border regions there has never been a consensus on the geographical position of the border of Lake Constance, neither in the Peace of Westphalia or any time thereafter. Some view large parts of the lake as condominium, (i.e. an area without national affiliation), which is the position predominantly held by the Swiss. Others, in particular Austria, locate the border in the middle of the lake between the states, while Germany does not have an explicit position. From the 1960s onwards, this question appeared on the political agenda due to environmental problems caused by increases in shipping and boat traffic on the lake. A lack of clear institutional governance gave rise to informal bi- and multi-lateral cooperation formats, which ultimately became a success story. Even if the environmental problems of the water quality and the shore habitats were severe in the 1960s and 1970s, most of the problems were resolved in subsequent years through this informal format.

The transboundary cooperation started with a strong focus on environmental water issues and was soon strengthened by means of an intergovernmental framework. In 1972, the International Lake

* For the map, see article 'Switzerland and Cross-Border Cooperation'.

Constance Conference (*Internationale Bodenseekonferenz* (IBK)) was established. In the early years, questions of environmental protection and water management were the main issues, but the focus broadened to an overarching intergovernmental exchange framework. The IBK is still today the key institution of cooperation across borders. Since 1994, cooperation has extended to the legislative level in the form of a parliamentary conference.

Questions of water management and quality are still high on the agenda in a series of cooperation formats, including the Government Commission Alp Rhine (*Internationale Regierungskommission Alpenrhein* (IKRA)) with regional representatives from Austria, Switzerland and Liechtenstein or the International Water Protection Commission (*Gewässerschutzkommission für den Bodensee* (IGKB)) with representatives from Austria, Switzerland, Germany and Liechtenstein. This sectoral cooperation formats are complemented by a large number of domestic ones like the Swiss Agglomeration Program that are in most cases of cross-border character.

Even if two of the involved countries are not EU member states, namely Switzerland and Liechtenstein, all countries participate in the EU cooperation program Interreg Alpenrhein-Bodensee-Hochrhein. Since 1997, two years after the Austrian accession to the EU, the Lake Constance Euregio was founded that accompanies the cross-border cooperation programs.

Today, the cooperation intensity is high also at the sectoral level, as it shows the cooperation of approximately 30 universities in form of the International Lake Constance University. The Spatial Development Commission Lake Constance (ROK-B) was initiated in 2001. It works in close interaction with the International Lake Constance Conference, but is formally independent from the IBK. The perimeter is very similar, even if the spatial focus of the ROK-B is a bit larger on the Swiss and the German side, and for some projects this perimeter is enlarged. This is in particular true for the Interreg IV project “DACH+” which was the forerunner of spatial monitoring in a cross-border region and is today complemented by a cross-border statistics platform. The ROK-B is intentionally informal and cross-sectoral, characterized by periodic meetings and extensive project experience. However, its instrumental scope is rather small. Currently, there is a Statute and a Charta that define the overall objectives and principles of the cooperation. An elected chair coordinates the meetings, but further institutions do not exist. The

softness of the cooperation structure is frequently debated but has so far been regarded as the best option as it allows a flexible thematic and spatial focus.

Summarising the situation in the Lake Constance Region one can observe that the multiplicity and variety of cooperation formats is enormous; however, the predominantly soft character of these formats makes it a challenge to coordinate activities and implement development ideas on concrete issues. Even if the environmental cooperation history is a success story, other strands of spatial development have not yet reached this level.

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Legal Tools of Cross-Border Cooperation

Each tool of cross-border cooperation is a translation of legal and operational initiatives and partnerships that continuously evolve. It is a dynamic process, in which the objectives pursued by the cooperation determine the relevant cross-border legal formula. Cooperation structures are part of the life cycle of cross-border projects and therefore respond to a particular need driven by the maturing, the deepening, and the sustainability of the cooperation.

The least binding commitment, which fully depends on the stakeholders' willingness, is the convention of cooperation. It represents a contractual commitment of local authorities and stakeholders to carry out a project or a cross-border approach, within their joint sphere of competence, – with the exception of police and regulatory powers. The convention of cooperation is the common law tool of cross-border cooperation. It is provided for by domestic law and by all inter-state bilateral and multilateral agreements signed by neighbouring states, for instance, those signed in the context of the Council of Europe Madrid Outline Convention of 21 May 1980, such as the Isselburg-Anholt Agreement in 1991 (Germany and the Netherlands), the Karlsruhe Agreement in 1996 (France, Germany, Switzerland and Luxembourg) or the Brussels Agreement in 2002 (France and Belgium). The convention can be used for various purposes, such as governance, consultation, immaterial or material projects. It also permits the creation of cross-border governance structures without legal personality to overcome the lack of legal structure requisite to a cooperation project. The convention does not create decision-making bodies or budgetary and financial management tools the cross-border project. Each signatory applies its own legal system to the actions it undertakes to implement the convention. However, it allowed for the creation of legal instruments via the various bilateral or multilateral agreements, such as the Local Grouping of Cross-border Cooperation (LGCC), created in 1996 under the Karlsruhe Agreement between France, Germany, Luxembourg and Switzerland and extended to the Franco-Belgian border in 2002 under the Brussels Agreement. In 2009, the Madrid Convention Additional Protocol No 3 provided the possibility for the creation of a legal instrument for cross-border cooperation applicable to all 47 member states of the Council of Europe: the Euroregional Cooperation Grouping (ECG) which has however not yet been implemented.

At European Union (EU) level, the European Grouping of Territorial Cooperation (EGTC) was introduced by the Regulation (EC) No 1082/2006, which was adopted on 5 July 2006 and amended by the Regulation (EU) No 1302/2013 of 17th December 2013. It represents a cross-border legal body with legal personality and since it has the advantage of being a tool that can be used by all EU public bodies, the EGTC is becoming the standard tool for supporting cross-border territories and services as part of a sustainable governance approach. Indeed, the EGTC is a sustainable and autonomous body, governed by public or private law, with legal personality and financial autonomy that is capable of entering into contracts, employing staff, launching calls for tenders, acquiring and disposing of movable and immovable property, etc. An EGTC may involve “contracting authorities”, i.e., authorities subject to the rules of public procurement, in accordance with the EU directive 2014/24/EU and 2014/25/EU, such as states, territorial authorities, public institutions, as well as associations of contracting authorities and businesses that provide public services. Contracting authorities from different member states can also set up an EGTC for joint procurement. In this case, the participating contracting authorities shall agree on the applicable national procurement rules of one of the involved member states. The EGTC can be used at the internal and – under certain conditions – at the external borders of the EU. This instrument aims at facilitating and promoting territorial cooperation in general. It can support intangible cooperation projects (including cross-border governance) or tangible projects (equipment, infrastructure or joint services), on the behalf of its members, within their joint sphere of competence. It can also assume the role of a management body of European territorial cooperation programs or support tools of integrated territorial development. Importantly, divergent interpretations of the European framework may still occur among EU member states due to the fact that the EGTC could refer both to the national rules of the member state where it has its seat and also to the member state’s law where the activity takes place. Unlike the EGCT, the LGCC within the Karlsruhe Agreement (1996) or the Brussels Agreement (2002) which is also a sustainable and autonomous body governed by public law, with legal personality and financial autonomy, presents a limited list of members and tasks. In fact, states cannot be members and the LGCC missions must be exclusively cross-border, in the interest of each of its members and enter into their joint sphere of competence.

These legal instruments supporting public projects exist alongside another less sophisticated instruments, governed by private law. First, there exists the European Economic Interest Grouping (EEIG), which is sometimes used to support cross-border projects or also associations and economic companies under various national laws. Created by the Regulation (EC) No. 2137/85 of 25 July 1985, the EEIG is a sustainable and autonomous body governed by private corporate law, with legal personality and financial autonomy. The EEIG is open to any legal public or private entity, as well as to individuals engaged in economic activities. It aims at facilitating or developing the economic activities of its members, improving or increasing their results, etc. In practice, the EEIG has been used as a *de facto* tool for cross-border cooperation, in the absence of other relevant tools, for instance in case of cooperation existing between public and private entities (e.g. the EEIG *Bihartean* was established to allow for cross-border cooperation between the Spanish Chamber of Commerce and Industry of Guipuzkoa, which has a private economic structure, and the para-public French Chamber of Commerce and Industry of Bayonne in the *Pays Basque*).

Second, the use of associations as cross-border cooperation tools is usually based on practice. It does not come under any legal text, with the exception of some of the agreements concluded under the Madrid Outline Convention, such as the Isselburg-Anholt Agreement authorizing the creation of an associative public law cross-border structure, the German *Zweckverband*, the Brussels Agreement, which provides French and Belgian local authorities with an association tool under Belgian law, or the Treaty of Bayonne referring to the cross-border *consorcio* under Spanish law at the Franco-Spanish-Andorran borders,. The possibility of a local authority to join such associations depends on the association scheme of the place where the head office of the entity is located, and also on the domestic law of each future member. The associative entities dedicated to cross-border cooperation foster political or technical cross-border dialogue that promotes an activity, a cross-border project or studies, particularly in the context of cross-border strategic planning approaches. It cultivates a wide and diverse partnership and helps to overcome the absence of tools dedicated to the cross-border cooperation. It has a flexible structure, easy to form and to dissolve. The association is particularly well suited for missions carried out upstream of operational projects. The associations are legal persons under private law and therefore they cannot replace the authorities in the exercise of their powers. Generally, due to their limited

financial resources, these organizations do not grant the same guarantees as public law cross-border cooperation organizations.

Finally, companies (for example limited liability companies) are another possible private law tool. On the Polish-German border, the cross-border sewage treatment plant of the German and Polish municipalities of Gubin in Poland and Guben in Germany is working as a common company under Polish national private law.

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Macro-Regional Strategies and Sea Basin Strategies



Macro-regional and sea basin strategies are frameworks for cooperation for a given transnational geographical area including several countries. They aim to address common challenges, support growth and maximize common assets. The strategies aim to support achieving the Europe 2020 Strategy targets and achieve cohesion through strengthened cooperation. The first sea basin strategy was developed for the Black Sea in form of the “Black Sea Energy” cooperation whereas the idea of a macro-regional cooperation arose in the Baltic Sea Region.

The development of the first macro-regional strategy for the Baltic Sea region was launched in mid-2007. In 2019, the EU Baltic Sea

Region Strategy (EUSBRS) had its 10th anniversary, marking a decade of macro-regional cooperation in the European Union (EU). The European Commission offered a broad definition of the concept of macro-regional strategies: Macro-regions aim to benefit from “strengthened cooperation for economic, social and territorial cohesion” and offer “an integrated framework to member states and third countries in the same geographical area” in order to address common challenges. Initiated by the EU member states, the Directorate General for Regional and Urban Policy is responsible for coordinating a macro-regional strategy at the request of the European Council. The four macro-regional strategies developed to date are: the EUSBRS, endorsed in 2009; the EU Strategy for the Danube Region (EUSDR), endorsed in 2011; the EU Strategy for the Adriatic and Ionian Region (EUSAIR), endorsed in 2014; and the EU Strategy for the Alpine Region (EUSALP), endorsed in 2015. Further strategies have been considered but are not under development currently.

Macro-regionalization means to develop solutions in the course of ongoing cooperation. Designed to be built onto existing EU budgets, institutions and regulations, macro-regional strategies are characterized by flexible, bottom-up, sector-centred governance in priority areas. The cooperation is based on non-binding documents that set out joint strategic goals. At the EU level, a high-level group steers the processes and relations of macro-regions with other EU processes. Within each macro-region there is an intergovernmental coordination level for each thematic area of cooperation. Thematic areas diverge between the macro-regions and can touch upon many policy fields. Commonly, strategies address economic development, institutional cooperation, environmental policies (such as climate change and biodiversity), transport policies, maritime spatial planning and security. Due to the territorial perimeters addressed, a considerable number of macro-regional projects are developed within the framework of transnational European territorial cooperation programs. More sectorial oriented priority areas provide an input to policy developments and support coordination of projects to be delivered, for example, under the EU’s trans-European network funds. In general, one can say that macro-regional cooperation brought a new mindset into regional cooperation alongside other areas of cooperation and combined political, operational and administrative elements.

The idea of a sea basin strategy arose against the backdrop of a growing number of strategies and policies to address maritime development, marine conservation and coordination of the use of the sea. Important policies

are, the Water Framework Directive (2000), the Common Fisheries Policy (as revised in 2002), the Integrated Coastal Zone Management (2002), the Integrated Maritime Policy (2007), the Marine Strategy Framework Directive for Good Environmental Status by 2020 (2008), the Maritime Policy (2009), the Renewable Energy Directive (2010), the Maritime Spatial Planning Directive (2014) and the concept of the Motorways of the Sea and the Blue Growth Strategy (2012, 2017). The online platform “European Atlas of the Seas” provides information on the use of the sea and its environmental status. The increasing attention paid to “blue growth” and development of multiple policies led to the emergence of sea-basin strategies aimed at coordinating of different policy areas based on specific regional challenges and on member states’ and/or regional priorities.

There are seven EU sea basins covered by tailor-made sea basin strategies: The Adriatic and Ionian Seas, the Arctic Ocean, the Atlantic Ocean, the Baltic Sea, the Black Sea, the Mediterranean Sea and the North Sea. Most sea basin strategies are initiated by the European Commission’s Directorate General for Maritime Affairs and Fisheries, at the request of member states and regions, and accompanied by an Action Plan. Member states, coastal regions, regional advisory committees, lobbying associations and the geographical commissions of the Conference of Peripheral Maritime Regions (CPRM) influence the different regional approaches. Some regions developed a dedicated strategy document endorsed by the European Council. Others, such as the North Sea Region, developed a strategy document in the context of the respective geographical commission. Regional strategies differ in approaches for development, processes of identification of political priorities, choices for governance settings, as well as ownership and type of strategy documents. The Maritime Strategy for the Adriatic and Ionian Seas developed into the macro-regional EUSAIR. In the Baltic Sea Region, the macro-regional strategy also addresses marine and maritime policies through maritime spatial planning policies. The macro-regional governance structure fosters interinstitutional collaboration. The European Commission also adopted in 2014 the agenda for sustainable growth in the Baltic Sea complementing the macro-regional agenda.

The regulatory framework for European Structural and Investment Funds for 2014–2020 placed macro-regional and sea basin strategies into the legal framework of the EU. At the same time, new perimeters of macro-regions have influenced the territorial coverage of the transnational

European Territorial Cooperation programs (Interreg B). The Baltic Sea Program covers the EUSBRS and includes third countries (Norway, Russia and Belarus). The Danube Region Program and the Adriatic-Ionian Region program are entirely congruent with the macro-regional strategies. In the Alpine region, the territorial coverage of the European Territorial Cooperation Program is slightly smaller than the EUSALP perimeter, due to eligibility of administrative levels. The macro-region for example in Bavaria is on the German *Länder* level, whereas the European Cooperation Program includes the districts. The current state of negotiations for the regulatory and financial framework for the period 2021–2027 indicates that macro-regions and sea basins will be given a similar role and that Interreg programs will contribute to achieving their strategic goals.

In academic debates, macro-regional strategies have been discussed as a new form of experimentalist and evolutionary governance and have been conceptualized as a representation of “soft spaces” at the EU level. This is in contrast to statutory or “hard spaces” that co-exist alongside non-statutory or “soft spaces”. Furthermore, the analysis of macro-regional strategies has shown their influence on multi-level decision-making and the rescaling of decision-making competences as well as on the development of differentiated European integration.

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Madrid Outline Convention

The European Outline Convention on Transfrontier Cooperation between Territorial Communities or Authorities (Treaty No. 106 in the Council of Europe treaty recording system) is widely known as the “Madrid Convention” or the “Madrid Outline Convention” because it was opened for signature on 21 May 1980 in Madrid following adoption by the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe. The opening for signature of a Council of Europe convention outside Strasbourg was, and still is, a relatively rare occurrence which stresses the commitment of the host country to the treaty’s subject matter or, as is the case for the Madrid Outline Convention, allows for the treaty to be signed by the political representatives who were at the origin of the treaty – in this case the European ministers responsible for local government meeting in Madrid for their fourth conference.

After the initial step taken by the Resolution (74)8 of the Committee of Ministers in 1974, European ministers have been instrumental in pushing for such a convention by having this issue twice on their agenda: first in Paris in 1975 and then in Athens in 1976. Interestingly, thirty years later, in 2009, the same conference of European ministers was hosted in Utrecht at the occasion of the signature ceremony for Protocol No. 3 to the Madrid Outline Convention on Euroregional Cooperation Groupings (Treaty No. 206). It was the ministers in charge of sectoral policies (in this case cross-border cooperation between local and regional authorities) who felt the need for an international legal framework the establishment of which required the agreement of Foreign ministers – which was finally obtained from the Committee of Ministers after lengthy negotiations. The reluctance of the Foreign ministries was due to the requirement that local authorities be allowed to enter into effective “international” cooperation agreements without encroaching on the treaty making power of states and remaining within the limits of the state’s foreign policy goals and alliances. These two major preoccupations can be seen in the Madrid Outline Convention which reveals its genuine political character: Art. 3(1) refers to the “model” agreements and arrangements appended to the Convention (and whose drafting gave rise to the hottest debates) and specifies that they “have no treaty value”; while Art. 3(4) recalls that these arrangements shall pay “due regard to the jurisdiction provided for by the internal law of each Contracting Party in respect of international relations and general policy.”

It also has to be underlined that the Madrid Outline Convention modestly commits the Parties “to facilitate and foster transfrontier cooperation between territorial communities or authorities” within the jurisdiction of each Party (Art. 1), the purpose of which is “any concerted action designed to reinforce and foster neighbourly relations ... and the conclusion of any agreement and arrangement necessary for this purpose,” (Art. 2). The Convention is not specific about what actions Parties could take with a view to facilitating and fostering such cooperation, or in the wording of Art. 3(1), to encourage “any initiative inspired by the outline arrangements drawn up by the Council of Europe.” This reference is, however, helpful as it gives an overview of the areas that such cooperation could cover (i.e., spatial planning, watercourses, tourism, economic and social development, etc.) provided that the same domains fall within each local authority’s competence according to domestic legislation (Art. 2(1)). But, at the same time, it implicitly restricts the cooperation to the listed fields, and while these were modestly expanded by a second wave of model arrangements later adopted by the Committee of Ministers, there is no evidence that the model arrangements and agreements which have been actually used led to the practice of adding further models.

Among the additional conditions that the Madrid Outline Convention places on local authorities’ freedom of action (Art. 2(2) identifies “communities, authorities or bodies..., subjects and forms,” to which the Convention applies or which are excluded from its scope and Art. 3(5) identifies authorities competent for domestic “control or supervision,” which may also be seen to contribute to legal security in regard to the other Parties), the most significant provision is Art. 3(2) which enables the Parties to conclude inter-state agreements that could “establish the context, forms and limits” within which the authorities concerned “may act”. This provision has been used sparingly by only eight Parties (Azerbaijan, Georgia, Italy, Malta, Romania, Serbia, Slovakia and Spain) but *de facto* only Italy, Slovakia and Spain have subsequently concluded bilateral agreements with neighbouring states for the purpose of regulating the modalities of cross-border cooperation involving their respective local authorities (Italy with France, Austria and Switzerland; Slovakia with Hungary and Austria; Spain with France and Portugal). Romania has concluded three treaties with Slovakia, Lithuania and Hungary on cooperation on specific issues (not action by local authorities) and Azerbaijan, Georgia, Malta and Serbia have, seemingly, concluded none.

On the other hand, countries that have not invoked the provision of Art. 3(2) – Belgium, France, Germany, Luxembourg, Switzerland, Portugal – have nonetheless concluded agreements with a view to facilitating and regulating cross-border cooperation between their respective local authorities (which include Germany and Switzerland, *Länder* and Cantons). Apart from the Franco-German Treaty of Bonn (1976), these treaties date back to the years immediately following the signing of the Madrid Outline Convention (the BENELUX Treaty in 1986 and the Isseburg-Anholt Treaty in 1991) and characteristically they not only list local communities or authorities, fields of action and legal acts, but also allow for the setting up of cross-border cooperation bodies with extended legal personality. These treaties therefore paved the way for the Additional Protocol to the Madrid Outline Convention signed in Strasbourg on 9 November 1995 (Treaty No. 159) which allows for the setting up of such bodies with or without legal personality – the latter being either of public or private law. After the Additional Protocol was concluded, other bilateral and multilateral treaties (the Bayonne Treaty in 1995; the Karlsruhe Treaty in 1996; the Brussels Treaty in 2002; the Valencia Treaty in 2002) came into existence based on and expanding the solutions of the 1995 Protocol.

The Madrid Convention entered into force relatively quickly on 22 December 1981 and is still one of the most widely ratified conventions of the Council of Europe, having been ratified by 39 of the 47 member states. This is certainly due to its largely symbolic nature and its connection with the European Charter of Local Self-Government adopted in 1985 (Treaty No. 122), which establishes the right for local authorities to enter into cooperation agreements, which was not included in the Madrid Outline Convention. Madrid was also among the conventions the ratification of which by post-1989 member states was urged by the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe and these states were dutifully complying. There are nonetheless a few exceptions: Estonia, Greece, the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, the United Kingdom, Andorra and San Marino have not signed the Convention, while Malta has signed but not ratified. The normalization of the relationship between Greece and the Republic of Northern Macedonia and the need to protect the bilateral relationship between Ireland and the United Kingdom after Brexit point to the practical usefulness and symbolic nature of signing the Madrid Convention and could thus convince these states sign in the near future. There only remains the unsettled border dispute between Estonia

and the Russian Federation (a bilateral treaty on border definition was signed in 2014 but has not yet been ratified by either country) as an obstacle to Estonia's ratification, which could be the last piece to a cohesive European landscape.

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Malta*

Malta is an island state which holds several records in Europe: it the smallest, the least populated and the most densely populated European Union (EU) member state. The population of approximately 500 000 is concentrated on the two main islands, which cover 316 km², giving a density of over 1 300 inhabitants/km². Lying approximately 100 km from the southern coast of Sicily and less than 200 km from the Tunisian coastline, this archipelago sits between the western and the eastern Mediterranean and is close to the strait of Sicily. This archipelago was invaded several times from the central middle ages to the 19th century, due to its strategic location. From the 16th to the beginning of the 19th century, it was a place of confrontation between Muslims and Christians and an outpost of Christianity. The Maltese language which is a Semitic language with integration of Italian, French and English words is a symbol of this frontier location. It became part of the British Empire in 1814, obtained autonomy in 1947 and gained independence in 1964, while remaining a member of the Commonwealth. Malta joined the Council of Europe in 1965, but only joined the EU in 2004.

Malta has just one EU neighbour, namely Italy. Interreg III introduced a specific cross-border cooperation program between Italy and the island state. That program was renewed for the subsequent programming periods and focuses on three main objectives: protecting the environment, promoting the cultural heritage and improving the health of the citizens. There are no cross-border cooperation bodies linking Malta and Italy. Malta also is involved in the transnational program Mediterranean Area (MEDA) and in the European Neighbourhood Instrument (ENI) Mediterranean Sea Basin Program like all the EU countries of the Mediterranean Area. Due to its location close to the coast of northern Africa, the image of Malta is associated with the external border of Europe, a place where new devices of control and closure are implemented while refugees are often transiting in the islands or in the maritime area. One of the issues of the country is to foster cross-border cooperation with Italy to consolidate integration within the EU. On the other side, one can reflect on the way Malta

* For the map, see article 'Italy'.

could more participate in different transnational programs of the EU and to the ENI program with the African bordering countries.

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Media

Media are technologies enabling the transfer of ideas, information and meaning through space and time. The digital revolution of the past decades led to the transformation of the mass media such as the press and television and made possible of so-called social media permitting a more individualized circulation of contents. This new technological environment has liberated communication flows at the global scale. However, as proved by the analysis of online mass media content, the new digital environment has not led to a radical transformation of ideas, or information and meaning associated to space.

In fact, media and borders are still strongly interrelated. Producers and users of media contents are developing routines in a material context made of bounded networks, limited flows, given scales and contained territories involving social, economic, political and cultural parameters. They are influenced by a series of pre-existing border effects that they help to reproduce or overcome through the definition and practice of circulated information.

This media-border connection can be analyzed from different perspectives. First of all, one should never forget that the media implies the existence of business models and consequently the presence of clients to be enticed. The link between media and spatial borders can consequently be studied from an economic geography angle. As argued by Robert Picard, spatialized information circulated by news producers is intimately related to the limited space of consumption where the audience is located. This containment does not mean that mass media producers have no expansionist strategy in space, but that they need to conceive business models in a specific, often mosaic-like market. The market shaped within bordered nation-state is probably the most crucial one, even if key consumers can be concentrated in urban areas cross-cutting state borders.

Secondly, another issue is to explore the influence of mediated information on the people's representation and practice of space beyond and across borders. Mass media producers are often considered as an influential agent of spatial bordering. Benedict Anderson has insisted on the function of the 19th print capitalism in the production of state-national bounded "imagined communities." They are still viewed today as a force responsible for what can be named a "banal nationalism" through the daily and mundane information distinguishing a national

'we' facing national 'others' located beyond the state border. However, the influence of the media in favoring the reproduction/the re-imposition of state borders needs to be relativized. They orientate the topics on which users will interact and define their opinions, but media practices are inscribed into a broader organisation of routines and social structures. This organisation needs to be researched to measure the specific function of media in the active process of spatial (de-)bordering.

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Mission opérationnelle transfrontalière (MOT)*

In the early 1990's, after the launching of the Interreg initiative, initial experiences showed the difficulties local players were facing to carry out their cross-border projects in France. The idea took hold of creating an engineering structure for the French borders which could provide technical answer to local authorities and to the State. In April 1997, a Transfrontier Operational Mission, the Mission opérationnelle transfrontalière (MOT), was created by the French government as an inter-ministerial structure. Various pilot sites were set up and in January 1998, the MOT became a non-profit organisation.

The MOT's network consists of players of border territories on both sides of French borders: regions, provinces, municipalities, groupings of local authorities, cross-border structures, public enterprises, chambers of commerce and industry, urban planning agencies, federations, networks and natural persons (national and European parliamentarians). The MOT's network includes institutional partners at the French national level, as well as other states. The organisation also has very close links with the European institutions.

The MOT's network currently comprises more than 70 members from ten European countries. It is largely representative of the players involved in cross-border cooperation: the different territorial levels, the different French borders, and neighbouring areas. All of the players are brought together in order to facilitate the design and implementation of cross-border projects. This positioning facilitates structured dialogue between national and European authorities, and local players. This multi-level approach meets the needs of cross-border territories, for which one has to take three territorial levels into consideration.

At the local level, for the inhabitants of border regions, crossing a border presents an opportunity for finding work, making purchases, receiving healthcare, accessing shared equipment and services, leisure activities, a common heritage and environment, or simply exchanging with one's neighbours. But border region inhabitants face obstacles that hamper these exchanges. Cross-border cooperation aims to resolve these difficulties, promote the resources linked to the border and build common living spaces, at different territorial scales: cross border agglomerations,

* For the map, see article 'France'.

Euroregions. Whether they are urban, rural, or maritime, cross-border territories require specific management by local and regional players, through thematic projects (economy, employment, environment, services, etc.), and integrated territorial development across the whole territory.

At the national level, border regions are peripheral and often little account is taken of them in national policies. The existence of different political, legal, cultural and linguistic systems creates obstacles to cooperation. Countries with shared borders need to adapt their policies to take account of cross-border issues, to support the local players, and to cooperate with one another across the border. The objective is to find solutions to common issues by coordinating legislation, policy, and domestic funding across each border.

At the European level, cross-border territories are testing grounds for European construction: free movement, territorial cohesion, and European citizenship are at the heart of the European project. However, they are not sufficiently taken into account by European policies. The European institutions promote cross-border integration through a number of mechanisms: by providing the support of its cohesion policy (Interreg), by creating legal tools suited to projects and territories such as the European Grouping of Territorial Cooperation (EGTC), by developing sectoral policies that meet the needs of cross-border regions, and by promoting networks for exchanges on the issue of borders.

The MOT—both its network of players and its technical team—provides responses appropriate to each level.

At the local level, the MOT with its legal, sectorial and territorial expertise supports cross-border territories and players involved in cooperation projects. The MOT enables networking among players and facilitates the sharing of experiences between territories. It identifies obstacles and looks for concrete solutions. Through its website, it provides reference documents on cross border cooperation, maps, and an interactive forum.

At the national level, the MOT provides support in order that better account is taken of cross-border territories in public policies and legislation. To this end, it is in constant contact with French government ministries, and French Parliament. The MOT provides support on each border to the coordination between neighbouring countries: resolution of legal obstacles, cross-border statistical observation, among others.

At the European level, the MOT, with its partners, supports networking between cross-border territories, works for better recognition of these territories in European policies, assists the European institutions in their actions, facilitates cooperation between European governments on cross-border issues, and helps to disseminate good practices across Europe and elsewhere in the world.

MOT also cooperates with other organisations in Europe. Some organisations, such as the Euro-institutes (TEIN network) work on a specific border. MOT has contributed to the launching of the Central European Service for Cross-Border Initiatives (CESCI), which promotes cross-border cooperation with countries neighbouring Hungary, on a working pattern comparable to MOT's one. This approach is relevant in unitary states. Federal countries such as Germany or Switzerland have different approaches for cross-border cooperation, combining the local action of federated states, and a co-ordination at the federal level. At the European level, the Association of European Border Regions (AEBR) acts as the umbrella organisation representing border and cross-border regions, whereas MOT focuses on multilevel approach involving states. These different organisations promoting cross-border cooperation and integration aim at building together a European political platform.

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Monitoring (Observation)

On each border the co-existence of two national systems gives rise to divergences in a number of areas such as legislation, economic and employment dynamics, and culture, but also between statistical systems, mainly produced by states.

For a long time, cross-border regions have been considered as margins and observed from a national perspective as if nothing existed on the other side. Instead, observations based on common criteria and homogenous data aim at understanding their cross-border functioning, which is necessary for the implementation of joint planning and development policies.

The observation of cross-border territories should be first of all quantitative. Three major categories of objects can be measured: population data, socio-economic data, and flows. Population volumes on each side of the border can be combined, allowing a critical mass to be reached for markets and cross-border public services and to achieve the territories' potential if the obstacles linked with the border are removed. Different socio-economic characteristics on each side of the border generate gradients and cross-border flows, which outline new functional spaces, but are too often neglected by national statistical systems and therefore by Eurostat. However, the observation of cross-border territories must also be qualitative; this includes analysis of cooperation procedures, of cross-border projects and issues, and of political, administrative and cultural systems which meet at the border and have to be reconciled.

France and Germany are playing a pioneering role on this topic. In Germany, the "Demonstration Projects of Spatial Planning" (MORO) projects led by the German Federal Institute for Research on Building, Urban Affairs and Spatial Development (BBSR) prepares the implementation of a unified, on-going cross-border monitoring system at the federal level. In France, the Cross-border Strategic Committee, launched by the General Commission for Territorial Equality (CGET) and the *Mission opérationnelle transfrontalière* (MOT) in Paris, encourages the networking of regional and local cross-border observatories. With the Aachen Treaty, signed on 22 January 2019, France and Germany have committed to identify needs among data users and to facilitate cooperation with data providers, in order to foster cross-border monitoring on the French-German border, on their other borders, and at the European level. For its part, the European Commission has launched a pilot project

“Border Region Data Collection” to test new ways of collecting data on cross border flows of daily commuters.

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Mont-Blanc Space*

The Mont-Blanc Space (*Espace Mont-Blanc*, EMB) is an initiative of cross-border cooperation bringing together four territories sharing a similar language (French) around the mythic massif of Mont Blanc: Savoie and Haute-Savoie in France, the autonomous region of Vallée d'Aoste in Italy and the Canton of Valais in Switzerland.

The initiative dates back to 1989 as part of the bicentenary of the first ascent of Mont Blanc. Environmental Associations proposed the creation of an international park for the protection of the Mont Blanc, an idea supported by the States without taking into account the economic realities of the territory. Soon, local actors mobilized to defend a less protectionist vision, one oriented towards sustainable development; an innovative concept at the time, in the wake of the 1992 Rio Earth Summit. In 1991, the governments of the three states finally created a cross-border conference bringing together local authorities (municipalities, inter-municipal structures), regional authorities and a representative of each State. A secretariat is located in Chamonix to prepare decisions and support achievements.

The Ministries of the Environment of the three countries requested the Cross-border Conference of the Mont-Blanc (*Conférence Transfrontalière du Mont-Blanc*) to integrate all Monte-Blanc Space activities within the framework of a Sustainable Development Scheme.

The area covered by the cooperation initiative encompasses around 3500 km² of border territory, and holds a population of approximately 120 500 people distributed within 50 municipalities.

The cooperation aims to have a balanced and sustainable territory in a high mountain context since 80 % of the surface area is located at an altitude of more than 1500 metres. This cooperation started with the selection by the Conference of the Mont-Blanc of pilot projects, on the themes of mountain agriculture, environment, tourism, and transportation. It was successfully implemented in cross-border test zones: for example, management of refuges and *cabanes* (huts), education through programs of cross-border meetings, organisation of events and innovative choices in energy and transport. Thus, an original approach for free public transport for valley guests has been introduced to limit

* For the map, see article 'Switzerland and Cross-Border Cooperation'.

the use of private cars in order to reduce greenhouse gas emissions into the atmosphere. However, some areas, including the central theme of international transport, are totally outside the scope of cooperation. For example, the Mont Blanc Tunnel, located on one of the main transport axes crossing the Alps, is used by more than 5 200 vehicles per day, including nearly 600 trucks. Nevertheless, the diversity of the Mont Blanc Space's actions gives it legitimacy in areas that are not exclusive to central governments and the European Commission.

From 2009 to 2013 activities entered their realization phase by means of a Cross-border Integrated Plan – in the context of the Interreg Alcotra program – which was developed to put into practice regional projects related to economic, social and environmental aspects as well as mobility concerns. By providing a coordination plan to assure the follow-up and the implementation of all projects, the Mont-Blanc Space attempted to reach the sustainable development objectives fixed by the 2006 Sustainable Development Scheme, with remarkable results such as the institutionalisation of the Observatory of the Mont-Blanc (*Observatoire du Mont-Blanc*), a tool for cross-border information and monitoring.

As of today, the Strategy for the Future of the Mont-Blanc (*Stratégie d'avenir du Mont-Blanc*) constitutes the strategic framework for projects aimed at making Mont-Blanc Space an exemplary territory for the preservation of natural resources and their valorization for the benefit of the population. While local public authorities mobilized in the 1990s against the idea of an International Natural Park, they now recommend that Mont-Blanc be placed on the UNESCO World Heritage List. A declaration of intent to launch the Mont-Blanc candidacy was signed by French, Italian and Swiss officials during the 2017 Conference of the Mont-Blanc.

While the Mont-Blanc Space is not founded on a legal structure, it is managed by the Conference of the Mont-Blanc, a forum of political coordination composed of five members per countries, three of them at least coming from local authorities. A document for the creation of a European Grouping of Territorial Cooperation (EGTC) was signed by the three vice-presidents of Mont-Blanc Space in 2014. The EGTC, with a distinct budget and full legal capacity, could constitute an upgrade for the Mont Blanc model of cooperation, to better manage projects and simplify procedures. This is in view of its UNESCO candidacy.

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Multi-Level Governance

Multi-level Governance (MLG) is a concept that has been developed in Political and Administrative Sciences at the beginning of the 1990s. Its roots can be seen in the observation that policy-making within the European Union (EU) is increasingly characterized by an active participation of sub-national actors at the European level. Both at an institutional level (increasing activity of subnational actors in Brussels through the opening of subnational “embassies” in Brussels and the creation of the Committee of the Regions in 1994) and with regard to policy-design and implementation (strongly promoted by the reform of the structural funds from 1988 onwards), sub-national actors have not only established direct contacts with the European governance system but have been strengthened as functional actors within the EU. Moreover, older debates on regional mobilization and constitutional transformation of the nation state are increasingly discussed in the MLG context. MLG thus can be interpreted as an outcome of the simultaneous processes of European integration and regionalization, both of which leads to a diffusion of powers away from the nation state and giving new arguments for the re-initiation of the idea of a Europe of the regions.

The core definition of MLG refers to network-like interactions between actors of different territorial and/or functional levels sharing competencies and responsibilities within the context of European policy-making. As the underlying concept of governance suggests, MLG is not referring to new approaches of European institutionalisation but tries to capture and describe the procedural patterns of policy-making which go beyond the official, institutional and politico-administrative framing of the state. Established theories of European integration until the 1990s primarily focused on the vertical dimension of competence shifts from the national towards the supra-national level. MLG, in turn, introduces a more differentiated understanding of this vertical dimension by enlarging the analytical focus to subnational political and administrative entities such as regions and local authorities. In addition, a better understanding of horizontal interactions taking place between actors coming from the same level (e.g. transnational cooperation between regions, inter-local cooperation, between different member states or within cross-border territories) and/or sector (cooperation between chambers of commerce, individual enterprises, actors of civil society and/or from the research and innovation scene) is also captured

and interpreted – a dimension that was largely ignored by theories of European integration until the early 1990s.

It is useful to remember that, in response to the criticism of MLG being rather an analytical model rather than a proper theory, Gary Marks and Liesbet Hooghe – who can be seen as the inventors of the MLG concept – have developed a more concrete definition, which distinguishes two types of MLG: the more traditional MLG-type 1 takes place between general-purpose jurisdictions (governments) at different levels, and is mostly interested in the interaction between these levels and the sharing of competences between them with regard to multi-issue and multi-policy approaches. Federalism can be seen as its theoretical foundation, at once according the concept of vertical subsidiarity an important role in this regard. This type of European MLG was institutionally recognized by the Treaty of Lisbon.

MLG-type 2, by contrast, is characterized by task-specific (instead of general purpose) jurisdictions, intersecting memberships and a flexible design that is responsive to temporary needs. The characteristic pattern here consists of special-purpose (inter-institutional) networks that tailor membership, rules of operation, and functions around a particular problem which can span several territorially or otherwise defined levels, such as socio-economic sectors.

Emerging and changing vertical and horizontal dynamics between actors and institutions with regard to the formulation and implementation of European policies in relevant fields can thus be better understood by referring to the MLG concept. By thinking beyond classical EU member state relations, the concept of MLG allows to strengthen the consideration of the role local and regional actors are playing in the context of European integration. It is estimated that 70 % of European legislation is implemented by local and regional actors and thus directly impacts them. Giving these sub-national actors more consideration can improve both the quality and effectiveness of European policies. Within the better regulation approach and the *ex-ante* impact assessment system of the European Commission, for instance, sub-national actors are fully considered and regularly consulted as stakeholders in order to better anticipate and minimize possible administrative burden resulting from new legislation. Regarding the horizontal dimension of MLG, this is also the case with socio-economic actors, leading probably to an even more significant change of the practical functioning of the multi-level EU governance system.

However, the exclusive focus of MLG on network-like patterns of policy-making has also given rise to some criticism. One line of argument states that networks are often characterized by a lack of openness and transparency, thus counteracting the functioning of the official institutional arrangements of the European governance system. Another criticism is that unbalanced power positions between different (sectorial) actors can be reinforced in this way, increasing the difficulty of accountability and democratic legitimacy of European politics. Ultimately, one can also question from a more normative point of view, whether network-oriented MLG is really only mirroring the reality of European governance or is finally even counteracting further improvements of supra-national integration and the emergence of an effective European governance system with resilient executive, legislative and judicial functions. Approaches of the European Commission like the White Paper on Governance, or more recent initiatives which try to strengthen the notion of participatory governance and citizens' participation can be better understood in this regard.

European Territorial Cooperation (ETC) can be cited as an interesting example of MLG, which refers not only to both types of MLG but also allows for a critical reflection on its potentialities and challenges in the context of further European integration. In the aftermath of the reform of the European Cohesion Policy, cross-border cooperation has known an increasing importance in Europe. It has significantly contributed to the rise of vertical and horizontal interaction between local, regional, national, sectorial and supranational actors. Today, in the cross-border strand A of ETC alone, 60 Interreg programs are promoting cross-border cooperation approaches in the form of more than 15 000 projects, and more than 350 institutional arrangements across borders. The action-model of ETC, explicitly in relation to the partnership-principle, is based on a close vertical and horizontal collaboration. In its cross-border dimension, this leads to the constitution of both policy- and issue-related networks, integrating relevant actors that come from diverging politico-administrative systems, into a horizontal sub-system of cooperation.

As these actors remain mostly representative of the participation of local and regional governments, one could at first glance conclude that cross-border cooperation represents the above mentioned MLG type 1. A closer analysis, however, suggests, that cross-border cooperation is mainly characterized by special-purpose networks and projects that tailor membership, rules of operation, and functions to a particular

policy problem, thus representing an interesting MLG type 2 example. In addition, cross-border cooperation also refers for its functioning both to the horizontal and the vertical dimensions of MLG: due to the very different vertical distributions of power by which the politico-administrative systems in Europe are still characterized, a successful cross-border cooperation approach always needs to also vertically integrate actors, representing different functional levels. This polycentric form of governance can span from the local up to the national level, sometimes also including relevant thematic Directorates General (DG's) of the European Commission. The vertical inclusion of the European level, however, is differentiated according to the various phases of the policy-cycle: The European Commission, Council, Parliament and the Committee of Regions are all playing a decisive role during the evaluation and design of programming-periods, while during the very implementation-phase, individual representatives of the DG REGIO are participating as functional counterparts within each territorial program.

All vertical and horizontal actors are, in turn, represented in a program's managing body, including social and economic partners. This vertical and horizontal pattern of cross-border MLG can also be identified at the different management levels of cross-border projects and institutionalised cross-border bodies.

On the other hand, cross-border cooperation also illustrates the above mentioned challenges of MLG. A common criticism refers to cross-border cooperation being a closed business between administrative experts rather than an approach, which is open also to actors from other sectors. Only recently, approaches of citizen's participation that go beyond the Interreg-project approach of "people to people" are developed in some border regions. Closed inter-institutional and inter-personal networks still mostly characterize cross-border cooperation, which can be linked to the notion of secondary foreign policy/micro-diplomacy.

Ultimately, and referring to a generalized pattern that has been used to characterize cooperation taking place in the international and transnational context, MLG in a cross-border context can be interpreted as a specific case of "governance without government", according to James N. Rosenau. Different from supra-national integration, in the cross-border context of transnational policy-making, no hierarchical/institutional order has emerged yet. Thematic, financial and functional competencies still remain with the domestic politico-administrative partners involved. Cross-border MLG thus shares the destiny of many

International Public Administrations (IPA) which strongly depend for their successful functioning on the willingness, power support and thematic contributions of their domestic partners. To what extent such sub-systems of transnational MLG can enduringly compensate for the absence of productive and resilient government solutions, however, seems a broader question that concerns both the cross-border and the supra-national level of Europe.

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Mura Region*

The Mura Region European Grouping of Territorial Cooperation (EGTC) began in 1993 through the cooperation of municipalities as a regional self-government partnership within the framework of the Muramenti Nationality Regional Development Association (which mostly unites settlements with significant Croatian minority in Hungary). The creation of the Mura Region EGTC, situated along the Croatian-Hungarian border, was heavily supported by a successful Interreg IV-A project titled Mura Region EGTC. The EGTC was officially registered by the court 28 May 2015 with a seat situated in Tótszerdahely, Hungary. The grouping consists of 21 local governments cooperating with each other. The founders include the settlements of Tótszerdahely, Eszteregnye, Fityeház, Molnári, Murakeresztúr, Petrivente, Rigyác, Semjénháza, Szepetnek, Tótszentmárton, Valkonya from Zala County, and the municipalities of Donja Dubrava, Donji Vidovec, Goričan, Kotoriba and Doni Kraljevec from Međimurje County. Letenye, Bázakerettye from Hungary and Legrad, Sveta Marija, Orehovica from Croatia joined later. The Croatian language is primarily used as the language of cooperation, but the documents of the EGTC are prepared in both languages, in Hungarian and Croatian languages.

The cooperation has had its situation analysis and integrated development strategy elaborated. The strategy has the following interventions: creating a cross-border business platform, interventions on the development of townscape, social bridge which would strengthen the cooperation between generations, the creation of organisational frames of complex rural development, agro-centred rural development, local product programme regional-scale and near-natural tourism, and green energetics.

According to its charter, the structure of the organisation consists of a general assembly, director, secretariat and supervisor board. The officers of the grouping include the president and copresident, Chair and members of the board. The organisation employs two persons; one responsible for administrative tasks and the other as a director.

The cooperation has submitted an approved project proposal titled Sustainable Water Tourism along Mura and Drava River, financed from

* For the map, see article 'Croatia'.

the Hungary-Croatia HUHR Cross-Border-Cooperation Program (2014–2020). The main goal is to create a joint, sustainable water-based tourism offer along the Mura and Drava rivers and the project's tourism attractions will be developed on both sides of the border. The activities include construction of docking places, a tourism and a visitor centre, a water tourism rest area, boat storages, information points, furthermore the implementation of a joint tourism strategy and promotion.

The EGTC relies on strong partner settlement, inter-municipal, civic and ethnic minority cooperation, and plans on further strengthening the border economy to create a sustainable EGTC along the river Mura.

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Non-Central Governments (NCGs) in International Relations

Studies on international relations increasingly focus on actors at the sub-state level. Para-diplomacy is the term used most frequently to describe especially federal states' international activities. More recently, focus has also been laid on cross-border regions or Euroregions as international actors within the European Union (EU) framework of multi-level governance. Birte Wassenberg and Martin Klatt have suggested labelling these activities of local international relations "secondary foreign policy" which would widen the para-diplomacy term used in political science to describe regional, non-centralized state activities in international relations. The term secondary foreign policy is derived from the German *Nebenaußenpolitik*, which is a concept used to describe the German *Länder's* initiatives on the diplomatic floor, especially when they first set up European representations offices in Brussels in the mid-1980s with the aim to influence European policies. It suggests that international relations by Non-Central Governments (NCGs) are not situated on the same level as those of the national state as they may be conducted in parallel but are clearly subordinated to "primary" foreign policy (either in support or in opposition to the latter). The advantage of the term secondary foreign policy is that it clearly refers to foreign policy actors who intervene in addition to state actors who remain the primarily legitimated players.

This article deals with NCGs who increasingly engage in international activities and by so doing challenge the traditional monopoly of the sovereign nation state in this field. Today, international politics concern all economic, social and cultural policy areas of the developed welfare state. This provoked NCGs interest to not only influence their central governments' foreign policies, but also to supplement or even challenge them with their own activities.

It has become more and more apparent that the increasing interconnection among economic, social and political issues resulted in direct connections between agents and a multi-level foreign policy. Furthermore, the free movement of capital and the rise of multinational companies drastically reduced the ability of states and their governments to manage national economies on their own. In this competitive field, regions then went abroad seeking investments and new markets for their products and innovation technologies. Consequently, the foreign activities of regions, alongside firms, trade unions and Non-Governmental

Organizations (NGOs), broadened the scope of international affairs by supplementing states as the hitherto “legitimate” actors. The federal constitutions of Switzerland, Austria, Belgium or Germany already permitted NCGs to engage in direct negotiations with foreign states under certain circumstances and for specific issues related to their competences. Ongoing decentralization since the 1980s has led other sub-state actors, for example British or French local governments, to also engage in a wide range of secondary foreign policy activities.

European institutional building also resulted in a multi-layered or multi-level diplomacy as defined by Brian Hocking (1993). European regional and local authorities have lobbied for the opportunity to engage in cross-border political engagements in the Council of Europe since the 1960s, resulting in the Council of Europe’s Outline Convention on Transfrontier Cooperation between Territorial Communities and Authorities (the Madrid Convention) in 1980. The Madrid Convention has incited a number of bi- and tri-lateral agreements regulating NCGs secondary foreign policy activities such as the the Isseburg-Anholt Treaty between Germany, the Netherlands and the German *Land* Nordrhein-Westfalen in 1991 or the Karlsruhe Agreement between Germany, France, Switzerland and Luxemburg in 1996. In 2006, the EU introduced the legal instrument of the European Grouping of Territorial Cooperation (EGTC) as a legal framework to organize cross-border cooperation, both territorial and functional.

The EU has supported the inclusion of NCGs in European policy making by associating local and regional governments to its decision-making process with the subsidiarity principle introduced by the 1992 Treaty of the EU. Furthermore, it has integrated cross-border cooperation in its European Regional Policy by means of the Community initiative Interreg in 1990.

NCGs have played an ever-increasing role in international relations. The EU has included them in co-decision procedures into its Regional Policy. In border regions, Euroregions form coalitions of interest to achieve common goals. The current crises in the EU, however, has also demonstrated the limited power of Euroregions in the multi-level governance system and the persistence of territoriality and national interest. The security paradigm has not yet dismembered the Schengen zone, but physical and technical border controls have been reintroduced despite Euroregional protest. Symbolic re-bordering, such as the “Wild Boar Protection Fence” on the Danish-German border, harms

local commitment to cross-border cooperation. Persisting systemic differences, as well as indifference, complicates cross-border cooperation even while functional integration continues. This will remind NCGs of the continuous necessity to engage in cross-border cooperation and secondary foreign policy.

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Nordic Cooperation*

The Nordic countries, or the “Nordic”, is a collective term used for five countries in Northern Europe and the North Atlantic, consisting of the sovereign states of Denmark, Finland, Iceland, Norway and Sweden, including their associated territories of Greenland and the Faroe Islands, both autonomous regions within the Kingdom of Denmark, and the Åland Islands, an autonomous region of Finland. Politically, the Nordic countries do not form a separate entity, but the existence of the region is based on extensive forms of regional cooperation. The five countries are commonly grouped together as a family of democratic, welfare-capitalist countries, which in addition to geographical proximity have much in common historically, culturally and economically. Religion is also seen to provide another essential similarity; the Nordic countries are all Protestant nations, with Lutheranism being the most important religion. Most notably, they share the so-called Nordic model of economy and a social structure whereby the market economy is combined with strong labour unions and a universalist welfare sector financed by heavy taxes. However, although the concept of “Nordic” is primarily used to underline the similarities between the five countries, there have been historical intra-Nordic variations and substantial differences still exist today. Each of the Nordic countries is politically independent and has its own economic and social model, while the security policy traditions, multilateral ties and economic orientations of the Nordic countries also differ considerably. Although the area is linguistically heterogeneous, the common linguistic heritage is often put forward as a factor making up the Nordic identity. The Nordic region is often inaccurately used as a synonym for the narrower concept of Scandinavia, which is somewhat ambiguously used to refer to the cultural and linguistic group formed by the monarchies of Denmark, Norway and Sweden, or geologically to the Scandinavian peninsula, which generally comprises the mainland of Sweden, most of Norway, the northwesternmost part of Finland, as well as a narrow area in the west of the Pechengsky District of the Russian Federation.

Among the Nordic countries, Denmark, Finland (including Åland) and Sweden are members of the European Union (EU), while Iceland

* For the map, see article ‘Cooperation Forums’.

and Norway are members of the European Economic Area (EEA). The Faroe Islands and Greenland are not members of either of the organisations. Out of the Nordic countries, Finland is the only one that uses the Euro as its official currency. As a geographical space, the Nordic region is diverse. From a temperate climate in the south to polar climate in the north, with everything from metropolitan urban regions to very remote and sparsely populated rural regions. It covers the combined area of 3 425 804 km², yet approximately half of the area is covered by uninhabitable glaciers, mostly in Greenland or other marginal areas. The total population of the region has increased to over 27 million, yet the region still remains characterised by one of the lowest population densities in the world (7.62/km²). In all of the Nordic countries, a significant share of the population has concentrated in and around of the respective capital cities. The countries cluster near the top in numerous metrics of national performance, including education, economic competitiveness, civil liberties, quality of life and human development. The population of the region is predominantly Scandinavian or Finnish, with Greenlandic Inuit and the Sami people as indigenous minorities. While most Nordic languages belong to the North Germanic branch of the Indo-European languages, the Finnish and Sami are part of the Finno-Ugric languages and Greenlandic belongs to the Inuit branch of the Eskimo-Aleut languages.

The Nordic Region has a history that extends more than a millennium back in time, yet that is also a history full of struggles and wars. The loosely united Norwegian Realm around and after the turn of first millennium included the territory of modern-day Norway and parts of Sweden, and at its peak took control of the Faroe Islands, Iceland and Greenland, interacting also closely with the Viking kings of Sweden and Denmark. During the Middle Ages, the position of the Nordic Region as a cultural, economic, and political entity was established. In 1397, the kingdoms of Denmark, Norway and Sweden merged together under a single monarch to form the Kalmar Union (until 1523). The Union also comprised the old Norwegian overseas settlements of the Shetlands, the Orkney Islands, the Faroe Islands and Iceland, as well as Åland and the coastal areas of contemporary Finland, which were under Swedish rule during the era. Throughout the history, the internal borders of the region have altered several times. Sweden and Denmark–Norway became separate monarchies after the disintegration of the Kalmar Union in 1523. The area that we currently define as “Nordic” did not however crystalize until much later.

The current national border between Denmark and Sweden dates back to 1658, prior to that the historic provinces of Scania, Blekinge and Bohuslän belonged to Denmark, so that the Denmark–Sweden border ran across what is now southern Sweden. The changes in the border between Denmark–Norway and Sweden were defined in the Treaties of Brömsebro (1645), Roskilde (1658) and Copenhagen (1660). The border was largely unmarked and merely based on local knowledge until the Treaty of Strömstad (1751) after which border cairns were erected between Norway and Sweden including Finland (i.e., the modern Norway–Finland border). The Finland–Sweden border was created in 1809 by the Treaty of Fredrikshamn, as Sweden ceded Finland over to Russia, until 1917 when Finland became an independent state. The modern Norway–Sweden border remained the border between Denmark–Norway and Sweden until the breakup of Denmark and Norway in 1814. After the Treaty of Kiel and the Convention of Moss (1814) the union between Sweden and Norway was established, and the Norway–Sweden border became a border between two union partners. The modern Denmark–Sweden border then became the border between Denmark and the United Kingdoms of Sweden and Norway until Norway achieved independence in 1905.

In essence, rather than an historical one, the idea of the “Nordic” is a modern creation. In the late 18th century, thinkers and writers sought to liberate themselves from the Latin culture by formulating new national ideals and values. The conflicts and wars of the past between the Nordic countries were deliberately discarded to make space for the idea of a common Nordic culture based on which the national identities of the Nordic countries could be constructed. The common language family, with the exception of Finnish, the Protestant religion and the common judicial system, the Viking history, the pre-Christian mythology and joint (although disputed) territories were combined to craft the basis for a common Nordic identity. This became evident in expressions of the literary *Nordism* as well as in the *Scandinavianism*, which attempted to foster Nordic unity and to transform former enemies into allies to defend against external threats. Certainly, different political and cultural contexts, and the radically differing Nordic experiences during the Second World War, as well as the Cold War and post-1989 phases, have provided different settings for articulating ideas of a shared Nordic identity.

The actual terms of “Norden” and “the Nordic countries” were coined in the interwar period, after Finland and Iceland gained independence

and began to replace the term “Scandinavia” as reference to the Northern countries of Europe. Lacking a strong central power that would have held the Nordic countries together, the region evolved into a system of small homogeneous states. A more official commencement of the Nordic cooperation stems from the establishment of the Nordic Council (NC) in 1952. It was created as a geopolitical inter-parliamentary forum to promote cooperation between the five Nordic countries and to bring the countries closer together culturally, economically and politically as compensation for the lack of a political security arrangement. The Council does not have any sovereign powers; it can only make recommendations for member states to act. It is nevertheless a unique body, with all the Nordic prime ministers being part of the assembly and has thus some impact. Its first concrete results were the introduction of a common labour market in 1954, a Nordic Convention on Social Security in 1955, and the passport-free travel area (for the countries’ citizens) in 1958. These measures contributed considerably to closer ties between the Nordic countries. The goal of “making the Nordic border invisible”, as it was described by a joint Nordic Parliamentary Committee for Freer Communications in 1951, resulted from a combination of political, economic and ideological considerations, reflecting a strong a political will to make the common Nordic space into a reality. As a result of the Nordic Passport Union, passport checks at the border were removed, yet, custom checks remained in force. As the earlier plans for a Nordic customs union have not materialised, the Nordic citizens are able to travel without showing their passports within the Nordic space, but must present all taxable goods at customs.

The Helsinki Agreement of 1962 forms the official framework for the Nordic cooperation and sets out the actual objectives of cooperation and how it is organised. By this treaty, the Nordic states commit themselves to close cooperation on legal, cultural and socio-economic issues as well as in the field of physical infrastructure and environmental regulations. The original text has been amended several times over the years. Much of the harmonisation between the Nordic countries was pragmatically motivated and resulted from informal contacts between decision-makers. Joint cooperation projects were supported by the Nordic Investment Bank (NIB) and Nordic cultural activities by the Nordic Culture Fund. Cooperation in the economic area have, however, been more limited. During the late 1960s, the Nordic states endeavoured to strengthen economic collaboration by means of a plan for the Nordic Economic

Cooperation (NORDEK), which soon failed to materialise as the economic policies of the individual Nordic countries pulled in various directions. The formal and informal political ties in turn intensified Nordic unity and increased cooperation created a relatively unified Nordic area with coherent political solutions, acting often as a bloc in the foreign policy sphere and dividing work and duties between themselves. The Nordic Council of Ministers (NCM), an intergovernmental forum, was established to complement the Council in 1971. The Council makes recommendations to the Nordic governments and the Council of Ministers, who in turn report back on the measures that have been taken in the light of recommendations at annual sessions. In the same year, the agreement concerning cultural cooperation was also signed with the objective to enhance and intensify cooperation in education, research and other cultural activities, and to ensure that the countries work together to develop the Nordic cultural community. The Nordic Language Convention was signed in 1987 with an aim to ensure that Nordic citizens are able to communicate in their own languages with official bodies in other Nordic countries.

Cross-border cooperation forms an important part of Nordic cooperation, but the cooperative frame extends wider and deeper to the Nordic societies. Close historical ties between the Nordic countries, their socio-cultural similarities and the general parallels of social and economic development, even if with divergent paces, have ensured that a solid ground exists for close cooperation between many levels of society. In 1977, the Nordic Agreement between Finland, Denmark, Sweden and Norway on cross-border cooperation between municipalities was concluded. It postulated that cooperation between municipalities across national borders should be pursued to the same extent and in the same way as between municipalities within one country, and that each contracting party should proceed with necessary changes to their national legislation in order to enable such cooperation. The regional bodies were authorized to conclude international agreements, according to their specific powers, albeit under the supervision of national authorities. In addition to the cooperation with the region, the Nordic countries have developed, particularly during the 1990s, closer relations also with the Baltic countries, Russia and other countries in the Baltic Sea region as well as international organisations in neighbouring regions. Finland, which has had close yet not always warm relations with the Soviet Union, led the expansion of cooperation, particularly with north-western Russia.

The goal of international cooperation is to ensure stability throughout the region by preventing environmental disasters, improving maritime safety and preventing the spread of crime and contagious diseases.

As a consequence of the end of the east-west conflict and the changing international environment, the governments of the Nordic countries initiated revisions to their cooperation policy. Particularly following the accession of Sweden and Finland to the EU in 1995, the added value of Nordic cooperation had to be redefined in relation to European integration. On the other hand, it was agreed that cooperation with the Baltic states and Russia must be of a different character than the traditional Nordic cooperation. Consequently, Nordic cooperation became restructured on the basis of three pillars: the continuation of traditional inter-Nordic cooperation, cooperation with neighbouring regions (Baltic states and north-west Russia) and relations with the EU and Europe in a broader sense. The NC thus abandoned its previous committee structure based on particular fields (e.g., environment, culture, etc.) and instead founded three committees in accordance with these geographically oriented pillars. However, as the new committees were unable to operate effectively due to having too many different topics under their jurisdiction, the parliamentary organization returned to its original committee structure in 2001. The intergovernmental NCM in turn initiated an annually rotating Council Presidency among member countries, established information offices in the Baltic state capitals and in St. Petersburg, and reduced the number of official committees operating under its umbrella. Furthermore, structures were also created to better coordinate the Nordic countries EU policies, yet they were soon abandoned for not functioning effectively.

Despite its' at times "official" nature, much of the cooperation is focused on the people-to-people level with the underlying objective to facilitate the free movement of citizens, enterprises, goods and capital between the Nordic countries and abolish border formalities to encourage cross-border cooperation. To promote mobility, the Nordic Council has set up various scholarships and exchange programs and sought to harmonise the social welfare and educational systems of the Nordic countries to make it easier for people to move from one country to another. Despite increased migration from and to countries beyond the Nordic Region, together with the challenges it has brought to the adaptability of Nordic labour market institutions, intra-Nordic migration remains a significant part of overall migration flows, and thus plays an

important role in maintaining the coherence of the Nordic Region. Denmark and Norway have net Nordic immigration, whereas Finland, Iceland and Sweden have net emigration. Traditional areas of Nordic cooperation such as culture, education and research, have more recently been joined by consumer matters, the environment and cooperation with neighbouring countries and regions. The NCM's activities are financed by the five Nordic countries, the contribution of each is determined by a distribution plan which indicates the country's share of the collective Gross National Product (GDP).

The NCM is member of the Association of European Border Regions (AEBR) with observer status and is represented in the AEBR Executive Committee. As a part of its regional policy, the Nordic Council of Ministers for Business, Energy and Regional Policy (MR-NER) supports and funds a number of institutions, such as Nordic Project Fund and Nordregio as well as various cross-border committees and regions. The cross-border regions have grown out of local and regional initiatives and some of the cross-border cooperation committees have been active since early 1960s. These regions are geographically delimited by their member institutions, consisting of subnational government organisations, such as municipalities, counties, local authority associations or other organisations that deal with regional development in neighbouring countries. When the Interreg initiative was introduced in the Nordic Region in 1995, as Sweden and Finland joined the EU, additional funding became available for cross-border and transnational cooperation, strengthening the Nordic cross-border cooperation committees. The regional cross-border structures in the Nordic region have considerable similarities with the Euroregions, in terms of their identity, capacity and multi-purpose nature. In fact, the experience brought into the EU from the pre-accession cooperation in the Nordic countries can be seen to have influence on the formation of the Euroregions and their cross-border institutional arrangements.

Nordic cooperation seeks to safeguard Nordic and regional interests domestically but also in the boarder European and global community. On the other hand, the European transnational and cross-border cooperation policies have had an important impact on cooperation and networking across borders in the Nordic countries. Developments in the EU have affected the Nordic cooperation, much of which today has an EU dimension. The Nordic Council in turn brings an important regional "Nordic" dimension to the EU. The EU decision-making and orientation

is naturally different from that of the much more homogeneous Nordic community. In EU matters, the NC mainly acts through its representative members of parliament of a particular Nordic country or it may participate as an independent actor in general consultations organised by the European Commission. In the European Parliament, politics is based on party groups, whereby there is no recognised role for regional perspectives. This is to say that regional parliaments have no recognised status in the EU's activities and decision-making in the same way as member state parliaments have. From the EU's point of view regional parliaments operate outside of the decision-making process, being practically on a par with all the lobbying organisations. In order to get its voice better heard in the EU, the NC published its first ever EU strategy in 2009 and has since then sought to forge closer contacts with the EU institutions and Members of European Parliament (MEPs). The Helsinki Treaty, which forms the basis of the Nordic cooperation, remains however to be amended in this respect. But in practice, the Nordic-EU cooperation is far from self-evident, as in some cases, general EU attitudes and specific positions differ considerably, even among the three Nordic EU member states. Despite the often ambiguous rhetoric, the discussions on Nordic-EU cooperation have remained rather abstract and the NCM's desire for a more concrete implementation of EU cooperation has encountered scepticism, if not actual resistance from individual governments.

To make matters more effective, the NCM initiated new reforms which were launched in 2014. The ministers for Nordic cooperation presented their visions of future cooperation built on the idea that given that the Nordic region has decades of positive experience in facing the various challenges together, the countries are stronger together, and the region needs to prepare for the future through closely co-ordinated cooperation. It was also decided that the traditional inward-looking ambitions of a borderless Nordic Region (especially in terms of further removing border obstacles such as different taxation, etc.) and an innovative Nordic Region remain goals worth aiming at. A complementary objective focuses attention outside the area in seeking to make the Nordic Region more visible and to intensify Nordic cooperation with regard to global issues and within international organizations.

Based on these visions, the NCM seeks to modernize Nordic cooperation in order to make it more effective and strengthen its political relevance. The catalogue of reforms, adopted by the ministers for Nordic

cooperation, covers four areas: ministerial cooperation, the Secretariat to the NCM, budgeting and project level. The reform agenda identifies also a more systematic dialogue on international and EU policy issues as a significant field of cooperation. The reform process has brought about many changes in the way the NCM operates, giving a more prominent role for the heads of government in formal cooperation and fuelling informal meetings, but the modernization agenda has been expanded to cover also cooperation with business and the civil society.

Looking back, the Nordic social and political cooperation has achieved a lot. It has strong traditions in politics, the economy and culture, and the Nordic countries have been pioneers of many forms of cooperation achieving results that the EU has yet to reach. However, many assessments of the Nordic model are discussed, to a certain extent, “nostalgically” rather than as an effective cooperative structure of today. Seeking to find relevance in the midst of globalised capitalism, Europeanisation and national competition strategies, its status has become threatened and there is no denying that the golden era of Nordic cooperation is long gone. Ideas of reviving the Nordic cooperation have had hard times, as perhaps most notably showcased by the reintroduction of border controls at the inner Nordic borders in 2016, which contrasted the 2014 vision of a borderless Nordic Region quite sharply. More broadly speaking, it seems fair to assess that the tensions and open differences of opinion between the Nordic countries have hampered cooperation within the joint organizations and thus the entire political significance of the institutionalized Nordic cooperation.

The contemporary European reality—in particular the witnessed great irregular migration influx and the subsequent reintroduction of temporary border controls—has been detrimental to the crown jewel of Nordic cooperation, the Nordic Passport Union, which many have held self-evident for decades. Five decades after the initial agreement on a passport-free Nordic area, the accession of the Nordic countries to the Schengen zone brought tension between free mobility and local protectionism at the surface. As members of the Schengen zone, the Nordic countries became connected with a much broader passport-free area. The resulting increases in migration flows put Nordic unity to the test and urged the individual countries to redefine their agendas particularly in terms of immigration, the policies of which had previously been rather varied between the individual Nordic countries. Today, the Schengen zone and the Nordic Passport Union co-exist in a rather

complex relationship, challenging much of the original ideas of the Nordic cooperation on mobility issues.

Despite the credibility problem for Nordic cooperation and the apparent challenges the region faces, the Nordic countries still grace the top of many global rankings, the Nordic region's ability to sustain its characteristic welfare systems, competitive economies, as well as its social and cooperation model is profiled strongly throughout the world. However, while the positive reputation is taken with pride and celebrated throughout the Nordic region, it is increasingly done as a part of national branding strategies by particular Nordic governments, whereas the former emphasis on transnationality and cooperation that used to be an integral part of the "Nordic" is predominantly left out. It is telling that, for example, the 2015 report of the possible future of the Nordic model, commissioned by the Joint Committee of the Nordic Social Democratic Labour Movement (SAMAK), did not even mention Nordic cooperation.

While the Nordic region is facing many challenges, internally and externally, the prospects for the future are not, however, all dim. There has been a rather consistent effort in dismantling the remaining cross-border barriers and making the Nordic region a single area where the individual Nordic citizen can move about easily, study, work and settle across borders freely without losing benefits earned or without double taxation. While there have been plans to make restrictions to these benefits, it has also become apparent that there are many who hold these rights dear. One avenue to gain more relevance has been to assume a more outward looking approach for the new Nordic by extending its reach to European and international fora. The NC has become more active in Brussels so as to give Nordic cooperation more visibility and influence in the European debate. In addition to deciding how to position themselves on the future of the EU, for example regarding the Brexit negotiations, the Nordic countries must also rebalance their geostrategic and security policy relationship with neighbouring Russia.

On the other hand, with the recent European crisis and the related Euroscepticism, the effects of which have been felt strongly by the Nordic members of the EU, Nordic cooperation has returned onto both the political and public agenda. The Eurosceptic movements in the Nordic region have long argued for the Nordic model as an alternative to European integration along the EU model. The debate has, however, gotten new impetus from the recent critical external developments, the tackling of which seems like a daunting task for any individual country. The Nordic

cooperation as an intergovernmental model, preceding the EU and its ideas of free movement are seen as an alternative to EU integration that would allow the persistence of borders as administrative regulators, yet keeping them open for integration and interaction to flourish.

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Nouvelle Aquitaine Euskadi Navarre Euroregion*

In 1989, the Basque Autonomous Community and the Aquitaine Region signed a collaboration agreement that marked the beginning of a permanent relationship between these two border regions, which share a common language, Basque, and a common culture.

On the 13th of February 1992, a single agreement for tripartite cooperation was signed between the Aquitaine Region, the Basque Autonomous Community and the Provincial Council of Navarre. The objectives of the agreement included encouraging collaborative relationships between the public, professional and private bodies operating in each region. Highlighted in particular are economic and social areas, developing communication infrastructure, training, research and raising the value of cultural and linguistic heritage.

To achieve these goals, cooperation funds were established. They are coordinated by an institutional standing committee. The committee is made up of the presidents of the regions and four additional members, including a representative from the sub-regional border communities. A permanent office acts as the secretariat of the committee. Mixed technical commissions were also established, corresponding to the three sectors of the cooperation fund. They are responsible for examining the proposed cooperation projects and for presenting a breakdown of the spending to the standing committee.

Until the creation of the Bidasoa-Txingudi Cross-border Consortium in 1999, the Tripartite Cooperation Agreement was the largest enterprise in cross-border Franco-Basque cooperation. The Government of Navarre has since decided not to continue its contributions to the common fund due to political differences with the Basque Government; this has resulted in the Tripartite Cooperation Agreement being suspended. It was not until 2011 and the creation of the Aquitaine-Euskadi Euroregion, as well as the constitution of its European Grouping of Territorial Cooperation (EGTC), with headquarters in Hendaye, that this issue was resolved.

In 2014, the Euroregion passed its 2014–2020 Strategic Plan, defining four priorities, including Euroregional citizenship, the knowledge economy, sustainable planning and open governance.

* For the map, see article 'Andorra'.

Since then, two important changes have taken place in the region: the Limousin and Poitou-Charentes regions were merged with Aquitaine resulting in the Nouvelle-Aquitaine Region, and the Navarre Community has become a member of the Nouvelle-Aquitaine Euskadi Navarre Euroregion (NAEN), creating a region of nearly 9 million inhabitants within an area of 100 000 km². A partnership agreement between these three entities within the EGTC was signed in Bordeaux by Alain Rousset, president of Nouvelle Aquitaine and the Euroregion, Iñigo Urkullu, president of the Basque Government, and Uxue Barkos, president of the Government of Navarre.

With a budget of over 3 million euros, the Euroregion notably implements cross-border projects in the fields of culture, multilingualism, youth, knowledge economy, attractiveness, sustainable development and mobility. In 2017, the call for projects was divided into two subject areas: one on culture, education, sport and multilingualism, and the other on economics, research, and innovation.

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Novohrad-Nógrad*

The central southern region of Slovakia and central northern region of Hungary implement cross-border cooperation under the trademark of Novohrad – Nógrad, a historic name of the administrative unit divided by the border between Czechoslovakia and Hungary established in 1920 by the Treaty of Trianon.

The Novohrad-Nógrad Geopark was the first UNESCO labelled geopark of the world that undertakes cross-border structure with the slogan “Ancient world without borders – geoscientific and other natural values”, and it is a member of the European and Global Geoparks Networks. The Geopark stretches almost on 1600 km² and it involves 64 municipalities from Hungary and 28 municipalities from Slovakia with a population of around 150 000 inhabitants.

The main objective of the geopark is to reconcile environmental preservation, i.e. to preserve the unique local geological values of the area, and economic development. Activities of the geopark go beyond pure geological frames, including also landscape, archaeology, history and culture. Besides nature protection and the preservation of unique geological values, cross-border interactions constitute other activities in the domains of education, research, infrastructure development, tourism, investment and business development. Thus, the geopark attempts to formulate an effective and attractive geo-tourism using the geological, environmental, archaeological, historical values, through which it can provide support for the development of local economies on both sides.

The activities of the geopark have been implemented by an association in Slovakia and a limited company in Hungary.

There was a significant step forward in 2011, when the cities of Salgótarján in Hungary and Filákovo in Slovakia decided to establish a European Grouping of Territorial Cooperation (EGTC) in order to deepen the cooperation and to help the work of the geopark. The EGTC includes both cities, operates on 119 km² and has approximately 47 000 inhabitants.

The EGTC aims to promote cooperation across the borders, economic and social cohesion, development of employment structure, and sustainable development of the region. It highlights the development

* For the map, see article ‘Carpathian Euroregion’.

of infrastructure, Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs), education, research, active tourism, and protection of the environment. Moreover, the particular aim of the grouping is to support the activities and initiatives of the Novohrad-Nógrád Geopark and they have established close cooperation and joint planning with the structures mentioned before.

The grouping was very active from 2011 until 2014 and it implemented several projects. With the support of the International Visegrad Fund, the EGTC has developed its partnership system; the management has drafted a strategy for development and tourism of the region and they managed a priority project of more than 200 000 euros enabling the construction of a research centre and a visitor's centre of the geopark.

Nevertheless, after many disputes, the EGTC is currently under the process of liquidation and will probably be closed down in the future.

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Øresund/Greater Copenhagen Region*

The Øresund Region, renamed Greater Copenhagen and Scania Region in 2016, is centred around the Øresund strait and the cities of Copenhagen in Denmark and Malmö in Sweden. This cross-border metropolitan region has 4.3 million inhabitants and comprises the Capital Region of Denmark (Hovedstaden) and the Region Zealand on the Danish side and Skåne and Halland on the Swedish side.

The Øre (or Öresund) has been a heavily trafficked sound since medieval times. Its northern entrance is marked by the sister cities of Helsingør and Hålsingborg and its southern entrance by Copenhagen and Malmö. Denmark levied a toll on all ships passing the sound from 1429 until 1855 as a major contribution to the king's personal budget. The sound became Denmark's border to Sweden when Denmark had to cede Scania and Blekinge to Sweden with the Treaty of Roskilde of 1658. In the 19th century, Danish-Swedish rivalry for dominance in the Baltic Sea Region was replaced by a popular pan-Scandinavian movement promoting Scandinavian unity and voicing the idea of the Nordic "brethren people". Closer Nordic political and cultural cooperation in the 1950s have resulted in a cross-border labour market, free access to higher education, and a travel zone without regular passport control.

Metropolitan cooperation was formalized with the establishment of the Øresund Committee in 1993, just before Sweden joined the European Union (EU) in 1995. Cross-border integration was boosted by the opening of the fixed link in 2000, which made fast and frequent crossings possible. Since then, the Øresund Region has been considered a flagship model of cross-border EU integration, perhaps most notably by the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD). Easy accessibility has opened for intensive border crossing activities, which have formed the basis of the transformation of the Øresund Region into a creative hub of innovation. Commuting into the attractive Danish labour market increased, as well as the number of Danes moving to Sweden attracted by lower housing costs. The pharmaceutical industry cooperated across the border (Medicon Valley), a joint port authority has been installed, and Copenhagen International Airport has become the most important airport for southern Sweden. A network of higher education institutions

* For the map, see article 'Denmark'.

was formed in the Øresund University, including cross-border study programmes, but cooperation here was hampered by bureaucratic issues concerning the financing of the activities and has now stopped.

While the period of 2000 until about 2012–13 witnessed an increase of cross-border practices, these have stagnated or even decreased since. Swings in the currency exchange rate (the Danish *kroner* being tied to the Euro, the Swedish *kronan* floating free) have hampered cost differentials. Typical cross-border commuter issues within social security and taxation have repelled labour mobility. The temporary re-introduction of border controls from January 2016 to July 2017 disrupted the commute to Sweden, annoying commuters as well as local politicians who had branded the Øresund success.

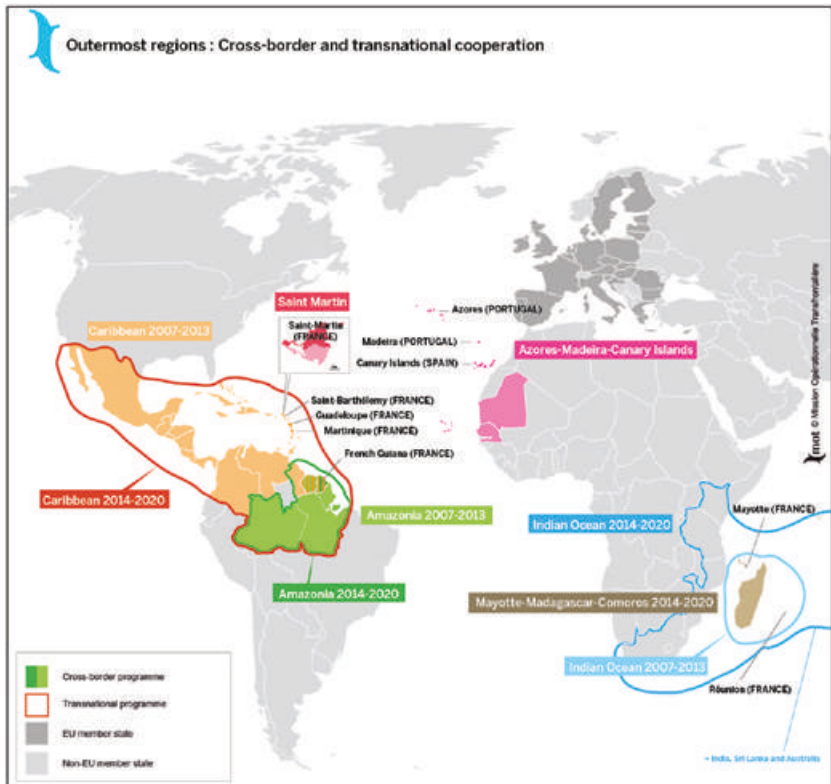
In January 2016, the name of the cooperation was changed from Øresund Region into Greater Copenhagen and Scania Region, the “and Scania” being omitted quite frequently in statements as well as written material. The new name reflects the Danish Capital Region’s political gravity in the cooperation. It also refocuses the cooperation from a cross-border regional integration project to a competitive cross-border metropolitan region in a globalized world.

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Outermost Regions



The term “outermost regions”, the status of which was officially recognised by the European Union (EU) in 1992, refers to territories forming part of a European country but situated outside the conventional geographical definition of Europe. The outermost regions are characterised by a double discontinuity: geographical (distance, intervening maritime area) with respect to their political territory, and political (international border) with respect to the surrounding geographical space. Not all the remote territories of EU member states fall into this category, however. In fact, the outermost region status does not apply to the Overseas Countries and Territories (OCTs) of Denmark, the Netherlands or to certain French territories. It did also not apply to those of the United Kingdom during EU membership (i.e. until 2020). A distinction has to

be made between outermost regions that are members of the EU and, as such, take part in territorial cooperation programs and benefit from Regional Policy support, from those OCTs that form part of a member state but are not part of the EU and therefore do not qualify for support from those funds. In 2014, two new French regions (Saint Martin and Mayotte) were added to the seven outermost regions specified in 1992 (the Azores, the Canary Islands, French Guiana, Guadeloupe, Madeira, Martinique and Réunion).

The first conference of the governing authorities of the territories concerned took place in Madeira in 1988. Its objective was to establish a dialogue with the European institutions and their respective member states in order to gain recognition of their specific issues and benefit from European funding. This strategy bore fruit, in that their special status was obtained in 1992 and their constraints were recognised by the Treaty of Amsterdam in 1999. Since the adoption of this treaty, outermost regions have been identified as regions with specific constraints associated with their insularity, small population and remoteness from the metropolis. Because they are regarded as regions whose development is lagging, outermost regions benefit at a higher rate than for other regions (the rate can be as high as 85 % as opposed to 50 %) from funding out of the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF), the European Social Fund (ESF) and other funds like the European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development (EAFRD). They also benefit from specific measures introduced in response to their constraints, namely the Program of Options Specifically relating to Remoteness and Insularity (*Programme d'options spécifiques à l'éloignement et à l'insularité* POSEI). This special treatment was retained even after the context of the 2004 enlargement in which several outermost regions experienced a change in their wealth rankings in the EU and ceased to qualify as poor regions. From 2007 to 2013, outermost regions were eligible under the convergence objective, which applies to the least developed areas of the EU.

The issues facing outermost regions are described in several strategic documents prepared by the European institutions, as well as documents drawn up by the parent countries and by the regions themselves. These reports show that the outermost regions are gradually becoming defined not solely by their constraints but by their potential. By virtue of their geographical location, they contribute to the influence of the EU in different parts of the world. A new strategy was launched in 2017, with

the aim to strengthen the partnership in order to take better account the specific needs of these singular territories.

The broad strategy being outlined envisages a twofold integration for the outermost regions: integration within the EU and integration into their regional environment. It takes into account the constraints arising as much from their geopolitical situation as from their intrinsic characteristics. Outermost regions are most often island territories suffering from the disadvantages of small size, both in area and in population. Their limited market prevents economies of scale. Their economies specialise in certain sectors, such as tourism, fishing or agriculture, making them dependent on the outside world to meet the needs of their populations. Finally, the fact that most of them are located in tropical environment makes climate-related problems more likely than in Europe. All things considered, their geographical location penalises them in two ways. First, Europe is geographically remote and only accessible by air or sea and this is reflected in increased transport costs. Second, while their political inclusion in European countries certainly allows them to benefit from the support and infrastructure of a developed country, the outermost regions face competition from neighbouring, less-developed territories that specialise in the same economic niche markets and often have lower wage costs, and with which they have limited relations. However, the EU aims to make these territories bridgeheads for its actions directed at the surrounding areas. The outermost regions are involved in six territorial cooperation programs at multiple scales, covering areas of extremely different scales outside Europe.

The Madeira Azores Canary (MAC) program involves the Madeira, Azores and Canary archipelagos and also brings in West African countries. The program has been in existence since 2000 and has a transnational dimension. The objective is mainly to encourage cooperation between the three territories, ensure integrated development and foster collaboration with the neighbouring countries of West Africa. There are four main axes: cross-border innovation; cooperation of small and medium-sized enterprises, promoting climate change adaptation and strengthening environmental management and risk prevention.

The Interreg Caribbean Area program involving Martinique, Guadeloupe, Saint Martin and French Guiana links the states and island territories of the Caribbean as well as continental countries of Central America and South America. Launched in 2000, the program is original in that it links two Interreg components (cross-border and transnational).

It comprises two strands, a cross-border one and a transnational one and has six axes: encouraging competitiveness, prevent risk and natural hazard, protecting the cultural and natural environmental, responding to shared health issues, support the development of renewable energies with the Organisation of Eastern Caribbean States (OECS) and strengthening human capital in education. The Caribbean is broadly covered by regional organisations, namely the Caribbean Community (CARICOM), the Caribbean Forum (CARIFORUM) and the Association of Caribbean States (ACS).

The Amazonia operational program covers part of that continental area and funds cooperation projects between French Guiana and the neighbouring continental states of Suriname and Amapa and Amazonas in Brazil. For the 2014–2020 period, the program has two strands, a cross-border dimension and a transnational one. The state of Guyana is also now one of the eligible territories. Whereas the Interreg Caribbean program emphasises the integration of the outermost regions both in an island context (the Caribbean islands) and under a regional approach (with the continental countries), the Amazonia operational program is a response to the specificities of a continental area characterised by extremely low population densities and a specific physical environment. Four priorities have been developed: improving transport networks, protecting and enhancing biodiversity and natural and cultural heritage, tackling health and social issues, as well as developing trade in several key sectors.

The Indian Ocean operational program links Réunion and, since 2014, Mayotte with countries bordering on the Indian Ocean, including Kenya, Mozambique and Tanzania in Africa as well as India and Australia, plus the island states of the Indian Ocean Commission (IOC) (Comoros, Madagascar, Mauritius and Seychelles). Launched in 2000, this program also has a double transnational and cross-border dimension and has five strategic priorities: enhancing research and innovation centres, strengthening trade, developing capacities for climate change adaptation, promoting natural and cultural heritage and raising skill levels.

The final two programs were launched in 2014. The Mayotte-Comoros-Madagascar operational program covers part of the area covered by the Indian Ocean programme and focuses on Mayotte and the nearby Comoros archipelago and Madagascar. Three priorities have been designated: increasing trade, improving the population's state of

health and the emergency services, and promoting access to education through mobility.

The Saint Martin cross-border program covers a limited area in comparison to the areas described for the five above-mentioned programs and is well adapted to the territory's specific situation. In fact, the island of Saint Martin is divided into two: the northern part is an outermost region and the southern part, Sint Maarten, is a Dutch OCT of the Netherlands. During the life of the previous program (2007–2013), Saint Martin was associated with Guadeloupe. Its change of status prompted a program aimed primarily at strengthening cooperation with Sint Maarten, particularly in the areas of the environment, water management and risk prevention.

Although as a general rule ERDF funds may only be defrayed on European territory, they may exceptionally also be defrayed in regions neighbouring outermost regions. By extension, several countries that neighbour the outermost regions are members of the African, Caribbean and Pacific Group of States (ACP) also benefit from funding from the European Development Fund (EDF) and as such there are plans to coordinate the programming of these two funds in order to co-finance cooperation projects. Platforms of coordination between ERDF and EDF have been created in each outermost region.

What these various programs show is that the strategies developed in each area must incorporate widely differing aspects: cultural (linguistic and cultural areas), economic (different levels of development), geographical (climate zones, physical environments, populations, continental and maritime characteristics) and geopolitical (the presence or absence of regional powers). Despite this diversity, the special nature of the outermost regions is also to be found in their awareness of their individuality and in the solidarity that seems to drive them and has led them to demand their outermost region status, making them act proactively in relation to the EU and their respective mother countries.

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education and vocational training, economy, science, environmental protection and ecology, healthcare, transport and small infrastructure (cross-border gaps), administrative cooperation, promotional activities, etc. P2P and small-scale projects are accessible to a wide range of beneficiaries such as municipalities, Non Governmental Organisations (ONGs) (numerous types of associations, platforms, networks, foundations, churches, etc.), educational institutions (schools, vocational training centres and universities) and research and business-support institutions.

P2P projects have been supported by several generations of Cross-Border Cooperation (CBC) programs. In the current period, people-to-people and small-scale projects are financed in 19 CBC programs (approximately one third of them). They are mainly supported through a Small Project Fund (SPF) or similar instruments (sometimes called micro-projects, disposition fund or framework project to support small projects/initiatives). These SPFs usually take the form of an “umbrella project” under which several smaller sub-projects are implemented. In general, the funding has been rather low – from 1.5 % up to 20 % of the allocation of the programs (the demand is lower in the “old” pre-2004 enlargement European Union (EU) member states, while in the new member states and along the old external borders it is much higher).

P2P projects in general have added value and contribute considerably to the overall objective of CBC programs by means of overcoming border obstacles and integrating border areas and their citizens. The following specific benefits of such projects should be underlined: They help to develop larger projects and substantially support effective cooperation within the whole CBC program by improving the necessary professional and intercultural skills of beneficiaries and building capacities at local and regional level, providing room for experimentation and serving as incubators for bigger projects. They therefore facilitate learning about the culture of neighbouring areas and promote intercultural skills among the citizens of border regions. They also increase the ability of people to study, work and do business across borders. By facilitating communication between people, overcoming the language barrier by stimulating language learning, they help developing interpersonal contacts and building up partnerships. Many cross-border partnerships are initiated and then developed into long-term cooperation by small P2P projects. This leads to the mobilisation of wider civil society and even to the encouragement of a cross-border civil society. These projects also create a platform for sharing experiences and

best practices between all CBC players ranging from civil society to local and regional authorities. They address local problems of everyday relevance and find local solutions for them. In sum, P2P and small-scale projects help implement common visions by building trust and by removing stereotypes and prejudices caused by the sometimes difficult history of border areas. Cross-border cooperation and especially P2P projects thus help heal the “scars” produced by borders. They advertise the principle of tolerance and respect and therefore contribute to the European idea. It is in the cross-border interactions of people and by working together with your neighbours where the benefit of European integration is felt.

The Small Project Funds are usually implemented in a decentralized way by Euroregions and similar cross-border structures which enables a close cooperation with local applicants and beneficiaries by connecting partners across borders, developing project ideas, helping convert these ideas into actual project applications, monitoring the projects, focusing on prevention and helping correct mistakes. In this way, these projects are close to the applicants and thus more accessible even for the smaller municipalities, civil society and non profit organisations. Among the main challenges and shortcomings of such projects are the difficult measurement of their impact because of their soft nature. It is complicated to come with easily measurable indicators to evaluate their impact. They incur higher administrative costs: the successful implementation of SPFs is more time consuming and this is why administrative costs in comparison to the size of larger projects are quite high. Some projects have also tendencies to be repeated (by the continuation of existing contacts) and the true involvement of partners and the genuine cross-border character of some projects can be sometimes less significant. Finally, there is a growing complexity of SPFs.

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Phantom Borders

At a first simple descriptive level, phantom borders are, “earlier, mostly political demarcations or territorial divisions that structure space despite their previous institutional abolishment”, as described by Béatrice von Hirschhausen. Despite spatial political restructuring, the traces could be materially observed for example in architecture and rural settlement patterns or in infrastructure designs. In most enigmatic ways, traces left in contemporary societies by defunct territoriality can also be displayed in statistics or maps on voting behaviour or other social practices, even several decades after the dismantling of historic borders.

Invisible borders or cultural boundaries between ethnic groups are not marked on the ground but function as an interface between communities, regulate their exchanges and construct the limits of what can be crossed and what is transgressive. By contrast, phantom borders neither check nor regulate movement. They are crossed without transgression. They are less akin to borders as a complex political and symbolic apparatus than to discontinuity. Local societies may even have only a confused awareness of them. As ghosts, such historical “phantom borders” (we can also speak about “phantom spaces”, “phantom territorialities” or “phantom geographies”) might appear on some electoral maps for a time and later disappear.

“Phantom borders” is a term identified when analysing the enduring geographical-historic patterns found in East Central Europe, on the territory of nation states which were composed after the First and the Second World War, from early pieces of the Habsburg, Russian, German, or Ottoman Empires. On electoral maps, like that of Poland or Ukraine, at every election in the post-socialist decades, the borders of the Empires that had partitioned their respective territories several generations ago reappear with astounding clarity. This can be seen in available maps on elections in Poland or Ukraine. Such residual phenomena were also found at the same time by maps showing the levels of equipment in rural homes in Poland, post-Yugoslavian states and Romania, where people developed different modernization strategies depending on whether their village was Russian, Ottoman, Austro-Hungarian or Prussian over a century ago.

At the origin of the concept of phantom borders was the post-structuralist debate on whether supporting regional research on spatial concepts was justified. This debate focused on the case of South-Eastern Europe and the Balkans. Refusing the opposition between mental maps

and physical spaces, the concept proposes to consider regional differences as simultaneously a given and constructed reality. The term “phantom border” is thus metaphorical. Just as so-called phantom pains are felt in an amputated part of the human body, phantom borders are tangible traces (sometimes fleeting, sometimes more permanent) of earlier political entities and their external borders. It can be related to other metaphoric uses that refer to the complex relationship between space and memory by urban ruins, material traces of painful pasts or abandoned places.

Phantom borders could, of course, be classified as a strange and fascinating phenomenon, yet only useful for “curio cabinets”; however, this would neglect their political potential. Like phantoms in spiritualism, phantom borders can be summoned by political actors seeking to “awaken” collective memories at times of political need, such as through identity-related speeches and or to help construct “imagined communities,” as described by Benedict Anderson. The separation of the Czech Republic from Slovakia in 1992, and more dramatically the Yugoslav war in the 1990s or the conflict in Ukraine in the 2010s, remind us of how phantoms borders, once instrumentalized by political actors, can become powerful enough to undermine the countries they cross.

On a second and more analytical level, the difficulty both theoretically and empirically of discussing phantom borders is not participating in their reification and in identifying the mechanisms of their construction in the field of Social Science beyond the mere register of their discursive production. In this critical perspective, phantom borders and phantom spaces have to be understood as simultaneously imagined (e.g. produced and passed on discursively), experienced (e.g. perceived as experience and updated in practice by the actors and scientific observers) and designed (e.g. by territorialization processes). Emphasis here is on the interaction between spatial imagination, spatial experience and spatial design.

In this perspective, the concept of phantom spaces offers an alternative approach to geo-cultural borders, which entails three main aspects. First, the concept of phantom borders/phantom spaces focuses on the experience of the actors and not on supposed stable regional borders. In fact, it considers regional differences to be a bottom-up process through everyday behaviour of people. Institutional, social and structural heritages are permanently interpreted and updated by local actors in a selective way and represent a set of (more-or-less) referenced resources. At any point in time, depending on their momentary perception, these local actors can ignore, disqualify or make use of and reproduce the heritage of the past.

Methodologically, phantom borders are experienced by local actors and/or communities, whereas researchers try to aggregate local experience and to generalize it to some extent. This can be done through ethnographic observations, interviews and comparative case studies.

Second, the concept of phantom borders/phantom spaces opens up an interpretation of cultural spaces which entertains imagined spaces, new visions of the future and joint beliefs. The actors update their resources (of course relying on the past) but also with respect to the horizon of future expectations. They create their own world, which takes shape between a certain experience that is “full of past reality” and an expectation of an imagined future.

Third, the concept of phantom borders/phantom spaces considers that the visions of the future are not only endogenous, that is to a certain degree naturally emerging from the historic path, but also governed by mental maps drawn up at higher levels of power. Hegemonic knowledge defines, among other things, the “Centre” and “periphery”, the “modern” and “archaic” regions and thus prescribes geographies of the future to local societies which more or less willingly internalize them. The local populations thus identify potential developmental spaces and define their future horizons within the borders implicitly defined by the mental maps.

In this critical perspective, the concept of phantom borders/phantom spaces can be defined: It designs the performative capacity of previously existing historical territories to shape both the experience and the imagination of a social group and consequently the creation of regional patterns in a specific domain. This capacity is not permanent, but it is historically situated. Phantom borders and phantom spaces can appear and disappear in certain historical and geopolitical circumstances, though this capacity is not universal as it can concern certain aspects of social life, while excluding others.

Béatrice von Hirschhausen

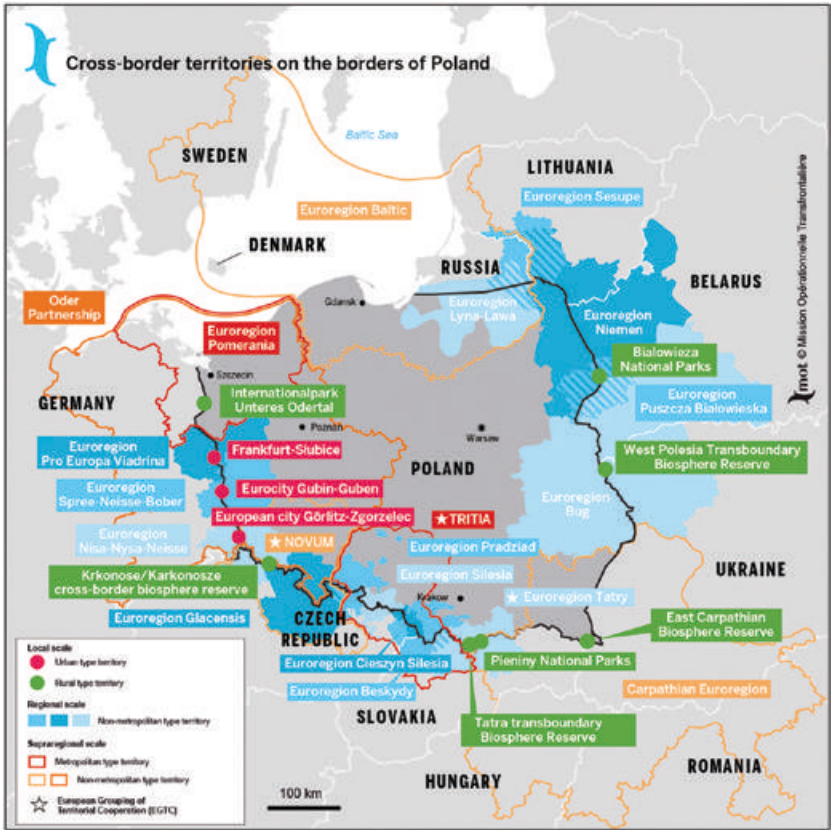
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Poland



Poland joined the European Union (EU) in 2004 during the major enlargement towards the East. With territory covering 312 685 km², this central European state is similar in size to Germany and shares borders with that country (465 km) to the west; with the Czech Republic (658 km) and Slovakia (444 km) to the south; with Lithuania (91 km), Belarus (605 km) and Ukraine (428 km) to the east; and with Russia (206 km) to the north. The border with Russia is with the oblast of Kaliningrad, a Russian exclave which lies inside the EU between Poland and Lithuania. Poland also shares maritime frontiers with Sweden and Denmark to the north, off its Baltic seaboard.

Poland's borders have shifted many times in its history, as the country has often been prey to territorial disputes between major European powers, especially Austria, Prussia and Russia in the 18th century, which even led to the disappearance of Poland from the map of Europe (from 1772–1795) as well as Germany and the Soviet Union in the 20th century. Although Poland is a relatively new State, its nationalist feelings date back many centuries. The Kingdom of Poland was established as long ago as 1025 and it entered a political arrangement with Lithuania in 1569 to form the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth, but it lost its independence between 1772 and 1795, when its territory was partitioned among Prussia, Austria and Russia. It did not regain its independence until 1918, after the founding of the Second Republic. The Treaty of Versailles granted Poland territory which was mostly taken from the German Reich. The port of Gdańsk was declared a free city, giving Poland access to the Baltic Sea. However, the borders of the new Poland had not been set in stone, thereby allowing the two neighbouring states of Germany and Russia to contest them. Poland emerged victorious from the Russian-Polish war of 1918–1920, having recovered the town of Vilnius in Lithuania and all the old borders between imperial Russia and the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth. However, in the interwar period, Germany took back part of Silesia and in 1939 Hitler annexed the port of Gdańsk, whereas the USSR annexed the eastern part of the country which it had lost in 1920. Poland was then invaded and occupied by the Nazi Regime and liberated by the Red Army in 1944. However, the USSR insisted at the Allied conference in Yalta in 1945 that it should get a share of the country and Poland's borders shifted yet again. The USSR kept the territory east of the Curzon line that it had annexed in 1939 and Poland's western border was shifted further west to the Oder-Neisse line, giving Poland the southern part of East Prussia, Pomerania and Silesia. This shift of the border led to important migrations of the German and Polish population of these regions. The USSR also included Poland in its security glacis during the Cold War, first by imposing a pro-communist government and then by incorporating it into the communist bloc together with the other satellite countries of eastern Europe. The Iron Curtain went up in 1948 and for 40 years the Polish-German border was with the German Democratic Republic (GDR). The Görlitz agreement (signed on 6 July 1950) confirmed the Oder-Neisse line as the border between the GDR and the Polish People's Republic. An agreement signed between the two neighbouring countries in 1967 allowed Polish inhabitants of the

border regions to be employed in the GDR and, in 1972, the border between the GDR and Poland was opened for a brief period, only to be closed again in 1980. It was therefore only after the end of the Cold War, German reunification and the re-establishment of a democratic Polish republic that regional cross-border cooperation could start to develop with neighbouring countries. To the west, the border along the Oder-Neisse line was only definitively recognized by unified Germany in 1990.

Cross-border cooperation started in the early 1990s to the west, with the Czech Republic and Germany. Polish stakeholders had a dual objective. First, reconciliation was essential, especially with their German neighbours. Neighbourhood relations within the Soviet bloc had been poorly developed, especially on the border with the GDR. Moreover, some towns had been cut in two after World War II, meaning that new rapprochement was needed. The expulsion of German inhabitants from territories to the east of the Oder-Neisse line and the policy of resettling the Polish population in border regions meant that the inhabitants on either side were strangers and had to build up new cross-border links. Second, Poland wanted to join the EU as quickly as possible. However, the EU laid down accession criteria at the Copenhagen summit in 1993 which included a number of political and economic ones. Cross-border cooperation then became a means of politically approaching the West before accession and also of achieving the economic standards required by the EU. The European Commission programs (Interreg, Poland and Hungary Assistance for Restructuring of the Economy (PHARE) and Technical Assistance to the Commonwealth of Independent States (TACIS)) were used to launch cross-border projects that would enable Polish border regions to better get to know their western neighbours and at the same time to boost growth.

The first Euroregions and Eurocities established on the Polish border therefore sent out a message that Polish stakeholders had the ability to participate in European Integration. They acted as test beds for the reunification of the European continent. In 1991, the creation of the first Eurocity uniting the towns of Guben and Gubin on the German-Polish border became a symbol of reunification. That same year, the first Euroregion Neisse-Nisa-Nysa was launched linking three local associations on the German, Polish and Czech sides around the River Neisse. Other cross-border agreements followed: The Frankfurt (Oder)-Słubice cross-border Eurocity was set up in 1993 in order to link these two towns across the River Oder. In 2007, the town of Görlitz/Zgorzelec,

which was cut in two after World War II, was then united by creating the *Europastadt* of Görlitz-Zgorzelec. The three Eurocities concerned in fact so-called divided towns, where the Iron Curtain had literally split the cities into two halves. Three more euroregions were established along the Oder-Neisse border, covering the entire border territory with Germany. In 1993, the Spree-Neisse-Bober Euroregion was created between two cross-border cooperation associations on the Polish and German sides, as was the Pro Europa Viadrina Euroregion linking the Federal state of Brandenburg and the Voivodeship of Lubuskie. In 1995, the Pomerania Euroregion was set up by two associations of municipalities, Polish and German, in the region of Pomerania. Interestingly, the Pomerania Euroregion was extended to Sweden between 1998 and 2003, when it was joined by the Swedish community of municipalities of Scania. It therefore acquired a maritime aspect, as both Sweden and Poland border the Baltic Sea.

Two large macro-regions have also been established involving Poland. The first one, the Carpathian Euroregion, was launched with joint support from the Council of Europe and the EU. It was established in February 1993, initially between three states (Hungary, Poland and Ukraine) and was then extended to Romania in 1997 and to Slovakia in 1999. In 1998, the second one, the Baltic Euroregion was created between Poland, Sweden, Denmark, Lithuania and Russia (Kaliningrad). The objective was to jointly manage the Baltic Sea with a view to improving environmental protection.

Cross-border cooperation with the Czech Republic and Slovakia proceeded along similar lines to that with Germany, but it started later, in the mid-1990s. Several Euroregions were set up, mostly on the Polish-Czech border, with the exception of the Tatry Euroregion, which was already created in 1994 on the border with Slovakia, and became a European Grouping for Territorial Cooperation (EGTC) in 2013. Most Polish-Czech Euroregions have been established at municipal level. The Glacensis Euroregion, founded in 1996, thus brought together a large number of towns and municipalities. The same applies to the Pradęd/Pradziad Euroregion, set up in 1997, which was later extended to 34 municipalities and 6 counties in Poland and 71 Czech municipalities. Finally, two more Euroregions were set up on the Polish-Czech border in 1998: The Cieszyn Silesia Euroregion linking once again an important number of municipalities. The second Euroregion (Silesia Euroregion) was based on a cooperation agreement between the Polish Association

of Municipalities of the Upper Oder and the Czech regional association for Polish-Czech cooperation (Opava Silesia). Its stakeholders include municipalities and the Chamber of Commerce of the Moravian-Silesian Region on the Czech side. Only one trilateral cooperation, the Beskidy Euroregion, has been implemented between Polish, Czech and Slovak local and regional authorities. The most recent Euroregion is Tritia, set up in the form of an EGTC in 2013 between Polish, Czech and Slovak regions.

From the mid-1990s onwards, Poland also developed cross-border cooperation to the east with non-EU countries, especially Ukraine, Belarus and Russia. These arrangements, which often involved Lithuania as well, were initiated before Poland and the Baltic states joined the EU in 2004. They enabled Poland to develop good relations with its neighbours to the east with the aim of achieving democratic stability and security, an objective broadly supported by the Council of Europe. However, these forms of cross-border cooperation developed in a framework of local relations between close neighbours whereas intergovernmental ties were very limited due to the authoritarian political regimes involved. Three Euroregions were established with partners in Belarus: in 1995, the Bug Euroregion was created in the form of an association linking regional authorities in Poland, Ukraine and Belarus. In 1997, the Neman Euroregion was then set up on the border between Poland, Lithuania and Belarus. Finally, the Białowieża Forest Euroregion established cooperation in 2002 between Belarussian districts, a Polish county and Polish municipalities. Only one cooperation initiative has been launched at municipal level with the participation of Russia: The Šešupė Euroregion was set up in 2003 between local and regional authorities in Poland, Lithuania, Sweden and Russia.

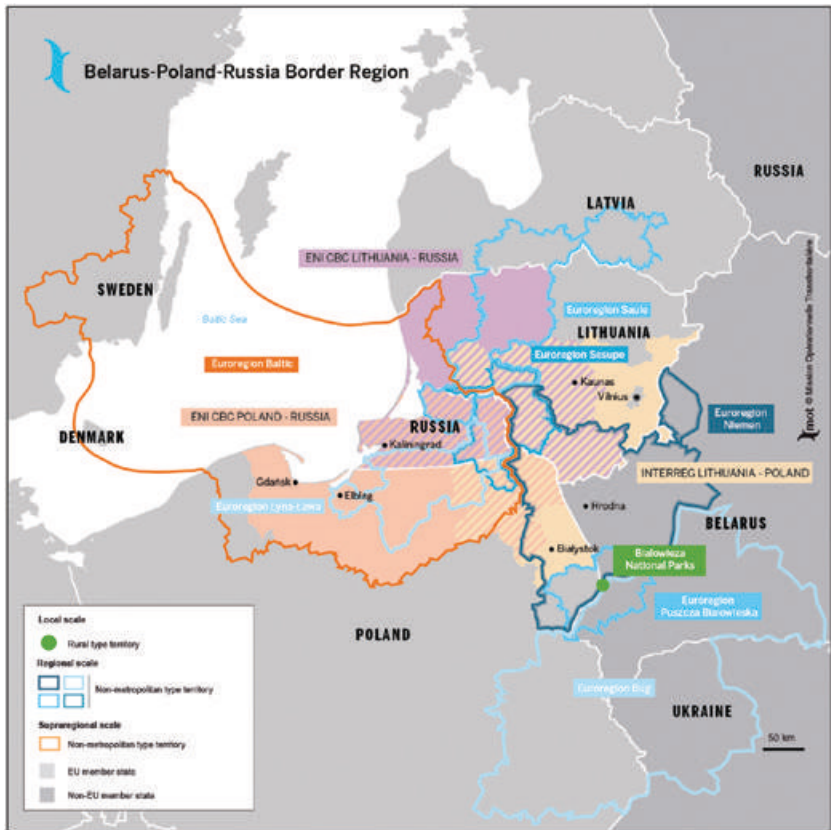
Polish cross-border cooperation therefore takes three different forms. There is intensive cooperation at a local scale on the western border (with Germany, the Czech Republic and Slovakia), macro-regional cooperation designed to protect natural spaces on the Baltic border to the north (with Denmark, Russia and Sweden) and on the Carpathian border to the south (with Slovakia, Hungary, Romania and Ukraine), and broad, local and somewhat informal cooperation on the eastern border (with Lithuania, Belarus, Ukraine and Russia).

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Polish-Russian Border Region



The Polish-Russian border is one of the most problematic and most recent European border regions and is characterized by difficult past experiences and considerable tensions in the present time. The border with the exclave Kaliningrad is Poland's only border with Russia.

Talks about a Polish-Russian agreement regarding a common border initially took place in Moscow in the first half of August 1945. Directly after it was established in the aftermath of the Second World War, the Kaliningrad district became a military zone of strategic significance. The inhabitants of Kaliningrad lived in a state of complete isolation and this was its core difference to other Soviet Union regions. It is possibly because

of this isolation that later contact with its immediate Polish neighbour played such an important role for development in the region.

The Polish-Soviet border was transformed into a totally closed and exceptionally well-guarded frontier, a state which changed little until 1985 when the Kaliningrad district was transformed into a military base. Of all Poland's borders, the Polish border with the Soviet Union was the most impermeable; the first border crossing point was only established in 1955 as the border had effectively been totally closed in 1948. For ten years, the populations on either side of the Soviet-Polish border were entirely cut off from one another, completely unable to establish any form of contact. The economic impact of this separation – where many Poles wanted to cross the border to access their former possessions – caused dissent and a considerable amount of protest. In the post-war period, there was significant destruction of property, above all on the Russian side of the border. The primary reason behind these actions was the fact that the inhabitants did not identify with their new homes.

The paranoia inherent in this Stalinist atmosphere precluded all forms of cross-border contact, and family and social bonds were the first to suffer under such conditions. Indeed, only a privileged minority of military and party officials were permitted to cross the border. Levels of control were not equal on the two sides of the frontier, with the stricter Soviet border regime contrasting with the laxer controls implemented on the Polish side. Certainly, border crossings were not the only activities subject to official regulation: any and all gatherings and visits to the border-region required prior registration, as did the possession of various personal articles such as cameras, telephones, and radios. Even the use of lighting in private residences was subject to restrictions. Like other regions in East Central Europe, the artificial and arbitrary manner in which the border had been drawn also led to the division of towns, villages, estates and forests. However, whereas the Polish borders with Czechoslovakia and even East Germany were kept open for the passage of goods and people for (predominantly) economic ends, this border remained closed until 1955.

The emergence of de-Stalinization, the Polish October, and Hungarian uprising of 1956, resulted in a gradual relaxation of the strict controls over the Soviet-Polish border. Cross-border co-operation between settlements in the frontier's immediate vicinity developed exclusively between the two communist parties. However, ordinary citizens were still unable to cross the frontier. Cross-border travel was also facilitated in the form

of school and university exchanges and between cultural and sporting associations. The 1970s also saw the establishment of regular border crossings within the framework of so-called friendship buses, travelling primarily between the Kaliningrad district and the Voivodship Olsztyn. These official excursions provided Polish citizens with the opportunity to purchase articles that either did not exist or were grossly over-priced in Poland. Such “journeys of friendship” also often became a source of additional income by buying highly coveted or cheaper Soviet goods to be re-sold in Poland.

Despite these cross-border contacts, the Soviet-Polish border remained a closed and closely controlled zone right up into the mid-1980s. The few limited contacts that existed were always kept to a tightly controlled minimum. However, after the introduction of a liberalized passport system in the 1970s, it became easier to travel to capitalist western countries rather than to attempt to cross the border to the Soviet “brother state”. This situation only began to change in the mid-1980s within the framework of Gorbachev’s *Perestroika*. In 1987 an agreement was signed between the USSR and Poland regulating more simplified border crossings for inhabitants of the shared border region. Visa-free cross-border traffic, which was introduced in December 1979 only to be revoked ten months later, now resumed with full effect. Nevertheless, genuine cross-border traffic between Poland and the Kaliningrad region effectively did not exist until the early 1990s.

The collapse of the Soviet Union presented Poland with four new neighbours to its east: Lithuania, Russia, Ukraine, and Belarus. After 1989, the Polish Eastern policy was established in an attempt to open its borders and increase cross-border cooperation. Due to its vicinity to the European Union (EU) and the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO), this development signified a process of opening for the Kaliningrad region.

On 22 May 1992, an agreement was signed between the governments of the Republic of Poland and the Russian Federation regarding cross-border cooperation in the spheres of economy, infrastructure, environment, culture, tourism and sport. From this point, the number of Poles crossing the Polish-Russian border began to increase continuously. For many Poles, the border serves as a scapegoat for a variety of problems involving smuggling, drug-trafficking, and even alcoholism among the younger inhabitants of the border-region. On 1st October 2003, a visa restriction was introduced for inhabitants of the Russian Federal Republic,

Belarus and Ukraine travelling to Poland. This became an immediate obstacle for cross-border exchange, above all for the smuggling of goods.

On 16 March 2012, the Polish-Russian agreement on local border traffic was ratified and became one of the most important developments in relations between the EU and Russia in recent years. The primary objective was to facilitate the crossing of the Polish-Russian border by residents of the Kaliningrad Oblast and selected Polish poviats (regions) of the Pomerania and Warmia-Mazuria voivodeships. On the basis of this agreement, Polish and Russian inhabitants of these areas were able to travel more freely across the border using just a valid travel document. Because Kaliningrad is an exclave of Russia, this agreement led to the feeling of having a closer connection with Poland and Europe. As a result of the simpler border transit, transport and tourist infrastructure began to develop, and tourism gradually increased. Despite this facilitation, cooperation between Poland and the Kaliningrad Oblast is not very advanced. The main reason for this underdevelopment, irrespective of the cultural and educational cooperation, is a lack of financial resources. Socio-economic and institutional asymmetries in the region are also a big obstacle with cross-border cooperation between Kaliningrad with its Polish neighbour taking place under unequal economic and institutional conditions largely due to faster and more successful economic development on the Polish side of the border than in Kaliningrad.

Furthermore, stereotypes and prejudices regarding the respective Russian and Polish neighbours are very much part of reality on both sides of the border. Cross-border cooperation can only be successful if people in the region are actively involved. When it comes to cross-border co-operation, it is crucial to support the development of civil society. In a 2004 Polish publication that presented all Polish Euroregions, the Euroregion Lyna-Lawa, founded on 4 September 2003, joining the Kaliningrad Oblast and some districts of the Voivodship Warmia-Mazuria, was not included. More time would be needed before this Euroregion was to become truly visible as from the Polish perspective, other Euroregions—and above all in the German-Polish and the Polish-Czech border region—are more important for the economic development.

In regards to the cultural and historical heritage, development has been very positive. The majority of inhabitants of Kaliningrad region have lost their fear that Kaliningrad would return to Germany and accepted the German past and started to perceive it as a “common” European heritage, or even beginning to be proud of their city’s German past. A development

not dissimilar to the developments in the Polish-German border region, in the former German cities of Breslau and Danzig.

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Polish-Ukrainian Border*

The Polish-Ukrainian border is with 526 km the longest eastern border of Poland. It belongs to newly formed national border lines as it was demarcated only after the collapse of the Soviet Union and the independence of Ukraine in the 1990s. However, it was the point of conflict and contestation in Polish-Ukrainian relations. Two centuries ago, this multi-ethnic and multi-religious borderland was part of Galicia in the Austro-Hungarian Empire. After the First World War the West Ukrainian People's Republic was declared and Poland and Ukraine were fighting for Lviv. Thanks to the commitment of many young Polish gymnasium and university students, who became known in the collective memory as "Lviv Eaglets", the city stayed under Polish rule. Ukraine as the Soviet Socialistic Republic has become part of the Soviet Union and the Polish-Ukrainian border changed to a Polish-Soviet one.

During the Second World War, the Polish-Ukrainian nationalist struggles in Galicia have revived and resulted in massive violence against Polish civilians committed by the Ukrainian Insurgent Party (UPA) in Volhynia in 1943. In the aftermath of the Second World War, the Polish-Soviet border shifted westwards and thousands of Poles were resettled to Poland, most of them to the northern and western border areas taken from Germany as a compensation for the lost eastern borderlands (*Kresy*). Furthermore, in 1947 within the so-called Operation Vistula (*Akcja Wisła*) of the Polish communist government the Ukrainian minority, including Boykos and Lemkos, was compulsorily resettled from the southeastern provinces of Poland to western and northern border areas of the country. During the communist time, despite the officially promoted socialistic friendship, the contacts over the Polish-Soviet border were tightly restricted and the loss of Galicia became taboo in public discourse.

After the fall of the Iron Curtain, the border regime was liberalized and Polish-Ukrainian border became relative open for everyday crossings. Due to the huge economic discrepancy between these two countries, cross-border contacts were dominated by everyday traders, known as 'ants', shopping tourism, smugglers and labour migration. Nevertheless, Ukraine was the first eastern neighbour with whom Poland signed a Treaty of Good Neighbourship, Friendly Relations and Cooperation in

* For the map, see article 'Poland'.

1992, confirming the existing Polish-Ukrainian border and regulating mutual cooperation. Only in the 1990s were two Euroregions created on the Polish-Ukrainian border: The Euroregion Carpathians in 1993, which entails Polish, Hungarian, Slovak, and Ukrainian local communes; and the Euroregion Bug in 1995, which includes Polish, Ukrainian, and Belarusian members. Moreover, Poland was considered as an advocate of Ukrainian accession to the EU. The cross-border cooperation is supported by the Poland-Belarus-Ukraine Program (2007–2013 and 2014–2020) within the European Neighbourhood and Partnership Instrument. However, the centralized governance system, bureaucracy, lack of knowledge and inexperience of Ukrainian stakeholders has been hindering the development of effective cooperation. Moreover, with Poland's accession to the European Union (EU) in 2004, the Polish-Ukrainian border became the external border of the EU. In 2003 Poland was forced to introduce visas for Ukrainian citizens, resulting in a decrease in cross-border contacts.

The Russian annexation of Crimea in 2014 and subsequent open conflict slowed down considerably the transformation process of Ukraine and its development towards close cooperation with the EU and resulted in a new unprecedented wave of migration to Poland.

Nevertheless, the decision of the Council of the EU in June 2017 to introduce a visa-free regime for Ukrainians to 30 EU countries and to the Schengen zone brought a hint of freedom for Ukrainian citizens. The main advantage of visa-free travel is that it saves money and time as fewer documents are required to cross the border than before. However, the introduction of visa-free travel also causes some difficulties. It is necessary to have a biometric passport and the waiting time for the passport has increased. Furthermore, Ukrainian citizens still have to collect a set of documents necessary to cross the border, which justifies the purpose and conditions of their stay in the EU. The abolition of visas also has an impact on the increase of queues at border checkpoints for cars. According to the survey of Center for Eastern Studies during the first three months of the visa-free programme's operation the dynamics of passenger traffic rose by 12.9 % compared to the same period in 2016.

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Pons Danubii*

Pons Danubii was established as a European Grouping of Territorial Cooperation (EGTC) on 15 December 2010 by Hungarian and Slovak municipalities, with a seat in Komárno, Slovakia. Hungarian members of the EGTC are Komárom, Tata, Kisbér and Oroszlány, Slovak members are Komárno, Kolárovo and Hurbanovo, while the municipality of Nové Zámky (Slovakia) is only a candidate. The Grouping operates in an area of over 500 km² and is inhabited by approximately 270 000 citizens.

The EGTC is led by the chairman appointed in a rotating cross-border system and it employs six full-time employees including a director. Pons Danubii aims at implementing projects in the fields of transport, economy, tourism, energy (with a special emphasis on renewable energies), environment, culture, education, human resources, sport, health care and disaster management. Pons Danubii has numerous opportunities that could be utilized, like communication, media and tourism. Green tourism has an important potential in Pons Danubii with the aim to establish a functional and effective cross-border bike path which links both sides of the border.

The first winner application of the EGTC was a “Europe for Citizens” project, called “*Danube Days*”. It enabled the creation of the bike map of the region, the tourist map of Komárom, and the new webpage of Komárom Fortress. Within the project “Crossing Borders by Information in the Pons Danubii Border Region”, a Media Office was established, Hungarian and Slovak local TVs exchanged their news, and EGTC *level* programs were shot, and published online in both languages.

The EGTC plays also a major role in facilitating the construction of bicycle routes, e.g. the Hungarian-Slovakian (HUSK) Cross-Border Cooperation (CBC) project aiming at the construction of a 18 km bike trail connecting Komárom in Hungary and Kolárovo in Slovakia and the elaboration of technical plans for the cycle path Komárom–Hurbanovo–Nové Zámky. The EGTC is also implementing a regional bike share project.

Another project called “Transborder Cooperation of Job Markets” has facilitated the return of workers to the labour market through re-training courses, employee fairs, and website. Other projects are currently under

* For the map, see article ‘Slovakia’.

development: “Sustainable Heritage Management of Waterway Regions” for the elaboration of strategies and organisation of knowledge transfer events, “Integrated Slow, Green and Healthy Tourism Strategies” for the elaboration of strategies, awareness-raising, integrated tourism products and “Interactive Thematic Parks” including creation of playgrounds with replicas of regional cultural heritage sites in the border regions.

Pons Danubii faces some obstacles, like the issue of pre-financing of projects. However, it is one of the most successful EGTCs in central Europe, which systematically involves its partnership network and enables a good cooperation between the twin cities of Komárom–Komárno and their surrounding urban centres.

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Portugal



Portugal joined the European Economic Community (EEC) in 1986, at the same time as Spain and shared a similar history. It is a formerly major European power, which built up a colonial Empire across the world between the 16th and the 18th century. When the authoritarian regime, established in the country in the 1930s, came to an end after the Ezelet revolution in 1974, it marked both the end of the colonial Empire and its transition to a democratic system, enabling it to apply for EEC membership. The nationalist tendencies of its former regime found expression in a defensive perception of borders. The border regions were thus seen as peripheral areas, where little investment was made.

European integration can therefore be said to have kickstarted territorial cooperation.

With only 10.3 million inhabitants, Portugal gives the appearance of a small country compared to Spain, but is slightly more densely inhabited (over 100 hab./ km²). This territory on the south-western periphery of Europe has a long seaboard and just one European neighbour, Spain. As a result, it is off the major transit routes in Europe. Portugal is one of the oldest nations of Europe, dating back to the 14th century. Although ruled by the Spanish crown between 1580 and 1668, Portugal retained a degree of autonomy. Despite being classed as a Mediterranean country, Portugal borders only on the Atlantic Ocean, not the Mediterranean Sea, and has two outermost regions in the mid-Atlantic, which have broadly autonomous institutional powers: the archipelagos of the Azores and Madeira, both of which are over 1 000 km away from the mainland. The part of the territory on the Iberian Peninsula displays a certain asymmetry: the coastal plain is densely populated and includes the two largest cities in the country (Lisbon and Porto). By contrast, the interior is a rural, sparsely populated area which suffered serious depression and demographic decline in the 1960s and 1970s. It tends to be seen as a buffer zone with Spain, in which there are little investment. The border is one of the oldest in Europe in that it has not changed significantly since the 12th century. It was recognised in 1668 under the Treaty of Lisbon, by which Spain recognized Portugal's independence. The sparse population on either side of the border reduces opportunities for interaction other than at the main crossing points – on the Atlantic seaboard between northern Portugal and Galicia, on the Mediterranean seaboard between the Algarve and Andalusia and in the central zone on the Lisbon – the Madrid axis between Extremadura in Spain and the district of Portalegre. With a few exceptions, the border does not follow natural dividing features and the two countries share several large river basins (Minho, Douro, Tagus and Guadiana) which were subject of several cooperation agreements that have been signed since 1964. Here, the political boundaries coincide with the language boundaries.

The Nomenclature of Territorial Units for Statistics (NUTS) 3 territories corresponding to Spanish provinces and Portuguese subregions have been covered by Interreg programs since the early 1990s. The whole of Portugal forms part of 2 Interreg V-B Transnational programs: South-West Europe Program (SUDOE) and Atlantic Area. The southern districts of Portugal and the Spanish regions along the Mediterranean

coast form part of the Interreg V-B Mediterranean Program (MEDA). However, neither country participates in any macro-regional strategy, although they are involved in the Mid-Atlantic and Mediterranean Sea neighbourhood programs with all the coastal regions bordering these seas. Finally, the Madeira-Azores-Canaries (MAC) program links the outermost regions of the two countries in the Atlantic Ocean.

Three working communities were established on the border between Portugal and Spain in the late 1980s or during the 1990s, but they do not cover the entire border as there is a gap between Extremadura on the Spanish side and the Portuguese region of Castelo Branco. Northern Portugal was involved in two working communities, one with Galicia and the other with Castile-Leon, and the third covered Andalusia and the two southern regions of Portugal. These working communities promote cross-border cooperation. It is hardly surprising that the first cooperation body was established in 1991 in the shape of a task force on the border between Spain and Portugal (the Galicia-North Portugal Euroregion), where the first working community had been established in 1986. This Euroregion was converted to a European Grouping of Territorial Cooperation (EGTC) in 2008. However, it was not until 2000 that certain local initiatives started to emerge. The Cross-Border Association of Municipalities of the Lands of the Great Lake Alqueva, established in 2005, works to promote the development of a disadvantaged and isolated region. In 2006, the Eurocity of Badajoz-Elvas, which links two towns which are 20 km apart, was set up in order to coordinate and pool services. In 2007, the Eurocity of Chaves-Verín similarly links two towns in close proximity with a view to developing Euro-citizenship and cultural cooperation. The first two ones have an association status and the third has an EGTC status. Finally, a further two Eurocities have been established: the Eurocity of Valença-Tui (2012) and the Eurocity of Gadiana (2013). The first one does not yet have a legal status, while the second one became an EGTC in 2018.

Four Euroregions were established during this period, three in 2009 (Duero-Douro, ZASNET and (Alentejo-Centro-Extremadura EUROACE) and one in 2010 (Alentejo-Algarve-Andalusia (EuroAAA)), two of which now have an EGTC status.

Although Portugal lies on the periphery of the European Union (EU), its local and regional authorities appear to be highly involved in cross-border cooperation at both local and regional level, with their unique neighbour, Spain. However, cooperation appears to have started

somewhat belatedly in the 1990s and 2000s. The issue at stake is on the one side to maintain a high level of cooperation to share common resources and to face the decline of the population in the peripheral land border regions of both countries and on the other side to foster cooperation of the outermost regions with other territories of Europe.

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Pyrenees-Mediterranean Euroregion*

Created in 2004, the Pyrenees-Mediterranean Euroregion is made up of three member-regions: Occitanie, Catalonia and the Balearic Islands. It has a population of 15 million and a GDP of 362,372 million euros.

The Pyrenees-Mediterranean Euroregion set up a European Grouping of Territorial Cooperation (EGTC) in 2009, which became operational in 2010. It has been run from Perpignan since 2017, and it has a general secretariat in Barcelona. The latter has supported a number of projects of different scales in its region. In support of innovation and economic and social integration, the organisation aims to encourage sustainable development in the region, and more generally to promote solidarity between citizens and help them feel connected to Europe.

The Euroregion's priorities are innovation and economic development. It supports the creation, establishment and development of companies on its territory. Numerous projects have been carried out in recent years, including the "Creamed" project, which encourages economic development by linking local businesses to tools and common objectives to support them. The result is the creation of a Euroregional incubator network, covering 98 % of business incubators in the four member regions, which amounts to 89 incubators and 1 400 young start-ups and businesses. In 2014, the project was awarded on a European level, and won 1st prize for interregional cooperation projects awarded by the European Committee of the Regions. Two other ongoing projects were founded as a result: Links Up (2016–2019) and Kiss Me (2017–2021).

The former is also part of the process of implementing the Euroregional innovation strategy adopted in 2014, and supporting the competitiveness of Small and Medium Enterprises (SME)s with a focus on e-health and e-tourism, which are key sectors in the three regions. Its aim is to stimulate growth and increase the competitiveness of start-ups in south-west Europe. The latter is aimed at improving the capacity for innovation of SMEs through cross-border cooperation.

In the field of higher education and research, it is worth highlighting the Pyrénées-Méditerranée Eurocampus, set up in 2009, which has more than 510 000 students and 45 000 researchers. It aims to encourage cooperation, mobility and exchanges in higher education. Particular

* For the map, see article 'Andorra'.

emphasis is placed on research and innovation, by creating connections between a variety of parties involved in these fields (researchers, academics, teachers, etc.). In this context, the main actions are the creation of an internet portal, the promotion of university exchanges via mobility grants (Eurocampus mobility checks), encouraging foreign language learning, and promoting dual university degrees.

Since 2011, the Euroregion has also focused on protecting the environment to prevent climate change. This is part of the “climate plan” that aligns with the “Europe 2020” strategy launched by the European Union. Calls for proposals have been launched to provide financing to tourism enterprises, with the aim of raising awareness of sustainable development and encouraging the adoption of more environmentally friendly measures.

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Rába-Danube-Váh*

The establishment of the Rába-Danube-Váh (RDV) as a European Grouping of Territorial Cooperation (EGTC) was initiated by Komárom-Esztergom County in Hungary in 2010. The original concept of the EGTC targeted the development of the joint Hungarian-Slovak section of the Danube within the EU Strategy for the Danube Region (EUSDR) being under preparation that time. Accordingly, Győr-Moson-Sopron County from Hungary, furthermore Trnava Region and Nitra Region from Slovakia were invited to the cooperation. At the end of the consultations, Nitra Region stepped back from the EGTC; therefore, it was composed by the three remaining regional self-governments. The establishment process was completed by the end of 2011. In 2016, Pest County from Hungary and Bratislava Region from Slovakia became members of the EGTC.

Despite the EGTC being seated in Hungary (Tatabánya), the president, the director and the leader of the secretary were delegated by the Slovak partner. The vice-president was appointed by the Hungarian side. Since 2015, the president of Komárom-Esztergom County Council has been fulfilling the seat of the EGTC president.

The organisation also has a Supervisory Board with four members, three Hungarian and one Slovak. The General Assembly involves five persons representing the members by each, where the Slovak parties have the same voting power than their three Hungarian colleagues in all together.

The main aim of the grouping is to strengthen economic, social and territorial cohesion between the members, to promote cross-border regional cooperation, as well as to establish a permanent institutional structure that covers the Hungarian-Slovak Danube area. The EGTC has elaborated an integrated territorial strategy with the professional support of the Central European Service for Cross-Border Initiatives (CESCI). The integrated development of the Hungarian–Slovak Danube Region consists of 11 project initiatives which are the following: implementation of activities associated with the rehabilitation of the Danube, its tributaries and watercourses; renewal of the industrial and urbanisation axis along the Danube; establishment of a joint water and disaster management

* For the map, see article ‘Centroe Territory Euroregion’.

system; research on the pollution sources affected the Danube and reduction of pollution – a comprehensive program; promoting local products along the Danube; Rába-Danube-Váh agricultural innovation cluster; realisation of a bioenergetics program; tourism destination development; creation of a cycling and water tourism system along the Danube; establishment of the Sacra Velo cycling pilgrimage route and the shaping of the Danube cultural partnership.

The EGTC also has an important role in the Slovak-Hungarian cross-border program as it directly manages the Small Project Fund (SPF) in the Western section of the border, to which eligible applicants within the target area can apply directly for project funding. The grouping promotes consensus, common interests and agreements at the meeting of the Fund. Moreover, it received a certain allocation from program finance, hence they distribute typically through people-to-people projects.

RDV is also an active and successful applicant for the same programme. By January 2018, they participated in three funded partnerships. RDV is the lead beneficiary in the project titled “silver economy” based on people 50 years of age and over. By helping this particular demographic, this project stimulates the economy, society, and regional cooperation. The second project is the “Herbaland” that aims to support the actors, business, organisations, and all the involved parties who are active within the domain of herbs. By doing so it develops a cross-border network of stakeholders in herbal industry and creates an integrated cross-border data, that includes the establishment of touristic attractions, research and processing centres, and localized value propositions. The third project is the so called “Circle of Circular Economy” which aims to reduce the production of waste through circular approach, where all the products and materials are re-used. It develops cross-border partnerships built between public authorities and people in the field of circular economy.

The RDV EGTC suffers from several obstacles. For example, border crossing infrastructure is infrequent because of landscape, but both countries continuously improve this situation, thus making the border crossing more effective. Further obstacles for cross-border cooperation include complexity in the domain of medical and health care cross-border cooperation and legal obstacles which limit cross-border cooperation in the field of local products. Also, the organisation and harmonisation of public transport systems is not sufficiently effective between Slovakia and Hungary. In spite of the existing obstacles, the RDV EGTC has

a valuable potential to enhance and develop cross-border cooperation between Slovakia and Hungary.

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Regio Basiliensis/Regio TriRhena*

Prior to the start of the First World War in 1914, there were virtually no border controls or restrictions to labour mobility. With this background, the German-French-Swiss region of Basel increasingly gained awareness after the Second World War that quality of life strongly depends on people, goods and services being able to circulate freely through borders. In 1963, this was the trigger for the founding of the Swiss organisation Regio Basiliensis. The association's declared long-term objective became to encourage points of commonality in the region of three countries and to reduce obstacles, while providing impulses from the Swiss side for the integration of the border region. With the founding of the *Regio du Haut-Rhin* in 1969 and the Freiburger Regio-Gesellschaft in 1984 (now the *RegioGesellschaft Schwarzwald-Oberrhein*), the Regio Basiliensis later acquired partners on the French and German sides.

The association Regio Basiliensis encourages trilateral networking and cross-border exchanges and dialogue with public events, projects and information on regional and European themes. It engages itself to make Basel and the trilateral upper Rhineland an attractive and competitive location with international significance and good accessibility.

In legal terms, the Regio Basiliensis is a private association which is supported by its membership which is comprised of both companies and individuals. Member contributions account for approximately 20 % of the total budget of 1.2 million Swiss Francs. With its so-called Inter-cantonal Coordination Office via service orders, the Regio Basiliensis also has sovereign state duties for the five north-west Swiss cantons of Basel-Stadt, Basel-Landschaft, Aargau, Jura and Solothurn, and administers support funds of the Federation and the cantons within this scope.

The Regio Basiliensis participated in founding various cross-border initiatives, committees and projects, such as the Association of European Border Regions (AEBR) in 1971, the cross-border information and consulting agency *Informations- und Beratungs-Stelle* (INFOBEST) Palmrain in 1993, the metropolitan region of the Upper Rhine in 2010, and the climate network TRION climate in 2015. On 15 December 1989, on the occasion of the 25-year jubilee of the Regio Basiliensis, a summit meeting took place in Basel between the French state president François

* For the map, see article 'Upper Rhine Region'.

Mitterand, the German Federal Chancellor Helmut Kohl, and the Swiss Federation President Jean-Pascal Delamuraz. The signing of the Tripartite Rhine Declaration of Basel (*Déclaration tripartite rhénane de Bâle*) recognised the many years of work by the various forces and players in regional cross-border cooperation.

The Regio Basiliensis also participated significantly in the founding of the RegioTriRhena Council in 1995, which is to be seen as a clear declaration of support for the cooperation region with the cities of Basel, Colmar, Mulhouse and Freiburg. From the beginning of its founding, the RegioTriRhena Council saw itself as a voluntary and complementary cross-border working group below the level of the Upper Rhine Conference. The RegioTriRhena association sees itself as a cross-border platform of the cities, regional institutions, communes, economic chambers, associations, colleges and associations, and makes a continuous contribution to the merging of the three countries' shared region. Examples of RegioTriRhena projects include the cooperation of exhibition organizers, a shared tourism platform, regular plant tours at companies in three countries and thematic conferences on focal themes.

With the concretion of cross-border cooperation in projects and the increasingly intensifying engagement of the cantons, the role of the Regio Basiliensis has also changed: It is no longer a promoter of the idea of cross-border cooperation, but a service provider for this idea. Contrary to the given structures on the German and French sides, where these two fields operate separately, the Regio Basiliensis can focus and integrate the greater share of cooperation activities of the north-west Swiss partners. This makes it possible to attain a high degree of professionalism and efficiency. Today, the Regio Basiliensis therefore provides all participants in the Upper Rhine Region cooperation with an expertise centre which is exemplary both in terms of its decades of experience and regarding the breadth of the tasks which it handles in the field of cross-border cooperation.

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Regio Insubrica*

The Regio Insubrica is a working community which was established in Varese on 19 January 1995 as a private law association under the 1980 European Outline Convention on Transfrontier Cooperation between Territorial Communities or Authorities. It is named after the Insubri, a Celtic population who inhabited three pre-Alpine lake districts (Lario, Ceresio and Verbano) in the 5th and 6th century BC, choosing Mediolanum (what is now Milan) as their capital.

The Regio Insubrica has always been committed to developing an awareness of the similarities shared by the region. It aims to promote cross-border cooperation through joint planning as a way of enhancing economic growth, transportation, communications, environmental practices, tourism and culture within the three Italian-Swiss pre-Alpine lake districts, as well as fostering a sense of belonging to a territory that shares the same social and cultural identity. It also provides practical solutions to current problems and strives to eliminate obstacles. At the same time, it supports authorities and institutions without interfering in their activities, thus respecting their individual identities.

The presidential board is comprised of the Republic and Canton of Ticino and the regions of Lombardy and Piedmont; while the board of directors is composed of the Canton of Ticino, the two Italian regions, the city of Lugano and the provinces of Como, Varese, Lecco, Verbano Cusio Ossola and Novara. In addition to these, it comprises 80 members, including municipalities with special cross-border interests, economic and cultural associations, and university institutes. The representatives of each organisation belonging to the Regio constitute the plenary assembly, which meets annually.

Despite enjoying strong bonds and sound trade relationships and opportunities among members are still not equally distributed. The metropolitan area of the Como-Lugano-Varese triangle is spread around three major hubs that have experienced differing economic and employment growth rates. In the aftermath of World War II, the Italian-Swiss Insubric region saw the development of cross-border work through the waves of workers from neighbouring Italy crossing the border to work in the Swiss canton of Ticino and providing support to the local economy,

* For the map, see article 'Switzerland and Cross-Border Cooperation'.

especially in the manufacturing industry. After the implementation of the 2002 Switzerland-European Union (EU) bilateral agreement on the free movement of citizens, the number of both Italian cross-border workers and Italian companies setting up office in the Ticino area has risen, triggering tensions and placing significant pressure on the Ticino labour market, including the service industry, which until 2004 had been the exclusive preserve of the local labour force.

The Regio Insubrica is therefore committed to fostering the complementary integration of its strengths and resources. It strives to eliminate the obstacles deriving from the inclusion of two different institutional systems, a lack of mutual understanding, and tensions that may arise on the job market. The measures it has implemented over the past few years include integrated promotion of tourism in the Three-Lake District of the Regio Insubrica, cross-border cooperation on education, increased civil protection cooperation following natural and man-made disasters and public health emergencies, informative and supporting role within the interregional cooperation program, organisation of workshops on topics of cross-border interest, mediation services, sponsorship of cultural and sports events, initiatives in the fields of environment and mobility, as well as workshops and projects to foster fair economic and employment integration.

Strategically located in the area, the Regio Insubrica has grown into a dynamic and flexible management tool. It is committed to ensuring that cooperation-based integration of the valuable resources within the Insubric territory and its systematic development into a functional space will unleash new resources and ideas. It also aims to provide new growth opportunities to those living, working and spending time in the region, thus acting as a crucial bridge between the north and the south of both the Alps and Europe.

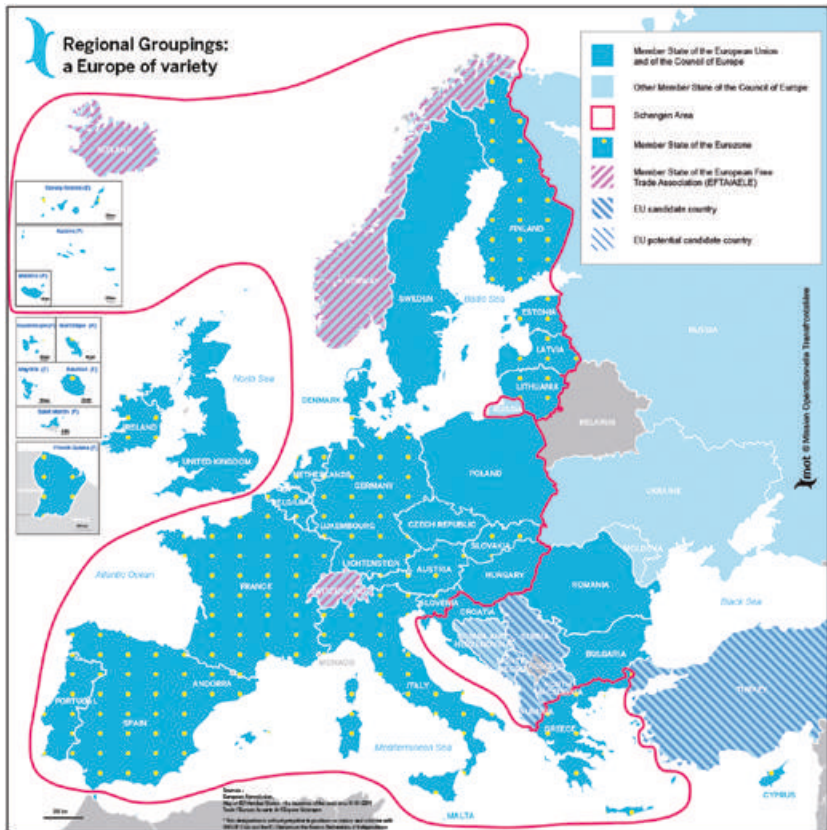
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Regional Groupings in Europe



After the end of the Second World War, the process of European Integration was initiated at the Hague Congress in 1948. The first step in this process was the creation of several European Organisations, two of which focused more in particular on borders and territorial cooperation: the Council of Europe, founded on 5 May 1949 in Strasbourg, which currently has 47 member states extending as far as the countries of the Caucasus and including all European States (with the exception of Belarus and Kosovo); followed by the European Economic Community (EEC), established on 25 June 1957 in Rome by 6 founding member states (France, Germany, Italy and the Benelux), which became

the European Union (EU) in 1992 and currently comprises 27 member states, after the UK has left the Union on 31 January 2020 (Brexit). A third European Organisation, the European Free Trade Area (EFTA) was signed on 4 January 1960 in Stockholm between 7 member states (UK, Switzerland, Portugal, Austria Sweden, Norway and Denmark) as an alternative response to the EEC project of a Customs Union.

The Council of Europe, the EEC and EFTA regarded creating a “Borderless Europe” as one possibility for achieving the goal of preserving peace and achieving wealth in Europe, but the type of borders concerned and the scope of the member states involved were not the same and also changed over time, resulting in a variety of different regional groupings. For cross-border cooperation in Europe, it is essential to take into account this variety of regional groupings and their different borderless spaces.

For the Council of Europe, a “Borderless Europe” means gathering a collection of countries around the defense of the fundamental values of human rights, the rule of law and democracy. It was the first European Organisation to provide a legal framework for cross-border cooperation: the European Outline Convention on Transfrontier Cooperation, adopted on 21 May 1980 in Madrid, which has subsequently been amended by three additional protocols in 1995, 1998 and 2009. Furthermore, the European Charter of Local Self-Government, adopted in 1985 provides for a legal framework enabling local authorities of the Council of Europe’s member states to manage their affairs independently. The Congress of Local and Regional Authorities of the Council of Europe, founded in 1994 as a representative body for cities and regions, pays particular attention to ensuring that local and regional democracy remains a fundamental principle in the way local and regional authorities work and maintains that true cross-border governance should be established at the level of “Greater Europe”, i.e. the 47 member states of the Council of Europe (among which also Turkey, all republics of the former Yugoslav and a large number of ex-Soviet republics including Russia). It is therefore the largest European grouping which provides for tools of territorial cooperation.

The EEC’s concept of a “Europe without borders” was from the start largely connected to the elimination of economic barriers and the principle of free movement of goods. The project of the Common Market of 1957 indeed foresaw the creation of a customs union, where internal trade barriers would be eliminated and a common external tariff imposed on the EEC’s external borders. This economic concept was not shared by all European states. Especially for the Nordic countries,

as well as the UK, the idea of free trade was rather connected with the concept of establishing a free trade area without the constraint of a common external tariff. Thus, when the EC started to implement the Common Market, under the initiative of the UK, the European Free Trade Agreement (EFTA) was set up in 1960, proposing a different type of “Borderless Europe” in comparison to the EEC: its purpose was to eliminate internal trade barriers without imposing a common external tariff. The EC’s Common Market and the EFTA’s free trade zone are non-compatible, so that no member state can be part of both Organisations. This explains, that, although Island, Finland and Liechtenstein joined EFTA respectively in 1970, 1986 and in 1991, with the progressive enlargement of EEC in the 1970s and the 1990s, EFTA has progressively shrunk in order to represent, in 2019, only four member states (Norway, Switzerland, Liechtenstein and Island).

After the adoption of the Single European Act in 1987, the EEC’s concept of the Common Market was enlarged to idea of a Single European Market (SEM) by 1993, where free movement would also be granted for services, people and capital. It was in the context of this project that the EEC began to engage with cross-border cooperation. The principal issue was to create a Europe that guaranteed free movement, one where economic flows and the mobility of persons would not be hindered by barriers at borders. Border regions then became a focus of attention, since it was within these areas that the effects of downgrading borders would be most tangible. From 1990 onwards, the European Commission began financing cross-border cooperation by means of a specific program of support, the Interreg Community Initiative Program (CIP), in order to help implement the SEM. However, the geographical space of this “Borderless Europe” is larger than that of the EC member states. First, Interreg allows for the participation of external border regions that are not members of the EU. Interreg program zones therefore include the external borderlands of its 28 (27) EU member states. Second, some non-EU member states have negotiated a status of quasi membership to the EU’s SEM thus extending this “Borderless Europe” to the countries of Iceland, Liechtenstein, Norway and to Switzerland. Still, the barriers to be removed within this regional grouping were still primarily economic obstacles to free movement.

The elimination of political barriers in order to improve mobility in Europe took place in a different framework: the so-called Schengen-space. Linked to the idea of the SEM, certain EC countries also wanted

the disappearance of border controls for travellers. The first “Schengen” agreements were signed on 14 June 1985 by Germany, France and the three Benelux countries in the town of Schengen, in Luxembourg. In 1990 they gave rise to a convention, which entered into force on 26 March 1995. Initially only applied between 5 member states of the EU, the Schengen agreement became part of the EU’s legal framework in 1997, with the adoption of the Amsterdam Treaty. It was normally designed to be applied by all EU member states, but the UK and Ireland negotiated an opt-out. Also, certain EU member states still have to prepare their accession, so that in 2019, Cyprus, Rumania and Croatia are not yet Schengen members. Finally, Schengen also allows or the association of external states, so that out of the 26 states which have gradually acceded to Schengen, some (Iceland, Liechtenstein, Norway and Switzerland) are not members of the EU. De facto, the micro-states of Monaco, San-Marino and the Vatican also participate in the agreement. It can thus be concluded that the European grouping of Schengen does, just as the SEM, not correspond to the borders of the EU.

The same principle counts for the Euro Zone of the EU. A European regional monetary grouping was foreseen as soon as in 1987, after the adoption of the Single European Act, but from the start, not all the EC Member States took part in it. The first phase of European Monetary Union (EMU) took place in 1992, after the adoption of the Treaty of Maastricht and with the implementation of the free movement of capital. However, two factors restricted the final Euro Zone membership. First, after a negative Danish referendum in 1992 on the issue, Denmark and the UK negotiated an opt-out. Second, the EMU required compliance with a certain number of economic criteria that had been fixed by the EU Council in Copenhagen in 1993. Thus, by the time its third phase was implemented in 2002 only 11 countries had joined the Euro Zone: the three Benelux countries, Germany, Ireland, Spain, France, Italy, Austria, Portugal and Finland. Membership to the EMU has since then still not converged with the borders of the EU. Sweden, which had no specific opt-out agreement, rejected the EMU by referendum in 2003. In 2019, Bulgaria, Croatia, Hungary, Rumania and Poland have still to pass the threshold of the economic criteria. Furthermore, like the SEM and the Schengen zone, the EMU has since been joined by other countries. Thus the European micro-states of San Marino, the Vatican, Monaco and Andorra have an agreement allowing them to be part of the Euro Zone, whereas the Montenegro and Kosovo use euros as their currency

unilaterally. In 2019, the Euro regional grouping thus numbers 19 countries, with a total population of more than 320 million people.

As a result, Europe today is a structure of varying shape, but its borders reveal several types of integration, which have to be taken into account for territorial cooperation. Indeed, the impact of the different regional groupings is important, as cross-border flows are facilitated in those areas, where a “Borderless Europe” is most present, i.e. where several types of barriers to free movement, economic (monetary, trade, customs) as well as political (border controls of people) have been eliminated. After the Brexit in 2020, the question also arises if and what type of borders and barriers will return when a state leaves a regional grouping – the EU – the aim of which is to create a “Borderless Europe”.

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Regional Language

The concept of regional language is often used as a synonym for minority language and opposed to official language (or national language). The construction of current European nation states (particularly since the 17th century) has been intrinsically linked to a political, cultural and language homogenization process based on the principle of “one language, one state, one people”, in which language has had a key role in defining identity. In this way, majority or dominant languages were promoted while others (peripheral with regards to the dominant power) were marginalized. The former acquired an official status across the entire territories of such states given that they were used by public institutions (government, administration, legal system, education, etc.). In this way, knowledge and use of these official languages became compulsory. The other languages, referred to as regional or minority, found themselves at a disadvantage since they were relegated to optional languages.

What defines a regional or minority language is not the total number of speakers of the language but rather the fact of being a minority in the state where it is spoken, or of having a non-official status. In this sense, the European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages (ECRML)—a European Treaty (CETS 148) adopted in 1992 under the auspices of the Council of Europe to protect and promote historical, regional and minority languages in Europe—defines regional or minority languages as those “traditionally used within a given territory of a state by nationals of that state who form a group numerically smaller than the rest of the state’s population; and different from the official language(s) of that state.” According to the Charter, languages spoken by a minority of citizens in any part of a state can be considered regional or minority languages (such as the Frisian spoken in the Netherlands and Germany, for example), as can be languages spoken by a majority, although in a geographically limited part of a state, as is the case of Catalan in Catalonia. Languages that have traditionally been spoken by citizens in a country, but which do not have a specific territorial delimitation within the state (such as Romani languages) are also considered to be minority languages. In any case, migrant languages are excluded since, although in a minority, they have no historical ties to the land. This latter point is rather contentious, however, as it is not clear at what point a language spoken by a group of nationals becomes rooted or “traditional”. In this sense, it should be noted that the aim of the ECRML is to protect these languages as

an intrinsic part of European cultural heritage and not in terms of the individual rights (including linguistic and cultural rights) of its citizens.

Without counting recent migrant languages, more than 80 different languages are spoken within the European Union (EU) (with 28 member states and over 500 million inhabitants in 2017). But of these, only 24 have official status in European institutions. Although indigenous to Europe, the rest (around 60 languages) have a different legal status. The reasons underlying this are complex, since most minority languages cross administrative borders between states. Therefore, a language may be official in one state while having minority or regional status in another (such as Czech in Austria, Danish in Germany or Dutch in France). We can also find languages with official status in one state, co-official status in another, and no legal recognition in another, as is the case of Catalan, for example, which is official in Andorra, co-official with Spanish in Catalonia, the Valencian Community and the Balearic Islands in Spain, but with practically no legal recognition in Northern Catalonia — in the south of France — and in the town of Alghero in Sardinia, Italy.

The concept of minority or regional language is closely related to that of a “minoritized” language. This concept refers to the fact that some languages suffer from restrictions placed on their use, regardless of the number of speakers (and even when they are majority languages in a specific territory), which means that they are not needed to go about daily life in certain contexts. This minoritization comes about since the languages are found in a situation of diglossia. Such a circumstance is generated when two languages coexist in the same territory (whether because there are two monolingual communities or because there is a bilingual community), whereby one of the two languages (language A) is used on a preferential basis in spheres of public communication (the media, the administration, education) and the other (language B) is mostly relegated to the private sphere.

The protection and public promotion of regional or minority languages is essential to avoid regression (a situation in which new speakers are less competent in the minoritized language), linguistic shrinkage (in which language B loses structural richness), or the eventual disappearance or marginalization of the language. On the one hand, although European diversity and linguistic richness are officially recognized both in Art. 3 of the Treaty on the EU as well as in Art. 22 of the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the EU, in practice, European institutions only promote the official languages of member states (the only working languages used

in European institutions are the official languages of those states). On the other hand, while European legislation encourages states to protect and promote linguistic and cultural diversity, it does not demand that they do this. As a result, protection policies for minority languages are not homogenous across the whole of the EU, nor are they applied to all languages in the same way.

As a Treaty signed on a voluntary basis by states, the ECRML even allows signatory countries to decide which regional or minority languages to apply it to. Furthermore, even though they must comply with certain commitments (those specified in Part II), the states must choose at least 35 paragraphs out of the ones which refer to education, the legal system, administrative authorities and public services, the media, culture, socio-economic activities and cross-border exchanges (Part III). Finally, it should be noted that the ECRML does not establish the official status of languages recognized by states in accession or ratification documents.

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Regionalism

A major distinction between “old” and “new regionalism comes from the evolution of the power pre-eminence of the nation state, following the progressive affirmation of a diverse range of new actors in governance frameworks: sub-state authorities, multinational corporations, Non-Governmental Organisations (ONGs) and other social groups. The multidimensionality of regionalism is linked to the inherent polysemy of the term region, a “meso-scale” concept that can refer to various spatial perimeters and territorial authorities. A basic divide exists between macro- or micro-regionalist approaches. Researchers in international relations mostly consider regions to be “macro” inter-state blocks like the European Union (EU), Mercosur or the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN). Conversely, many planners, economists and politicians conceive regionalism at a sub-state scale and deal with the territorial and socio-political units situated below the nation state level. This “micro” approach is generally the most common in studies of European cross-border cooperation.

For a long time, in Europe, regionalism was associated with particularism and backward movements, especially at a time of triumphant nation state constructions. Still, counter-currents remained within specific geo-historical realities, as shown by Stein Rokkan who notably identified two different types of sub-state “peripheral territorialities”, many of them in border areas: first, the “problem peripheries” or “interface peripheries” that were caught between several dominant state-building processes and were consequently never fully integrated into either of the blocs, like Flanders and Wallonia, Luxembourg, Lorraine and Alsace, Savoy, Val d’Aosta or the County of Nice; second, the “failed-centres” that might have built their own centrality but were the victims of more effective drives of incorporation from other centres like Occitania, Catalonia, Scotland or Bavaria.

From the 1960s to the 1980s there was a resurgence of regionalism, which combined ethno-cultural and linguistic arguments with economic ones and entailed diverse political arguments and lines. Some regions came to defend their sub-state identity so as to gain more autonomy to better develop their economies, like for instance in Brittany, Corsica, the Basque Country, Catalonia, South Tyrol, Flanders or Occitania. This context stimulated the creation of the European Regional Development

Fund (ERDF) in 1975 and led progressively to the transfer of capacity or autonomy to regional authorities in several Western European countries.

From the 1990s, the concept of new regionalism has expressed a renewed role and a reinforced capacity of regions. This phenomenon is described as “new” because analysts relate it to renewed economic dynamics and correlative socio-political evolutions. Two dimensions characterise new regionalism: economic internationalisation and external projection. New regionalism entails competition, cooperation and connection. In the post-industrial globalised system, regions, or “meso” units located between the local and the global levels, are viewed as relevant and competitive scales where to locate and develop economic activities. The Silicon Valley or the Third Italy are emblematic examples of these perspectives. To sustain economic competitiveness and dynamism, external relations and collective actions are vectors to build and project regional capacity: capacity to negotiate with states or European institutions, to attract public and private investments, to take the lead in a particular policy sector, to connect the economic milieu worldwide. For certain regions with high capacity, this cooperative regionalism is named “para-diplomacy” because of its particular political intensity.

The European construction, which was boosted by the Single Market Act in 1987, the reform of the Regional Policy in 1988 and the Maastricht Treaty in 1993, contributed to new regionalism. It represented a window of opportunity for the economic and institutional development of regions and for their external and cooperative action: better inclusion of regions in the EU decision-making processes with the creation of the Committee of the Regions, allocation of specific funds to support territorial and cross border cooperation with the Interreg programs, establishment of regional and interregional networks of representation within the lobbying galaxy of Brussels. In particular, European new regionalism has resulted in the multiplication of cross-border cooperative organisations commonly named Euroregions, which today number more than a hundred. In this evolution we can insightfully observe that most of the “peripheries” that Rokkan identified before the occurrence of new regionalism, now have an advanced political capacity and most are pro-actively engaged in cross-border and other cooperative regional schemes. Some of them have also drawn on external action to advocate their specific geo-historical identity. The analyses of new regionalism raised the hypothesis of the “Europe of the Regions”, by which the EU would gradually be based on a deeper inclusion of regions within the European multi-level governance

framework. This vision recalled the position of the Swiss intellectual Denis de Rougemont, eulogist of European federalism and one of the spiritual founding fathers of European construction, who considered the regional level to be the most relevant on which to build a European Union.

Despite a certain empirical and theoretical relevance, new regionalism reveals certain limits. On the heuristic level, the concept is subject to various interpretations and operationalisations, depending on the “regional” approach and on the concerned discipline. Empirically, the hypothesis of the Europe of the Regions has only been partially corroborated and, since the economic crisis of 2008, a certain shift in the European construction process shows that states remain preponderant in the European decision-making apparatus. Moreover, some evolutions challenge the concept of new regionalism in its relevance to characterise actual “regional” movements or forms, for example crises and tensions around the very status of region in Catalonia, Flanders or Scotland, the emergence of “mega” metropolitan regions that can disconnect from their hinterland, or opposition to free trade and globalisation and movements of border closure.

However, these facts do not really compromise the salience of studying regions and regionalism. They open up new perspectives on the subject to define what can be a coming “post-regionalism”. Rather than contrasting different scales of regionalism, an insightful agenda can be to deepen the analysis of the links and interactions between “micro” and “macro” regionalism to better grasp the role that inter-state regional organisations play in the development of sub-state and transnational regions, and how emerging forms of regions and regionalism can complement, more than oppose, the nation states. In this sense, one of the most operational approaches to new regionalism comes from regional and spatial planning. In this field, the notion refers generically to any innovative or renewed planning arrangements or areas that are set up to deal with specific issues at a distinct scale from the institutionalised administrative perimeters – which precisely corresponds to “euroregions” or many other cross-border bodies.

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Regions of the Southwestern Europe (RESOE)*

Regions of the Southwestern Europe (RESOE) refers to an agreement signed between six territorial authorities: four Spanish autonomous regions (Galicia, Castile and León, Asturias and Cantabria) and two Portuguese deconcentrated regions (North and Centre). In total, these six regions cover 32 % of the Iberian Peninsula area, and 24 % of its inhabitants: these proportions are indeed one of the main reasons for the RESOE's political vindication, given that they show low density of population and depopulation. In addition, ageing is reported to be one of the main weaknesses of the RESOE area. In particular, these negative demographic figures are especially alarming in the bordering region between inland Galicia, Portugal and Castile and León, which has been labelled as a “demographic ruin”, “demographic empty”, or even “terra nullius”. In terms of Gross Domestic Product (GDP) per capita, both Portuguese regions are lagging behind the Spanish regions (around 15 000 euros the average of the former and 21 000 euros the average of the latter); in any case, all of them are under the EU average (around 29 000 euros). Far from Madrid and Lisbon and the more populated and economic active Mediterranean coast, this macro-regional initiative pursues to reinforce cooperative initiatives between partners.

RESOE follows a path directly connected to the European Union (EU) political guidelines regarding the proposal of establishing macro-regional strategies. In fact, the creation of RESOE has to be read as a reaction to the 2009 European Commission Communication concerning the EU Strategy for the Baltic Sea Strategy: this text is directly quoted in the original Memorandum of Understanding signed by the Galician, Castile and León and Região Norte representatives in September 2010. What is more, the first point of the agreement deals with the definition of a “macro-region” and refers to the European Commission proposals. The agreement affirms that a new administrative structure is not built up and no specific funds from the EU are sought. However, the agreement asks for an increase of the European territorial cooperation funds.

At the beginning, RESOE partners were two Spanish regions (Galicia and Castile and León) and one region in Portugal (Região Norte). Two Working Communities dealing with cross-border issues existed since the

* For the map, see article ‘Eurocities on the Spanish-Portuguese Border’.

1990s between these regions (Galicia-North of Portugal, 1992; North of Portugal-Castile and León, 2000). However, no mention of these previous bodies is included in the Memorandum of Understanding signed in 2010, which means that the strong background of cross-border cooperation does not seem to influence this new structure. In fact, RESOE does not lead to the end of bilateral agreements (Galicia-North; North-Castile and León), what might have implied the creation of a new trilateral cross-border cooperation structure (as is the case in other Spanish-Portuguese regions, see the case of EUROACE and EuroAAA). The inclusion of new partners (Centre Region and Asturias in 2015 and Cantabria in 2017 – these two last are not bordering regions –) follow the same idea: RESOE is an arena for debate between members and not a new structure for cross-border cooperation. The aim of this macro-region is more in line with overall strategic frameworks such as “Europe 2020” or RIS3 (Research and Innovation Strategy for Smart Specialization), than with traditional and formal territorial cooperation policies. In particular, three priority topics are covered: transport and logistics, manufacturing competitiveness, and research and excellence in higher education. Also, environment, culture and tourism, and employment are areas for cooperation.

With regard to transport, RESOE supports the Trans-European Networks of Transport (TEN-T) Atlantic Corridor (from the ports of Lisbon and Porto to the port of Le Havre in Northern France, and cities of Strasbourg and Mannheim on the French/German border). However, this strategy, mainly related to rail freight transport, includes three other partners, Cantabria, Asturias and Galicia, which are excluded from the transport connections with the rest of the EU territory and whose ports are not inserted in TEN-T networks. In any case, complementary strategies are being proposed.

With regard to manufacturing, the automotive industry is presented as a key sector for the macro-region, with around 200 000 direct and indirect employees. In research and education, since 2011, private and public universities and research Centres gathered in the southwestern European Regions Conference of Rectors (CRUSOE). Six working groups are defined in RESOE, each one coordinated by one of the members: Demographic Decline and Active Ageing (Centre Region); Industrial Competitiveness (North Region); Education, Research and R+D+I (Galicia in coordination with CRUSOE); Transports and Logistics (Castile and León); Employment and Youth (Cantabria); and Tourism (Asturias).

RESOE should be interpreted, at least for the moment, more as an aspiration for a combined lobbying effort towards nation-states and the EU, rather than a strong cooperation structure. In fact, and as already mentioned, it is based on an agreement of understanding and there is no specific body or legal framework covering RESOE. This is, in fact, the idea behind the concept of EU macro-regions. Despite the fact that this initiative started at the beginning of the EU debate on macro-regions, it has not led to an official EU proposal for such a macro-region. In a way, RESOE was a reaction to a moment where there was no fixed idea of how many EU macro-regions would be in place and an attempt to be in the frontline. The total RESOE area and population is far behind the four EU official strategic macro-regions (Baltic, 2009; Danube, 2010; Adriatic and Ionian, 2014; and Alpine, 2015) and it only covers two EU member states. Furthermore, the RESOE Strategy that was under debate in 2018 was led by regional authorities, no by the EU and member states, as is the case in the four EU recognized macro-regions. At the end, the relevance of RESOE would depend not only on the strength of regional authorities, but also (and mainly) on the support from both states-members and the EU. Predictably, the macro-region for most of the regions covered by RESOE might be the current Atlantic Arc Commission (created in 1989). Nevertheless, the case of Castile and León is problematic given that it is not part of this Commission and the precedents of comprehensive macro-regional maps of the EU (e.g. Europe 2000+ document in 1995) amalgamated Castile and León with other continental regions, but not with its Atlantic counterparts.

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Research, Development & Innovation

Cross-border cooperation in science is an old phenomenon that can be illustrated by the humanist intellectual movement of the 15th and 16th centuries. The *peregrinatio academica* is the core concept, where professors and scholars travelled across Europe to develop a way of thinking and to discuss and exchange their research. Exchange and research are a fundamental combination. First, because it adds to the quality of the findings, and second, because there is no research without communicating it. Indeed, during the Renaissance the *Respublica Literaria*, which was an intellectual forum, produced thousands of letters between scholars. In addition, Gutenberg's printing press enhanced the dissemination of knowledge. For example, the City of Basel, in Switzerland, hosted at the beginning of the 16th century the famous press of Johann Froben.

In the 20th and 21st centuries, with the communication revolution and the development of trade, research exchanges have intensified and become globalized. Thus, research institutions became aware of how important it is to cooperate with colleagues from all over the world and from different organisations such as universities, research institutes or firms. At the same time, globalization has seen the rise of regions that want to compete at a global level. Proximity has thus acquired particular relevance. European integration has helped this process. In the 1990s, the European Economic Community (EEC) launched the first cooperation program across borders (Interreg), split up into three sections: (A) cross-border cooperation, (B) transnational cooperation (European areas) and (C) interregional cooperation (all over Europe). The first component is related to a territory within one hundred and fifty kilometers of the border. For example, the Upper Rhine Valley with three regions in France, Germany and Switzerland. This program shows the willingness of the European institutions to support the competitiveness of regions in the globalization process, especially cross-border regions.

In this perspective, since the 1980s, the research, development and innovation community and European regions have tried to find common goals. They have explored how to benefit from the geographical potential and how the border can bring either complementarity (e.g. competences) or solutions for common problems (e.g. pollution). Proximity is an advantage even with digital technology. It is easier to go across the border to talk about projects over lunch, than discuss them on the phone or by Skype.

Today, research, development and innovation involve different actors such as universities, companies, research Centres like the German *Fraunhofer Gesellschaft* or the French *Centre National de la Recherche Scientifique*. They have a different relationship to the market and the territory. In research, in which the objective is excellence, cross-border cooperation is one possibility among many for broad international cooperation. For example, even if cross-border cooperation is a resource, it is often not enough to finance high-value equipment or large infrastructure. Development and innovation are closer to the market and more linked to the territory. In those fields, the objective is developing a product and selling it. In this way, the European clustering policy encourages cross-border development and innovation. The Biovalley cluster, located in Strasbourg and specialized in health, fosters cooperation between companies and universities along the Rhine river. In all those projects, research, development and innovation have one thing in common: the difficulty of identifying the right partner across the border with whom intercultural problems might arise. Thus, some structures try to help actors to overcome the intercultural difficulties such as the platform Novartis at the University of Haute Alsace whose aim is to provide training and support in intercultural issues directly linked to cross-border cooperation in research and higher education. Finally, in some cases, interculturality can be a strength. In 2019, the European Grouping of Territorial Cooperation (EGTC) Eucor-European Campus has been awarded its first European Marie Skłodowska-Curie Cofund's project in Quantum Science and Technology (QUSTEC). This is a doctoral training program that offers thirty-nine positions in the universities of the Upper Rhine Region.

Elen Guy

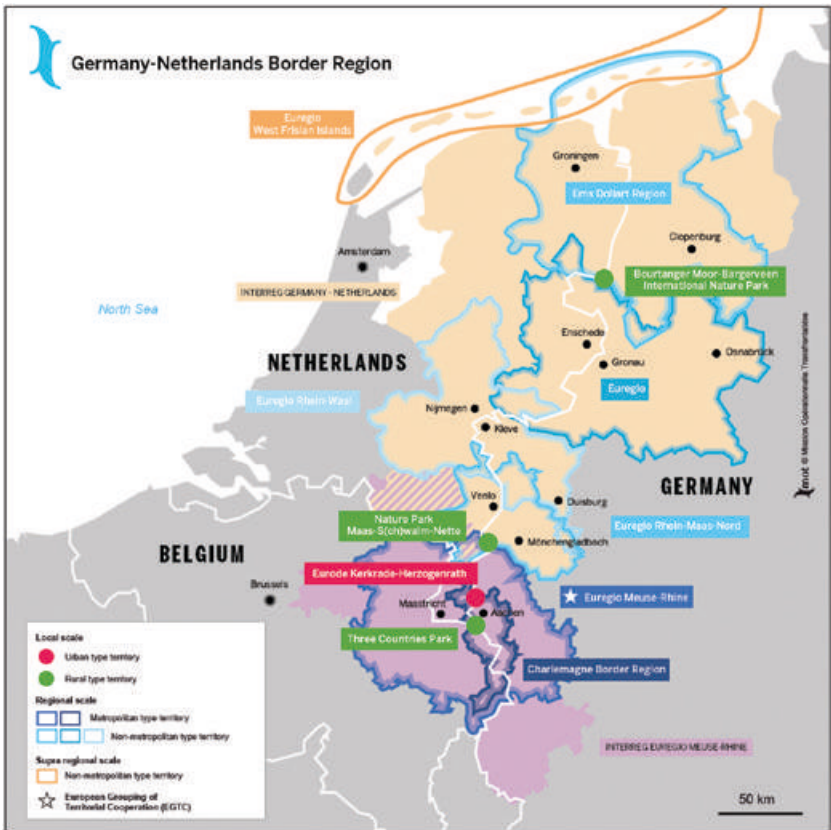
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Rhine-Meuse North Euregion



The Euregion Rhine-Meuse-North is located across the border of the Netherlands and Germany, and consists of the north and central part of the Dutch province of Limburg and part of the German state North Rhine-Westphalia. The border of the north and central part of Limburg and North Rhine-Westphalia is formed by the rivers Meuse and Rhine, which are directly connected with the name of the Euroregion Rhine-Meuse-North. In the north, the Euroregion borders the Euroregion Rhine-Waal with which it partly overlaps in the Kleve district. In the south, it borders the Meuse-Rhine Euroregion.

The border between the Dutch and German part of the Euroregion is roughly 80 km. This border starts in the north between the municipalities

Kevelaer in Germany and Gennep in the Netherlands and follows in a southern direction the official border. The shape of the border mirrors the river Meuse, which is a few km away. It ends in the south, between the Selfkant (German) and Echt-Susteren (Dutch). The Euroregion counts 30 member organisations, on the Dutch side, 13 Dutch municipalities with the Dutch chamber of commerce (until the end of 2018), and on the German side 14 local governments and 2 regional chambers of commerce. It covers an area containing more than 2.4 million inhabitants, 1.4 million jobs and more than 100 000 companies. With a span of about 3 400 km², today, the Euroregion belongs to the most densely populated Euroregions on the German-Dutch border.

The economy is mainly determined by logistics, industrial and agribusiness sectors. Centres of manufacturing, metal production and processing as well as the electro technical industry, are the two sectors with the most employees. Although industry is an economically important factor in the Euroregion, there remains a significant workforce attributed to the private or public sectors. It must be added, that the largest economic activity in the area comes from medium to small businesses.

Historically, this Euroregion geographically overlaps with the former Overkwartier of the old Duchy of Guelders. After long periods under German and Spanish rule, the Netherlands gained independence in 1581. However, many changes have happened to the border since then. The current border demarcation between the Netherlands and Germany was established in 1963.

The boundaries of this area hold an economic and social significance both felt in the past and in the present times. It separates two linguistic, cultural and religious areas of similar origin. Historically, the local dialect was, and still is, understood on both sides of the national border. For some people, crossing borders for work or education purposes is already an inherent part of their lives.

Regional attempts on cross border cooperation and communication have been made throughout the years. Already in 1958, Euregio (Gronau-Enschede) was founded, followed by more Euroregions. The Euroregion Rhine-Meuse-North was established in 1978 as a voluntary work community. In 2004, it transformed into a cross-border public body based on the 1991 treaty of Anholt, following the example of a number of other German-Dutch Euroregions.

At a membership level, this Euroregion includes not only public administration actors, but also three main chambers of commerce

from both sides: the Dutch Chamber of Commerce and the German *Industrie- und Handelskammer Mittlerer Niederrhein* and *Niederrheinische Industrie- und Handelskammer zu Duisburg*. At an organisational level, this Euroregion is comprised of a General Meeting Committee for political decisions on common strategies and an Executive Committee for implementations and project decisions. The General Meeting Committee, that takes place alternative places, is the highest body of the Euroregional *Zweckverband* (union of several local authorities under German law) with 84 voting members from the Dutch and German part of the Euroregion. The mayors of Venlo and Mönchengladbach each hold the presidency for two years. In 2018, there are several thematic committees.

The goals of the Euroregion Rhine-Meuse-North are: to overcome the barriers to living, working, studying and partaking in entrepreneurial activity within the Euroregion and creating the identity of the area as a coherent region; to strengthen the position of the Euroregion Rhine-Meuse-North centrally between the important economic core areas such as the Ruhr area, the area Vlaamse Ruit and North Brabant; and improvements in the priority areas sustainable special planning, economic development and social cohesion.

In order to help citizens and companies with respect to the cross-border labour market and housing, a “GrensInfoPunt” (Boarder Information Point) was established in 2017. At this GrensInfoPunt, cross-border workers (and retirees) and companies can seek personal help from cross-border experts. If necessary, the trained staff provide advice and specialists connections from the social insurance organisations and tax authorities.

The Euroregional partners are working in accordance to a strategy (Vision 2014 – 2020) that is under review. Preparations have already started with respect to the Interreg period post-2020 in order to provide input to the future program Germany-Netherlands.

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Romania



Romania was one of the last central and eastern European countries to join the European Union (EU) in 2007, together with Bulgaria. Romania is part of the Balkans a region of South-East Europe, the image of which is associated with confrontation, fragmentation and a development gap in comparison with western Europe. It has an area of 238 392 km² and is crossed by the Carpathians mountains forming a physical barrier between two lowlands, the Wallachian and the Oltenian Plains and the Dobruja in the south and the south-east, as well as the Banat and the Crisana Plains and the Transylvanian Plateau in the west and the north-west. It shares land borders with Hungary

(448 km), Moldova (450 km), Ukraine (531 km divided in two parts), Serbia (476 km) and Bulgaria (608 km) and has also a maritime border on the Black Sea with Ukraine. Since the occupation of Crimea in 2014, Russia claims for an extension of its maritime territory in the Black Sea which could potentially lead to a new border for Romania. The longest border with Bulgaria is formed by the River Danube on a long part, which only has two bridges and three ferries linking both sides in this section. They are completed by three road border crossings on the land border in the eastern part of the territory.

The history of Romania is closely linked to that of the Russian, Ottoman and Austro-Hungarian Empires. The Romanian United Principalities were established under the protection of France in 1859, in the aftermath of the Crimean War, under the form of a personal union between western Moldavia and Wallachia. In 1867, Transylvania came under the rule of the Austro-Hungarian Empire but, with support from Russia, Romania gained full independence in 1878. It in turn came to the aid of the Bulgarians by waging war alongside Russia against the Turks (1877–1878), which resulted in the liberation of Bulgaria in 1878, at which point its borders with Romania were fixed. Hostilities between Romania and Bulgaria began with the Second Balkan War of 1913. Although Romania had remained neutral during the First Balkan War, it supported Serbia against Bulgaria during the Second Balkan War, and in 1913, Macedonia was split between Serbia and Greece, with Romania obtaining Dobruja. This was the reason why Bulgaria allied itself with the German Empire, Austria-Hungary and the Ottoman Empire during World War I and found itself on the losing side in 1918. Romania, under Ferdinand I, joined forces with the Allies and found itself on the winning side. Under the Wilson 14-point program, Bucovina and Transylvania voted to join Greater Romania and the unification of the country was recognised under the Treaty of *Saint-Germain-en-Laye* in 1919. The new border with Hungary and the border with Serbia were fixed by an international commission and Romania was given Transylvania, the eastern half of Banat and various lands in eastern Hungary in 1919, under the Treaty of Trianon. The result of the shift of the boundary is that 2 million Magyar live on the new national territory. During World War II, Romania was protected by France, but when France fell in 1940, Stalin took the opportunity to occupy Bucovina and Bessarabia while Hitler forced Romania to cede part of Transylvania to Hungary. All in all, Romania lost one-third of its territory. In the aftermath of

World War II, Romania recovered northern Transylvania and the USSR retook eastern Moldavia in 1947, under the Treaty of Paris. The borders therefore changed once again. Romania passed into the Soviet sphere of influence in 1944–1945, with Stalin backing the establishment of a communist regime. It was therefore separated from western Europe throughout the Cold War by the Iron Curtain. Following the opening of the Berlin Wall in December 1989, it was not until 1990, after the Romanian revolution and the fall of the communist regime of Ceausescu, that the country restored democracy and was able to start developing cross-border cooperation with its neighbours at local and regional level. Different minorities live on the national territory, the largest being the Hungarians (more than 1.2 million according to the census of 2011). Officially recognized, this community has its own cultural institutions and representatives on the national Parliament.

Cross-border cooperation was late developing, as the state needed to introduce decentralization reforms in order to give local border public bodies autonomous powers. Moreover, relations with neighbouring countries were complicated and marked by serious mistrust, given the deep scars left from their past history of frequent confrontation and the repeated shifts in border lines. That mistrust has coloured bilateral relations between Romania and Bulgaria and especially between Romania and Hungary. Finally, as a result of war in the Balkans, first between Serbia and Bosnia-Herzegovina (1992–1995) and then in Kosovo (1998–1999), there is a feeling that the borders to the west are unstable. That makes it hard to develop cross-border cooperation communities and structures with Serbia. Thus, cross-border cooperation only started to develop on the borders of Romania in the late 1990s, as the prospect of accession to the EU drew closer.

However, two macro-regional cooperation projects have been established involving Romania. The first was founded in 1993 by Poland, Hungary and Ukraine to jointly manage the shared natural space of the Carpathian Mountains. They were joined by Romania (the counties of Bihor, Botoșani, Harghita, Maramureș, Sălaj, Satu Mare and Suceava) in 1997 and by Slovakia (the regions of Košice and Prešov) in 1999. Secondly, at the end of the first decade of the new millennium, Romania and Bulgaria jointly launched a macro-regional cooperation project with the countries bordering the Black Sea. The Black Sea Euroregion was set up in 2008 and links 12 municipalities and districts, one region (Cahul in Moldova) and one autonomous republic (Adjara in Georgia)

in five countries (Bulgaria, Romania, Armenia, Georgia and Moldova). Macro-regions are supported especially by the Council of Europe, which encouraged the creation of the Carpathian Euroregion and the Black Sea Euroregion in order to consolidate democracy in spaces shared by its member states. The aim for the Black Sea region is also to enable a better management of a maritime basin which is confronted to environmental pressures in a delicate geopolitical context.

The first cross-border cooperation associations were established in the late 1990s. The Danube-Kris-Mures-Tisa (DKMT) Euroregion was established in 1997. This is a trilateral cooperation initiative between Romanian and Hungarian local and regional authorities and the Serbian province of Vojvodina. Another Euroregion on the Danube was established in 1998 as an association under Romanian law: it was known as the Lower Danube Euroregion and linked Romanian, Moldovan and Ukrainian regional actors. Two more trilateral cooperation projects were launched in 2000 on the Romanian borders, one with Moldova and Ukraine (the Upper Prut Euroregion) and one with Hungary and Ukraine (Interregio). In 2002, a further bilateral cooperation project was launched on the border between Romania and Hungary, the Hajdú-Bihar-Bihar Euroregion linking the Bihar County on the Romanian side with the Hajdú-Bihar County on the Hungarian side.

A number of Euroregions were established along the River Danube between 2001 and 2005, mostly involving partners in Romania and Bulgaria. The Lower Danube Euroregion was set up in 2001, followed in 2002 by a trilateral Euroregion in the middle part of the river, near the Irongate, linking Bulgaria, Romania and Serbia: the Danube 21 Euroregion. A very intensive cooperation project was also established between the region of Ruse in Bulgaria and the district of Giurgiu in Romania. The two border towns of Ruse and Giurgiu sit on opposite banks of the Danube. They were linked in 1952 by the first bridge over the Bulgarian-Romanian border, known as the “Friendship Bridge”. They signed a twinning agreement in 1997, which was converted into a Euroregion-type association in 2002. Since 2014, several projects have also been launched to improve transport connectivity, to foster tourism as well as the development of heritage. The Danubius Euroregion covers various aspects of cross-border cooperation, such as economic growth, sustainable development and cultural heritage. In 2002, it created a joint cross-border university, the Bulgarian-Romanian Interuniversity Europe Centre. Only one Euroregion has been established between Romania

and Moldova, the Siret-Prut-Nistru Euroregion, set up as an association under Romanian law in 2005. It links 26 district councils in Moldova, excluding Gagauzia and Transnistria, with three country councils in Romania.

Thus, most cross-border cooperation projects involving Romania are recent initiatives organized in the form of associative or inter-municipal Euroregions. There are also two macro-regional cooperation initiatives based around the Black Sea and the Carpathian Mountains. On the one side, the issue is to increase cross-border cooperation on different levels with the other neighbouring EU members with the aim to reduce misunderstandings resulting from the scars of history and to increase economic development. On the other side, it is clearly hard for Romania to develop cross-border cooperation on the external borders of the EU, even if in the case of Moldavia, the cultural proximity could be an advantage. In all these cases, the cooperation on the Danube, whose Basin is covering a large part of Romania and all of its neighbours, is a crucial issue of the future. However, uncertainty remains on the Black Sea due to the complex geopolitical situation between Russia and Ukraine.

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Schengen Area*

The Schengen International Agreement was signed in 1985 as a laboratory for cooperation in border-management in the context of gradual removal of internal borders between the member states of the European Union (EU).

The removal of internal borders within the EU had to be compensated by common controls at external borders, to guarantee the checks of arrivals from outside the EU and the security of the “Schengen Area,” established by the Schengen Implementing Convention in 1990. The implementation of the Schengen Agreements started in 1995.

This space of free movement gave rise to the Area of Liberty, Security and Justice (Art. 67–89 of the Treaty of the EU (TEU)). The *acquis* developed through the Schengen Agreement and its aftermaths has been reinjected into the Treaty on the Functioning of the EU and therefore incorporated the agreement inside the legal framework of the EU.

The Schengen Area is very specific because it neither corresponds to the geography of the space of freedom, security and justice nor to the territory of the internal market. In 2019, among EU member states, only Bulgaria, Croatia, Cyprus and Romania were not members of this space of free movement. Given its island geography and the high volume of people travelling in and out, or simply transiting through the United Kingdom, this EU member state had obtained – before Brexit – a special status for the Schengen Area. A specific status is also applied to Ireland and Denmark.

A single set of EU rules governs the crossing of EU external borders. The Schengen Area today includes a Borders Code (issued in 2006 and lastly amended in 2017), a graduated common immigration policy (concerning short term visas and a common Asylum Policy), the use of the Schengen Information System (SIS) to enhance security and the creation of an EU Agency coordinating border control surveillance operations (Frontex). The EU is currently developing a more modern border management system through the coordination of the testing of a smart borders pilot project. This project analyses how to use information technologies to trace dangerous persons and differentiate controls at the borders with more secure documents (use of biometric data).

* For the map, see article ‘Regional Groupings: a Europe of variety’.

The Convention implementing the 1990 Schengen Agreement also developed police and justice cross-border cooperation to avoid that free movement within the Schengen Area results in international trafficking and abuses within an opened space of free movement and risk endangering public security of participating states. If we consider police cooperation, the police authorities of the member states cooperate to exchange information and official documents (for example driving licenses) to control cross-border movement of persons. This mutual assistance encompasses preparation of plans and cooperation of search measures or emergency searches. Police and customs cooperation are also organised by EU law to continue surveillance or even a pursuit operation initiated by a member state across the border. Bilateral agreements can be signed to foster police cooperation in border regions. Exchange of information is also programmed to enforce effective controls of EU external borders. National and regional police authorities have access to European databases such as the SIS, sharing information on criminal matters and to coordinate investigation of crimes that no longer respect national borders.

The cooperation is also organised between the 27 member states to guarantee common security beyond the Schengen Area. Member states out of the Schengen space may develop bilateral agreements with a Schengen member state and decide to foster police or customs cross-border cooperation. This cooperation can be encouraged by the European Commission (for example there exists a follow-up mechanism of the Franco-Bulgarian police cooperation). Also, EU Specific agencies have been created to organise cross-border cooperation. Europol is one of the EU agencies which provides operational support between the 27 member states. Europol offers specific common services to enhance cross-border cooperation via exchange of information and common expertise on dangers faced by the member states. Eurojust is another EU Agency which provides for a cooperation framework for joint investigation teams to tackle cross-border crimes. A European framework of national experts included in these teams has been created in 2005. A practical guide also provides advice, guidance and useful information for practitioners. This is a sort of practical handbook of operational cross-border cooperation in the field of security. These common instruments are operated by the EU Agency for the Operational Management of Large-Scale IT Systems in the Area of Freedom, Security and Justice (eu-LISA) to develop cooperation through technology. The idea is to allow competent national authorities

of EU member states to feed these systems and use the data to cooperate with other authorities to control and arrest dangerous persons, trace migrants to know who is on each national territory but also to allow for a free movement of proofs necessary for an effective judicial cooperation.

Cooperation with third countries can be organised in different international agreements. Non-EU member states have also joined the Schengen Area, such as Iceland, Norway, Switzerland and Liechtenstein. Third countries can also be associated to EU agencies for a more efficient cross-border cooperation.

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Secondary Foreign Policy

Secondary foreign policy of local and regional authorities is the term introduced by Martin Klatt and Birte Wassenberg to describe the diplomacy role of cross-border cooperation in Europe and in the world and can be regarded as a theoretical contribution to the discipline of Border Studies. It is a specific type of para-diplomacy which designates the small foreign policy used in a cross-border context by sub-national state actors, with the aim of contributing to European Integration via the normalization of neighbourhood relations between the bordering population and the development of cooperation between private and public stakeholders across the border.

In the scientific literature, the terms para-diplomacy or proto-diplomacy are generally used to describe international activities of state institutions below national level and outside the channels of the Foreign State Offices. There is indeed evidence that, since the 1980s, especially in Europe and North America, local and regional actors have become more engaged in international activities which traditionally have been considered a competence reserved for the Nation State. The term most frequently used in this context is para-diplomacy, which was introduced into the academic debate and developed theoretically by Panayotis Soldatos and Ivo Duchacek in the late 1980s. This indicates a form of parallel diplomacy to the one practiced by the national state, but it also alludes to the fact that the subnational and non-state actors involved have limited capacities and few or no legal powers at all compared to those of national governments. Para-diplomacy has then been more precisely defined with regard to different types and objectives of its international action. Duchacek has indeed identified three categories of para-diplomatic activities of subnational political entities: cross-border regionalism, trans-regional diplomacy and global para-diplomacy. Soldatos then differentiates between supportive para-diplomacy, where local and regional diplomacy is coordinated by or jointly executed with the federal government, and substitutive para-diplomacy, where it exists parallel to central governments' foreign policy and can be either in harmony or in disharmony with the latter. In contrast to para-diplomacy, proto-diplomacy has been applied to designate external action by regions aspiring to become themselves nation states such as the Canadian province of Québec, the British region of Scotland or the Spanish autonomous community Catalonia. These regions seek to engage in International

Relations in order to ultimately replace the national foreign policy by their own independent foreign policy.

Instead, secondary foreign policy designates a local and regional diplomacy which contributes to the national and European policies of social and economic cohesion, including also a dimension of reconciliation in border regions. The term is derived from the German *Nebenaußenpolitik*, a concept used to describe the German *Länder's* initiatives on the diplomatic floor, especially during the time of office of the Bavarian Minister President Franz-Josef Strauss (1978–1988), who was very active in this field. The term reflects the understanding of this para-diplomacy as a new phenomenon which takes place in parallel and in addition to the national foreign policy. However, in the case of the German *Länder*, their international activities were conducted “next to” (*neben*) the foreign policy of the Federal government and not necessarily in line with the latter. In contrast to this, secondary foreign policy suggests that international relations by local and regional authorities in border regions are not situated on the same level as those of the national state: they may be conducted in parallel but are clearly subordinated to the “primary” foreign policy. With regard to para-diplomacy, secondary foreign policy is both wider and more restricted. It is wider as it opens up to include a wide range of subnational actors, political, economic and from the civil society. It is therefore a more encompassing term alluding to policies on multiple levels (local, regional, trans-regional, European) and including multiple actors. But when applied to cross-border cooperation, secondary foreign policy is geographically also more restricted as it serves to assess and evaluate the complexity of international relations in border regions. It is then also very closely linked to the participation of local and regional authorities in the definition and implementation of European policies: it uses the concept of the European Union (EU) as a multi-level governance system of shared sovereignty, where a formalized negotiation process takes place between non-central and central governments in order to achieve the common goal of European integration.

With the acceleration of the European integration process, the distinction between domestic national and European policies has indeed been increasingly blurred and this almost naturally led to an increasing involvement of local and regional authorities in European “Foreign” Affairs. Since the 1980s, more and more regions and cities have opened representation offices in Brussels to influence European policy at EU level. Besides, they have also been participating in multilateral regional

associations such as the Assembly of European Regions (AER), the Conference of Peripheral Maritime Regions (CPRM) or the Association of European Border Regions (AEBR) in order to coordinate their international activities and to form strategic alliances for the defense of their interests in European policy making. In the 1990s, secondary foreign policy was further facilitated by the fact that the EU started to associate local and regional governments to its decision-making process, mainly via the so-called multi-level governance system, which was introduced by the subsidiarity principle in article 3B of the Maastricht Treaty in 1992 and encouraged a share of policy making between the regional, national and the EU-level of governance.

In this context, cross-border cooperation can be regarded as a specific form of secondary foreign policy. When looking at the reality of cross-border cooperation in Europe, it is one of the first fields of intervention by local and regional authorities which has acquired a certain legitimacy in the foreign policy sphere. Thus, since the 1960s, cities and regions have increasingly lobbied in the Council of Europe for the opportunity to engage in cross-border cooperation and this resulted in the adoption of the Council of Europe's Madrid Outline Convention on Transfrontier Co-operation between Territorial Communities and Authorities in 1980, which provided a first legal framework for cross-border cooperation. All 47 member states of the Council of Europe have ratified this convention thus facilitating cross-border cooperation as a form of secondary foreign policy. The EU has also recognized secondary foreign policy in cross-border regions since 1990, it has integrated cross-border cooperation in its European regional policy, especially by means of the Community initiative Interreg which provided for a direct participation of local and regional authorities, allowing them to contribute to the implementation of the Single European Market. The EU also helped to further legitimize secondary foreign policy in cross-border regions by means of a new legal instrument, the so-called European Grouping of Territorial Cooperation (EGTC), adopted in 2006, which enables them to set up joint cross-border governance structures with legal personality.

Secondary foreign policy in border regions can also be practiced as an integrated cross-border diplomacy. This unique form of secondary foreign policy is for example used by Euroregions or other cross-border governance institutions which have been established across virtually all European border regions. These trans-regional groupings vary in structure and size, but usually encompass several local and regional administrative

units spanning across one or more national borders. They can be set up in an informal way, but also via associative, private law structures, or, since 2006, as public law bodies within the new EU law instrument of the EGTC. Cross-border structures practice secondary foreign policy on a day-to-day basis, across national borders. They function as instruments of cross-border governance and can act as policy entrepreneurs co-designing and implementing EU regional policies. Their secondary foreign policy is designed to govern territorially across borders and to meet the necessities of functional integration in the border region. But cross-border secondary foreign policy might also aim at the social construction of a cross-border regional identity and its practices depend on individual, practical motives of local and regional stakeholders, which might, but not necessarily do align with EU-regional policies of integration.

In sum, cross-border cooperation as a form of secondary foreign policy in Europe has been widely recognized and developed since the 1990s, facilitating neighbourhood relations and potentially contributing to European integration. The multiple dimensions of this type of secondary foreign policy go far beyond what has been termed para-diplomacy, including a wide range of non-central government and non-governmental actors interacting in cross-border activities out of different motives and interests. However, in the framework of the EU multi-level governance system, there are also important limits of secondary foreign policy, as its practice in border regions still depends on suitable institutional and legal tools and on the existence of constructive forums of dialogue with central governments, who remain the dominant players in the field of foreign policy.

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Slovakia



Slovakia is an Eastern European state which acceded during the first enlargement of the European Union (EU) to the east in 2004. It has an area of 48 845 km², and shares land borders with Austria (91 km), Poland (444 km), Hungary (677 km) and the Czech Republic (252 km). The border with Ukraine (97 km) is an external border of the EU. The only navigable waterway in Slovakia is the Danube, which is also partly the border with Hungary on 150 km. Slovakia was formed in 1993 as a consequence of the partition of Czechoslovakia, resulting in the creation of two new states, the Czech Republic and Slovakia.

When Great Moravia was invaded by the Hungarians in 907, the Slovaks were placed under Hungarian rule. Slovakia was later absorbed into the Ottoman Empire, which occupied Hungary in 1541. Following the establishment of the Dual Monarchy of Austria-Hungary in 1861, Slovakia remained under Hungarian control. The history of Slovakia became interconnected with that of the Czech Republic after World War I. Czechoslovakia was formed in 1918 under President Wilson's 14-point program, bringing together the Czechs, Slovaks and Ruthenes from the old Austro-Hungarian Empire. The newly independent state also included a large German and Hungarian minority. The borders of Czechoslovakia were defined in succession under the 1919 Peace Treaties, but were contested in the interwar period, especially by Nazi Germany, which annexed the Sudetenland in 1938. The first secession in the country occurred during World War II, when Slovak nationalists formed an independent state supported by Hitler. The country reunified after the war but was included in the Soviet sphere of influence in 1948. It was not until after the Velvet Revolution of 1989 led by Václav Havel that a democratic regime was restored in 1990. However, the new federal Czech and Slovak Republic was dissolved just two years later in 1992. It was decided in a peaceful process to partition the country, resulting in the creation of two states in 1993, the Czech Republic and Slovakia and the emergence of a new national border.

Cross-border cooperation initially developed after the end of the Cold War between Czechoslovakia and its neighbouring countries (1990–1992). In the first phase, Czechoslovakia's objective was similar to that of Poland, namely to use East/West cross-border cooperation at local and regional level to demonstrate that it was willing and able to participate in the process of European integration. As accession to the European Community was not possible immediately for economic reasons, cross-border cooperation was the only way of establishing links with the European Community. The European Commission supported this process by providing funding through Interreg, Poland and Hungary Assistance for Restructuring of the Economy (PHARE) and Technical Assistance to the Commonwealth of Independent States (TACIS)). Numerous cross-border organisations and projects then emerged, but mostly on the Czech-German border, some of which also involved Poland.

Slovakia has only established one bilateral cross-border cooperation with Poland. In 1994, the Tatry Euroregion, was set up in the mountain

area between Poland and Slovenian between 12 Slovak border counties and various local and regional authorities in Poland. For the rest, Euroregions involving Slovakia developed later, from the late 1990s onwards. Those involving Czech partners were mostly created on a trilateral footing and involved municipalities in a third country. Thus, the Pomoraví-Weinviertel-Jižní Morava Euroregion was set up in 1997 on the border between Austria, the Czech Republic and Slovakia. A second trilateral cooperation, the Beskidy Euroregion, was established between Polish, Czech and Slovak local and regional authorities in 2000. Finally, a multilateral Euroregion was also established in 2003 between partners in four countries: Austria, the Czech Republic, Slovakia and Hungary. Due to its geographical location it is called “Centrope”. By contrast, there is only one bilateral Czech-Slovak Euroregion, the White Carpathians Euroregion, which was set up in 2000 and links over 50 partners on either side of the border (municipal and regional associations, towns, universities, chambers of commerce and industry, etc.). This is either due to the fact that the two countries have decided to separate and the border municipalities do not want to embark on structured cooperation at local and regional level, or because they already cooperate adequately and do not feel the need to set their neighbourly relations on a formal footing. Finally, the Czech Republic is also involved in interregional cooperation.

At bilateral level, Slovakia has mainly developed cross-border cooperation with Hungarian partners, probably also due to its important Hungarian minority on its territory. In 1999, two Euroregions were established at local level at the initiative of border municipalities. The Ipel’-Ipoly Euroregion was founded by the Mayor of Balassagyarmat on the Hungarian side, and the Mayor of Šahy on the Slovak side, and by four other municipalities and six civil society organisations in Šahy. This Euroregion covers the middle section of the River Ipoly. This cooperation was followed in 1999 by the Vág-Duna-Ipoly Euroregion slightly further west in the same region. Cooperation between border towns has also been established in that area: one between Komárno-Komárom and one between four twinned towns in the Ister-Granum region (Ister was the ancient Greek name for the River Danube and Granus was the medieval name for the River Horn). The cooperation started in 1999 with the rebuilding of the Mária Valéria Bridge over the Danube, which had been destroyed by the Nazis. It was later consolidated under a bilateral agreement in 2000, became a Euroregion in 2003 and was

finally replaced with a European Grouping of Territorial Cooperation (EGTC) in 2008.

Other Slovak-Hungarian Euroregions followed in the 2000s. The Košice-Miskolc Euroregion and the Sajó-Rima/Slaná-Rimava Euroregion, which was again initiated by two mayors, the Mayor of Putnok on the Hungarian side and the Mayor of Tisovec on the Slovak side, were set up in 2000. The Euroregion is managed by an NGO and involves over 324 Slovak municipalities and 125 Hungarian municipalities. Within that Euroregion, four towns decided to step up their cooperation by creating an EGTC, which was ultimately set up in 2013. In 2001, the Podunajský Trojopolok/Hármas Duna-vidék Euroregion was established between the municipalities of the Hungarian county of Győr-Moson-Sopron and the municipalities in the Slovak regional association of Csallóköz-Mátyusföld. It covers the territory of approximately 298 Hungarian and Slovak municipalities. Lastly, a memorandum of understanding on an interregional development alliance for the region of Zemplin was signed in 2004, which is now called the Zemplin Euroregion. It is very active in organizing cross-border events, such as Euroregion days, the Zemplin exhibition and the Szomszédolás Zirc (“Visit Your Neighbours”) festival, all financed by the Community Interreg program. However, Slovak-Hungarian Euroregions are not always successful. For example, the Eurorégió Neogradiensis, established in 2000 on the basis of a memorandum of understanding between representatives of the Hungarian county of Nógrád and several Slovak districts, has been more or less defunct since 2003.

Slovakia is also involved in interregional cooperation. The Slovak regions of Košice and Prešov decided in 1999 to join the Carpathian Euroregion, which was initially set up in 1993 as a regional association between Hungarian, Polish and Ukrainian local and regional authorities and, from 1997 onwards, with the involvement of Romanian authorities.

Overall, the partitioning of Czechoslovakia did not disrupt the development of cross-border cooperation at local or regional level, which has proceeded without interruption since the early 1990s. The stakes of Slovakia's cross-border cooperation therefore lie mainly with Hungary and Ukraine. First, the existence of important Hungarian minorities in Slovakia place this cooperation into the delicate situation of seeking an equilibrium between establishing good neighbourhood relations and the risk of fueling Hungarian ultra-nationalism. Second, the Ukrainian

external EU border needs an approach of border stabilization and security rather than that of territorial cohesion policy which is usually applied for internal Community borders.

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Slovenia



Before gaining independence in 1990, Slovenia was part of the Federal People's Republic of Yugoslavia which was created in 1918, after the dismantling of the Austro-Hungarian Empire. This federation of states was formed against a background of complex and sporadic emerging tensions and nationalist movements in this part of south-eastern Europe, which had been occupied by the Ottoman Empire and which is generally referred to in western Europe as the "Balkans". From the day it was founded, Yugoslavia was home to peoples who each considered themselves to be different but regarded all as Slavic by western Europeans. After World War II, the republic took the name of the Federal People's

Republic of Yugoslavia and adopted a communist regime. It comprised six federated states, namely Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, Macedonia, Montenegro, Serbia and Slovenia. In 1948, Marshal Tito, the Prime Minister, broke off relations with the Soviet Union. Yugoslavia did not therefore join the Warsaw Pact in 1955 and helped found the so-called Non-Aligned Movement. A change to the constitution in 1963 increased the autonomy of the six republics in the federation. Each republic was based on a majority nation, but in reality, the population was far from homogenous in each republic. New changes were made in 1974, when the republics were given the right of secession. The upheavals in Europe in 1989 also impacted on the Yugoslav republics. Croatia and Slovenia held free elections, leading to a change of government, and sought to renegotiate the federal pact. They jointly declared their independence in June 1991. Federal troops (mainly Serbs) invaded the two republics, but Slovenia, which had few Yugoslavs of other ethnicities, managed to oust them, marking the end of the war, while in Croatia the war only ended four years later, in December 1995, with the Dayton Agreement. The borders between Slovene and Croat territories were based on the dividing lines that were already in place in pre-1991 Yugoslavia. The war had emphasised the differences between the two states, which had previously enjoyed close relations while they were still part of the same federation. If anything, the accession of Slovenia to the European Union (EU) in 2004 and then to the Schengen Area in 2007 consolidated the border between the two countries. It was hoped that Croatia's accession in 2013 would facilitate rapprochement and the development of cross-border interactions. However, Slovenia opposed the accession of Croatia for several years on the grounds of an outstanding dispute over their maritime border in the Adriatic Sea and the long land border (668 km), which follows a fairly complex route. Following mediation by Sweden, the two states finally agreed that a commission should be set up to define the border. This agreement has been reviewed by the Permanent Court of Arbitration in The Hague, which approved the expansion of the maritime territory of Slovenia in the Piran bay and a direct access to the international waters in the Adriatic Sea whilst providing in exchange a small part of land territory to Croatia. Croatia still contested the decision and Slovenia questioned the European Commission which decided not to get involved. Slovenia then brought an action before the Court of Justice of the European Communities (CJEU) in 2018. In January 2020, the CJEU said it has no jurisdiction to rule on this dispute and that both

countries have to solve this problem themselves. The conflict is currently not resolved and this could hinder the cross-border cooperation between the two countries.

With a population of over 2 million, Slovenia is among the least populated EU member states. It is a very compact state which only has a narrow seaboard. All of Slovenia's borders became internal EU borders after the accession of Croatia. Slovenia borders Italy (199 km), Austria (330 km), Hungary (102 km) and of course Croatia.

Slovenia is involved in five transnational EU programs for the period 2014–2020 (the Danube Area and Central Europe) and in three macro-regional strategies (the Adriatic and Ionian macro-region, the Danube macro-region and the Alpine macro-region). Slovenia also belongs to the Carinthia-Slovenia working community and to the Alpe-Adria working community. The territories at the Slovenian-Croatian border, which used to be included in the Instrument for Pre-accession Assistance (IPA), are now involved in Interreg V cross-border cooperation programs.

The first cross-border cooperation began in the 1970 with Italy between the border cities of Gorizia and Nova Gorica, which was a planned city built when a new border had been established between Italy and Yugoslavia after World War II. The two towns have been engaged in cooperation projects since 2001, covering higher education, urban planning, management of the water courses separating the two towns and transport. A European Grouping of Territorial Cooperation (EGTC) was established in 2011 in order to further strengthen cooperation between the two towns and another Slovenian municipality bordering Nova Gorica. More recently, new projects were launched in healthcare and mobility. A strategic plan was implemented with the aim to reinforce the attractiveness of the urban area and to increase mobility and to share the healthcare resources. Nova Gorica is also candidate to host the European capital of culture in 2025 presenting a common program together with Gorizia. The other cross-border cooperation bodies are mostly bilateral and established at local level with Italy (Julian Alps Transboundary Ecoregion) and at regional level with Austria (the Styria-North Slovenia Euregio), mainly linking associations of local and regional authorities. First, the Julian Alps Transboundary Ecoregion was set up between Italy and Slovenia, which was given a "EuroParc" label in 2007, certifying active cooperation between two nature parks separated by a border. This cooperation had started in 1996 by the Triglav National Park in Slovenia and the Julian Prealps Nature Park in Italy. Second, the Styria-Northeast

Slovenia Euregio was then established with Austria in 2001 linking associations of local and regional authorities on either side of the border. Last, a trilateral cooperation arrangement was launched in 2000 with Croatia and Slovenia (the Dráva-Mura Euroregion).

Surprisingly, cross-border cooperation between Slovenia and Italy has already been developed before the fall of the Iron Curtain. Slovenia is currently involved in several cooperation projects on transnational scale and in many macro-regional strategies and all in all, this comes close to a record for this small country. The challenge here is to strengthen the cooperation with Croatia, with whom it shares the longest border. Hence, the resolving of the border dispute between both countries is of utmost importance.

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Sønderjylland-Schleswig



Today's land border between Denmark and Germany divides the former duchy of Schleswig or Southern Jutland (*Sønderjylland*). When drawn in 1920, it divided a socially and economically integrated region on the issue of nationality. The region had been a border zone between German and Danish cultural influences since the Middle Ages. It belonged to the Danish conglomerate state until the Danish-German war of 1864. In 1920, a plebiscite was conducted to determine its national future, resulting in today's border. While contested in the interwar years, it is now generally acknowledged as the most just border between Denmark and Germany. Historic national and cultural diversity is preserved by national minorities with cultural autonomy.

Border policies in the interwar years, as well as the three decades following the Second World War, remained focused on economic and social integration of the border region into the respective states. This only changed incrementally, when Denmark joined the European Community (EC) in 1973. Danish companies started to open German subsidiaries in the immediate border region. Logistics became important, as Danish trade with Germany and the EC increased. The German side of the border region remained rather isolated, though, with an economic fabric heavily dependent on the West German armed forces stationed in the area. Border shopping was the exception, as local grocery stores took advantage of cost differentials based on the different taxation and price level of food in both countries. Border shopping has remained an important economic factor in the German part of the border region until today.

Political German advances to establish a Euroregion were rejected during the first two decades of Danish EC membership. Cooperation intensity increased with the introduction of Interreg in the 1990s. Especially the Danish county of Southern Jutland used cross-border agreements to counter challenges in the health system: cross-border ambulance services were agreed upon, later a cross-border helicopter and an agreement on cancer treatment for Danish patients with a hospital in German Flensburg.

A Euroregion was established in 1997. Further political networks evolved with a partnership agreement between Danish Southern Jutland County and German *Land* Schleswig-Holstein (2001), and the municipal “Border Triangle” between German Flensburg and Danish Aabenraa and Sønderborg (2008). Functional cooperation has been institutionalised in a Danish-German Transport Commission focusing on the coordination of infrastructure development.

While all stakeholders maintain there is a good dialogue in the many cross-border networks, it only has resulted in very few agreements of institutionalised cooperation. Many of these are the result of bottlenecks in Denmark: Southern Jutland County outsourced services to Germany in the 1990s, and bottlenecks on the Danish labour market in the 2000s resulted in a surge of south-north commuting. Presently, bottlenecks in vocational training have resulted in efforts to align curriculums and ease border crossing within vocational training programs. Shopping dominates in daily border crossing practices, but commuting from Germany to Denmark has increased since the 2000s. Still, deeper integration into a

reciprocal cross-border labour market or a cross-border political action space has not yet been achieved. Networking has extended the historic territorial framework of the Duchy of Schleswig into a more functional approach reflecting the economic relations of the Jutland corridor stretching from Denmark's Industrial Belt in Jutland to the Hamburg metropolitan area.

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Spain



Spain, which lies in the south-western corner of Europe, joined the European Economic Community (EEC) in 1986, at the same time as Portugal. Spain, which is the largest European Union (EU) member state after France (504 000 km²), has 46.7 million inhabitants. The current configuration of the country dates back to the end of the 15th century, when Castile and Aragon merged, marking the end of the *Reconquista* or reconquest of the Moorish kingdoms. Spain was a centralized state which built a colonial Empire and acquired several possessions in Europe, but was itself considered as composed of various nations. The civil war (1936–1939) ended with the victory of General Franco, who

established a dictatorship which ended on his death in 1975. The new regime signalled both the end of a period of relative autarchy and a strong desire to catch up politically, economically and psychologically. It marked its transition to a democratic system, enabling it to apply for EEC membership. European integration can be said to have kickstarted territorial cooperation, as the nationalist tendencies of its previous regime found expression in a defensive perception of its borders, where few investment was made. Spain has two enclaves in Morocco (Ceuta and Melilla) and one outermost region (the Canary Islands) in the Atlantic Ocean west of Morocco. The town of Gibraltar, located beside the strait of the same name, has been a British overseas territory since the Treaty of Utrecht was signed in 1713 and is still an object of tensions with the UK which become more intense with the Brexit after 2016.

The land border between Spain and Portugal is one of the oldest in Europe in that it has not changed significantly since the 12th century. It was recognized in 1668 under the Treaty of Lisbon, in which Spain recognized Portugal's independence. The French-Spanish border – also a land border – was established with the signing of the Treaty of the Pyrenees in 1659. The political border does not coincide with the language border confirming that the Pyrenees are not a natural border: Basque and Catalan are spoken on both sides of the Pyrenees, although less so in France than in Spain. Exchanges across the French-Spanish border are much more important than across the border between Portugal and Spain, but they are concentrated on the coastal roads from Madrid to Paris along the Atlantic seaboard and from Barcelona to Lyon and Marseille on the Mediterranean seaboard, bypassing the Pyrenees.

The border regions have been incorporated into cross-border programs between Spain and Portugal and between Spain, France and Andorra. Numerous cross-border cooperation bodies have been set up since Spain joined the EEC, on the French-Spanish border and on the Spanish-Portuguese border. However, there was a slight time lag between the two borders.

The first cooperation structure set up on the French-Spanish border was the Pyrenees Working Community (CTP) initiated by the Council of Europe in 1983. It links four Spanish autonomous communities, three French regions (two since the merging of regions since 2015) and the Principality of Andorra. Its aim is to boost development in the Pyrenees mountains and foothills, while conserving both resources and heritage. The CTP also promotes cross-border cooperation, with initiatives at local

level. Cooperation was established in 1988 between the Pyrenees National Park and the Ordesa y Monte Perdido National Park. It was set out in an action strategy in the form of a charter. Again at local level, a cross-border cooperation agreement gave rise in 1993 to the Basque Eurocity of Bayonne-San Sebastián, the partners being Gipuskoa (Nomenclature of Territorial Units for Statistics (NUTS) 3) and the French district Pays Basque including the agglomeration of Bayonne-Anglet-Biarritz. That cooperation was established within a large urban area of around 600 000 inhabitants stretching more or less the length of the Atlantic seaboard on either side of the French-Spanish border. The partners set up a cross-border observatory with the status of an European Economic Interest Group (EEIG) in 1997, which, in 2000, was named the Cross-Border Agency for the Development of the Basque Eurocity. A white paper was published proposing a plan of action to strengthen the integration of this cross-border urban space. The aim was to organize a multi-centre urban space. Enhanced cooperation was established in that space in 1998 between two Spanish municipalities (Irun and Hondarribia) and the adjoining French municipality of Hendaye. The Bidasoa-Txingudi cross-border Consortium set up at that time was also converted to an EEIG. At the other end of the Pyrenees, the Pyrénées-Cerdagne community was set up as a cooperation project between inter-municipal cooperation bodies within the Catalan Cross-border Area Eurodistrict in 1998. It was converted to a European Grouping of Territorial Cooperation (EGTC) in 2011.

Two cross-border territories have been established on the French-Spanish border, namely the Catalan Cross-border Area Eurodistrict in 2008 and the Pourtalet Area in 2011, for the latter with EGTC status. The first links the department of Pyrénées-Orientales and the province of Girona in a body aiming to draw up a joint land-planning policy and strengthen cross-border ties between these two culturally and linguistically similar territories. The second links the autonomous community of Aragon and the department of Pyrénées-Atlantiques for the purpose of pooling services, creating a joint resource centre and developing cultural projects. A highly original project has been developed within the Catalan area, with the construction of a cross-border hospital in which resources are pooled, within the framework of the Interreg IIIA program. This public facility, which opened in September 2014, was set up in 2010 as an EGTC between the French state and the Catalonia Health Council and was the first project to pool health services between two European countries. It is located in Puigcerdà in Catalonia and admits patients from both countries without distinction. This cross-border hospital, unique

in its kind, is as well a symbol as a laboratory of cross-border cooperation: the caregivers and the patients have to find daily together the way to communicate and to resolve the problems provided by the differences between the two national health systems. Finally, two Euroregions have a supra-regional dimension. The Nouvelle Aquitaine-Euskadi-Navarre Euroregion covers the western part of the border in the Pyrenees, while the Pyrenees-Mediterranean Euroregion lies in the eastern part, including Balearic Islands. Spain is also engaged in 3 Interreg V-B transnational programs, Atlantic Area, Sudoe (Southwestern Europe) and Mediterranean Area (MEDA). Last, the country is also involved in the European Neighbourhood Instrument (ENI) with the Mid Atlantic Sea Basin program which involves Andalusia and the outermost region of Canaries, three regions of Portugal, Gibraltar and several administrative units of Morocco.

All in all, cooperation at the Spanish borders appears to have started somewhat belatedly, in the 1990s. The creation of cross-border organizations appears to have picked up in the new millennium. Many now have EGTC status, which is a sign of the will to integrate. Spanish local and regional authorities appear to be highly involved in cross-border cooperation at both local and regional level.

Despite the intensity of cross-border cooperation, Spain is facing several challenges on its borders. First, Spain is sharing a border with Morocco which is also an external border of the EU: the migration pressure underlines the wealth gap between Europe and Africa. Otherwise, the enclaves of Ceuta and Melilla are still matter of political tensions with the Cherifian Empire due to their location on “African” land. The partnership between the EU and Morocco could be an answer to this issue. Second, the case of Gibraltar depends mainly on the way the UK government manages the Brexit. Third, the claim for the independence of Catalonia is creating new types of borders inside the territory of Spain, between Catalonia and the other part of Spain, but also inside the society between the partisan of independence and those of maintaining the integrity of the Spain territory.

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Spatial Planning

About town and country planning, as then introduced in the United Kingdom, the so-called Schuster Report (1950) said the obvious: For nearly all its activities the community depends on a limited supply of land, and the location of development can have profound effects on social and economic issues. For allocating their land, taking account of existing and future uses, the Town and Country Act 1947 has charged authorities with making so-called development plans.

Schuster invoked a classic argument, the limited supply of land. So, in the interest of the whole community and of the well-being, now and in the future, of its members, planning must ration its allocation per use or function. The rights of land-owners come second. See here the basics of spatial planning.

The authorities concerned exercise their powers strictly within their areas of responsibility. However, they cannot avoid their neighbours' actions from adversely affecting the allocation of land to its optimal uses; nor do authorities need to be concerned about doing the same to their neighbours. Unless there is a mutual understanding – or perhaps a legal requirement – to take account of external effects, spatial planning in fact deals with what are virtual islands. The representation of spatial plans often suggests precisely this: plans being made for islands floating in empty spaces.

The outcome is far from optimal. An optimal allocation of land uses would require considering wider areas for which no single authority is responsible. The same is true for the location of so-called Not-in-my-back-yard (NIMBY) uses. To find locations where the nuisance can be minimized would require taking an overall view. In reality such facilities are located where the nuisance is experienced by neighbours rather than by the community whom they serve.

In sum, public spatial planning being bounded by the areas of responsibility of the responsible authorities has two effects: It makes the scarcity of land worse. After all, if there were no fixed boundaries for the areas of search, one could look elsewhere. And, by only attending to spatial interactions within the area concerned – in other words, by only taking account of external effects for which the planning authority is accountable to its constituency, the boundedness of the plan area distorts locational choice. Which is why there are sometimes provisions

enabling or mandating planning on a larger scale, maybe even that of the entire state.

This is not where the story ends. As the European Spatial Development Perspective states in 1999, "...internal borders are increasingly losing their separating character and more intensive relationships and inter-dependencies are emerging... This implies that effects of regional, national or Community projects in one country can have a considerable impact on the spatial structure of other member states." This hardly suggests a vast masterplan for the European Union (EU). What it does suggest, is that spatial planning needs to look beyond supposedly self-contained territories and to deal with multiple layers of cross-border spatial relations instead.

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Sports

The various dimensions of sport give it properties within the fields of politics, economics and culture, or in the voluntary sector. From the practice of recreational activities (in clubs, private facilities or in public or natural areas) to sporting competitions, from amateur to professional structures, sport is a medium for entertainment as well as a pretext for health or integration policies.

The analysis of a European border-crossing context, more specifically in the context of territories with hard borders, shows that sport is present in state policies designed to foster bilateral cooperation. The organisation of cross-border sports events – whether by policy officials or intermediate players – can be used as a means of promoting cooperation or a guarantee of success. The language barrier, often cited as a major difficulty in peoples' interactions and cross-cultural exchanges, could be easier to overcome by resorting to “body language” and by the common reference to international sports rules.

A brief overview of the policies pursued by cross-border cooperation at the example of the Upper Rhine Region shows that sport is not as prevalent in comparison to other exchanges. Economic issues are a core element of cooperation, even if this includes touristic and cultural actions, reinforcing territorial attractiveness. Cross-border sport – when organised and broadcast – serves political interests, which exceed sporting or cultural dimensions.

In the particular case of the Strasbourg-Ortenau Eurodistrict – the sports policy of which we analyzed over the course of eight years (2010 to 2018) – we noticed that cross-border sport exchanges exist beyond the involvement of the EGTC. The reasons are historical (Alsace was a German territory during the period when most sports clubs were created) and cultural (the Alsatian dialect is almost identical to the dialect spoken by German inhabitants of the Rhine plain area). Among the other important reasons for such exchanges are economics, as there are many cross-border workers as well as strategies developed to reinforce the consumption of goods and services – including sport – or the cheaper property rates in “the country across the border”. The explicit objectives – to promote cultural exchanges between peoples – are not met, especially since competitive sporting events (the most common) rather strengthen national identities and community attachment. The only exception is the Football Club Eurodistrict, which, for 13 years, has

been trying to promote the idea of a new cross-border territory based on a team composed of players from both nationalities.

As for the Interreg Upper Rhine program, initiated by the European Union (EU), which supports cross-border cooperation via the European Regional and Development Fund (ERDF), sport is not only absent from the priorities, but so is funding (less than 0.5 % of total funding goes to sport projects), unless one considers a broader definition of sport as the funding is slightly larger for the development of bike paths, especially for cross-border roads.

Michel Koebel

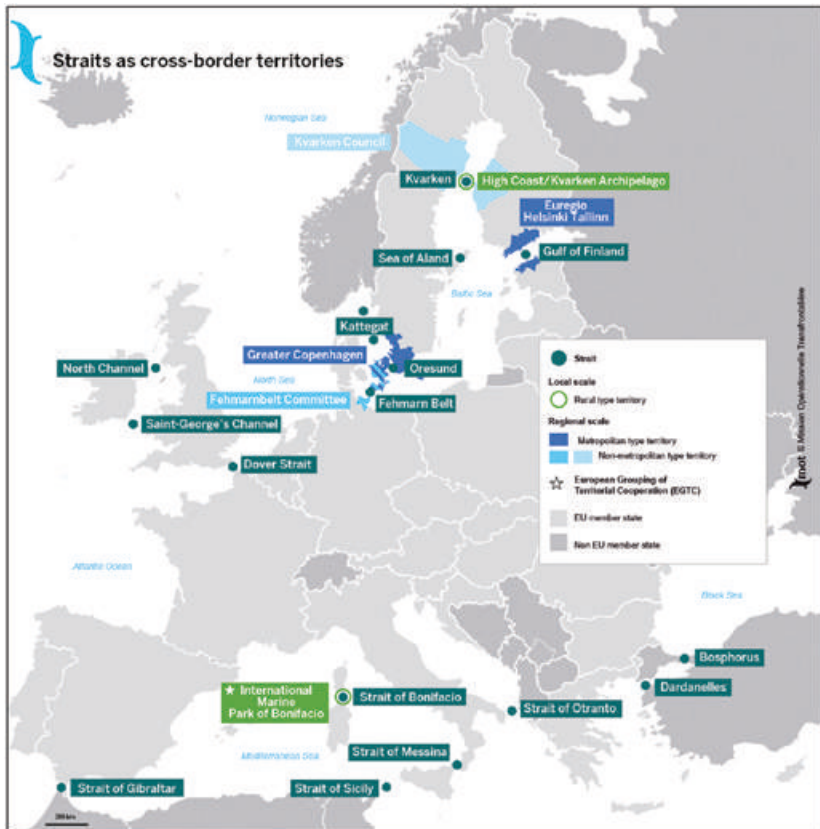
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Straits as Cross-Border Territories



The European Straits Initiative (ESI), launched in 2010 by Pas-de-Calais County Council and Kent County Council, brings together local government areas bordered by straits. Its aim is to emphasize the particularities of these territories and their role in territorial cohesion and in the European Union's integrated maritime policy. The term 'straits' designates a narrow maritime passage between two land masses that links two seas. Straits provide both a division and a contact zone in both directions. They are unique and complex zones of land-to-sea interface. In order to comprehend them, longitudinal flow, latitudinal flow as well as the sea-zone itself must be taken into account.

Straits are almost always considered first as narrow maritime passages concentrating longitudinal flow. They offer more direct links and reduce transport durations by allowing long detours around continents and capes to be avoided. The Strait of Gibraltar, which has become strategic since the opening of the Suez Canal in 1869, has encouraged exchanges between the Indian Ocean and the Atlantic Ocean by avoiding the long route through the Cape of Good Hope. Truly 'gateways to the ocean' and sometimes mandatory transit points, straits concentrate ever-increasing global flows. Due to the globalization of transactions and resultant increase in worldwide sea traffic, straits are a key issue in world trade. Straits are major axes for the convergence of energy flows and for transoceanic merchandise shipping lines. Located at the juncture of the main maritime routes, the straits of Gibraltar and of Dover play a key role in the growth of the North Sea ports (Antwerp, Rotterdam and Hamburg) and the Mediterranean Sea ports (Algeiras and Tanger-Med). As for the Fehmarn Belt and Oresund straits, they are one of the main transit points for maritime transport between Northern Europe and Scandinavia. However, these intense corridors for maritime traffic can be also chokepoint due to shipping difficulties in these sea-zones which are constricted and shallower than the high sea. Finally, the fact they are so close to shores gives straits a specific strategic dimension because it can be controlled. This geopolitical role explains why there is a 6th American float in the Mediterranean Sea and why the Gibraltar rock is occupied by the British since 1704. However, according to the Montego Bay Convention of 1982, all the great powers agreed that bordering nations are required to respect the rights of passage of the ships through the international straits in order to preserve the freedom of sea.

A strait is also a transversal transit point linking two coasts, two countries or two continents. It offers crossing possibilities which are a lot easier than anywhere else, given that coasts are exceptionally close. From a land point of view, it is the transit point where maritime crossing is the shortest. A 'bridge effect' is apparent due to the concentration of all the transversal land flows of people and goods. It is therefore a transit point and when a fixed link (such as a bridge or tunnel) is set up between these two coasts, and that the missing land link is not missing any longer, the strait can be considered as a junction at the crossing of sea and land transport networks. Within Europe, straits are becoming one of the links for long distance transport. The Channel Tunnel, inaugurated in 1994, has indirectly linked the British road network and fast trains

to the French and European ones. Building fixed links in 2000 in the Oresund region has resulted in a new metropolitan dynamic evolving around the Copenhagen and Malmö urban pole and the emergence of a multimodal crossroads at the junction between Scandinavia, continental Northern Europe and the Baltic states in the east. By contrast, border states' choices, such as the Brexit chosen by Great Britain in June 2013 or Sweden and Denmark's choice on the return of border controls in 2016, are a direct influence for the trans-European transport network's regional integration process.

There are many straits that serve as borders, for they represent *a priori* a natural limit in a way that is similar to rivers or mountain chains. With coasts getting closer, discontinued lines emerging and the presence of the border effect, straits are therefore privileged transit points for illegal flows and high-pressure migrant zones. Due to the implementation of the Schengen Agreement in 1995 and the European Border and Coast Guard Agency (Frontex) in 2000, the straits of Gibraltar and Sicily have become highly controlled zones, where human flows are limited and where transnational mafia-like networks proliferate and are responsible for many migrant deaths. At the very heart of border regions, 'internal straits', which link European countries together, are supported as much by local authorities as by the European Union in the context of the Interreg 4C programme called Network Of STRAits (NOSTRA) until 2014 and then the ESI: the western Kent-Pas-de-Calais-West Flanders area around the Dover strait or the dynamic and integrated cross-border region between the Swedish and Finnish shores on both sides of the Kvarken strait.

However, a strait's maritime border is different than a terrestrial border because it can't be limited to a line. It is quite thick but also quite deep and the sea is not empty. Despite rivalries or political conflicts, border states are sometimes obliged to work together in order to protect this fragile sea-zone from the risks of pollution, overfishing, or destruction of its ecosystems. The fact that straits are close to shores makes a one-sided management of maritime resources impossible, and joint management of environmental issues are common despite the border. For the Channel strait, the border states have set-up traffic separation systems based on traffic corridors going up and down as well as navigation aids in risky areas. As for the Sicily strait, linking Sicily to Tunisia, a joint maritime authority is responsible for the safety and monitoring of maritime traffic. The protection of the biodiversity and the promotion of the straits'

natural heritage are also at the heart of the ESI's programs, supporting the creation of an International Marine Park, such as the Strait of Bonifacio in 2012, strait classification projects (Sulphur Emission Control Area) as in the Fehmarn strait between the German and Danish shores or the PASSAGE project, which aims at reducing the straits' ecological footprint. The strait, its two shores and its maritime area, can then be considered as a true cross-border territory.

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Subsidiarity

Subsidiarity, from Latin (“*subsidium*” for “aid” or “support”) at its most general level denotes the principle of governing the relationships between different levels of action or authority. It stresses that the lower levels (which can even be perceived as an individual) should have the autonomy to govern their own affairs and that the higher levels should only intervene if necessary as a means of support. The principle originates from the 16th century post-reformation debates on ecclesiastical organisation and was formulated in opposition to the centralism of Roman catholic hierarchies. It was later included in catholic social theory upon trying to reconcile the need of addressing collective social problems with the independence of (self-) organizing units within the framework of emerging welfare states.

As a political notion, subsidiarity in multi-level or federal structures is of principle use when balancing the needs for unity at a higher level with the normative and practical requirements for autonomy of – and diversity between – the parts at a lower level. The essence of the principle is that the higher levels only have – and exercise – the powers which are necessary for the lowest levels to fulfil their organisational functions. It has been argued that subsidiarity has thus been an implicit element of European integration from its origins. This is demonstrated in Art. 5 (paragraphs 1 & 2) of the European Community of Coal and Steel Treaty (ECSC) (1951) which states that the Community “fulfils its tasks ... through limited interventions”. In the course of European integration, the short-hand understanding of this principle has become that every political decision should be taken “as closely as possible to the citizens.”

Concretely, the European Communities (EC) (and subsequently the European Union (EU)) can only exercise competencies conferred on them by the member states under the treaties. As such, the principle of subsidiarity was implicit in the 1957 Treaty of Rome, but interpretations of which precise “interventions” of the higher level (i.e. the Community level) were necessary and therefore authorized began to diverge more often between the EC institutions and the member states as European integration progressed.

The 1987 Single European Act which introduced a new competence on environmental protection made the first explicit reference in Art 130r (4) to the condition that “the Community shall take action relating to the environment to the extent to which the objectives referred to in

paragraph 1 [i.e. protection of the environment] can be attained better at Community level than at the level of the individual member state”.

This formula highlights that the principle of subsidiarity can be usefully applied only to areas of competence which are shared between the EU and the member states, since areas of exclusive Union competence have by definition been allocated to the highest level. Subsidiarity was then anchored formally in EU law in 1992, by a reference in the preamble to the Treaty on European Union (TEU), by including a specific article re-confirming the principle of “conferral” of competencies and by stating that, in areas of non-exclusive competencies the Community acts “...only if and insofar as the objectives of the proposed action cannot be sufficiently achieved by the member states and therefore, by reason of the scale or effects of the proposed action be better achieved by the Community” (Art 3b of the EU Treaty). To ensure the practical application of the principle, the Treaty of Amsterdam (1996) added a specific protocol on subsidiarity. These Treaty changes were meant as reassurances for those who feared a growing centralization of the EU and an increasing encroachment by the EU institutions (notably the European Commission) on the competencies of (mainly) national legislatures. Yet many observers both from the legal and from the political perspective formulated doubts from the beginning as to whether and how the principle could be actually enforced legally and politically. This debate has ebbed and flowed ever since, and various criteria and mechanisms were created to ensure that legislative action of the EU in areas of shared competence respects the principle of subsidiarity and the associated principle of proportionality, but without really settling the issue.

At each Treaty reform, subsidiarity and its role in ensuring good governance and ultimately the legitimacy and acceptance of European integration by the citizens, has been discussed. The relevant protocol was substantially altered by the Lisbon Treaty (now Protocol No 2). The protocol introduced by Amsterdam had contained “guidelines” on how to assess compliance of proposed legislation with the principle, based on criteria developed in case law of the European Court of Justice. To stand the test, a proposal had to show that: the issue at stake had a clear transnational dimension, a lack of EU action would negatively affect the attainment of aims of the EU Treaties and EU action could provide clear added value compared to member state intervention (Art 5). Interestingly, these criteria were removed from the subsidiarity protocol at Lisbon, which focused instead much more on procedural

questions of controlling *ex ante* the compliance with the subsidiarity principle: the protocol specifies that respecting subsidiarity requires “as wide as possible” public consultation prior to the Commission proposing legislation; explanations being provided as to why legislation is necessary at EU level; as well as assessments of the legislation’s financial impact, the expected administrative burdens it may create and qualitative and quantitative indicators for its possible impact on private and public actors at different levels. Significantly, the Lisbon protocol then gives a key role to national Parliaments in controlling that these requirements are being met by empowering them to raise objections to a proposal within an eight-week deadline. If a sufficient number of national Parliaments express such concerns, the European Commission has to strengthen its argumentative case on why it believes that a proposed action is necessary.

Importantly, the Lisbon Treaty changes also underline that subsidiarity does not just refer to the distribution of competencies between the EU and the member states, but that subsidiarity should apply to all levels of governance (vertically): Art 5 TEU now specifies that the test whether action should be undertaken by the EU must include an assessment whether the objectives “...cannot be sufficiently achieved by the member states, either at central or at local level”. In the same spirit, the revised protocol on subsidiarity also gives a right to take action on the grounds of a presumed infringement of the principle to the Committee of the Regions (Art 8.2 of Protocol No 2). On this basis, the Committee of Regions has developed its own methodology to monitor the application of the subsidiarity principle in close cooperation with regional parliaments, national parliaments, regional associations and practitioners from the local and regional level.

Despite these institutional developments, however, doubts remain as to the “enforceability” of subsidiarity due to widely diverging interpretations of what it means exactly. Discussions on the compatibility of concrete legislative proposals with the subsidiarity principle have frequently focused on their political acceptability rather than on the legal context, and very often the distinction between the (at least formally justiciable) principle of subsidiarity and the even less concrete principle of proportionality has been blurred. National parliaments have also found it difficult, so far, to exercise their control function, partly because of the tight deadline of eight weeks (according to the Protocol) which poses a number of administrative difficulties given the linguistic diversity in the EU and the different functioning of national parliamentary structures,

but also because of political disagreements on what the European level should or should not do. The European Court of Justice was initially reluctant to engage subsidiarity as a legal principle, but has recently addressed it in a number of cases, often concerning Art. 114 of the Treaty of Function of the European Union (TFEU) on the functioning of the internal market. Judgments such as case C-58/08 (“Vodafone”) in 2010 and C-547/14 (“Philip Morris”) in 2016 do confirm that subsidiarity is indeed justiciable in certain cases.

In late 2017, the Commission president relaunched a debate on subsidiarity by creating a task-force composed of three representatives each of the European Parliament, the national parliaments and the Committee of Regions, to make proposals on how to improve the implementation of the subsidiarity principle in the context of the wider discussions on the future of Europe. The task force, in which the European Parliament did finally not participate, presented its proposals in 2018, agreeing on the need to develop a more widely shared understanding of subsidiarity, a more “active” approach involving all levels in implementing it and a common set of criteria to measure it. Despite such efforts by the different institutions to prove the need for, and added value of, joint EU level action, in concrete cases this will probably continue to be contested if and when EU legislation affects established practices or vested interests at different levels. The central function of subsidiarity therefore has to remain as a dynamic principle which ensures that any legislative action, at whatever level, is supported by the best possible assessments of its potential impact as well as by sound arguments as to its necessity and appropriateness.

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Sweden



The Swedish state was a long time in the making and its territory has changed over the centuries. Sweden has played a large role in establishing the European territorial order: between 1611 and 1718 it was a major European power whose territories extended to the southern and eastern shores of the Baltic Sea. It has since become a distinctly modern state with an efficient administration. With more than 10 million inhabitants, Sweden has a much larger population than the other Scandinavian countries, but with just 20 inhabitants per km², it still has one of the lowest population densities in Europe. Moreover, the population and the towns are concentrated in the south of the country and along the coast.

Sweden is a neutral state and has not been involved in wars since the early 19th century.

Its frontiers with Norway and Finland have remained more or less the same since the 15th century. Demarcation was virtually complete by the start of the 19th century. The long border with Norway (1630 km) more or less follows the watershed line to the west. To the north, the border with Finland (614 km) crosses a vast forest area that is home to the Sami, an indigenous people who can be found in all the adjoining countries (Norway, Finland and Russia). The border zones are very sparsely populated and the population is declining. The Gulf of Bothnia basically serves as the border between Sweden and Finland. Finally, the Baltic Sea divides Sweden from the Baltic states and Poland. Today there are sea links with these countries, which were previously behind the Iron Curtain. All these borders are now internal European Union (EU) borders, with the exception of the border with Norway, which is member of the Schengen Area. However, this border has been included in EU programs since Interreg II, and the Norwegian government takes the place of the EU for financing allocated to the partners of the authorities in that country.

Five programs cover the north-south border: Sweden-Norway, Nord, Bothnia-Atlantica, Øresund-Kattegatt-Skagerrak and Central Baltic. All programs apart from the last one associate Norwegian provinces. Regions of Finland are involved in three programs and regions of Denmark are involved in one. Finally, the Central Baltic Program establishes cooperation across the Baltic Sea by linking Eastern Sweden (including Stockholm) with Estonia and Nomenclature of Territorial Units for Statistics (NUTS) three regions in Latvia and southern Finland (including Helsinki).

Cross-border cooperation started back in 1967 in the far north of the country, with the creation of the North Calotte Council, set up by the Nordic Council which was formed in 1952 as a formal body for intergovernmental cooperation. Based in Rovaniemi in Finland, the Council is built on partnership between the various provinces and regions of Sweden, Finland and Norway. It has undertaken various cooperation projects in a wide range of areas (environment, culture, economic development, etc.) since its inception. A second Euroregion, the Midnordic Region, was established between these three countries a little further south in 1978. It joins a Finnish region to a Swedish region across the Gulf of Bothnia, together with a region in the centre of Norway.

Several cross-border regions were also set up from the 1970s onwards, before Sweden joined the EU. They mainly comprised regional or local authorities in Sweden with neighbouring counterparts in either Finland (the Kvarken Council in 1972 and Haparanda-Tornio in 1987) or Norway (Arvika-Kongsvinger in 1978, the Svinesund Committee in 1980 and Mittskandia in 1988) or all three together (the Tornedalen Council in 1987). Most of these structures are associations rather than profiting from a legal status in the country in which they are based. The most original of all cooperation projects is the one between the two border towns of Haparanda and Tornio, which started pooling their public services in the 1960s (swimming pools, waste water treatment, etc.). The decision to set them up on a formal basis led in 1987 to the ratification of a cooperation arrangement that had been in place for over twenty years. New projects were developed under the Interreg programs in both the education-training and the environmental sectors.

Curiously, Denmark and Sweden did not establish any cross-border cooperation framework until the 1990s, even though the two countries are only separated by a narrow strait crossed by numerous ferry services. A cooperation was launched in 1993 in order to strengthen relations across the Öresund strait between the metropolitan region of Copenhagen and the highly urbanised neighbouring regions of Sweden (Scania includes the cities of Malmö, Sweden's third largest city, and Lund, which has one of the most prestigious universities in the country). The objective was to establish a fixed link across Öresund which has been achieved in 2000. Since then, a dual road/rail link has replaced the former ferry service linking the two shores. Although it has a loose governance structure with no legal personality, cross-border cooperation is very intense. In January 2016, the Öresund Committee was transformed into the Greater Copenhagen and Skane Committee (GCSC) with the aim to ensure a better promotion the metropolitan area on a world scale by using the positive image of Copenhagen while strengthening the international transport infrastructures and upgrading the scientific innovation. A truly metropolitan regional strategy has been established by the Committee in order to become a global player, with Copenhagen as the main centre. As a secondary centre of this cross-border metropolitan region, Malmö strengthens its position in the Swedish urban system.

Finally, mention should be made of two Euroregions involving local authorities on either side of the Baltic Sea. The first is the Pomerania Euroregion, created in 1995 between associations of municipalities in

north-western Poland, north-eastern Germany and southern Sweden (Scania). Its objective is to promote cooperation between the participating municipalities, in their areas of responsibility. The second, the Baltic Euroregion, involves regional authorities from five countries, including the oblast of Kaliningrad (Russia), which does not belong to the EU.

The low degree of institutionalization of cross-border cooperation doesn't prevent an intense activity on Sweden's borders, which was kickstarted in the 1960s by the Nordic Council. That cooperation was pursued primarily with Norway – although it is not a EU member state – and with Finland. It was only following accession to the EU that cooperation was extended southwards to Denmark and across the Baltic Sea. The diverging migrant policies, leading to the re-establishment of border controls since 2015 and increasing tensions between Sweden and Denmark have not really prevented the reinforcement of cross-border cooperation and regional integration of the Swedish territory.

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Switzerland and Cross-Border Cooperation



Considering the relatively small size of the Swiss territory, most of the inhabitants and public authorities are engaged in close relations with the neighbouring countries Germany, France, Italy, Austria and Liechtenstein to varying degrees. Even though the boundaries of the Swiss Confederation are the same since the Congress of Vienna 1815, particularly since 1945 functional cross-border relations have developed continuously in all regions; having resumed after the interruptions caused by the First and Second World Wars.

Due to the topography and spatial interconnections, different types of action and cooperation areas can be observed: regional-alpine in the

cantons of Valais and Graubünden, rural, large-scale in the Jura Arc, the High Rhine and Lake Constance, as well as three urbanized metropolitan areas in the Lake Geneva region, North-Western Switzerland, and Ticino. Of the 320 000 cross-border commuters (compared to 160 000 in 2012), 80 % are concentrated in these three metropolitan areas, more than half commute from France to Switzerland, and about 20 % from Germany and Italy. As a non-European Union (EU) country, Switzerland participates in a number of sectoral agreements (i.e. the Free Movement of Persons Agreement in the framework of the Bilateral I, 2002), in the European Single Market and in the Schengen/Dublin Association Agreements.

The borders with the neighbouring countries can be considered as highly permeable, this has to be taken into account in order to understand the dynamics of increasingly close cross-border relations. The Swiss system of division of power concedes Foreign Affairs to the Confederation which conducts intergovernmental agreements concerning special issues affecting regional matters, for instance in areas such as traffic, environment, energy, police, judiciary or disaster management. However, the 26 cantons possess, due to their quality as federated states, extensive competences and have the right to conclude agreements with foreign countries and to meet directly with lower ranking foreign authorities (Art. 56 of the Federal Constitution).

The foreign policy strategy of the Swiss Federal Council pays particular attention to the border regions. The Confederation organizes dialogues with the neighbouring countries France and Italy with the participation of cantonal authorities and is committed to consultative commissions in the Basel and Geneva area. Sometimes, the cantonal governments coordinate their cross-border activities at an inter-cantonal level, for instance by means of the eastern and north-western Switzerland Conferences of Cantonal Governments, of the Inter-Cantonal Coordination Office (IKRB) at the *Regio Basiliensis* or of the Association *arcjurassien.ch*. The Conference of Cantonal Governments has only a limited coordination role, for example in the Congress of Local and Regional Authorities of Europe at the Council of Europe. Since the local law is part of cantonal affairs, municipalities have, depending on the canton, the possibility to cooperate across the border. Some federal laws (Art. 7 of the Law on Spatial Planning, Art. 2 of the Law on Regional Policy) and some cantonal constitutions (Bern, Basel-Land, Basel-Stadt, St. Gallen, Graubünden, Ticino, Vaud, Geneva, Jura) demand explicit cooperation with foreign countries. Financially, the federal agglomeration policy supports cross-border agglomerations

in terms of constructing cross-border transportation infrastructure since 2001: *Grand Genève*, Basel, Mendrisiotto, Schaffhausen, Neuchâtel and others. On an international level, the Confederation and the Cantons participates in the legislative process of the Council of Europe (the Madrid Convention 1980 and its protocols). The Karlsruhe Agreement of 1996 is only effective in the cantons Basel-Stadt, Basel-Land, Aargau, Jura, Solothurn, Schaffhausen, Bern, Neuchâtel, Geneva, Vaud, Valais. Furthermore, Swiss institutions have the possibility to enter European Groupings of Territorial Cooperation (EGTCs) if at least one institution from an EU-member state is represented (i.e. the canton Basel-Stadt entering the EGTC Rhine-Alps-Corridor or the University of Basel co-founding the EGTC Eucor – The European Campus in 2015). The cantons are participating since the 1990s in EU funding programs like Interreg (the Confederation since Interreg II). Today, 20 out of 26 cantons participate in Interreg projects in the four program areas France-Switzerland, Upper Rhine, Alpenrhein-Lake Constance-High Rhine and Italy-Switzerland, as well as other programs like INTERACT, URBACT or European Observation Network for Territorial Development and Cohesion (ESPON).

Cross-border cooperation has been increasingly institutionalized since the 1960s (*Regio Basiliensis*) and especially the 1970s (Geneva, Upper Rhine, Lake Constance). The following types of cross-border cooperation may be distinguished.

A first type consists in urbanized metropolitan cooperation areas with their strong centres (Lake Geneva region and Basel/North-Western Switzerland). Overlapping levels of cooperation are characteristic for this type; the highly centralized French state is contractually committed. Agreements from 1973 (Geneva) and 1975 (Basel) have each respectively institutionalized a consultative commission and a regional committee: the joint consultative commission for regional problems between the canton of Geneva and the French departments of Ain and Haute-Savoie, and French-Genevan regional committee, as well as the French-German-Swiss Upper Rhine Commission and Upper Rhine Conference. Both platforms are dealing with a wide variety of issues, most of the time within the framework of technical committees, but also complemented by parallel organizations like the Lake Geneva Council, the Upper Rhine Council and the recent Metropolitan Conferences. Both areas focus on mutual coordination for planning infrastructure, sustainable use of resources as well as labour mobility. The EuroAirport Basel Mulhouse Freiburg

represents a special case, since this intergovernmental construction is entirely based on French territory but is jointly operated by France and Switzerland (1949). The Trinational Eurodistrict Basel, founded in 2007, is a platform for municipal cooperation that follows the Franco-German initiative of creating Eurodistricts on their border and the therefore also has a seat in the cross-border cooperation committee established by Art. 14 of the Aachen Treaty in 2019. It is based in a former customs platform which houses since 1993 the trinational cross-border information and counselling centre, the *Informations-und Beratungsstelle* (INFOBEST) Palmrain.

The canton of Ticino with its centre Lugano is under the influence of the metropolitan area of Milan. The platform Regio Insubrica was founded in cooperation with the neighbouring Italian provinces in 1995. Because of the strong socio-economic asymmetries, it acquired a new dynamism only in 2015 and focusses today on economic and environmental issues.

Several other structures have been developed in the Jura Arc, on the High Rhine and at Lake Constance as well as on the Alpine Rhine and the Alps region: the Jura Association (1985, since 2001 the Trans-Jura Conference), the High Rhine Commission, a grouping founded under the Karlsruhe Agreement of 1997, as well as the International Lake Constance Conference (IBK) of 1972, an organization that originally dealt with environmental issues, but is now treating a wide variety of topics from education, culture, traffic, economy until health. The Lake Constance Council (1991) concentrates on economy, politics and culture in the same area as the IBK. Other cooperation forums exist in the Alps region: the Alpine countries association (1972), the Western Alps association (1982, since 2006 the Alps–Mediterranean Euroregion), the Mont-Blanc Space (1991) and the EU macro-regional Strategy for the Alpine Region (EUSALP) (2009).

Cross-border cooperation falls on good soil in a country marked by its federalist division of power: cantonal, regional, local and private partners experiment across the external border, though depending on the division of power within the neighbouring countries. The objectives of the different cooperation areas are very similar in terms of their objective to overcome the inherent ambivalence of border areas. On the one hand, border obstacles shall be overcome, on the other hand, existing potential for development shall be used – the location competition with other European and non-European greater areas is an important factor. Border

regions are laboratories for the development of a wide range of structures that are serving these causes. Some have a legal personality, others have considerable financial resources and all of them have a different range of tasks. Some have been founded with enthusiasm, others are soon forgotten. Informal contacts develop across borders between economic associations, social partners and the commitment of individuals in general. Those factors prevail over the significance of the legal bases that use many resources and need real delegations of cross-border competences. Innovative approaches and a democratic basis, as well as solid funding are the key factors for a successful cross-border cooperation with sustainable institutions and prosperous projects.

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Switzerland and European Integration*

Situated at the heart of continental Europe, Switzerland is a small state with a surface of barely 41 285 km². Due to its geographical position in the centre of the Alps and with a part of the Jura Massif covering respectively 58 % and 12 % of its territory, it has the image of a country of mountains. Three quarters of its population of 8.6 million is concentrated in the non-mountainous areas, i.e. the main cities of the country which are situated, with the exception of Basel, in the Rhine Valley, north of the Jura mountain chain. The high density of the population (208 inhabitants/km²) is coupled by the fact that Switzerland is an enclave within the European Union (EU), both from a geographical point of view, as part of the European dorsal and as a transit country across the Alps, but also from a political perspective, as it has never joined the EU.

Switzerland has borders with 4 EU member states: Germany (334 km), Austria (164km), Italy (740 km) and France (573 km). It also shares a border with the micro-state of Liechtenstein (41 km). At the Congress of Vienna in 1815, the European powers recognized Switzerland's internal and external borders, which have stayed intact for the most part until today. There are a number of specific characteristics of the Swiss borders: first, some of them are considered as "natural borders", traced along the mountains (Jura, Alps) and following the course of the Rhine towards Germany; second, they pass through several lakes, i.e. the Lake of Constance ending at the triple point formed by the German-Austrian and the Austrian-Swiss borders, the lake of Léman concerning the dyad with France, the Lake Maggiore and the Lake Lugano with small portions of the Italian dyad; third, two enclaves, one German and one Italian, are situated on the Swiss territory, resulting from a specific tracing of borders; fourth, there are several cross-border agglomerations, two of which represent the most populated cities of the country (Basel and Geneva).

This small state has also very specific socio-political characteristics. It has the image of a calm and almost idyllic country, but it is also extremely performant economically and orientated towards international trade. Its state structure, in spite of its small size, is a federation: the Swiss

* For the map, see article "Switzerland and Cross-Border Cooperation".

Confederation is divided into 26 sovereign cantons. Historically it has been a bottom-up state building process comparable to Italy or Germany, but unlike these latter, it never experienced a centralized power in the federal capital. The old Swiss Confederacy was an alliance among communities of farmers in the central Alps in order to protect themselves against the neighbouring powerful kingdoms and the holy Roman German Empire. Thus, the rural communes of Uri, Schwyz, and Unterwalden adopted a Federal Charter at the beginning of the 13th century which is considered as the confederacy's founding document. At the same time, the passages over the Alpes, especially the Gotthard Pass, became strategic points on the road linking two major economic centres of Europe, the Rhine region and the region of the Po plain. The alliance grew until the 16th century and was then comprising 13 cantons. But the war between Catholics and Protestants and the Thirty Years War in the 17th century weakened the alliance. Six new cantons were integrated after the French Revolution. At the Vienna Congress in 1815, the Confederation was formally constituted with 22 cantons, 3 of them, Geneva, Neuchâtel and Valais, had joined at the same time. A new Federal Pact was negotiated in 1848 after a short civil war, the *Sonderbund* war, creating a new state which mentioned the sovereignty of the Cantons.

The image of Switzerland is also associated to a successful model of a consensual society with the co-existence of four official languages, three of which are the languages of its neighbours (German, French, Italian), and one, Romansh, which is only spoken by a small minority in certain rural parts of eastern Switzerland, two religions (Catholic and Protestant) and a bottom-up democratic structure based on the frequent use of direct democracy (referenda). The internal confessional and linguistic borders are important markers of regional and local identity.

The reputation of Switzerland as a country largely involved in International Relations is also impressive: it is recognized as a state of neutrality (granted since the Vienna Treaty in 1815), with a high capacity of diplomacy and a strong presence of International Organizations, which already started in 1919, when the headquarters of the League of Nations were installed in Geneva.

However, when it comes to regional and European integration, Switzerland reflects an almost paradoxical image. On the one hand, it has been on the forefront of the development of cross-border cooperation in Europe, having been involved from the start, in the 1960s, in several initiatives of local, regional and bi-lateral neighbourhood relations. It is

also one of the European states which employs the most cross-border workers from the neighbouring countries (mainly France, Italy and Germany) and therefore practices *de facto* a strong functional regional integration. On the other hand, its population has always refused to become part of the European Economic Community (EEC) and has even rejected, in a referendum on 6 December 1992, the European Economic Area (EEA) which had been designed for EU non-member states in order to develop closer economic relations.

But when looking closer at this paradox, one realizes, that the Helvetic Confederation has not really a contradictory approach to European integration, as it has not refused European cooperation *strictu sensu*, but rather the supranational approach of the EEC/EU. Thus, Switzerland is a founding member of the European Free Trade Association (EFTA), which was set up in 1960 reuniting those countries in Europe which did not adhere to the EEC's principle of a common market, i.e. a customs union, but preferred to install a free trade area without common external tariffs. From 1957 onwards, the immediate proximity of three EEC member states also created an environment favourable to economic and cultural exchanges which ensured the stability of neighbourhood relations. With a progressive harmonization of its border regimes by means of bilateral arrangements with the neighbouring states (except for Liechtenstein), Switzerland has in fact become largely associated to the EU's common market. Furthermore, at the initiative of the border cantons which have always manifested their willingness to foster cross-border cooperation, the Helvetic Confederation has progressively redefined its strategy of relations with the EEC/EU. First, it has participated from the start, in 1990, to the Interreg program launched by the European Commission in order to support cross-border cooperation in European border regions. Second, Switzerland has negotiated with the EU a specific status which grants it for the most part benefits comparable to EU members, by adopting a sectoral approach: thus, seven bilateral Treaties have been signed between Switzerland and the EU in 1999; they enable a very intense economic cooperation with the objective to allow for a better access to the labour market, to goods and services, free circulation of people and workers from 2002 onwards, agriculture, research cooperation in the framework of the EU's pluriannual programs, as well as to air and land transport. The Treaties have been revised in 2009 and enlarged to 9 sectors, mainly resulting in Switzerland being associated to the Schengen Area and the Dublin Asylum System. Third, since 2004, other partial agreements have

been concluded with the EU: Switzerland is therefore part of the EU's legal cooperation framework Eurojust and participates since 2012 in the European Defense Agency (EDA) and, since 2016, in the European Asylum Support Office (EASP). The Swiss Federal Council has underlined at several occasions the importance of these bilateral Treaties which guarantee a participation of Switzerland to European policies in function of its priorities and without threatening its independence. However, recently, the Swiss population has again manifested resistance against a too close rapprochement with the EU, thus confirming that the Swiss paradox with regard to European integration has not entirely disappeared. Indeed, following an initiative from the Swiss population, a referendum has been scheduled on 15 May 2020 which aims at abolishing the principle of free circulation between Switzerland and the EU. The referendum has been postponed due to the COVID-19 pandemic, but if the result is positive, this would threaten the bilateral Treaties with the EU.

However, with regard to cross-border cooperation, Switzerland has not only manifested a pioneer spirit in initiating first cross-border governance structures with its neighbours, but has proven a stable and continuously invested partner for all neighbouring states. To start with, in 1963, the cross-border association in the Franco-German-Swiss Upper Rhine Region, the *Regio Basiliensis*, has been initiated by Swiss economic and local political actors in Basel. Three other “hotspots” of cooperation can be identified at the Swiss borders: the agglomeration of Geneva at the French border, the Lake of Constance at the German and Austrian border and Ticino at the Italian border.

Especially the Franco-Swiss cross-border cooperation has been intense and original from the 1960s onwards: thus, in 1963, a European Cross-Border Grouping (ECG) has been set up in order to represent and defend the cross-order workers on both sides of the border. The ECG manages so-called cross-border houses which are unique cross-border information points installed alongside the border. A financial compensation system also exists between the Canton of Geneva and France, which has been created by an Agreement of 29 January 1973 for French cross-border workers who work in the canton and who are directly imposed on their salary by the Swiss authorities. The amount of fiscal compensation has been fixed at 3.5 % of the total gross income of the Geneva cross-border workers and the collected fiscal revenue is redistributed to the neighbouring French local authorities and departments of Ain and Haute-Savoie.

As for Interreg, the cantons have **S** been involved in the Community initiative since Interreg I (1990) and the Swiss Confederation financially supports the program from the period of Interreg II onwards (1995). The Confederation is therefore largely associated to the Interreg V program for the period 2014–2020. As a rule, the Swiss project partners cannot directly benefit from the EU funds, but they can obtain financial support from the Confederation and/or the cantons, who cover the EU-part of the funding. The Helvetic Confederation co-finances Interreg projects on the condition that they comply with the principal objectives of the Swiss New Regional Policy (NRP) which focusses on innovation, entrepreneurship and the creation of a “surplus value”. However, the cantons have the possibility to autonomously finance cross-border projects outside the framework of the NRP, if the project activities are foreseen in the operational Interreg programs. The Swiss Federal Department of Foreign Affairs also provides support, if necessary, for the good functioning of cross-border cooperation.

Not being a member of the EU doesn't prevent Switzerland from having an active cross-border cooperation on different scales, which has started since the 1960s. The results of the referendum on the EEA agreement encouraged the Confederation to negotiate a partnership with the EU, which led to the bilateral agreements. As a consequence, cross-border cooperation appears as a crucial issue, both for the Confederation and the border cantons. Even if the intensity of cross-border cooperation is not constant in time at all places, it could be presented as a model for other regions of Europe. However, a sword of Damocles is hanging over this cooperation: a referendum on the free movement of people between the EU and Switzerland will be organized in 2020. If it results in the restriction of free movement, this would cancel the bilateral agreements. One may question the way, the Swiss authorities, on both federal and cantonal level will then consider the future of cross-border cooperation and their relations with the EU.

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Territorial Diplomacy

Territorial diplomacy has often been qualified as the “small” foreign policy practiced by local and regional authorities, who thereby become genuine actors in international relations. Fostered since the 1980s by globalization, cities, regions, and federal states have increasingly contributed to the “major” foreign policy conducted by their national governments. The external action of local and regional authorities has therefore gradually broadened and put an end to the traditional conception of the Westphalian state, which possesses the privilege of exclusivity over foreign policy. Applied to cross-border cooperation, territorial diplomacy has been mainly used, since the 1990s, for the implementation of European Regional Policy and the European Neighbourhood Policy (ENP).

The notion of territorial diplomacy has multiple meanings and includes numerous formulations in the scientific literature such as para-diplomacy, sub-state diplomacy, regional diplomacy, city diplomacy, local and regional diplomacy, decentralized diplomacy, etc., which do not necessarily reflect the same approach to external action of infra-national actors. To start with, Anglophone political scientists (Ivo Duchacek, Panayotis Soldatos, Francisco Aldecoa, Michael Keating) have used the term of para-diplomacy to designate this new diplomacy practiced below the central state level. Their theoretical works were rather open considering the type of actors concerned which could be federal states, local and regional authorities or even non-governmental actors (ONGs). In the German literature, however, this type of diplomacy was mainly reserved for the activities of the German *Länder* and labelled as “*Nebenaußenpolitik*”, among underlining its parallel character with regard to the federal state. Other terms have then been spreading, such as micro-diplomacy, proto-diplomacy or pluri-national diplomacy or multi-layered diplomacy, all of which generally distinguish between an infra-national diplomacy led in support of or in opposition to the foreign policy of the central state. In the context of cross-border cooperation, territorial diplomacy has been labelled as “secondary foreign policy”, stressing the fact that local and regional authorities at the border mainly use it in order to support the “primary” cohesion policy of the national States and of the European Union (EU).

In the United States, the origin of territorial diplomacy came from a mobilization of local authorities and federal states against Reagan’s

foreign policy in the 1980s. They boycotted for example investments in certain countries, which were considered unethical or they welcomed illegal refugees fleeing conflict in Latin America. The concept of an “independent” city diplomacy from the state was taken up by the United Cities and Local Governments network founded in 2004, that brings together the world’s infra-national entities. During a meeting in Marrakesh in 2006, it defined city diplomacy as the “tool of local authorities for the promotion of social cohesion, the prevention of conflicts, and post-conflict reconstruction”. However, the increasing foreign activities of certain US states, aggressively positioning themselves against the federal policy were seen as a potential impingement on federal responsibilities and treaty obligations. In 1996–1997, the Supreme Court therefore invalidated a Massachusetts Law that excluded from public contracts all firms who were trading with the authoritarian regime of Burma and thus reaffirmed the federal power’s authority on the diplomatic scene.

In Europe, territorial diplomacy originally began with the policy of French-German town-twinning after World War II for the purpose of reconciliation. Their diplomacy was mostly informal and destined to contribute to the general aim of the Western European powers to safeguard peace in Europe. From this perspective, territorial diplomacy served as the local extension of the national state’s foreign policy and was built through cooperation and in complementarity with the latter. However, the practices of territorial diplomacy by local and regional authorities in Europe from 1945 onwards then largely differed depending on the degree of decentralization of their State and on the purposes of their “small” foreign policy. The German *Länder*, for example, practiced a more or less independent *Nebenaußenpolitik* often challenging the foreign policy of the Federal state, as illustrated by the frequent foreign policy statements of the Bavarian prime minister from 1978–1988, Franz-Josef Strauß. In contrast, in France, territorial diplomacy was tightly connected to the concept of decentralized cooperation, which generally took the form of an implementation of the central state’s developmental aid policy on the local level, via the establishment of extra-European intercommunal partnerships (North-South). Overall, until the end of the 1980s, territorial diplomacy, due to the non-permeability of the Iron Curtain, territorial diplomacy was mainly limited to Western Europe and even there, it remained an exception, for the majority of the European Community’s (EC) member states were then still largely centralized and did not leave space for major secondary foreign policy.

Since the fall of the Berlin Wall in 1989, the new composition of the international system accelerated the dynamics of territorial diplomacy in Europe. The fall of the Iron Curtain has enabled local and regional authorities in Central and Eastern Europe to also engage in this form of foreign policy. There has indeed been a multiplication of pan-European networks of local and regional actors, whilst the deepening of decentralization policies further increased the scope of action for Western local and regional authorities on the international scene, including in countries of centralizing tradition. Such a development can be observed in Italy, Spain, Belgium or in France, where decentralization movements have led local governments to engage in a wide range of secondary foreign policy activities. With the “Europe of Regions” paradigm which was spreading from the beginning of the 1990s, regions with secessionist agendas like Scotland, Catalonia and Flanders successfully used this to operate as proto-states, escaping the national framework. These local and regional actors with strong identity claims placed their bet on an international affirmation based on the development of a diplomatic network all over the world.

From the 1990s onwards, the EU also encouraged cities and regions to play a stronger role in European Integration. Territorial diplomacy became an integral part of the EU’s regional policy in order to achieve social and economic cohesion. After the introduction of the principle of subsidiarity in article 3B of the Maastricht Treaty in 1992 and with the creation of the Committee of Regions in 1994, local and regional authorities could now participate in the formulation and implementation of European policies. The multi-level governance enabled them to conduct a “small” foreign policy within the EU by drafting opinions for EU legislation in their field of competence. It also gave them the possibility to practice secondary foreign policy by developing interregional, cross-border, transnational, and macro-regional cooperation. This European territorial diplomacy was mainly supposed to contribute to the implementation of EU Regional Policy: with the creation of the Interreg program by the European Commission in 1990, the European Community directly associated regions in the carrying out of the project of the Single European Market. In 2004, the European Neighbourhood Policy (ENP) also provided for the contribution of territorial diplomacy for the stabilization of external borders. The role of territorial diplomacy was further reinforced in 2007, when the Lisbon Treaty was adopted, which the objective of territorial cooperation, with the goal of having cities and regions contribute to

European economic and social cohesion through their “small” foreign policy.

The main problem of territorial diplomacy remains the need for its legitimization. With foreign policy being reserved, even in the case of a federal political system, as the guarded sphere of competence of the central national state, “small foreign policy” by local and regional actors often lack legal authority and tools in order to be able to practice territorial diplomacy. The legal possibilities of participation in national foreign policy in Europe vary considerably and generally increase in proportion to the degree of decentralization of the national state, but as soon as cities or regions wish to engage in institutional, long-term international cooperation, they need specific legal tools that enable them to legitimize their secondary foreign policy. Some Federal states, such as Germany or Switzerland, allow for a participation of their federal units in the negotiation and implementation of international Treaties, but European states with a centralizing tradition like the Netherlands, the UK or many Central and Eastern European states do not provide for this possibility in their respective Constitutions. However, the legal tools for territorial diplomacy are slowly improving, both on the national and on the European level. In France, for example, a new legal framework was adopted in 2000, recognizing the ability of overseas local and regional authorities to intervene in negotiations and, in certain circumstances, to sign agreements with sovereign nations. The law Letchimy of December 5th 2016 on territorial diplomacy enlarged this possibility to all local and regional authorities. The latter also provides for the new function of a territorial ambassador in each French Region, who is designated by the Quai d’Orsay and is attached to the regional Prefecture acting as a facilitator of local and regional diplomacy. On the European level, three legal tools have been created to facilitate territorial diplomacy. The EU has adopted the Grouping of Territorial Cooperation (EGTC) in 2006, which allows for local authorities to formalize external relations with their European neighbours and put in place transnational legal structures. The Council of Europe has adopted the Third Protocol to the Madrid Convention on Transfrontier Cooperation in 2009 which prepares for a similar legal instrument, the Euroregional Cooperation Groupings, (ECG) which also enables local and regional authorities of non-EU members to conduct a neighbourhood policy and to thus contribute to the stabilization of the European continent. Finally, the revised Franco-German Treaty of Aachen signed in January 2019 provides for new

legal tools of cross-border cooperation just as does the project of an EU regulation on a “European cross-border mechanism” which would allow for integrated projects to extend national law across the border in order to facilitate cross-border management.

Nevertheless, all these measures always provide for territorial diplomacy of local and regional authorities to be authorized by the national states and by the EU and thus to be compatible with and complementary to the “major” foreign and European policy.

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Territorial Singularities



Many border and territorial singularities dot the European area. A singularity can be defined as something rare, particular and original. The nature of such singularities can be very diverse and they are notably legal but also political or even sometimes result from territorial-geographic specific issues. A frontier singularity results from the specific situation that characterizes the territorial boundary and that arises, either from its linear layout (e.g. a tri-point border), or from an uncertainty or disagreement on a fraction of a dyad (e.g. the territorial limit at the top of Mont Blanc), or, the legal regime of certain segments of it (e.g. a border condominium such as Isle of Pheasants) and border areas (e.g. free zone).

The territorial singularity can characterize both the originality of a state territory (e.g. micro-states like Monaco) and a portion of state territory (e.g. the Spanish enclave of Llívia in France). It may also result from the area of application (or not) of part of European Union (EU) law (e.g. Schengen area, euro zone), specific status (Outermost Regions (ORs) and Overseas Countries and Territories (OCTs)), and the legal nature of a special constituency (e.g. Gibraltar).

Some border peculiarities are due to the nature of the tracing of the boundary line. At times, the delimitation of the boundaries is spread over several centuries (e.g. the boundary-line between France and Andorra results from arbitrations starting in the 13th century but the last bilateral agreements are contemporary: 2001 and 2012). Other singularities hold in the absence of tracing: Lake Constance, Austro-German-Swiss, is not delineated on most of the water body (no conventional limit in the Upper Lake or Obersee) despite the presence of several agreements concerning the shared management of certain resources (fisheries, navigation). Several other features are due to differences of interpretation on the tracing (e.g. the Franco-Italian border at the top of Mont Blanc). Some other issues have been settled by legal agreements; for example, the border forest of Mundat between France and Germany (which goes back to a medieval status) is under German sovereignty but the title of ownership is French.

In a context of territorial proximity or contiguity, the construction of transportation infrastructure such as airports, tunnels, bridges and roads abound with specificities. The airport of Basel-Mulhouse has a plurinational governance while being located entirely in French territory. In addition, there are functional limits that divide both the respective national areas and the international common sector and raise certain questions of applicable law. Some border roads are classified as 'neutral roads' (e.g. the road through France which connects the Spanish Catalan enclave of Llívia to Spain).

Other singularities concern the status of certain spatial zones or that of cooperation organisations across borders. Specific regimes are based on the notion of a 'border zone': the border zone, relating to the fiscal status of frontier workers or cross-border commuters, is distinguished from that relating to the law of transfrontier or cross-border co-operation between local authorities. A very singular legal regime is the 'condominium' which means that the sovereign authority is common between states over a certain spatial area. A first condominium still in force is that said of the Isle of Pheasants located in the middle of the river Bidasoa

between France and Spain. The island is under the authority of Spain from February 1 to July 31 and the authority of France between August 1 and January 31. A second condominium concerns the portion of the common border formed by the Moselle, Sûre and Ur between the Federal Republic of Germany and the Grand Duchy of Luxembourg. The 'free zones' where the border of the customs territory is distinct from the international border are singular cases (e.g. free zone of the Pays de Gex and Haute-Savoie). It is also worth mentioning the small French zone of Saint-Gingolph, the Italian zone of Livigno and the zone of Campione d'Italia. The case of the City of London Corporation, a very specific district in the heart of London, is also unique.

By nature, a cross-border organisation is singular. Among others, there is the Cerdanya Cross-Border Hospital on the Franco-Spanish border, which has the legal status of a European Grouping of Territorial Cooperation (EGTC). This new legal tool is unique because it is from the European Union and reveals a challenge of « inter-juridicity » between different legal systems. Some curiosities can be discovered in the diplomatic archives. For example, agreements dating back to the Middle Ages of *compascuités* (common grazing), *lies et passeries* (Alliance and Peace) or *faceries* (conventions relating to the common interests of frontier populations) – passed between valleys separated by the territorial boundary in the Pyrenees mountain range.

The 'enclaves' and the 'quasi-enclaves' refer rather to the rank of the territorial singularities. An enclave is defined as a portion of state territory entirely enclosed within the territory of another state. There are maritime enclaves and land enclaves (e.g. the case of the Channel Islands enclosed in the French continental shelf; e.g. the German enclave of *Busingen am Hochrhein* in Switzerland; the Spanish enclave of Llívia in France). The situation of the Belgian municipality of Baerle-Duc (Baarle-Hertog in Dutch) is particularly original. As for the quasi-enclaves, they are portions of territory of a State touching the border but whose terrestrial communication routes pass through the territory of another State (e.g. the Spanish village of Os de Civís accessible by Andorra; the valley named Val di Lei is a part of the Italian territory but accessible by Switzerland; the Austrian Kleinwalsertal valley accessible only by road through Germany). These enclaves and quasi-enclaves often benefit from a specific customs regime. A particular singularity, and a source of geostrategic tensions, concerns the Russian Kaliningrad oblast (15 125 km²). In the same register as the enclaves or quasi-enclaves, Ceuta (19.4

km²) and Mellila (13.4 km²) are two Spanish cities whose perimeter security form the African land borders of the European Union (with the Peñón de Vélez de la Gomera).

Many singularities also arise from the spatial configuration of certain States, the constitutional status of certain parts of national territories or the legal regime applicable to certain territories. The smallest state in the European Union, the Republic of Malta covers an area of 316 km² on an archipelago of eight islands. Another island, Cyprus is divided into four separate legal zones. These include: the Republic of Cyprus (EU member state since 2004), the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus (and the Kokkina exclave), the UN buffer zone divided into several sectors and marking the green line or Attila line, and the two English military bases of Akrotiri (75.5 km²) and Dhekelia (81 km²).

Several independent and non-EU states also have a small territory (they could be called « micro-states »): the Principality of Andorra (468 km²), the Principality of Liechtenstein (160 km²), the Republic of San Marino (61.19 km²), the Principality of Monaco (2.02 km²) and the State of the Vatican City (0.44 km²). For example, the Vatican is not part of the EU or the customs territory of the EU. It is a sovereign and independent state with the status of a third country. The legal framework of certain territories also depends on the application, or not, of the law of the European Union, and its components: citizenship of the Union, Schengen area, Value Added Tax (VAT) area, Euro zone, Customs territory, etc. This customs territory includes the territories of the Member States with exceptions (e.g. the territory of Germany with the exception of the island of Helgoland).

For its part, Gibraltar has the status of British overseas territory and is part of the European Union while being outside the customs union and the VAT area. Gibraltar must nonetheless participate in the common European transport and environmental protection policies. Despite the recent Constitution of Gibraltar (2006), the United Kingdom remains fully responsible for Gibraltar's external relations. The future of the Rock remains linked to the effects of Brexit, to its constitutional status, to the Spanish claims and to the diplomatic relations between all the protagonists.

Other singularities depend on the European legal regime applicable to areas outside continental Europe, namely the Outermost Regions; the Overseas Countries and Territories; and other special cases. The

provisions of the European Treaties apply to the ORs, while the OCTs are not sovereign and depend on their states (Denmark, France and the Netherlands – not counting, because of Brexit, the United Kingdom and its twelve OCTs). They have wide autonomy for everything except defense and foreign affairs, they are generally not subject to EU law, and are not part of the customs territory of the EU but are considered part of the “European family” and are granted trade preferences.

In addition, nationals of EU member states who reside in these OCTs have European citizenship. The provisions of the European Treaties apply to the Åland Islands (Finland) in accordance with the corresponding Protocol. They also apply to the Isle of Man and the Channel Islands (Bailiwick of Jersey, Bailiwick of Guernsey and their dependents; with the special status of Sark). These latter islands are related to English sovereignty but are not part of the territory of the United Kingdom. On the other hand, the Treaties do not apply to the Faroe Islands. The archipelago of Svalbard (*Spitzberg*) is subject to the sovereignty of Norway, with special tax treatment. Greenland, an autonomous territory within the Kingdom of Denmark, associated with the EU since 1985, has seen its autonomy strengthened since the law on self-government Greenland (2009). The Monastic Republic of Mount Athos is part of the customs union, the Schengen area but not the VAT area.

These singularities are sometimes accompanied by ambiguities or by custom-made devices. The specific statutes depend either on geo-historical contingencies or on specific provisions and derogations supported by the States and adapted to the needs of the population of the areas concerned. An original delimited zone at constitutional level can be taken into account at international level and have repercussions in the European Union. Regarding the European Union, the legal regime of these particular statutes has either been provided for in the Adhesion Treaties and the subsidiary Protocols, or is settled by specific agreements or by recourse to the Court of Justice of the European Union when there are difficulties connected with the application of European law. At one point, it could question the EU’s cohesion policy. For its part, the law of the European Convention on Human Rights may also apply, exceptionally, and for certain territories whose international relations are assumed by the States Parties (Art. 56), taking into account the “local requirements” (Art. 56.3). Many other singularities obviously exist and are not mentioned in this short entry, such as Mount Dolent, Sorgschrofen Mountain, Märket Island, the original form of the border

line in Lake Geneva, the land borders in the Monegasque tunnels, the history of Olivenza and the *Alpe* of Cravairola, the “*biens-fonds*” regime, the concept of “mobile border” on certain glaciers and mountain tops.

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Tisza*

Tisza was the first European Grouping of Territorial Cooperation (EGTC) in Europe involving a non-European Union (EU) member state. In 2015, the founders were Szabolcs-Szatmár Bereg county and the municipality of Kisvárdá from Hungary; and Zakarpattya oblast (county) from the Ukraine. The territory of the EGTC is larger than 18 000 km², where more than 1.8 million inhabitants live in 838 municipalities. The first international introduction of the EGTC was in 2016, in Brussels, at the annual meeting of the EGTC Platform. The EGTC was set up based on the relevant EU legislation and the fact that Ukraine was among the first countries adopting the third protocol of the Madrid Outline Convention which is one among the eligibility criteria of the EGTCs with third country members. At the same time, the background ensuring legally fixed operation of the grouping is still missing causing daily difficulties to the EGTC. Therefore, the management of the grouping plays an active role in designing the Ukrainian legal provisions facilitating the establishment and functioning of the EGTCs – in cooperation with the National Academy of Sciences and the Uzhhorod University.

The grouping was created with a purpose to strengthen cross-border territorial cohesion and to promote the Euro-Atlantic integration of the Ukraine.

The cooperation across the border is inevitable because the water and waste management of the river Tisza requires joint efforts. The need for integrated interventions makes it reasonable to set up such a joint institution. The strategic plan of the EGTC approved at the beginning of 2017 by the three-membered General Assembly contains interventions targeting joint environment management, the development of a cross-border network economy and an integrated labour market, as well as the improvement of social cohesion by strengthening mutual understanding and the protection and promotion of joint heritage. According to the strategy, the EGTC should act as a fore-runner of the Euro-Atlantic integration, a coordinator of fundraising, a promoter of inter-institutional cooperation and as an instrument of maintaining of joint institutions.

In 2017, the EGTC began development on an impressive project. Within the framework of the Hungary-Slovakia-Romania-Ukraine

* For the map, see article 'Carpathian Euroregion'.

European Neighbourhood Instrument (ENI) program, a large infrastructure project will be implemented: a landfill will be built in Yanoshi (Ukraine) which will supply the municipalities of Berehovo district; and a biogas power plant will be launched in Kisvárda (Hungary).

One of the major disaster risks of the region is the collapse of the former salt mines in Solotvino (Ukraine), from where an increasing quantity of salt is percolating into the Tisza, thus polluting the ecosystem of the river. The EGTC submitted a proposal to the ENI program with an attempt to implement a comprehensive underground survey on the current situation and to draft recommendations in order to avoid a disaster. Another proposal targets cross-border integrated tourism development.

It is important to underline that the grouping faces several limiting factors. To be specific, the EGTC involves a country which is not a member state of the European Union and which faces a war situation in the Donbass region, thus this special border regime constellation and international/geopolitical tensions generate significant difficulties for cross-border cooperation. Moreover, a significant Hungarian minority (around 150 000) live in the Western region of Ukraine; however, the Ukrainian central government aims to drastically limit the constitutional rights of the minorities in the Ukraine and this have caused disagreement between Hungary and Ukraine. Simply, the current internal political tensions and war situation of Ukraine pose large obstacles for successful and effective cross-border cooperation.

Since its establishment, the grouping has been developing into one of the most significant actors for Hungary-Ukraine cross-border cooperation, supporting the partnership at the level of regional authorities, knowledge transfer, addressing business and local governmental actors, and supporting social cohesion by organising different social events.

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Tourism

Tourism is the sum of all travel away from home for more than 24 hours and less than one year, motivated by any purpose (e.g. leisure, business, education, health, shopping, religious pilgrimage, or visiting friends and relatives). It includes all services and attractions that facilitate travel at the tourist's place of origin (e.g. shops, travel agencies, passport agencies), in transit (e.g., petrol stations, airports), and within the destination (e.g., tour companies, hotels, restaurants, car rentals). It entails people traveling within their own countries (domestic tourism) and crossing international borders (international tourism). Tourism is a global phenomenon that involves a wide range of sectors, such as lodging, transportation, and food services, and other industries, including agriculture, construction, petroleum, and fishing and has significant impacts on the social, ecological and economic environments. These impacts include, among others, cultural misappropriation, discontent among destination residents, economic leakage, and physical wear and tear. Tourism also involves many different stakeholders in the public, private and non-profit sectors.

As a result, tourism scholars have long argued for the need to collaborate across borders, because collaboration can help uphold the principles of sustainable development and provide more equitable relationships between border communities. Transboundary cooperation in tourism aims to address mutual issues on both sides of a border and includes different scales, including global, regional, binational, and inter-local ones. Each of these cooperation scales has its own purposes. At the global level, cooperation usually takes place in areas such as data collection and policy consultations. For example, the World Tourism Organisation, a United Nations (UN) agency, facilitates the collection and analysis of data on international tourism flows and provides development assistance to countries in need. At the regional level (e.g. European Union (EU), Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN)), unions of states affect transfrontier mobility, visa regimes, and transportation policies (e.g. open skies). Binational cooperation typically focuses on economic development and conservation, and inter-local cooperation deals with small-scale event planning and symbolic representations of cultural unity between cross-border communities.

A common tourism-related issue addressed through cross-border cooperation is ecological and cultural resource management. This is all the

more crucial where fragile ecosystems or cultural areas are divided by an international border. Close relationships are necessary to protect shared resources for tourism and other purposes. Another area of cooperation is infrastructure development, including airports, ports, roads, and border inspection facilities. These are all important parts of the tourism system, and many examples exist where efforts have resulted in more efficient and affordable infrastructures. One example is binational airports built adjacent to an international border to serve travelers from both sides. Prominent examples include EuroAirport Basel Mulhouse Freiburg, Geneva Airport and Tijuana International Airport. Finally, cross-border efforts focus also on marketing and economic development. Binational tourism promotional campaigns are indeed commonplace. Many border areas carry out binational events, marketing campaigns, joint websites, and shared destination management organisations that work together on both sides of the border to promote transfrontier destinations. From this perspective, the EU's Interreg programs have been instrumental in promoting cross-border cooperation at local, binational, and regional scales in many areas of tourism development.

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The earliest agreements binding twin cities were concluded before the signature of the European Coal and Steel Community (ECSC) Treaty in 1951. Town-twinning was first promoted as a beneficial means to heal the wounds of the recent past and soften the scars of history. The need to avoid the errors of the interwar years, combined with the strategic necessities of the Cold War, resulted in cross-border strategies aimed at achieving higher principals, such as ensuring the unity of western Europe and promoting world peace. Thus, adopting an approach of “building Europe from below” provided a promising way to overcome resentment and division. The origins of certain town-twinning were deeply rooted in the past. Sometimes they were also a continuation of private contacts or of peer group meetings occurring in an economic, cultural and religious context, or at sporting events.

The launching and development of town-twinning during the period known in France as the *Trente Glorieuses* (thirty years of unprecedented growth from 1945 to 1975 following the end of the Second World War), was often subject to a certain number of forces such as ideological antagonisms, demographic growth and economic expansion. In many respects, twinning contributed to the invention of a tradition of interactions and exchanges which are underpinned by the spirit of reconciliation. However, over the years, the thrill of discovery vanished and the symbolic force of shared rituals faded. For many town-twinning, the initial impetus has not been sustained. More importantly, their contribution to the education and intercultural experiences of European youth has diminished significantly and become marginal in most cases. Yet, at the beginning of the 21st century, the Council of European Municipalities and Regions (CEMR) reaffirmed that town-twinning was a “vital means to bring Europe to its citizens” and has continued to appeal ever since, though with mixed success, for a formal reboot of town-twinning. Characteristically enough, the CEMR Representatives and Coordinators Congress held in Antwerp in 2002 stated in its final declaration the role town-twinning can play in the future of an enlarged Europe, without explicitly mentioning proximity or cross-border cooperation; neither did the European Commission’s report assessing the “Europe for Citizens” program (2007–2013) or the mid-term report for the 2014–2020 program term.

Initially and for a very long time, proximity appeared as an insignificant factor when it came to seeking a potential twin city. This seems all the more surprising since logistics might crucially impact the

funding of travels, frequency of encounters, involvement of minors and ultimately the vitality of town-twinning in the long run. This is likely the case given that contacts with foreigners were not an ordinary experience for the majority of European citizens at the time. Until the end of the 1970s, travelling regularly abroad for touristic, cultural purposes or business was only reserved for a certain elite. Moreover, prior to the implementation of the Erasmus program in 1987, studying for a semester or a year in another European country was not standard in most higher education curricula. Therefore, it is no surprise that though the official documentation and the academic literature dealing with the 30 000 or so town-twinings registered by the CEMR may shed some light on historical and chronological aspects of the phenomenon, it hardly engages with its geographical and spatial facets. Thus far, it has been almost impossible to name a considerable synergetic interaction of the aforementioned European programs. Interviews with practitioners of both cross-border cooperation and town-twinning provide a reoccurring explanation. Over time, the technocratic and bureaucratic drift of Interreg has made it practically impossible for smaller twin cities located in the cross-border area to apply for this type of financial support.

It is striking that the Aachen Treaty on Franco-German Cooperation and Integration signed by Emmanuel Macron and Angela Merkel on 22 January 2019 has begun taking these obstacles into consideration. This declaration of intent issued at the highest state level has established a common fund to encourage and support citizen initiatives and town-twinning with the goal of bringing people closer together in cross-border areas located between the two countries. Going forward, it is likely that the number of town-twinings involving cross-border area cities as well as the number and nature of projects they implement together will be scrutinized more than ever, finally resulting in their consideration as valid tools to measure the capacity of European neighbours to develop a common culture of “living together” beyond the single market and EU structural funds.

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Transfrontier Euro-Institut Network (TEIN)

Cross-border obstacles have different roots, such as a lack of knowledge of the “other” (i.e. culture, language, judicial, social, economic or political systems) and a lack of appropriate methodologies for intercultural work. This creates a growing need for specialised training, counselling and support to be adapted to the specific characteristics of each border.

The Transfrontier Euro-Institut Network (TEIN), led by the Euro-Institut, a Franco-German organisation aiming at improving cross-border cooperation through training and consulting based in Kehl, has been formed in 2010 in order to answer this need. TEIN originates from bilateral contacts the Euro-Institut had with several actors at different European Union (EU) borders. In fact, these actors were conscious of the requirements for developing a non-profit offer to support to cross-border actors and wanted to benefit from the experience of the Euro-Institut in order to bring methods and tools to their respective regions. If these bilateral discussions and projects were fruitful, it became obvious that it would represent a clear benefit to gather all these actors in a network to enable multilateral exchanges. In this way, the work accomplished could then become more visible, including at the EU level.

In 2019, TEIN brought together 14 members from 9 border regions in Europe as well as two associated partners, the *Mission opérationnelle transfrontalière* (MOT) in Paris and the Association of European Border Regions (AEBR). Members are universities, research institutes, associations of municipalities and training Centres, working either as cross-border entities or as partners across a border. Their work involves cross-border training and facilitation, managing cross-border projects, providing mentoring and advice for actors as well as studies and research on cross-border issues. Furthermore, TEIN members cover many different kinds of borders including old European borders, new eastern borders, post-conflict borders, maritime borders and external borders (Switzerland). By bringing together different types of organisations from different border regions, the network is able to measure the need for capacity-building in cross-border cooperation throughout Europe and to develop its activities in accordance with local contexts. In addition, the exchange within the network can be enriching in many ways and often leads to innovative solutions for identified problems.

The objectives of TEIN are to build capacity in cross-border contexts, facilitating cross-border cooperation and providing practical solutions

to European cross-border issues. Therefore, TEIN members exchange best practices, capitalize on and draw synergies from the different local initiatives and develop training and research that is “fit for purpose” for cross-border issues. They also work on new products such as transferable training modules, methods or tools and increase knowledge and awareness of cross-border issues at all levels of government. For example, TEIN developed a toolkit for inter-cultural/cross-border project management; it works on a citizen’s engagement project in cross-border territories, organised several conferences on cross-border issues and is involved in several research projects. TEIN also participated actively in the Cross-Border Review launched by the European Commission in 2015, which led to the Commission’s Communication “Boosting Growth and Cohesion in EU Border Regions” adopted on 20 September 2017.

All members have subscribed to a common charter to ensure the organisation of the network and the quality of its output. The challenges TEIN is facing are two-fold: First, if the diversity of its membership provides opportunities for cooperation, it can also mean that it is difficult to find common interests and approaches to certain topics. Second, there is a challenge of funding. TEIN activities are funded to a certain extent by its members and the network regularly applies for EU funding for projects. This way of working has three weaknesses: the difficulty of long-term planning, the very restricted possibility to invest time in taking initiatives or being active as a think tank as well as the difficulty of finding appropriate funding for specific issues, for which there is a demand but no appropriate EU program. While the first challenge might be easy to face, as confidence is growing between members and the work can be organised in “project groups” within the network, the second will remain until TEIN can find appropriated institutional funding or finance its activities in the framework of larger long-term projects.

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Trans-Jura Conference



The Trans-Jura Conference (*Conférence transjurassienne*) aims to foster cross-border collaboration in the Jura region (*Arc jurassien*). This French-speaking region covers a range of medium-altitude mountains and is crossed by a 230 km border between France and Switzerland. In its institutional definition, the Jura region gathers four Swiss cantons (Jura, Neuchâtel, Vaud, northern part of Bern) and four French departments of the Bourgogne Franche-Comté region (Doubs, Jura, Territoire de Belfort, Haute-Saône). It holds a population of 2.4 million individuals. Haute-Saône was removed from this perimeter with the French territorial reform of 2016. The topographic definition of the Jura region is narrower with only 640 000 inhabitants.

The main urban Centres are located in low land areas outside the core of the region (e.g. Besançon, Belfort, Lausanne, Neuchâtel). The region is, thus, mainly rural with some small- and medium-sized cities such as La Chaux-de-Fonds (38 000 inhabitants) and Pontarlier (19 000). The density and demographic growth are globally higher on the Swiss side. A focus on the border shows, however, a higher growth but of low density in French municipalities that attract cross-border commuters. Economically, the Swiss Jura is more dynamic. The region has retained its industrial specialization (about a fourth of the labour force). It exports products worldwide and is highly praised for its watch-making industry, micro technologies and machinery sector (e.g. Swiss-made label).

The border was delineated in 1815 by the Congress of Vienna and has become more porous over the last decades. The most visible phenomenon is the steady growth in cross-border commuting. In 2015, almost 50 000 French residents worked in the four Swiss cantons. They represent more than 40 % of the residents and labour force of some municipalities. Their growth is explained by the Agreement on the Free Movement of Persons between the European Union (EU) and Switzerland (2002), the dynamics of the Swiss economy and salary differentials. Cross-border commuting is almost exclusively dependent on cars which has led to congestion at the few points of entry defined and restricted by topography. The growth in the number of cross-border commuters and their purchasing power, generates a high demand and puts upward pressure on housing prices in the French border areas.

Other forms of mobility are observed. Swiss residents buy goods and services (dental care, optical glasses) in France due to price differentials. To a lesser extent French residents may go to Switzerland to benefit from the variety of services offered in bigger urban Centres. Cross-border residential mobility is rather limited. The Swiss part attracts mainly young and highly educated adults from other French regions than the Jura. Some of them, cross the border at a later stage of their life for the schooling of their children or to access to home ownership in France.

The Jura region faces several challenges given the border and its peripheral location. Cross-border commuting raises the issue of the regulation of motorized traffic and urban sprawl. The specialization in residential economy of the French side (or in productive economy for the Swiss side) may lead to difficulties to retain employees (and respectively customers) and risks of exclusion on the housing (and respectively labour) market(s). Finally, a higher degree of collaboration would be required to

tackle the lack of mutual knowledge and to build a stronger sense of belonging beyond utilitarian considerations such as cost differentials.

Cross-border governance in the region was institutionalised in 1985 with the foundation of the Working Community of the Jura (*Communauté de Travail du Jura*), on the initiative of the cantons of Bern, Jura, Neuchâtel and Vaud as well as of the Franche-Comté region. Initially many studies were carried, but real instances of cross-border collaborations remain few and far apart.

An important study on the urban and economic structure of the Jura region identified a dozen priority actions. It defined four areas of local cooperation that are still used today. These areas are from North to South (see map): Delle-Boncourt, PACTE that is now called Urban Agglomeration of Doubs (*Agglomération urbaine du Doubs*), Mont d'Or-Chasseron and Haut-Jura.

In the 1990s the Working Community of the Jura was asked to address various issues such as education, transportation, agri-tourism, social actions and planning. It relies on working groups that regularly meet and are more or less active. The actions of the Working Community of the Jura notably concern the implementation of a cross-border planning scheme, the technical, legal and financial evaluation of an improvement in train connections, the cooperation between the actors organizing a cross-border feast, the coordination of cross-border itineraries and their markings, and the protection of cross-border grazing.

In the early 2000s cross-border governance began to falter due to a lack of a clear political vision. The arrival of the French State in the Working Community of the Jura (that adopts the new name of *Conférence Transjurassienne*) helped to maintain a dynamic that stayed rather weak. Nevertheless, cross-border collaboration was facilitated by the growing importance of Interreg funds that gave rise to many projects. Cross-border mobility grew fast thanks to the Agreement on the free movement of persons and various differentials due to the presence of the border.

The monitoring of this fast-paced evolution required harmonised data and indicators. In 2005 a statistical observatory (*Observatoire statistique transfrontalier de l'Arc jurassien*) was founded under the supervision of several French and Swiss institutions. Thanks to its regular publications, cross-border collaborations and the subsequent dynamics are better documented. The Working Community of the Jura has since adopted more of a role as initiative coordinator and discussion platform. It addresses

issues related to the cross-border mobility scheme (2009), industrial innovation (2010), the constitution of an institution connecting French and Swiss universities (*Communauté du Savoie*; 2011) and the publication of a tourist guide (*Guide du Routard*; 2014).

2015 marked the beginning of an in-depth reflection based on a wide territorial diagnosis. It led to a renewed strategy on cross-border collaboration. Former themes (such as mobility, economic development, and environment) continue to be of interest. The issues of social cohesion and mutual knowledge is now brought to the fore in the four areas defined in the 1990s. Among them Urban Agglomeration of Doubs has become a Local Grouping for Cross-Border Cooperation. The creation of a support fund for small cross-border projects highlights the move toward a more grass-root steering with new governance that gives priority to reinforced links within the areas of local cooperation and a more marked support to local actors both in public authorities and the civil society. The Working Community of the Jura is now organised around a board (decision-making body), a general secretariat (administration) and a council of cross-border territories (technical consultation platform). The internal organisation relies on two distinctly identified technical entities (arcjurassien.ch and arcjurassien.fr) which unfortunately do not possess the necessary human resources to meet the challenges faced by the Jura region.

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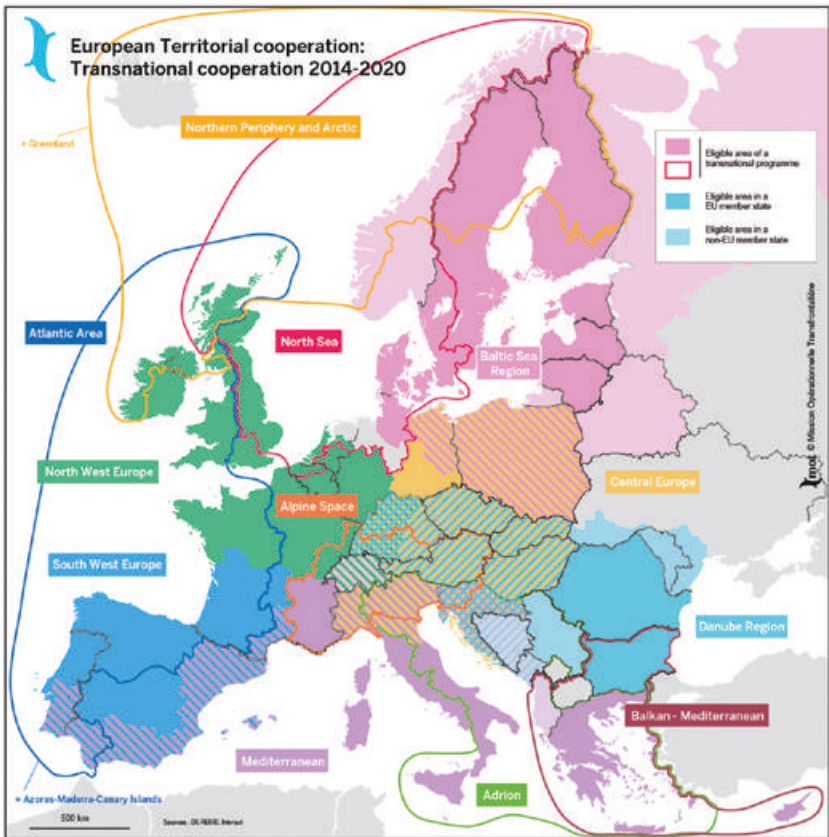
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Transnational Cooperation (TNC)



Transnational Cooperation (TNC) is one of the three strands of the 2014–2020 European Territorial Cooperation (ETC) objective of the European Union (EU)’s Cohesion Policy. ETC (or Interreg) is the financial tool for achieving cohesion in the EU: this tool provides funding for projects which implement structural activities in regions. EU cohesion could be concretely translated into EU-identity, sense of belonging, solidarity, reduction of disparities.

TNC is split up in 15 rather large program areas. They sometimes coincide with a macro-regional strategy (e.g. Danube), sometimes with a sea-basin strategy (e.g. Atlantic) and sometimes they are designed

for parts of EU states that are situated outside of Europe and include large non-European territories (Indian Ocean). Sometimes they are rather new (Central Europe) and sometimes they have a long-standing history formulating territorial challenges: for example, North-West Europe (NWE) has emerged from a cooperation between planners, the so-called the Conference for Spatial Planning in North-Western Europe (CRONWE) which started in 1955. TNC can be seen as one of the results from the debate on European spatial development, which was reflected in the European Spatial Development Perspective (ESDP) in 1999. The definition of the 2000–2006 TNC program strategies, such as the North Sea Region (NSR) and the North West Europe (NWE), were based on the ESDP and selection criteria for projects referred to it. Later, this debate continued as the debate on territorial cohesion reflected in the EU territorial agenda.

Some TNC programs – mainly those with a formalised strategy behind – seem to create a new sub-European identity, for example a “Baltic Sea” identity. A hypothesis exists that such sub-level identities help to create a European identity and a similar idea lies probably behind the cross-border cooperation “micro-regions”, the so-called Euroregions. So far, there is however no evidence for this hypothesis. One could more easily believe the opposite hypothesis, i.e. that the creation of sub-European identities defers people from feeling more “European” and therefore proves to be rather counterproductive.

Each and every EU region is covered by at least one TNC program and most regions are covered by more than one TNC program. As a result, all cross-border cooperation program areas are also covered by at least one TNC program. For example, the NWE program overlaps geographically with 21 other programs, 6 TNC and 15 Cross-Border Cooperation (CBC). On top of that, almost all TNC programs have chosen the same themes to cooperate on and thus don't have a concrete identity based on themes. But the TNC programs support very different activities and demand projects to provide different levels of concreteness and measurability of outputs and results. Some programs support rather substantial budgeted projects, which invest many million euros, for example in the hardware for testing facilities or pilot investments (e.g. in energy efficiency or renewable energy), while others limit the subsidised actions to feasibility studies and rather soft improvements of working ways of (public) institutions, without measuring the on-the-ground-impact for EU citizens. Looking at it from the outside, one would

expect more content related differences between programs or niches. For instance, the NSR program could be expected to support “sea-related” projects and the largely overlapping NWE program to choose a “land-based” approach. However, when looking at projects selected during this and previous program periods, this difference is not at all visible.

If one wants to use the differences between CBC and TNC in order to better define TNC, then one could turn to the report “boosting growth and cohesion in EU border regions”. In an annex, the specificities of CBC programs are illustrated by 239 cross-border cooperation challenges. However, when closely looking at all these challenges, over 90 % of these can equally be qualified as TNC challenges. Most of the mentioned challenges are not just limited to the famous 25 km reach of CBC programs. Many examples look at legal differences, for instance on health or labour. But all these legal differences are due to national laws and therefore relate to the full territory of those countries and not just the 25 km zones around borders. Thus, such territories are more likely to be covered by TNC programs than CBC programs.

And then, projects really don't care under which program they are funded. Very often rejected projects shop around by simply adding or removing a partner to fit another program area. A vast network of consultants is assisting projects to find the best opportunity program. On top of that, there are almost no projects which perfectly cover the program area, be it CBC or TNC: projects are either geographically bigger (e.g. work on a transport corridor over more than 1000 km) or smaller (e.g. the service area of a cross-border hospital). Empirical proof based on approved projects that the program areas are the right level or area is completely lacking. Therefore, the complex and very institutionalised structure of 80 Interreg programs divided over three strands cries out to be reconsidered from what projects need. For, projects don't match geographically with programs and projects identify themselves more with the theme or topic they work on than with the Interreg program that funds them. It is the projects that deliver change, that make the life of people better, that reduce disparities between regions, that create cooperation leading to EU identity, not the programs.

And also, one scale up, the division between strands of CBC, TNC and Interregional Cooperation is not helping the projects much: the difference between CBC and TNC is a confusing artefact constructed by us – the people working in this field. So, it's not the strands that deliver change, nor the programs, it's the projects. Finally, the last scale up, the

strategic policy level, should not be dealt with on program level. Projects combining thematic and territorial expertise are best situated to come up with the best answers to European policy challenges. Limiting the answers to program boundaries has led and will lead to suboptimal and thus less efficient projects, sometimes even leading to increasing disparities.

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Transport

For travellers as well as for goods, crossing the borders of the member states of the European Union (EU) and of other states, whether or not they are on the borders, is essential for economic competitiveness, as well as for the pleasure of travelling. This crossing is carried out in the interests of geopolitical coherence, which is supported by the EU and the border regions. This is all part of the protection of the environment and the fight against Greenhouse Gases (GHG), even though an overwhelming part of transport is carried out by road and therefore gives rise to pollution.

Europe has a long history of merchant tradition, where the trader is the major figure. He is at the same time entrepreneur, banker, insurer, shipowner, landowner and he takes a financial risk. Thanks to the instruments he contributed to create, he succeeded in developing long-term trade. The Hanseatic League was a medieval foreshadowing of trade-based power.

Conversely, until 1945, the establishment of national borders legitimized by the Treaty of Westphalia in 1648 led to the multiplication of administrative harassment, taxes, protectionism and even diplomatic tensions and wars. As early as in 1951, with the creation of the European Coal and Steel Community (ECSC), the founding fathers of the six member states put an end to the frontier-barrier paradigm. In 1957, Art. 75 of the Treaty of Rome proposed the establishment of a Common Transport Policy, which the states accepted only with reluctance, insisting on the introduction of an unanimity rule. From the 1990s onwards, the EU intensified its Transport Policy in response to the new challenges resulting from globalization, the growing congestion of networks, the integration of the countries of central and eastern Europe into the EU and the growing importance of the climate issue.

In the maritime field, with the exception of the United Kingdom, the EU has entered into the landlord port logic, where, since the turn of the millennium, public authorities define a port strategy and entrust business to private companies. In the aviation sector, the Single European Sky (SES) was established in 2004. It guarantees free competition in air transport within the EU and its neighbouring Mediterranean countries, makes control systems interoperable and allows for better traffic management. Low-cost companies were thus able to change the airline industry environment with a strong traffic growth, an integrated European area and flows designed according to the logic of profitability.

Within the EU, the wide-gauge waterways, despite its performance in terms of reduced pollution, remains however a weak element, because of the lack of powerful lobbies who would defend it and because of the environmentalists who are opposed to it. Railways were promoted by the EU Directive 440 of 1991, which aimed to open up the market to competition and make it interoperable. Since 1996, the standards of the European Rail Traffic Management System (ERTMS) have gradually introduced common signalling. National traditions and technical standards must therefore be progressively unified, but each country is moving forward at its own pace on different themes (high-speed rail, regional transport, freight, night trains). In this sense, rail freight is ahead of the game, particularly on the European backbone.

The EU is also trying to shift road traffic to waterways and rail. In 1998, the first Euro-corridors for rail freight between the North Sea and the Mediterranean Sea appeared with the rationalization of customs documents. In 1994, in Essen, the EU announced 14 major infrastructures, of which only three were fully completed (from 2003): in Ireland (railways), Malpensa (the new airport in Milan) and the Öresund Strait (the road and rail bridge/tunnel linking Copenhagen and Malmö) in a cross-border context. In 2013, 9 Trans-European Transport Networks (TEN-T) rail corridors were selected to be completed before 2030. The most advanced is corridor no.1 between the North Sea and the Mediterranean via the new Swiss base tunnels. In 2014, the European Fund for Strategic Investments (EFSI) was provided with a guarantee to raise loans. But the European Commission also refers to infrastructure, ports and alternative fuel distribution network and estimates that the completion of these corridors requires an investment of around 700 billion euros by 2030.

As early as in 1999, the EU hoped to tax heavy goods vehicles. In 2004, Austria was the first country to do so, followed by Germany in 2005, where tolls are levied only on motorways (which are otherwise free of charge) and where lorries are identified by passing through toll gates. However, since 2001, the Swiss have been the forerunners with the performance-related heavy-vehicle fee (*Redevance Poids Lourds liée aux Prestations* (RPLP)). The RPLP is the result of bargaining between the Helvetic Confederation and the EU: the former wants to promote the new rail links through the Alps by taxing heavy goods vehicles, the latter demands freedom of movement. As for France, it abandoned its ecotax

project in 2015, after vigorous protests in certain regions, particularly in Brittany.

In 2011, the European Commission adopted the Transport 2050 Plan, which aims to reduce carbon emissions from transport by 60 % until 2050. By 2030, the EU also intends to halve the number of gasoline and diesel vehicles (private cars, taxis, vans, etc.) and targets their total disappearance from cities in 2050. Over medium distances (i.e. more than 300 km), 50 % of road travels of persons or freight are expected to shift to rail and inland waterways. In addition, the Commission foresees a 40 % reduction in carbon emissions from air and maritime transports thanks to new engines.

Finally, Multi-Level Governance (MLG) allows cross-border regions to replace the cut of the border line with seams. Institutional complexity hinders their projects, but it also offers opportunities. The Upper Rhine Region is the most advanced in this field, for example with the cross-border tramways of Strasbourg-Kehl and Basel, and the only binational airport in the world at Mulhouse-Basel.

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Trinational Eurodistrict of Basel*

Cross-border cooperation has a long tradition in the trinational area of Basel. The Regio Basiliensis was created in 1963, followed by the Regio TriRhena e.V. in 1995 and the *Association pour le développement durable de l'Agglomération Trinationale de Bâle* (ATB), which was renamed in 2007 as the Trinational Eurodistrict of Basel (TEB). By 2018, the TEB had 81 members consisting of 51 Swiss, 16 French and 15 German local authorities. The TEB is an association established according to French law that consists of the following bodies: the assembly, the steering committee that embodies the member's executive power, and the district's council that reflects the legislative power of the Swiss and German members and brings together the representatives of the parliaments of the Swiss Cantons Basel-Stadt and Basel-Landschaft, as well as the county council of the *Landkreis* Lörrach on the German side. On the French side, members of the district's council are mayors or members of communal government.

The aim of TEB is to reinforce the cross-border region of Basel and to promote this trinational region for its inhabitants. The TEB has at its disposal a budget, an administration with three employees and a project manager for each of its projects, all together ensuring the functioning of the TEB, its bodies, and its projects. In 2009, the TEB established a branch according to Swiss legislation, the *Internationale Bauausstellung* (IBA) agency, that manages the International Exhibition of Architecture (IBA Basel 2020), which is involved in about thirty projects that aspire for the IBA-label. The most important ones are "Rhin mon amour", "Active stations" and "3Land". The latter is the largest trinational urban planning cross-border project in Europe, the aim of which is to transform the harbour sites in Basel (Switzerland) and Weil am Rhein (Germany) as well as the industrial site in Huningue (France). The TEB is tasked with the monitoring of the budget and the project secretary. The TEB strives to improve cross-border cooperation in general in the trinational agglomeration of Basel which consists of 850 000 inhabitants, 10 % of which living in France, 30 % in Germany and 60 % in Switzerland.

Since its establishment in 2007, the TEB leads and manages projects that receive funding from the European Union (EU) via the Interreg-program.

* For the map, see article 'Upper Rhine Region'.

The TEB successfully showed through two cost-benefit analysis studies that the construction of the cross-border tramway lines built in 2014 and 2017 and connect Basel-City to Weil am Rhein in Germany and to Saint-Louis in France, were useful and economically feasible.

Other projects cover spatial planning, transportation, and civil society. In ten years, these projects have drained more than 5 million euros of European (Interreg) and Swiss funding through the New Regional Policy (NRP) to the trinational agglomeration of Basel. The TEB leads projects with Interreg V funding, for example “AtmoVision” which aims to improve the air quality or “Passe-partout”, a project encouraging children to learn the neighbour’s language. But it is also involved in several other projects: such as “Vis-à-Vis”, a project for the creation of a cross-border green space in Huningue (France) and Weil am Rhein (Germany) on each side of the bridge that crosses the Rhine and connects both cities or “Trois pays à vélo/Dreilandradsregion”, which seeks to develop the cycling tourism in the trinational agglomeration of Basel and Southern Alsace. The TEB also manages the “Fonds de rencontre”, a fund in order to promote encounters and exchanges between the citizens of the three countries that make up the trinational agglomeration of Basel.

The actual challenges for TEB as an association and as a region are to deepen the cooperation between the local authorities of the three countries with concrete projects, not only in the field of city planning and transportation but also in the field of climate change, health, energy, economic development, culture and sport, etc. To maintain a lively trinational cooperation on the local level is a crucial issue in a context where the French and German governments want to reinforce their bilateral cooperation and where at the same time, there are tense negotiations between Switzerland and the EU about their future cooperation.

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TRITIA



The described territory has an area of 34 069 km² and a population of over 7.8 million. It involves the Opole and Silesia Voivodships from Poland, the Czech Moravian-Silesian region and the Slovak Žilina self-administrative Region. Its population density is rather high with 228 inhabitants per km², twice as much as the European Union (EU) average. On the other hand, its Gross Domestic Product (GDP) of around 12 000 euros per capita makes it far below the EU average. There are two cities with more than 300 000 inhabitants, Katowice (in Poland) and Ostrava (in Czechoslovakia). All of the regional Centers of this European Grouping for Territorial Cooperation (EGTC) are geographically substantially

remote from their respective national capitals, Ostrava, 377 km from Prague and Katowice, 290 km from Warsaw. The core area of TRITIA is a conurbation around Katowice and Ostrava with a population of 5.3 million. Whereas the Silesian Voivodship and Moravian-Silesian Region represent the urban and densely populated part of the EGTC, the Opole Voivodship and the Žilina Region are its more rural part.

Heavy industry with coal mining and steel production has been since long the main economic activity in the cross-border region. But all of the regions involved have been undergoing economic reconstruction; the manufacturing industry, made up of mainly automotive, has newly emerged. Cooperating partners are tied by many socio-economic relations, such as the production chains in the automotive industry. Major economic centres or metropolis are missing on the TRITIA territory. This is why there is no substantial cross-border labour market or cross-border flow of commuters in the TRITIA regions. This leads to an absence of specialized structures catering to the cross-border labour market. Except for Ostrava, which is situated on Czech-Polish borders, all of the bigger cities are geographically at least one hour's journey by car from the borders.

The cross-border cooperation in the Czech-Polish-Slovak border regions is an example of close partnership between the new EU member states with their post-communist history. It involves the Opole and Silesia Voivodships from Poland, the Czech Moravian-Silesian Region and the Slovak Žilina self-administrative Region. It is an area where three West-Slavic languages are spoken, with the addition of the Silesian dialect being used in most of the Polish and southern part of the Czech TRITIA territory. Czech and Slovak are easily mutually understood. While there are less similarities with Polish, the language barrier is still rather minor. Thanks to a common history and the Velvet Divorce of Czechoslovakia, there are excellent relations between the Czechs and the Slovaks. Despite the consequences of the Czechoslovak-Polish border conflict in 1920, which still influences the relations between Czechia and Poland, the relations between Czechs, Slovaks and Poles are very good.

The process of the TRITIA creation started in 2009, when the economic crisis was first felt. This crisis was more severe in the “old EU 15” than in Poland, the Czech Republic and Slovakia. For the Czech and Slovak regions, it was beneficial to intensify cooperation with their Polish partners, to allow high growth rates and access the economy of the Silesian Voivodeship with its 5 million inhabitants. The primary motivation for

establishing the EGTC, however, was the possibility that it might have a significant role in the administration or at least for the use of EU funds. A first cross-border initiative between Poland, Slovakia and the Czech Republic was initiated in the second half of the 1990s. It mainly involved municipalities of middle and smaller size. This Euroregional initiative offered the opportunity to cooperate within national ministries on the management of European funds. This share of competences is still in place today.

However, the formation of TRITIA as an EGTC encountered a very hesitant welcome from national authorities and a direct refusal from the Euroregions. This was due to the EGTC's flat structure (classified under the Nomenclature of Territorial Units for Statistics (NUTS) 3 self-administrative regions), ignoring other vertical public administration levels as well as economic actors and civic society organisations and accompanied by unhidden ambition to have more control over the funds for cross-border cooperation.

The process of the TRITIA establishment was as a simple application of the top-down principle. Despite the players at lower than regional levels declaring their interest in joining the action towards the creation of TRITIA, their voices had been ignored for a lengthy period. This, jointly with a very low level of communication between national levels, created a hostile environment which was not favourable to the new cross-border cooperation actors. Therefore, the founding process itself was very slow and the working group members encountered many difficulties at the national administration level in all three counties. The only exception seemed to be the Slovak Government, which, due to the functional co-operation between southern Slovakia and Hungary, had some experience with this legal form which was not the case for both the Polish and the Czech Governments facing their first experience of managing an EGTC. The EGTC was finally founded according to the Polish legislation and its seat was situated in Cieszyn, a town located on the Czech-Polish border.

Globally, the main TRITIA ambition stayed to act as a managing authority of its own trilateral Interreg program for the 2014–2020 period. Despite the European Commission verbally supporting this cooperation, the national authorities from Poland and the Czech Republic, underpinned by Euroregions which were controlled by the municipalities, did not allow this to happen. Once it was clear that the EGTC would not play a major role in the administration of Interreg

programs, the founding regions lost much of their enthusiasm. They have continued in supporting EGTC financially, as each region pays an annual contribution of 22 000 euros which enables TRITIA to employ staff (currently 3 people) and implement projects. However, the objectives have not really been fulfilled. Therefore, TRITIA's potential remains unexploited and there are some indications that one of the founders, the Opole Region, might leave the EGTC. This may lead to the gradual dissolution of the cooperation entity.

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Tyrol – South Tyrol – Trentino Euroregion*

The territory of the European region “South Tyrol, Tyrol and Trentino” was part of the county of Tyrol for centuries, later being subdivided into two national states, and finally reaggregated within the context of the European Union.

Tyrol, South Tyrol and Trentino as the country of Tyrol fell under the Habsburg Monarchy from 1363 to 1918. With the end of the First World War, South Tyrol and Trentino were annexed to Italy. A few years later, the fascist government led by Benito Mussolini forced the population of South Tyrol to assimilate to the Italian culture resulting in the German language and traditions being suppressed violently. After the Second World War, new democratic political forces on both sides of the border made an effort to normalise the relationship. In 1946, the foreign minister of Austria, Karl Gruber, and the Prime Minister of Italy, Alcide De Gasperi, signed a treaty which established legislative and executive autonomy for this region, a special arrangement to facilitate frontier exchange between Italy and Austria while also ensuring the preservation of cultural identity and customs of the German-speaking population.

Throughout the 1970s any remaining political friction diminished following the ratification of a new Austro-Italian treaty, the Agreement on the Second Statute of Autonomy including Implementation Measures, adopted 31 August 1972. At the same time, the establishment of the Association of Alpine States (Arge Alp) in 1972 also favoured a context to foster cooperation.

The Euroregion has since profited from the increased attention paid to cross-border cooperation which ensued from the Madrid Outline Convention and the establishment of European Territorial Cooperation. In the early 1990s, the first steps toward a closer political cooperation between the local parliaments of Tyrol, South Tyrol, and Trentino took place, culminating in an agreement on cross-border collaboration between Austria and Italy enforced in 1995. Since then, intergovernmental work among the regions has been growing constantly, deepening in terms of the weight of joint decision making and broadening policy fields included in the cooperative design. 1995 also marked the year that Austria entered the European Union (EU), (Italy being a founding member of the EEC had already joined) allowing for the institutional relations between Italy

* For the map, see article ‘Italy’.

and Austria to take advantage of the process of European integration. This helps regions, national states, and the EU interact according to new rules and benefits from new opportunities on cross-border cooperation.

The relationship among Trentino, South Tyrol, and Tyrol strengthened further from 2009 – 2011 with the establishment of a European Grouping of Territorial Cooperation (EGTC), the European Region Tirol-South Tyrol-Trentino. The Euroregion strives to facilitate cross-border cooperation in various policy fields: communication, culture, youth, research, welfare, environment, health, transport, economy, labour. Relevant aspects for the EGTC are also specific issues related to the mountain environment, such as the protection of alpine nature, the promotion of sustainable mobility, the promotion of alpine products, and the sustainable management of tourism and energy.

To better promote the values linked to the Alpine environment, the Euroregion Trentino, South Tyrol and Tyrol is also involved in EU Strategy for the Alpine Macro-Region EUSALP, a macroregional strategy established since 2015 to achieve economic, social and territorial cohesion in the alpine area, covering 48 regions in Austria, France, Germany, Italy, Liechtenstein, Slovenia and Switzerland. This double role of the Euroregion bestows it a pivotal position to reach its objectives in the framework of cooperation within the Alpine region.

The ultimate goal of the European Region Tyrol-South Tyrol-Trentino is to foster regional development jointly, creating cooperative ties between public and private sectors within the cross-border region.

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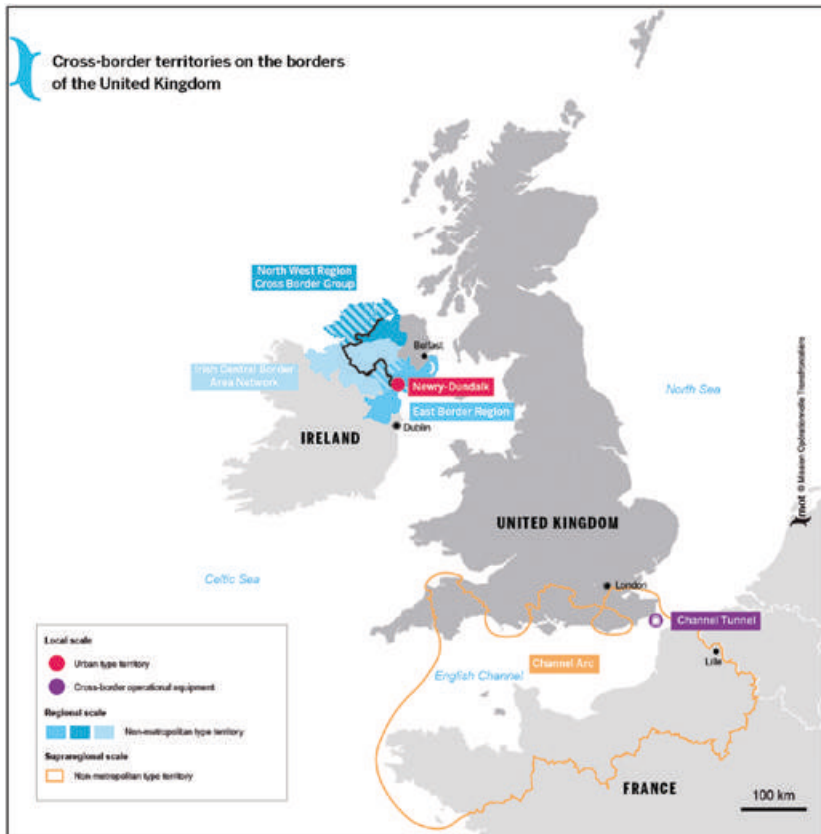
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United Kingdom



The United Kingdom (UK) joined the European Economic Community (EEC) in 1973, together with Ireland and Denmark. This EEC enlargement resulted in the establishment of the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) in 1975, which was necessary partially because in the UK, several industrial areas (including the Midlands, Yorkshire and Wales) were undergoing serious crises. It mainly led to one of the first two objectives of regional policy being laid down: to provide retraining in crisis areas. Despite the existence of the Channel Tunnel since 1993, the UK is still separated from its neighbours by maritime borders: from Ireland by the Irish Sea and from continental Europe by

the Channel and the North Sea. These physical barriers mean that large distances have to be crossed and costly infrastructure (ports, bridges, tunnels, etc.) is needed to do so. However, the UK maintains close cooperation with France, but also with Belgium and the Netherlands, so as to ensure the management of ship traffic in the Dover strait linking the Channel and the North Sea, one of the busiest maritime routes in the world.

The UK was the second most highly populated country in the EU in 2019. With 66.4 million inhabitants, its population is slightly higher than that of France and like this latter, the state has been a long time in the making, starting in the 13th century with the consolidation of royal government. Although densely populated (260 inhabitants per km²), population densities vary considerably across the country. Scotland, in the northern part of the UK, accounts for a third of the area but only 8 % of the total population. Its capital is one of the most populous cities in Europe and is the leading financial centre in the world.

The UK is also one of the main political powers in Europe: it has played a major part in its modern history by systematically trying to prevent the emergence of a continental power which might have rivalled its status as a leading sea power, which it has progressively acquired since the 17th century. Apart from it being an “island”, the UK has various original characteristics: it is the result of the gathering of several national entities which have each preserved their singularities. Wales was integrated in 1536, after two centuries of English occupation. The kingdom of Scotland used to be independent although several kings of Scotland also became kings of England, starting from 1603. The Act of Union between the Parliaments of these two states was signed in 1707, thus creating the UK. Ireland was integrated in 1801 but obtained its independence more than a century later.

Besides, several territories enjoy a specific status. The Isle of Man, in the Irish Sea and the Channel Islands, close to the French coasts, are direct dependencies of the Crown. Because of their “self-governing” autonomous status, they are not part of the UK nor of the European Union (EU), though they are members of its customs union, while their residents, as British citizens, are not submitted to its rules on free circulation. Gibraltar, a British enclave in Spain, close to the strait of the same name, was its only overseas territory to be part of the EU without belonging to the customs union. The other overseas territories, islands and archipelagos situated in different maritime areas, like the Caribbean,

the Atlantic, the Indian or the Pacific Ocean, were never members of the EU. And yet, as Overseas Countries and Territories (OCTs) of the EU, they benefited from the help of ERDF.

Like France, but in a very different manner, the UK has kept a privileged relation with many territories out of Europe because of its former colonial power. Colonisation, which started in America in the 16th century, then went on in India in the 17th and later reached Africa in the 19th, resulted in the creation of the Commonwealth in 1931, while the process of decolonization had already started. This organisation, now gathering 53 states of widely different sizes (including India and Tuvalu), gathers 2.4 billion inhabitants. Its aim is to favour exchanges between its member countries, which supposedly share a common history and to reinforce economic and cultural links. The institution is meant to promote and propagate human rights and democracy and it is also a means for the UK to preserve its status as a major power all over the world. Furthermore, though sovereign for several decades already, some former colonies still have the Queen of England as their Chief of state: this is the case for Canada, Australia and Papua New Guinea. Finally, the UK owns two military bases in Cyprus, on which it has full sovereignty. It should also be added that during EEC/EU membership the UK had negotiated opt-out options to several Community policies. Like Ireland, it was not part of the common space of freedom, security and justice and therefore did not belong to the Schengen Area. Neither was it part of the Economic and Monetary Union, like Denmark and Sweden: the preservation of the Sterling as national currency was related to the desire to retain London's power as a financial centre. The opt-out option finally also concerned the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the EU.

The most problematic border for the UK is the 499 km long one separating it from the Republic of Ireland. It is the result of the latter's independence process and the partition of the island. The relation between the two states has been marked by a conflict, which, between 1968 and 1998, caused more than 3000 casualties and injured many people. Various attempts to resolve it having failed, a cease-fire was concluded in 1994, but only after the Good Friday Agreement had been signed in 1998, did the tensions begin to subside. The agreement allowed to create common institutions for the whole island and to adopt a new statute of autonomy for Northern Ireland, linked with a "communitisation" of functions and political power. Besides, the agreement stipulated that the status of Northern Ireland could change if a majority of the population

was favourable, which opened the possibility of a reunification of the island. The document also provided for the recognition of a victim status and a demilitarisation of the border. The general appeasement reflected a normalisation of the border within the EU, even though it was only in 2008 that armed groups laid down their weapons and Belfast is still divided by “peacelines”, i.e. walls separating nationalist and unionist neighbourhoods.

During the period 2014–2020, the UK was engaged in four Interreg B transnational cooperation programs: the North-West Europe Program, involving eight European countries including Switzerland and Ireland, the aim of which is to strengthen economic growth, enhance innovation and disseminate knowledge; the Atlantic Area Program, which links regions in France, Portugal and Spain, and counties in Ireland and the UK; the North Sea Region Program, which links six countries in addition to the UK; and the Northern Periphery Program, which also includes Ireland and four Scandinavian countries. The UK was also included in four Interreg A cross-border programs, two with continental partners to the east and two with Ireland to the west. The France (Channel)-England Program links regions in the south of the UK and north-western France. The Interreg A Two Seas Program links the same English counties with the *Hauts-de-France* region in France and some Belgian and Dutch provinces. Both programs focus on economic growth through research and innovation, the development of a sustainable, low-carbon economy and environmental issues. There is also a third specific program in place linking the counties in eastern Ireland with the coastal counties in Wales which covers the same major issues. Two programs then relate specifically to Scotland and Northern Ireland: they are the Program for Northern Ireland, the Border Region of Ireland and Western Scotland, and the Ireland-United Kingdom (Wales) Program. In addition to the objectives described above, the first program also focuses on transport and social issues.

The UK was also involved in the think tank for the North Sea Basin, which it was hoped would produce a development strategy exploiting the potential of sea areas while protecting them against environmental pressures. In contrast, the UK has few cross-border cooperation bodies although the fixed link between the UK and France has brought about stronger relations and has increased exchanges between the countries. The Cross-Channel Euroregion was set up in 1987 under a memorandum of understanding, originally between the French region

of Nord-Pas-de-Calais and the English county of Kent. They were joined by the three Belgian regions in 1991, namely Wallonia, Flanders and the Brussels Region. This was one of the first cross-border cooperation bodies to be set up with the legal status of a European Economic Interest Grouping (EEIG). Although economic development was one of its main objectives, it also gave rise to cultural projects and socio-economic studies. However, not all the partners were equally involved in the structure and the EEIG was finally dissolved in 2004.

Two cooperation projects have been set on a formal footing. First, the Channel Arc was set up in 2003, linking British counties and French regions across the English Channel, in order to formulate a maritime area strategy within the framework of EU Maritime Policy predicated on improving accessibility, developing competitive centres, identifying resources and putting governance in place to ensure sustainable resource management. However, not all coastal counties are involved in this cooperation, which was created in the form of the Channel Arc Manche Assembly in 2005. Second, the Network Of STRAits (NOSTRA) project launched by the County of Kent and the Department of Pas-de-Calais in 2010 was designed to create a network of the local authorities bordering several straits in Europe. Fifteen local authorities bordering eight straits have set up a partnership with the aim of getting European and national institutions to recognise the specific nature of these geographical areas. This network of local authorities also works to promote cooperation based on shared experiences in fields such as economic development, transport networks and resource conservation. All these forms of cooperation could be compromised by the UK's withdrawal from the EU.

The UK's decision to leave the EU is an unprecedented case of a state pulling out of a regional organisation. The withdrawal on 31 January 2020 was the subject of difficult negotiations and the necessary construction of new relations between the UK and the EU can be compared with a process of border reconstruction.

The idea of a referendum about EU membership was initiated during the 2015 General Election campaign by the Conservative Prime Minister David Cameron. Once re-elected, David Cameron used the referendum as a means to pressure the European Commission in order to renegotiate the involvement of the UK in the EU. Four points were discussed: economic governance, competitiveness, sovereignty and immigration. The British government considered that the results of this negotiation did not fulfil its expectations and, therefore, the referendum

took place on 23 June 2016. The referendum campaign essentially focused on the question of migration and the perspective of the UK regaining full sovereignty. Against all odds, 51.7 % of voters were in favour of Brexit. The main Remainer areas were the big cities, London coming first, and Scotland. Following the referendum, David Cameron, who had been on the Remainer side, resigned and Home Secretary Teresa May became Prime Minister in 2016. However, the letter asking for Article 50 of the EU Treaty to be activated, which launched the process of withdrawal, was only submitted on 29 March 2017. Brussels designated Michel Barnier as negotiator for the EU in order to conclude a global agreement for an ordered withdrawal of the UK with a transition period, which was assumed a fundamental condition in order to elaborate a framework for future relations. However, within the main two parties in Westminster, profound disagreements existed between Brexiteers and Remainers, which did not make it easy to reach a common position.

A first discussion point was the financial contribution of the UK. The British part in the 2019 and 2020 EU budgets had to be negotiated in accordance with previous involvement. A solution was found in December 2018, with a global amount of about 45 billion euros to be paid by the UK: it resorted to a calculation method, which would allow for a recalculation once the final agreement is established. The status of citizens was a second point: roughly 1.2 million British citizens live in other member states of the EU, while more than 3.6 million EU citizens live in the UK. In March 2019, the two parties managed to agree on a temporary statute, which would allow for citizens to keep all Community provisions until December 2020. From 1 January 2021, EU citizens having lived in the UK for more than five years, will obtain a right of permanent residence. Similarly, British citizens are assimilated with other citizens of member states if they reside in one of them. A third discussion point concerns the legal system, which should apply in case of a commercial conflict between an EU member state and the UK. Based on its newly recovered sovereignty, the UK first claimed its own Court of Justice should intervene as much as the EU Court of Justice (ECJ), but eventually accepted the arbitration of the ECJ.

Finally, maintaining an open border between the UK and the Republic of Ireland became an essential bargaining issue, while it had been largely ignored during the referendum campaign. The Irish Republic and the EU wanted to avoid the recreation of a material border between the two Irelands, since they feared a renewal of tensions between Northern

Irish communities. The withdrawal of the UK from the customs union and the single market might result in the reintroduction of tariff and regulatory barriers and the implementation of new controls. The EU therefore suggested the creation of a “backstop” to keep Northern Ireland within a common regulatory area until a permanent solution can be found. This solution was opposed by the UK, because it questioned its territorial integrity.

When it was submitted to the British Parliament, the agreement negotiated between the EU and the UK in Autumn 2018 was rejected by a majority of Members of Parliament, which made it necessary to postpone the withdrawal date to 29 March 2019, and then again to 12 April. A few weeks later, the agreement was resubmitted in Parliament and failed again. In July 2019, the Prime Minister resigned and was replaced by Boris Johnson. After some stalling, the negotiations restarted and resulted in a compromise after the meeting of the British and Irish Premiers, Leo Varadkar and Boris Johnson, on 10 October 2019. The document recommended that Northern Ireland should form a common regulatory area with the EU, with the same production standards. At the same time, Ulster should be part of the British custom union and apply the same Value Added Tax (VAT) rates. Controls would effectively take place between Northern Ireland and the rest of the UK, no border being created between the two Irelands. Having a constitutional veto on the withdrawal agreement once implemented, the Northern Irish Parliament would be consulted on the matter every four years. To prevent any single party from deciding for the whole population, the veto right would only apply if supported by several parties.

The European Council of 17 and 18 October 2019 validated the new agreement, which takes up 80 % of the arrangement of the previous text. Its rejection by Westminster on 19 October 2019 meant a new postponement of the withdrawal date, from 31 October to 31 January 2020, and prompted Boris Johnson to dissolve the Parliament. The 12 December General Election gave a majority to the Conservative Party and Boris Johnson was reappointed as Prime Minister. The agreement between the EU and the UK was finally adopted on 20 December 2019 by the British Parliament. The withdrawal of the UK thus becomes effective on 31 January 2020 and the two parties have until 31 December 2020 to negotiate a permanent agreement. Many points are still in abeyance, like the question of standards. The EU is concerned that the UK might adopt less constraining standards, a positioning and differentiation strategy that

would give the UK a comparative advantage in several economic sectors. The signing of the future agreement will eventually raise the question of the kind of cooperation which the UK plans to have with the EU, the latter having asserted during various European Councils that it wanted the links to be as close as possible. Beyond economic and trade relations, social and environmental dimensions are also at stake. The issue of defence, which is not an exclusive competence of the EU, is equally important, since the UK is the second military power in Europe after France and therefore appears as a major player in any discussion of European defence or a potential reorganisation of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO). Also, internally, the British withdrawal from the EU might heighten tensions. Apart from the question of a possible reunification of the two Irelands, the question of Scottish independence might also reappear. It was first raised by a referendum on 18 September 2014, when a clear majority rejected independence with more than 55 % of the vote, with a voter turnout of 84 %. The Scottish government and a majority of the population were actually in favour of staying within the EU. A new referendum could be demanded and new conflicts might appear if the British government does not answer positively. Building a new relation between the EU and the UK might have as a consequence the emergence of new borders leading to a territorial reconfiguration of the UK.

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Upper Rhine Region



Located alongside the Rhine, this region covers bordering territories of three States: France (Departments of Haut-Rhin and Bas-Rhin), Germany (Baden and South Palatinate) and Switzerland (cantons of Basel-Stadt, Basel-Landschaft, Aargau, Solothurn and Jura). The region is densely populated (282 inhabitants / km²) and presents a polycentric urban organisation with no dominant metropolis: each urban Centre is located in the middle of a set of labour pools which, because of the proximity of the cities connected by a dense transport system, are closely intertwined with one another. With a Gross Domestic Product (GDP) of 245.1 billion Euro (2014), the region is among the wealthiest in Europe,

although there is a real asymmetry between the various components of the region, which encourages intense cross-border commuter flows (97 000 in 2016).

The region has long been an area of contact between the Roman and Germanic cultures, but it has also been largely marked by war and conflict. Torn between France and Germany, Alsace has thus changed its national affiliation several times. National constructions and the gradual erection of a border since the Treaty of Westphalia (1648), have long called into question the pre-existing linguistic and cultural coherence. Switzerland, for its part, succeeded in remaining outside the conflicts of the 20th century, thanks to its neutral status.

Franco-German cooperation started after the Second World War, within the context of Franco-German reconciliation. As early as in 1946, a binational Franco-Swiss airport was built between Basel and Mulhouse. Between 1950 and 1960, several twinings between French and German municipalities then came into being. However, the true starting point for cross-border cooperation was the year 1963, with both the signing of the Élysée Treaty affirming Franco-German reconciliation on an international, bilateral scale and the foundation of the *Regio Basiliensis* in Basel, a Swiss private association aiming at stimulating economic cooperation with its German and French neighbours, at the local level. The activism of the latter, which involved contacts with foreign institutions in neighbouring countries, worried however the French State, for which this “small foreign policy” was clearly going beyond the competences of local authorities.

From then on, four phases of cooperation can be identified, each of which leading to a new structure of the cross-border area and the involvement of new actors.

An institutionalisation phase characterized the 1970s. It started with the Intergovernmental Treaty of Bonn, adopted on 22.10.1975 and initiated by the French government wishing to legalize and to control cross-border cooperation. It defined a limited territory for cross-border cooperation and set up an Intergovernmental Commission as well as two regional committees (a Franco-German-Swiss one for the south and another Franco-German one for the north), but it left enough room for any thematic orientation. The creation of the Upper Rhine Franco-German-Swiss Conference in 1991, resulting from the merger of the two regional committees, also allowed for the participation of the Alsace Region and the two French Departments. Thanks to the Basel Treaty

(20.09.2000) revising the Bonn Agreement and extending the Swiss part to three new cantons, the Conference has become the central governance structure for cross-border cooperation.

The French decentralization (1982), which strengthened the powers of local and regional authorities, introduced a new phase of cooperation: that of regionalization. A new cooperation mechanism was indeed launched: a biennial Tripartite Congress, which would be organised alternately in one of the three bordering States, in order to discuss a specific theme of cooperation and to develop joint projects. In addition, from 1976 onwards, regular meetings were taking place between elected regional representatives, bringing together parliamentarians from Baden-Württemberg and from the Regional Council of Alsace. In 1997, this framework was used to found the Upper Rhine Council as a 'parliamentary complement' to the executive Upper Rhine Conference. Composed of 71 local and regional elected representatives from France, Germany and Switzerland, it pursued the main objective of political coordination and advice.

The third phase of cooperation, the Europeanization, started in 1990 when the European Commission proposed a Community initiative which later became the so-called Interreg program. The latter was tested in the northern Franco-German part of the Upper Rhine region called "Pamina". The Upper Rhine Interreg was therefore divided into two programs (Pamina and Centre-South) which were maintained during the first three phases of Interreg before finally being merged in 2007. More than 500 projects have been carried out in a wide range of fields. They respond to many regional needs: the necessity to pool equipment or services (university cooperation, Franco-German nursery, tri-national museum-pass), to strengthen links and communication (creation of cross-border bicycle paths, construction of bridges and railways), to promote innovation (network in neuroscience), to create cross-border "places" such as the "garden of two banks" or common structures which aim at facilitating the exchange of information and mutual understanding of the respective political and administrative systems. These structures address both citizens of the cross-border region, be it cross-border workers (*Informations- und Beratungs-Stelle* (INFOBEST)) or consumers (European Consumer Centre), and cross-border administrations and actors (Euro-Institute).

From 2000 onwards, cross-border cooperation has then been entering into a phase of metropolization, including both the creation of a new local level of cooperation and a greater rationalization of cross-border governance

at regional level. At the 40th anniversary of the Elysée Treaty in 2003, the French and German states launched indeed the idea of a Strasbourg-Ortenau Eurodistrict, which was set up first by a convention signed in 2005 and then implemented in 2010 as one of the first European Grouping of Territorial Cooperation (EGTC). This innovative project is introduced, for the first time, the concept of a “common space of management and life for border citizens”. Three other Eurodistricts were consequently founded: one in Freiburg/Centre and Sud Alsace, the Trinational Eurodistrict of Basel (ETB) and one in the PAMINA region. In 2008, this local level was finally associated to the institutional cooperation framework: at the 11th Tripartite Congress in Strasbourg, where the idea of a “Trinational Metropolitan Region” (RMT/TMO) was launched, for the first time the main cities of the Upper Rhine Region signed the final declaration, alongside regional and national authorities. The RMT/TMO was established in 2010, not as a new institution, but as a framework for structuring the multi-scalar governance system in the region. Its aim was to better coordinate the existing cross-border institutions that had until then been little interconnected, mainly by setting up four “pillars” of cooperation: politics, science, economy and civil society.

In conclusion, the Upper Rhine constitutes an original “model” cross-border region, due to several factors: its tri-national character, the presence of Switzerland which is not a member of the European Union (EU), the Franco-German cooperation which began with a reconciliation process and was then extended to other aspects, the length of cooperation and the involvement of all institutional actors at various scales, who have demonstrated a great capacity for innovation, have developed many projects and have founded several cooperation structures.

Overall, however, cross border cooperation in the Upper Rhine Region presents a mixed picture. There are redundancies between the multiple governance structures, reflecting difficulties in coordination. Cross-border integration is also only partial, because the whole population does not share the idea of a common identity of the “Upper Rhine” and because cooperation remains essentially the business of institutional actors. Moreover, the decline in bilingualism, the crises of European Integration and the growth of Euroscepticism, the resurgence of nationalism and the return of border controls that reinforce the idea of separation are all factors that hamper the project of a common cross-border region.

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Via Carpatia*

The Via Carpatia European is a Grouping for Territorial Cooperation (EGTC) which has been established in 2013 by the Košice Region and Borsod-Abaúj-Zemplén County, along the eastern border section of Slovakia and Hungary, with a seat in Košice, the second largest city in Slovakia. The grouping covers an area of 14 000 km² and is home to almost 1.5 million inhabitants.

The name Via Carpatia is derived from the historical route connecting the Baltic Sea and the Aegean Sea. One of the major strategic goals of the EGTC is to support the integration of this transit route into the Trans-European Networks of Transport (TEN-T). For this purpose, the grouping carries out a wide range of activities; from networking, through planning to the organisation of professional events for managing cross-border cooperation.

The main goal of the EGTC is to enhance cross-border economic and social cohesion, especially through the realization of projects and programs. Since its establishment, the grouping has implemented several projects in the field of tourism and regional planning supported by the Hungarian Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade and by the Ministry of Transport, Construction and Regional Development of the Slovak Republic.

In 2017, the EGTC has submitted several projects to different calls, e.g. to Interreg Europe, Interreg Danube transnational program, to the DG REGIO Call, or the Hungary-Slovakia-Romania-Ukraine European Neighbourhood-Instrument (ENI) cross-border cooperation program. The most important project is the Territorial Action Plan for Employment (TAPE) of the Cserehát micro-region implemented within the framework of the Interreg V-A Slovakia-Hungary cross-border cooperation program. The region of the action plan is identical to the rural area situated between Košice and Miskolc, the largest Hungarian city involved in the cooperation and includes 75 Hungarian and 26 Slovak municipalities. The overall objective of the action plan is to reduce the unemployment rate in the micro-region by re-establishing the “Beautiful Cserehát” cross-border micro-region and exploiting its endogenous potential local production.

* For the map, see article ‘Carpathian Euroregion’.

The EGTC has an outstanding role in the Interreg V-A Slovakia-Hungary cross-border cooperation program. Specifically, it manages the Small Project Fund (SPF) to which eligible applicants within the target area can apply directly for project funding. The SPF supports projects to strengthen social cohesion.

Beside its project and program developing activities, the grouping offers also business services both directly and through its company (*Jövő Útja kft.* – Road to the Future Ltd.), located in Miskolc. The key services include advisory-consulting in the field of regional development, preparation of joint development strategies in employment and social welfare, agricultural production support, tourism, promotion and preservation of cultural heritage.

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West-Vlaanderen/Flandre-Dunkerque-Côte d’Opale*

The European Grouping of Territorial Cooperation (EGTC) West-Vlaanderen / Flandre-Dunkerque-Côte d’Opale follows the Franco-Belgian coastline for 200 km from Berck-sur-Mer to Brugge via Boulogne, Calais, Dunkerque and Oostende. Due to its complex name, which refers to its geographical perimeter, it is sometimes called the “littoral EGTC”.

Its territorial structure is comprised of three elements: the English Channel with its beaches and sizeable harbours, a land stripe of very low altitude, and finally, the suburbs of the thriving cities of Gent and Lille. The two countries are marked by significant differences in land and landscape use, as well as employment and economic structures. While on the French side, rural and natural areas coexist alongside the numerous industrial sites, the more densely populated and urbanized Flemish side lacks free spaces. In the current post-industrial era, the activities of both the industrial and fishing sectors located on the French side have declined, leading to a high unemployment rate. Contrastingly, Flemish cities like Brugge, Oostende and Kortrijk offer employment opportunities in the secondary and tertiary sectors.

The cross-border territory has a common Flemish history. Dutch is the official language in the province of West-Vlaanderen on the Belgian side. The Flemish influence is also noticeable in the French Flanders, especially in the region of Westhoek, where the Dutch dialect spoken has left traces in the villages’ toponymy (Hazebrouck, Hondshoote, Steenvoorde, Watten, Wormhout...). Despite these strong geographical and cultural continuities, the cultural division along the border is growing. In fact, language itself remains a barrier along this border. There are multiple indications of this, such as job Centres offering Dutch classes and the fact that cross-border meetings require bilingual translation.

In the 1970s, the *Communauté urbaine de Dunkerque* and the *West-Vlaamse Intercommunale* started an informal cooperation in the fields of spatial planning and economic development. This resulted in a progressive institutionalisation of the cross-border cooperation along the coastline.

* For the map, see article ‘French-Belgian Border’: map ‘France-Belgium Border Region’.

This initiative was supported by: the agreement between the *Département du Nord* and the *Provincie West-Vlaanderen* in 1989, the introduction of Interreg programs, the Brussels agreement between France and Belgium in 2002, and by the works of the “Franco-Belgian Inter-parliamentary Working Group” in 2005. With the support of the influential mayor of Dunkerque, Michel Delebarre, the “Cross-Border Platform West-Vlaanderen / Flandres-Dunkerque-Côte d’Opale” was founded in 2005. In 2009, it grew into a European Grouping of Territorial Cooperation including all levels of government from both sides.

British partners from Kent and Dover declined invitations to join the EGTC. Thus, the Cross-Channel cooperation’s logic remains based on *ad hoc* projects outside of the EGTC, for example in the “European Straits Initiative.” Even if the Schengen area has never included the United Kingdom, the Brexit is a geostrategic challenge for the EGTC because it will be located next to a new external border of the European Union (EU).

The EGTC successfully networks political and economic actors as well as citizens. Its office is located in the border city of Veurne and offers horizontal participation in workshops and conferences. The EGTC follows a pragmatic approach, and as such focuses on project implementation and partner mediation. Starting with the fields of culture, tourism and environment, the team of two delegates – together with thematic working groups – supported more technical projects such as access to health services, joined risk and water management of the polders, a bilingual lexicon on spatial planning and a map of public transportation on the Franco-Belgian coastline.

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Working Community of the Pyrenees*

The Pyrenees have always been the ideal place for exchanges between communities from either side of the mountain range resulting in the local populations developing a joint custom of collaboration for the betterment of the region. Long before 1659, the year the border was drawn, the good relationship between these neighbours made it possible to establish local agreements known as “*lies et passeries*” or “*faceries*”. These treaties referred to the right to use pastures, water and wood, as well as mutual protection in the event of conflicts or health problems. These were applied across the Pyrenees mountain range as early as the 14th century.

Subsequently, these age-old cross-border relations in the Pyrenees led to the establishment of the Working Community of the Pyrenees (CTP), from its French, Spanish, Occitan and Catalan initials in 1983, at the instigation of the Council of Europe. The CTP hoped to create a cross-border cooperation organisation in the heart of the Pyrenees with headquarters located in Jaca, Aragon. Its territory covers 254 680 km² and includes a population of nearly 23.2 million individuals.

In 1995, the Treaty of Bayonne, on cross-border cooperation between local authorities, was signed by French and Spanish regional governments to promote cross-border cooperation in an area that extends for 250 km on either side of the Pyrenees. Then, the treaty concerned the Spanish autonomous communities of the Basque Country, Navarre, Aragon and Catalonia, and the French regions of Aquitaine, Midi-Pyrénées and Languedoc-Roussillon.

In 2005, the CTP was equipped with a Consortium, a legal entity under Spanish law, offering a new impetus for action, particularly in terms of managing European funds and programs. It also allowed the CTP to become the managing authority of the Cross-Border Cooperation Operational Program France-Spain-Andorra (POCTEFA) for 2007–2013, and then again for the 2014–2020 period. POCTEFA's scope covers all the French departments and provinces along the French-Spanish-Andorran border, as well as the entirety of Andorra. It includes 17 Nomenclature of Territorial Units for Statistics (NUTS) 3 regions. The territory is located along the Pyrenees mountain range, with Andorra in the Centre, three French regions and five departments to the north

* For the map, see article ‘Andorra’.

of the border, and four Spanish autonomous communities and eleven provinces to the south.

Its aim is to encourage and finance cross-border cooperation processes between France, Spain and Andorra using the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF). Over the 2007–2013 period, POCTEFA financed 152 projects with 638 beneficiaries thanks to funds from the ERDF. Over the 2014–2020 period, 58 projects were included in the first call for projects in the fields of tourism, research and development, adapting to climate change, preventing natural risks, protecting natural and cultural heritage, and training and social inclusion. From the second call, 62 projects were approved in the fields of tourism, research and development, regional language learning, preventing natural risks, protecting natural and cultural heritage, cross-border mobility and sustainable transport, and training and employment.

The members of this community included three French regions, Aquitaine, Midi-Pyrénées, Languedoc-Roussillon, (with the latter two now known as *Occitanie*) and four Spanish autonomous communities, Catalonia, Aragon, Navarre, the Basque Country, as well as the Principality of Andorra. The main aim of the CTP is to contribute to the development of the Pyrenees mountain range, and to establish work plans to strengthen integration between communities. In November 2013, Andorra took on the presidency of the CTP and established the goal of monitoring cross-border impact, as well as improving seasonal wealth distribution and encouraging transnational and inter-regional cooperation, in addition to participation in other European programs. In order to better participate in cooperation actions between local authorities on either side of the border, the Andorran government signed a protocol amending the Treaty of Bayonne in February 2010. The Andorran Cross-border Cooperation Organisation (OACT) was set up to resolve governance difficulties. Thanks to this extension of the Treaty of Bayonne, Andorra became a member of the CTP Consortium and, since 2007–2013, has been involved in POCTEFA without benefiting from European funds.

Without membership to either the European Union (EU) or the European Economic Area (EEA), the Principality of Andorra is governed by a specific framework. This framework was constituted in international law following the adoption of the Andorran Constitution in 1993. The trilateral treaty between Andorra, France and Spain, signed in 1993, allows the Principality to be recognized as an independent state and

to establish balanced diplomatic relations with its two neighbouring countries.

In November 1994, Andorra joined the Council of Europe. An agreement signed in 1990, and renewed again in 1996, ensures the association between the Principality and the EU bringing forth many benefits such as a customs union that establishes a tariff-based trading system for industrial products. Some other products, in particular agricultural products, are excluded from the customs union. The agreement allows for free movement of people. In 2004, new documents were signed with the EU, an agreement on tax and savings, and a cooperation agreement. Since 2015, Andorra, San Marino and Monaco have been negotiating an Association Agreement with the EU. This agreement could allow Andorra to benefit from ERDF funds.

The border area between France, Spain and Andorra includes an economic and social organisation entrenched in strong cultural and geographic ties. This area is also characterized by a wealth of cultural, social, economic and administrative diversity, among other factors. The region's organisation is characterized by its cross-border and international scope, justifying the *raison d'être* of cooperation across the Pyrenees border.

To ensure the best future possible for the cross-border Pyrenees region, it is necessary to go beyond borders and – more importantly than ever before – work together. The characteristics and specificities of each territory have to be taken into consideration, and appropriate strategies must be adopted in cross-border areas. This means that projects must adopt a strategic vision that takes into account characteristics, needs and challenges brought forth by each entity. A shared regional approach to development is based on experience, know-how and good practices. Any strategies or action plans that are implemented can and must be integrated as part of an operational cooperation programme, such as POCTEFA. The Euroregions, the Basque Eurocity, the Eurodistrict of cross-border Catalan space, the Bidasoa-Txingudi Cross-border Consortium, the Cross-border Country of Art and History, as well as the 6 European Groupings of Territorial Cooperation (EGTCs) upon which existing structures are based, all show the dynamic nature of cross-border cooperation along the Pyrenees border, particularly at its extremities. Not to mention the *Train à Grande Vitesse* (TGV) line connecting Perpignan to Barcelona, which opened in 2013, and the construction of the first

cross-border hospital in Europe in Cerdanya, which has been running since 2014.

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Youth

The involvement of young people in cross-border cooperation is difficult to map at the international, or even European level. Rather, it seems to be far more frequent at the local level, where interregional or cross-border exchanges are more commonly promoted.

Even at the national level, very few programs appear to promote encounters and exchange opportunities between young people from neighbouring countries. Similarly, the European Union (EU) has only launched since 2017 an initiative specifically aimed at involving young people in cross-border cooperation programs. The Interreg Volunteer Youth (IVY) initiative thus deploys young volunteers in cross-border cooperation programs and projects (Interreg, Instrument of Pre-Accession (IPA) and European Neighbourhood Instrument (ENI)). Furthermore, the European Commission's department responsible for youth, the Directorate-General Education, Youth, Sport and Culture (DG EAC), does not address cross-border cooperation. Consequently, there is a lack of data analysing the general knowledge or attitude of young people towards cross-border cooperation and it is difficult to assess the extent of the involvement of youth in this field, as well as of the development of competences for cross-border activities.

On the other hand, there are many projects developed by regional and local actors which address the involvement of youth in cross-border cooperation – especially within Interreg. According to the “Keep” database, a search on the keyword “youth” shows that there are 807 projects involving youth in Interreg, IPA and ENI cross-border cooperation programs. This clearly indicates that local authorities recognise the importance of including youth in projects which enable cooperation across regions.

Some Euroregions have included integration and cross-border cooperation values in their educational systems so to build trust and the necessary competences to foster cooperation with the neighbouring regions. Examples of such policies are the *Sprachen Offensive* in the German-Czech Euregion Egrensis, joint textbooks in the Franco-German-Swiss Upper Rhine Region, the *Sprachstrategie* in the Danish-German Sonderjylland-Schleswig Region and the *Frankreichstrategie* in Saarland. Many policies of cross-border regions particularly addressing youth are also related to the labour market, education and vocational training, for example cross-border vocational training in the German-Czech

Euroregion Elbe-Labe and in the East Border Region between Ireland and the UK; “Practice Future”, a project bringing together education with industry in Finnmark (Norway) and in Murmansk (Russia); *Iacobus*, a cross-border Erasmus implemented between Spain and Portugal; and cross-border high education courses in Sonderborg and Flensburg, the German-Polish *Collegium Polonicum* and other border universities. There is also a growing interest in tackling youth unemployment (*Jobtown*, under the program URBACT II), which significantly affects some European border regions.

In terms of assessing the attitudes of young people toward cross-border cooperation, again this is challenged by the little data which is available. However, according to a survey “Millennial Dialogue on Europe. Shaping the New EU Agenda”, carried out by the think tanks Foundation for European Progressive Studies (FEPS) and *Think Young*, the majority of young people are in favour of European integration and perceive economic solidarity among European countries as positive. In the absence of specific surveys on the view of territorial cooperation, this data can be viewed as generally reflecting a positive attitude towards cooperation among the youth of the EU member states and their regions in the framework of the EU.

Some of the most relevant initiatives involving young people in realising projects of territorial cooperation (cross-border and macro-regional) include first of all the Youth Forums organised by the Association of European Border Regions (AEBR). The AEBR’s Task Force for External Borders (TFEB) has indeed organised Youth Forums every year since 2009, involving young participants to discuss various aspects of cross-border cooperation with the goal to empower young people in border regions. Second, there is also the network of Young Leaders for Cross-border Cooperation (YLCBC), established in 2015, which aims at training young people to participate in policy-making processes, as well as to initiate and implement regional and cross-border projects. Third, the pilot project “Interreg Volunteer Youth” (IVY) is promoted by the European Commission’s Directorate-General for Regional and Urban Policy and managed by the AEBR. It was launched in March 2017 and is part of the “European Solidarity Corps” allowing young people to volunteer in Interreg programs and projects. The main objective is to involve young people in projects of territorial cooperation so to raise awareness for this issue. Up to April 2020, IVY has engaged over 450 volunteers, demonstrating the great interest of young people in

cross-border cooperation and there are some “spin-offs” in IVY, such as the organisation of Citizen Engagement Activities (CEA), which was created on the ground by the volunteers. Finally, the initiative “EU Strategy for the Danube Region (EUSDR) and EU Strategy for the Adriatic-Ionian Region (EUSAIR) youth for cross-border partnership and cohesion” is jointly implemented by the Central European Service for Cross-Border Initiatives (CESCI) Balkans, the Task Force External Borders (TFEB) of the AEBR and the Institute of International Sociology (ISIG) in Gorizia in order to raise knowledge of young people on topics related to territorial cooperation.

The experience gained with these projects might boost future initiatives placing youth in the centre of many cross-border actions.

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ZASNET*

ZASNET is a European Grouping for Territorial Cooperation (EGTS), which is located on the border area between Castile and León (Spain) and Região Norte (Portugal), in an inland and mostly rural depopulated area with very low population density (26 inhabitants/km² on the Portuguese side; 22 on the Castilian side), high ageing rate and a quasi-absence of youngsters. The most important city in Trás-ós-Montés (Região Norte) is Bragança, with almost 35 000 inhabitants. Its Spanish counterpart is Zamora, which almost reaches 63 000 inhabitants. This small city is an important node in the area, as it is the capital of the province of Zamora. Its economic basis is therefore the public sector (the provincial deputation and local offices of the Spanish and Castilian-Leonese regional government).

This EGTC, founded in 2010, corresponds to a local initiative that started some years prior. The Working Community Bragança/Zamora was established in 1999: its founding members were, from the Spanish side, five local governments (Zamora, Alcañices, Puebla de Sanabria, Pedralba de la Pradería and Fermoselle) and the *Diputación* (Provincial Council) of Zamora; and, from the Portuguese side, five local governments (Bragança, Miranda do Douro, Mogadouro, Vimioso and Vinhais). It is important to mention that Portuguese local governments have a higher level of powers compared to their Spanish counterparts, especially after the Spanish Act 27 of 2013, which has affected the autonomy of most local governments in Spain. This is the reason why Spanish *Diputaciones*—which should be considered as local territorial units representing the province—are commonly found as partners in cross-border cooperation structures, rather than the municipalities. Later on, four other local governments (Benavente and Requejo in Spain; Macedo de Cavaleiros and Mirandela in Portugal) and one Spanish association of municipalities (*Mancomunidad de Sayago*) joined this first agreement.

In 2009, the agreement and statutes of the new EGTC were signed, and officially published in the Portuguese Official Gazette in 2010: This is the first EGTC on the Spanish Portuguese border under Portuguese law. At this occasion, Portuguese local governments gathered in two associations: *Terra Fria* (Bragança, Miranda do Douro, Mogadouro,

* For the map, see article ‘Eurocities on the Spanish-Portuguese Border’.

Vimioso and Vinhais) and *Terra Quente* (Macedo de Cavaleiros, Mirandela, Carraceda de Ansiães, Vila Flor and Alfândega da Fé)—all of them, except for Carraceda de Ansiães, belong to the Alto Trás-os-Montes and are Nomenclature of Territorial Units for Statistics (NUTS) 3 level. The Spanish part consists of three public bodies: the city of Zamora and two bordering Provincial Councils: Zamora and Salamanca (which also correspond to the NUTS 3 level). Three years later, the ZASNET 2020 Strategy was published: this document does not only focus on the ZASNET area, but also encompasses the Portuguese neighbouring NUTS 3 Douro and Beira Interior Norte, which are potential future members. Four main lines of common work have been established, in accordance to the Europe 2020 Strategy, based on smart, sustainable and inclusive growth. Its territorial cooperation guidelines underline the aim to identify possible other topics suitable to receive European Union (EU) funds. In this regard, tourism and marketing linked to the promotion of cultural and natural heritage present in the area, can be highlighted.

This explains the importance given to one specific project: the Meseta Ibérica Transboundary Biosphere Reserve (TBBR). The Meseta Ibérica TBRR has been financed by two Interreg projects, both of them led by ZASNET. The first one (for the period 2011–2015, receiving 300 000 euros from the European Regional and Development Fund (ERDF)) aimed to analyze the area in order to build its candidacy to the UNESCO list of World heritage sites. UNESCO designated indeed the TBRR in 2015, with ZASNET being the administrative authority. However, the TBRR perimeter does in reality not match with the ZASNET area.

In 2015, ZASNET also started to lead a second Interreg project named ZASNET Meseta Ibérica, for the period 2015–2018, receiving 1 443 340 euros from the ERDF. Its objectives were: protection, conservation and valorization of cultural and natural heritage, as well as the elaboration of a sustainable tourism model. It is clearly stated that establishing a tourist brand for the Meseta Ibérica TBRR is a priority for the stakeholders. In this regard, it seems difficult to balance natural conservation and the projection of a tourist development strategy for the Biosphere Reserve. In any case, TBRR arises as a key element for ZASNET, which may eventually appear to be totally identified with the reserve.

ZASNET cohabits with other local initiatives, as the Working Community Bragança/Zamora or the Working Community Beira Interior-Salamanca (BIN-SAL). However, its status as an EGTC allows it to lead EU funded projects. This is probably the reason why TBRR is

its main project. In the near future, if more members join the EGTC and more projects are led by ZASNET, it is reasonable to think that this legal structure will gain even more importance in the border area.

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Afterword

Effects of the Covid-19 Pandemic on European Borders, Cross-Border Cooperation and European Integration

The Covid-19 pandemic ongoing in the world since the beginning of 2020 has undermined European integration and raised interrogations about the functioning of internal and external borders, while questioning cross-border cooperation.

The following observations take place in a specific temporal context, the end of the lockdown period in Europe after the spread of the virus: as of May 2020, we were witness to the global health crisis without having access to any elaborate scientific literature. Our comments are therefore incomplete and sketchy, mere reflections of our subjectivity. However, as a sudden break in a system, which will have lasting effects, this crisis may be perceived as revealing pre-existing trends, delineating a European Union (EU) where the desire for security seems more important than the allure of liberty.

In early March 2020, three months after the first cases were detected in China and other Far East countries and South-East Asia, the World Health Organization (WHO) identified Europe as one of the epicentres of the virus. On January 30, during a meeting of its emergency committee, the WHO declared the spread of the coronavirus constituted a global risk for public health. On March 11, the WHO called the outbreak a pandemic, two days after the first lockdown measures were imposed in Italy. Nevertheless, all the regions of Europe were not identically hit by the virus. The media tend to emphasize the differences between countries, but within each of those, significant distinctions can generally be observed between large urban areas and less densely populated zones. A borderless map of the continent would show a noticeable discrepancy between Western and Eastern Europe; in the Mediterranean zone, strong concentrations are visible in Italy and Spain, while the number of cases

remains relatively low in Portugal and Greece. Within Italy, the very high scores of Northern regions (Lombardy, Piedmont) can be contrasted with those of the South. With a few exceptions, the main outbreaks are situated in the metropolises and state capitals, in urban centres which are, proportionally, the most connected with the rest of the world, where mobility is stronger and where the potential for social interaction is higher because of population density. Obviously, these initial observations will have to be refined when precise and reliable figures are available for the whole of Europe.

As shown by the history of the worst pandemics, it is not the first time that a disease has spread over different parts of the world in spite of borders and controls. In the Middle Ages, the Black Death left a deep mark on Europe by killing 25 to 50 % of its inhabitants in 1347–1352. At the end of the First World War, the Spanish flu spread from the United States and killed 50 to 100 million people over the world in 1918–19, that is 2.5 to 5 % of the global population at the time. Contagion is linked to the intensity of the circulation of human beings and the permeability of borders. The pandemic itself is not a radically new phenomenon. On the other hand, the Covid-19 stands out for the rapidity of its spread and the limited knowledge scientists have of its mutating virus, as much as the instant circulation of information which allows people to follow, almost in real time, the counting of cases by the WHO in each country. Despite harsh criticism by American President Donald Trump, who accused it of mishandling the health crisis and of being too lenient with China, the WHO has proved useful by publishing a daily report on the pandemic, but also by suggesting common standards of protection, raising relief funds and facilitating the dissemination of information collected by states.

However, our aim is neither to assess the international handling of the health crisis, nor to pronounce on the possibility of an epidemiological response to the pandemic, but to analyse the effects of Covid-19 on the EU, and more specifically on European borders, cross-border cooperation and European integration. From that point of view, four main consequences can already be noticed.

First of all, the Covid-19 crisis, as a sudden break contesting the basis of a system, with lasting effects on that system, has undermined European integration as previous crises had (the Euro, migrants, Brexit). The tensions between the European Commission and the European Council, and between governments within the Council, have revealed, in a now classic way, the existing antagonisms between supranational and

intergovernmental approaches, between the various perceptions of the crisis entertained by each state and the solutions implemented to solve it. The media have underlined how slow or even non-existent European decision-making was, and how hard it was to reach a consensus. Yet, in comparison with previous crises, unprecedented measures were rapidly taken, over a few weeks, or even a few days, in an emergency context. On 17 March 2020, the external borders of the EU were “locked down” for the next 30 days in order to reduce travels; public contracts were concluded for the purchase of sanitary equipment, a fund was created to support research on a vaccine, and coordination operations took place between member states. Above all, the EU provided a financial and economic response. In this paper, we shall discuss what are *a priori* the main measures. The rules of the Stability and Growth Pact have been relaxed: the deficit of state budgets may now exceed 3 % of GDP; state aid to companies is more generously extended. Besides, the Eurogroup has launched a stimulus funds and member-states of the Euro zone can be offered a line of credit by the European Stability Mechanism. Finally, the European Commission has been entrusted with preparing a plan for overcoming the crisis. While the partial pooling of the European debt, suggested by some states, initially created tensions mainly between the Mediterranean countries, Italy in particular, and the Northern countries, including the Netherlands, Denmark and Germany, there is a new hope that the French-German tandem may break the deadlock. On 19 May, Emmanuel Macron and Angela Merkel proposed a 500 billion euros European stimulus package in order to overcome the Coronavirus crisis through an unprecedented mechanism for pooling the debt. If their plan is adopted at EU-level, this would confirm an old habit, observed many times by historians during the European construction: after a deep crisis in the Community or the Union, European integration can be stimulated again by the creation of new common arrangements.

The measures implemented show that decision-makers are aware of the seriousness of the crisis and want to save time, but also that health is just a supporting competence for the EU, which can only sustain, coordinate and complement the action of states. Health remains a national competence, as recalled several times by the governments of some member-states. The supply of healthcare is organised within and by states; at European level, differences or even rivalries between national systems were much more noticeable than cooperation. The mode of identification of Covid-19 patients, the screening capacity and treatment

of serious cases, the information delivered to people and the devices implemented to limit the spread of the virus, all that depended on the decisions made by governments according to widely different strategies. Some states, like Sweden, chose herd immunity as their priority, while others, like Italy, Spain or France, advocated curbing the spread through limiting social interactions. Those lockdown strategies aimed at avoiding too strong a pressure on health facilities and health workers: they mainly depended on the capacity to accommodate the most vulnerable patients, those with respiratory infections. Developing health care is also a matter of national decisions on the long term: even though the general trends of the last two decades are similar within the EU (reducing expenses and healthcare acts in hospitals, creating care environments adapted to the patients), even though there are cases of cross-border cooperation in healthcare – with healthcare access zones in the French-Belgian cross-border space and a cross-border hospital in Cerdanya between France and Spain –, significant differences persist between member-states, and the crisis has highlighted both the successes and the failures of the various European healthcare systems. Moreover, within each state, differences exist in the organization and distribution of health competences. This competence can be shared between the state and the regional authorities, which means that various policies may have been implemented within each national territory. But seen from the outside and at European level, the national dimension comes first, and is identified by the WHO, and therefore by the media and the people.

In this context, cross-border cooperation has been severely challenged by the Covid-19 crisis, and it has been especially neglected by the media, while daily analyses emphasized the national counting of new patients hit by the virus, the number of deaths and the malfunction or success of healthcare systems. Nevertheless, exchanges of patients did take place, from France, Italy and the Netherlands towards Germany, for instance, but they illustrate above all the existence of bilateral cooperation. The French-German case is both an example and a special case: the *Elysée* Treaty, which founded the friendship between France Germany in 1963, was completed on 22 January 2019, one year before the health crisis. The new Aachen Treaty includes the creation of a mix committee gathering not only national authorities at the level of foreign ministries, but also regional (*Länder*, Regions) and cross-border (Eurodistricts) authorities. It has allowed a concerted action between the Région Grand Est and the neighbouring German *Länder*, followed by a rapid communication

with the national level, leading to an agreement for the transfer of patients from badly hit Alsace towards German hospitals. Despite such multi-level dialogue, two weeks elapsed before the first patients could be transferred towards neighbouring border regions. Meanwhile, the media published pictures of a train going from Strasbourg to Marseilles (1000 km away) to transfer Covid-19 patients whereas intensive care beds remained unoccupied in Baden-Württemberg... The inhabitants of border regions thus have had time to doubt the relevance of cross-border cooperation or European integration. Ultimately, from a European point of view, this health crisis reflects the “communitarization” of economic and financial decisions, but also the territorialisation of health strategies which are still managed within national frameworks, transformed by the media into the “imaginary communities” of the 21st century. Comparing the characteristics of the various national systems highlights distortions which seemed unbearable to the inhabitants of those countries where the virus was more lethal. In border regions, the border then revealed an appalling closeness. Despite the coordination efforts by the European Commission, transnational cooperation has taken place on an essentially bilateral level. This was true during the lockdown period, but it is also confirmed by deconfinement. As concerns the opening of Schengen borders, especially in anticipation of the summer holidays, bilateral agreements are being prepared: between Germany and Austria, for instance, or between France, Germany, Luxembourg, Belgium and Switzerland. On 12 May 2020, the European Commission introduced a recommendation on the progressive opening of Schengen borders in the interest of the tourism industry, which was the only hint at a minimal European dialogue. One might regret that tourists rather than citizens attracted the attention of the European Commission, which did not intervene to assert the rights of the inhabitants of border regions who were separated by the closure of borders during the Covid-19 crisis.

Secondly, this crisis has shown that the Westphalian world of sovereign states is still relevant: borders have been reactivated not only as regulation and protection devices, but also as symbolical means of differentiation and distinction.

The management of the health crisis stands apart: contrary to other pandemics, it does not only rely on establishing health facilities, but also implies a regulation of the mobility and free movement of people. Apart from strictly sanitary measures, each state implemented more or less elaborate lockdown measures. In Europe, Italy came first, on

9 March 2020, followed by Spain on 15 March and France on 17 March. Those decisions were made for a limited period and were prolonged several times, to reach at least two months in extreme cases. The word *confinement* comes from the latin *confinis*, meaning contiguity, the fact of sharing a limit, from *cum* (with) and *finis* (a limit). In Italian, *confine* is used to define the borders of the national territory. Through isolating an individual or a group, lockdown creates borders: by restricting free movement, it clearly establishes a temporary or lasting restriction on public space, whose access is circumscribed. All European states did not resort to lockdown, but they all passed laws, often in emergency situations, in order to restrict the mobility of people within their national territories. Here again, there were different responses. Some states, like Belgium, France, Italy, Spain or Greece, adopted drastic lockdown measures, limiting or prohibiting public events, either cultural, sporting or social, suppressing free movement by making an authorisation certificate necessary to go out. Other countries, like Germany, Sweden or the Netherlands, adopted less constraining measures, allowing greater mobility and the maintenance of some activities. Those measures were taken individually, according to mainly national criteria, depending on the evolution of the number of patients, the accommodation capacity of the health system and its viability in the event of a mass influx, without coordinating with the neighbouring states. However, the reduction of social and economic activities is also linked with socio-political criteria: the relationship between the authorities and the people, how much the government can trust the citizens' reactions. Finally, one has to take into account the people's habits, how they conceive social relationships, the effects of the distance or proximity of bodies during social interactions. For those reasons, deconfinement measures cannot adopt the same rhythm or the same modalities, even though each government observes and imitates what the others do. Each member-state of the EU has decided for itself when and how public spaces, schools, shops and businesses would reopen. Obviously, such decisions depend on how much each country was impacted by the crisis, which explains why less hardly hit states, like Germany or Austria, could deconfine earlier, right from late April 2020, and more widely than those where Covid-19 killed a high number of patients, like France, Italy or Spain. Differences can also be noticed in how governments consider their function as organs of control and protection, practicing injunction and coercion, or regulatory entities, providing advice and incitation.

From that point of view, the states' responses depend on their powers and their capacity to act; in the case of federal states, whether they can harmonize and propose a coordinated response at national level. The federal structure of a country like Germany allows for different measures according to the needs of each Land (or the beliefs of its minister-president) and leads to considerable variations in the lockdown and deconfinement policies over the German territories, variations which are not always consistent or understandable for the German people. Between 16 and 22 March 2020, the measures implemented covered the whole gamut from "French style" total lockdown in Bavaria to a complete lack of restriction in North Rhine-Westphalia (one of the epicentres of contagion in Germany). Between those two extremes, everything seemed possible: a ban on walking together for groups of more than 2, 3, 4 or 5 persons, the limit changing with each *Land*. And from May 4, 2020, the deconfinement policies have been quite as various: restaurants have reopened in Lower Saxony, retirement homes in North Rhine-Westphalia, theatres and cinemas in Sachsen, children's nurseries in Baden-Württemberg.

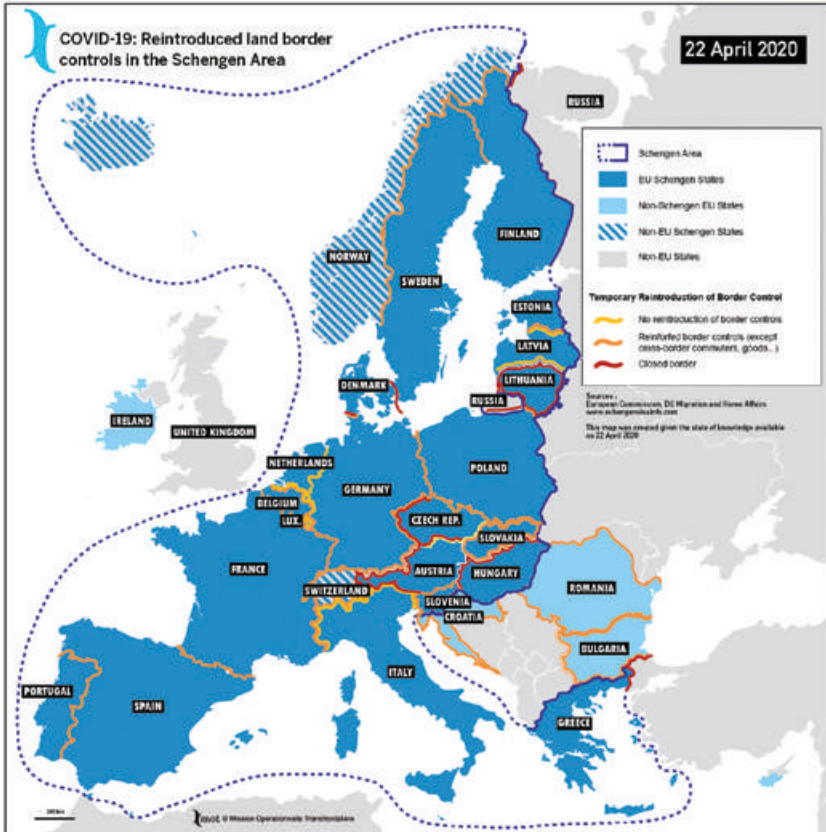
In more centralized states, however, the existence of a single answer on the national territory does not imply that its implementation has been the same everywhere or has been interpreted identically by the whole population, far from it. Many local or regional communities have had different reactions, as concerns the creation of healthcare facilities or the implementation of lockdown. Some French cities adopted curfews or limited the access to public spaces. Besides, the states could not prevent thousands of people moving from metropolitan areas or from the worst affected areas towards less sensitive ones. Many inhabitants of the Milan region left Lombardy for the Southern regions of Italy. Between 14 March, when lockdown was decreed, and 17 March, when it came into effect, about 1 million French people left the Ile de France region (the Paris urban area) for their country houses in the provinces.

The national management of human flow regulation has also resulted into stronger control on the internal borders. Right from 16 March, in an unprecedented move, the European Commission suggested that member-states limit the access to their territories on the external borders (a decision which was extended to 15 June until further notice). The word "lockdown", which was commonly used, is not the right one, neither legally nor functionally speaking, even though entrances have diminished by 96 % at the entry points into the Schengen area in April

2020 compared to April 2019. This restriction implies a temporary regime change for the European borders. At the same time, several states applied the same decision on their internal borders. Here again, the picture is mixed, since all states did not react the same way and used different clauses of the Schengen agreement. Some, like Germany, Portugal or Switzerland, referred to Art. 28, which provides for the reintroduction of border control for automatically renewable periods of twenty days. Others, like France, Belgium, Denmark, Poland or Hungary, activated Art. 25 and 27, which authorize a reintroduction for a renewable period of 6 months if a justification has been supplied to the Commission four weeks earlier. It may be considered that the new border regime is part of the states' policy of mobility regulation and that it is easier, on the short term, to control the entry points into the national territory than to master their whole network. Here again, the implementation of controls and the closure of borders was not the result of a concerted European dialogue. France was surprised when the German federal authorities closed the border in the night of 15 to 16 March, as much as the Germans were surprised by the closure of the Polish border during the same night, or by that of the Czech Republic for all cross-border workers on 25 March 2020.

The policies of border closure have varied considerably from one member-state to another but eventually, almost all the internal borders – with a few notable exceptions, like the German-Dutch border – were more or less tightly closed during the health crisis, from mid-March to late April, with significant consequences on the image of a “borderless Europe” which soon collapsed under the strength of a borderless virus.

On the other hand, a new paradigm seems to prevail in the use and function of borders: in public opinion, the national discourse on protection outweighs that on regulation. Since the Schengen agreement came into effect, there had never been such an obstacle to the free movement of people. However, other forms of free movement remained available: goods could still circulate, even though road traffic has slowed down at border checkpoints. The functioning of the Single Market seems to be guaranteed, which is all the more necessary to secure the circulation of food products and essential commodities: who can imagine the impact which drastic customs control on all the European state borders might have on retail supply chains? Besides, thanks to digital networks and dematerialization, finance and information can flow without hindrance.



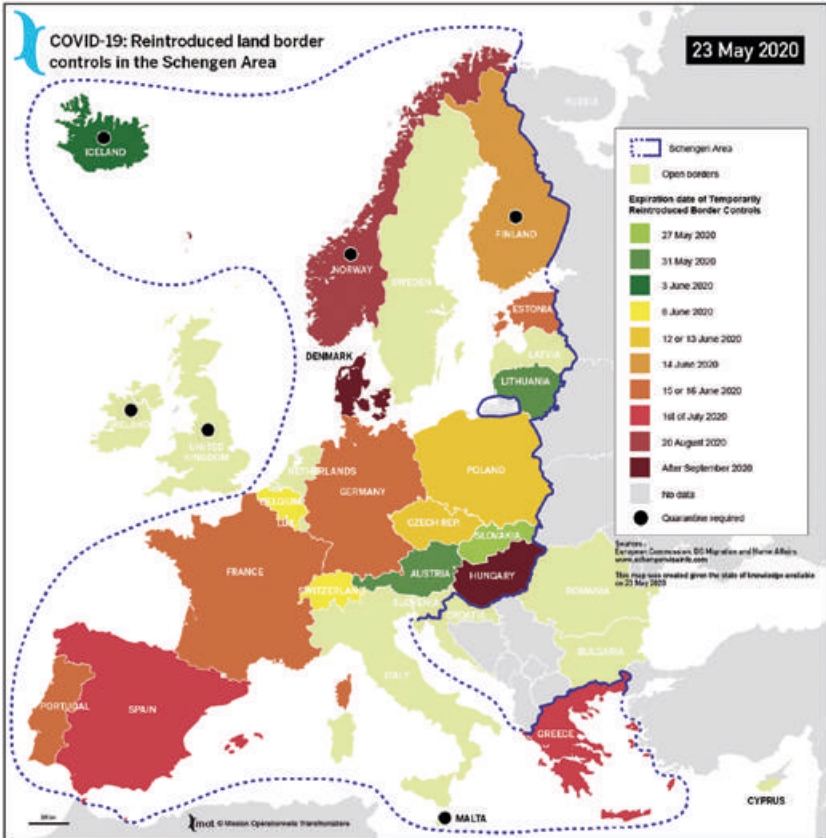
The reintroduction of border control was exploited by certain states which insisted on the prophylactic dimension of national borders. Staging the control of bodily temperature of car passengers, with the police wearing masks or protection suits, screening and quarantine all send out the message that the states have regained the sovereignty they seemed to have lost in the context of Europeanisation. Nevertheless, those governments who made most of the mediated “return of borders” are not those who suffered from the strongest contagion effects. In Poland or in the Czech Republic, which were far less impacted than some Southern countries (France, Spain, Italy), the reintroduction of border control under the guise of protection aimed at inner rather than external use. This said, one may wonder about the effects which media coverage had on public opinion: will it reinforce the idea internal borders are a

protective tool at the expense of the notion that they can also and above all be an interface? It might become even harder to accept the opening of borders and to embrace otherness. The crisis seems to strengthen national characters to the detriment of the transnational European spirit, while internal and external borders are once again control devices in a general context of regulation of the mobility of people.

Paradoxically, the states' grip on borders has also been confirmed in relation with the reopening of the Schengen borders. On 13 May 2020, the European Commission did submit a plan favouring a "cautious opening" of the internal EU borders, but in fact the states chose the timing and conditions of this opening. Indeed, on 5 May, Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania decided to put an end to border control, thus re-establishing an area of free movement within the Baltic states. After the Commission announced its plan, other countries followed suit, but with a more restrictive opening policy. Switzerland, Luxembourg, Germany and France plan to progressively reduce border control, from 18 May to mid-June. Similarly, Italy has declared that it would reopen to EU tourists on 3 June, just like Austria, which has a discriminatory policy: its borders are open to the Germans, but remain closed to the Italians. On the other hand, Denmark and Poland, for instance, still keep their borders hermetically sealed. While reopening their borders, some countries, like Spain, Italy, Poland, Slovakia, Austria or the Czech Republic, have also implemented quarantine, each in its own way. Those different modes of opening are as disturbing for the Europeans as the various forms of lockdown.

Through those differences, ordinary citizens have discovered some facts which are normally known only to everyday users of borders, or to the scholars who observe them. Borders are ambivalent spaces, of both opening and closure, where, during the health crisis, the state services accomplished sometimes contradictory duties – the police and the customs have to control them unilaterally as belonging to "sovereign" states, while diplomats are in charge of re-establishing cooperation. A border is not a single line, like an administrative limit within a state, defining its use within a specific legal and cognitive frame, but a double line. As underlined by Emmanuel Brunet-Jailly, this is revealed in the word *boundary*, a line which *binds* the two states situated on each side, with its own management of the border.

Thirdly, all those measures have considerably disturbed the lives of people in border regions. The restrictions indubitably had an impact on



the mobility of people, including on short distances. Interactions are numerous on internal borders – those of the EU or those of the Schengen area, between Norway and Sweden, or between Switzerland and all its neighbours, for instance. Indeed, many people cross the border to enjoy a leisure offer, to make some purchases or to have fun. Many border workers, families or partners live on the two sides of one same cross-border area. When borders lose their status as resources, opportunities are reduced for those who live in their immediate vicinity: cross-border functional areas lose part of their substance. Those effects were particularly notable on the hundred thousands of European cross-border workers who cross a national border every day to reach their workplaces. Remote working was a solution for some of them, and temporary lay-offs were as common as

elsewhere, but this was not a possibility in the sectors where the physical presence of the workforce is necessary: agriculture, healthcare or cleaning services. In many cases, cross-border workers were allowed to cross borders so as to reach their workplaces, but this could not be achieved without difficulty: longer waiting time at border checkpoints, obligation to provide a work permit, etc. Here again, the situations varied widely and there was no coordination between neighbouring states, even across peaceful and open borders – Germany prevented its cross-border workers from going to Luxembourg, for instance. Once an invisible resource, the border became tangible, material and uncertain. Some absurd and discriminatory rules were implemented: in the French–German border region, the German authorities allowed French nationals to work on German territory, but shopping was forbidden to them. Did they really believe an Alsatian cross-border worker was necessarily more contagious than a German citizen from Baden?

The reintroduction of border control was accompanied by the revival of hostile feelings towards the inhabitants of neighbouring states, feelings which were supposed to have vanished or to have reduced considerably. Such was the case when there existed a sharp asymmetry in the spread of the disease on the two sides of a border, but also when health management seemed better on one side, or when the lockdown measures were different. Cross-border workers often felt stigmatized and were rejected and ostracized because they spoke the language of the neighbouring territory. Such was the case between Italy and Austria, France and Germany, or Belgium and the Netherlands, the latter being founding states of the European Economic Community (EEC). Such attitudes show that the symbolic dimension of borders, linked with the rejection of otherness or feelings of exclusion, can easily be reinforced as soon as there is a hitch in a regulation system. It might well be worth analysing the reasons for the re-emergence of those hostile feelings. On the other hand, elected officials, civil society and ordinary citizens mobilized to denounce the restrictions unilaterally imposed by the states and to advocate the reestablishment of cross-border relations. During lockdown, various demonstrations of solidarity could be observed among border people, as illustrated by a few examples: close to the border between Bavaria and the Czech Republic, the Czechs hung a huge sign on the window of a building, saying *Ihr fehlt uns Nachbarn!* (“We miss you, neighbours!”); a couple holding hands across the fence installed on Lake Constance by the authorities to separate Switzerland and Germany; French

and German border people demonstrating on the Bridge of Europe, in the Strasbourg-Ortenau Eurodistrict, to demand the suppression of border control: “We were brought up to believe in a borderless Europe, we think this border should not exist”; a former inhabitant of German Democratic Republic (GDR), now living on the border between Bavaria and Austria, who exclaimed: “I have known those fences for forty years, we don’t want them anymore!”

Those examples also show that cross-border cooperation remains a cause for concern and it is more than ever on the political agenda. In spite of border restrictions, cooperation has gone on in many areas, albeit at a slower pace. Regional executives and local officials did not hesitate to mobilize against the measures taken by their governments, invoking the specificities of their territories where the border plays a key part. A number of initiatives have been launched on the German border, notably with France and Luxembourg: ministers-presidents, presidents of regions and departments, and local officials have recalled the existence of cross-border living areas and the complementarity between their economic fabrics. Taken as an indispensable condition for economic development, cross-border dimension is also a vector for improvement of the inhabitants’ living standards. In some cases, those initiatives have produced results, facilitating the transfer of patients in a cross-border area or pressuring national governments so as to speed up the process of border reopening, for instance. But what will happen if a second wave of Covid-19 hits Europe, and if the reinforcement of borders reappears and becomes permanent?

Fourthly, one should come back to the lockdown measures, to gauge the social consequences of stricter population control and restricted free movement. The state of emergency, as declared in France, has entailed the creation of new regulation devices at various levels, which remind us of the biopower imagined by Michel Foucault. The tightening of population control for eminently respectable health reasons might become problematic if it were to become permanent. One cannot help imagining a borderscape composed of new border control devices or “borderities”. This process is nothing new: it has been observed for many years at global level. However, until recently at least, the EU had seemed to forbear from such a development. The paradigm of free movement associated with the principles of democracy and its underlying balance of powers, and with human rights, might be largely undermined if the security of the national population, even for health reasons, becomes the dominant political

discourse of elected officials at EU level. For the moment, this discourse is essentially that of populist parties and seems to find embodiment in some Central European countries rather than in Western Europe. It can be easy to move from an open society to a society ruled by strong restrictions of mobility and freedoms, by quotas and social norms favouring social distance and “respectable attitudes” imposed by coercion: you just need the right arguments and the adequate technological means. The transition may be extremely quick, as shown by the choice of lockdown. In the case of France, during the deconfinement period, one no longer has to carry about an authorisation to leave home for a limited number of good reasons and over a limited time or distance, but wearing a mask is still compulsory in certain circumstances, including public transportation. Those situations where people find themselves in an irregular situation if they do not carry certain accessories may be created in a national context, but can very quickly be extended at European level, if suggested by the European Council or in the discourse of some of the parties represented at the European Parliament. Some national contexts already seem favourable to new lockdown measures, the introduction of multilevel boundaries, from the individual on; the humanitarian dimension of those policies may be questioned, even though, on the short term, they can appear as legitimate for health reasons.

Finally, we should start drawing lessons from the crisis, by suggesting some avenues for reflection on cross-border governance. The crisis initially revealed blatant malfunctions, because there was little or no coordination. Voices were raised – Yuval Noah Harari’s, among others – urging to plan for a different future, not as a reproduction of “the world before”, but as an opportunity to promote a more united and sustainable “world after”. The crisis may inspire a negative and a positive analysis: people, societies and territories were unequally hit, but the event may also favour an individual and collective awareness about how to approach the many ongoing transitions (demographic, economic, environmental, digital, etc.). Even before the crisis, the need for a change of policies was felt, the “Green Deal” suggested by the European Commission being one of its embodiments. We would like to suggest some guidelines for cross-border cooperation, which has appeared as a weak link in European cooperation.

For the moment, we shall not try to assess the performance of cross-border governance – that will have to be done later, taking into account the specificities of each border segment, each particular dyad. More simply, we

would like to learn from experience so as to act as early as possible in the border context, in preparation for the next steps: deconfinement, but also “the world after”. Our reflection also applies to all the territories where boundaries were the object of decisions which could have discordant effects, in the absence of coordination.

The return of borders, in the sense of a permanently reinforced control, will bring no sustainable solution, European societies being so interdependent and intertwined. This crisis might be the occasion to rethink border realities, so as to suggest more appropriate public policies at the service of people. The crisis has undeniably had tangible effects on the inhabitants of border regions. It has upset their everyday life, which usually implies crossing a border for work, purchases or just human relations, within a “cross-border living area”. The people involved are not only economic players: the “closure” of borders also had a considerable socioeconomic effect on work and supply. The measures taken to protect public health have inverted the usual paradigms: the “economy first” creed was questioned. People are not only citizens: in France, the second round of municipal elections was delayed (it will take place on June 28 if health requirements are satisfied) in order to stop the spread of the pandemic; more specifically, the notion of national citizen has demonstrated its limitations, in the case of binational families. The restrictions on border crossings have threatened the closeness which people had (re)discovered with the opening of borders. This shows how essential it is to consider the management of territories beyond their boundaries. Finally, people are informed beings – never before the Covid-19 crisis had the world been such a common horizon, when everyone could follow in real time the development of the pandemic and its consequences, when everyone could form an opinion about what should be done. Public policies should now address all those different facets of people.

What suggestions could be made in Europe for a public action which could transcend boundaries so as to be at the service of all? Most of these proposals were formulated before the crisis but, far from invalidating them, it seems to have made them all the more necessary. Indeed, the crisis was not just a shock for cross-border governance, whose insufficiencies it has revealed. It has also, and primarily, highlighted our many socioeconomic or human interdependencies, not only on the global or European level, but also on the local cross-border level. Taking into account the reality of those interdependencies now invites us to give a political dimension to European cross-border integration.

The first lesson to be learnt is that an approach centred on people and territories should be privileged, calling into question the exclusively sectoral approach. The experience of cross-border cooperation and European construction practitioners shows that people come first, as actors and as objects of the action. In a way, individuals have become a global priority, since the authorities have brutally put an end to collective life in order to save human lives. By doing so in national contexts, they have uncovered inconsistencies resulting from the poor coordination of border management. But by stopping some flows on borders, the crisis has also revealed interdependencies which can be economic (supply of goods, frontier work or seasonal employment) or functional (the healthcare system in Luxembourg or Geneva is heavily dependent on French frontier workers). It has highlighted some “productive-residential systems”, to take up the phrase coined by Laurent Davezies and Magali Tallandier, which obey a logic of cross-border complementarity. The “organic solidarity” which Emile Durkheim considered a source of social cohesion is also a cross-border phenomenon. As already underlined by Karl-Heinz Lambertz, a former president of the European Committee of the Regions, in his report to the Council of Europe’s Congress of Local and Regional Authorities, building cross-border cohesion through cross-border co-development is an unavoidable issue. Ultimately, careful analysis shows that the success of operations like the transfer of patients, for instance, always depends on the personal commitment of individuals (citizens, elected officials, civil servants, diplomats, etc.) who have managed to remobilise the existing cooperation structures.

Where such institutions did not exist, the difficulties generally proved insuperable. Where they existed, their productivity was certainly not immediate, but some results were noticeable. The Eurodistricts of the French-German border involving the local communities were among the first to act. Other structures, like the Euroregions, whose scope of action is wider and which boast a more complex, multi-level organisation, reacted later on, which does not invalidate their capacity to handle matters less related to everyday life.

In the future, a first possibility could be explored, at times of crisis or at normal times: the involvement of elected officials and local actors relying on decentralised and integrated territorial approaches, which may associate national or deconcentrated state-regional administrations, to manage public services. In a cross-border context, it can mobilise civil society (representatives of the inhabitants and of economic

forces) by integrating a whole territory beyond the border. As soon as deconfinement started, border actors have demanded the “reopening” of borders, while still accepting rules of prudence. A second possibility would be a multi-level approach based on the principle of subsidiarity, the level-specific approach having shown its weaknesses. The crisis has demonstrated that borders remain a state object, managed by rule of law institutions (police, customs). Vertical approaches have prevailed on both sides of borders: people primarily turned to “their” states, to the central authorities, and only afterwards took the neighbouring territory into consideration. A multi-level governance for cross-border territories should thus combine vertical and horizontal coordination. On the French-German border, coordination has started again, associating the national, regional and local levels, but also the cross-border Eurodistricts. The cross-border cooperation committee created following the provisions of the Aachen Treaty which has been signed by France and Germany on 22 January 2019, uniting the two countries on several levels, provided a legal basis: it has now been reinforced and could become a reference for other bilateral relations.

Meanwhile, the EU still plays a major part, by insisting on the indispensable coordination between states, as in the past. The challenge is now to imagine a European public health policy which might deal with crises. Supporting programmes which promote integrated territorial approaches, cross-border governance, solving obstacles to integration, legal tools allowing to use locally the law of the neighbouring country in order to manage cross-border public services, those are a few relevant answers. They exist in the post-2020 regulations bills currently negotiated, but the crisis has undeniably strengthened their case.

Finally, one ought to imagine a new representation of territories, borders and sovereignty. The crisis has confirmed the limitations of hyper-globalisation as much as of self-sufficient national and local territories. As underlined by Andreas Faludi, “local” is not a box placed inside the national box like Babushka dolls. The challenge is therefore to guess “where we should land”, to take up the phrase used by sociologist and philosopher Bruno Latour: which interdependencies should be preserved, which modes of governance should be suggested for functional territories, according to which logics of variable geometry? This allows to question the concepts of national sovereignty and that of border, which is intimately linked, but also the role of the state and of public authorities in general. While a border does delimit a national community, it also

sets it in relation with other communities. This relationship ought to be theorized and reconsidered so as to deconstruct the myth of the exclusively protective border.

The Covid-19 crisis has shown that states are indeed decisive in such a context, and they will remain so during the return to normal life and the solving of future crises, but only if they can act together, on every border, as part of regional systems like the EU. What should prevail is the notion of borders as “living areas”, active interfaces mediating between national systems, rather than lines separating national sovereignties. The creation of innovative governance devices, as described previously, is certainly an appropriate response. It should be complemented by a reflection on the collective representations of territories, borders and what makes sense as concerns the commons.

Eventually, the health crisis has multiple effects on European integration, on internal and external borders and on cross-border cooperation. On the one hand, the highlighting of differences at European level should not hide the fact that, despite tensions and misunderstandings, the paradigm of compromise characterising the EU still seems to function, as it was associated with a feeling of emergency. However, the decisions taken for the EU were mainly economic and financial ones. On the other hand, in accordance with the distribution of competences between the EU and its member-states, a differentiated management has prevailed in healthcare. Each state created its own regulation system, where the national borders, either internal or external, are a device among others, an essential device not on the functional level but also and especially on the political and symbolical level. The reactivation of borders as restrictions to free movement and the management of the health crisis have revived the Westphalian state which was considered outdated. However, as mentioned by Noah Yuval Harari in an article published in *Le Monde*, this implies maintaining, at global level, the necessary cooperation, the indispensable sharing of information and coordinated actions and efforts between states. This is also true within the EU if we want to preserve its cohesion. Another topic to examine is the continuation of cross-border cooperation, through digital resources, creating links of proximity on both sides of the border: it should be maintained and reactivated by projects and real encounters. For the health crisis has also shown that the construction of integrated cross-border areas, where the border act as an interface rather than a barrier, has become a reality, the links between border populations being generally deep, permanent and irreversible.

Deconstructing those areas would mean deconstructing the EU, demolishing the Europe whose construction started in the early 1950s.

Besides, exploiting borders for ideological ends, favouring their protective value so as to increase nationalism, might revive tensions by insisting on disturbing differences. Maintaining national borders as interfaces thus becomes a constant challenge, now joined by another questioning: how should one behave in the public space (out of home) when all other human beings carry a risk of contamination? The restrictions on public freedom and the implementation of new lockdown measures (as borderities, or devices creating new modes of control) might well create new borderscapes, on the national and European level.

Bernard Reitel, Jean Peyrony & Birte Wassenberg

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The Series « Borders and European Integration » fills in a gap in Social Sciences, as it connects two so far independent research strands: European Studies and Border Studies. Mainly initiated by geographers and originally hosted in the United States, Border Studies primarily deal with the study of borders and borderlands, whereas European Studies analyse the process of European Integration, its actors, institutions and policy fields. Although the idea of a Europe without borders was part of the project of the European Economic Community, the multidimensional role of the border has not been sufficiently taken into account by researchers in European Studies. Inversely, Border Studies have only rarely examined the specificity of borders and borderlands in Europe in comparison to other regions in the world.

At the crossroads between Area Studies and International Relations, this Series therefore offers a pluri-disciplinary approach to borders and their role in the European construction. Taking into account the perspective of different disciplines in Social Sciences, the diversity of actors of European Integration and borderlands (local, regional, national), it allows a new multi-level and decentred view on conflicts and cooperation at European borders. The Series addresses researchers and university scholars of all disciplines in Social Sciences and wishes to tackle the challenging contemporary questions on borders in Europe.

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