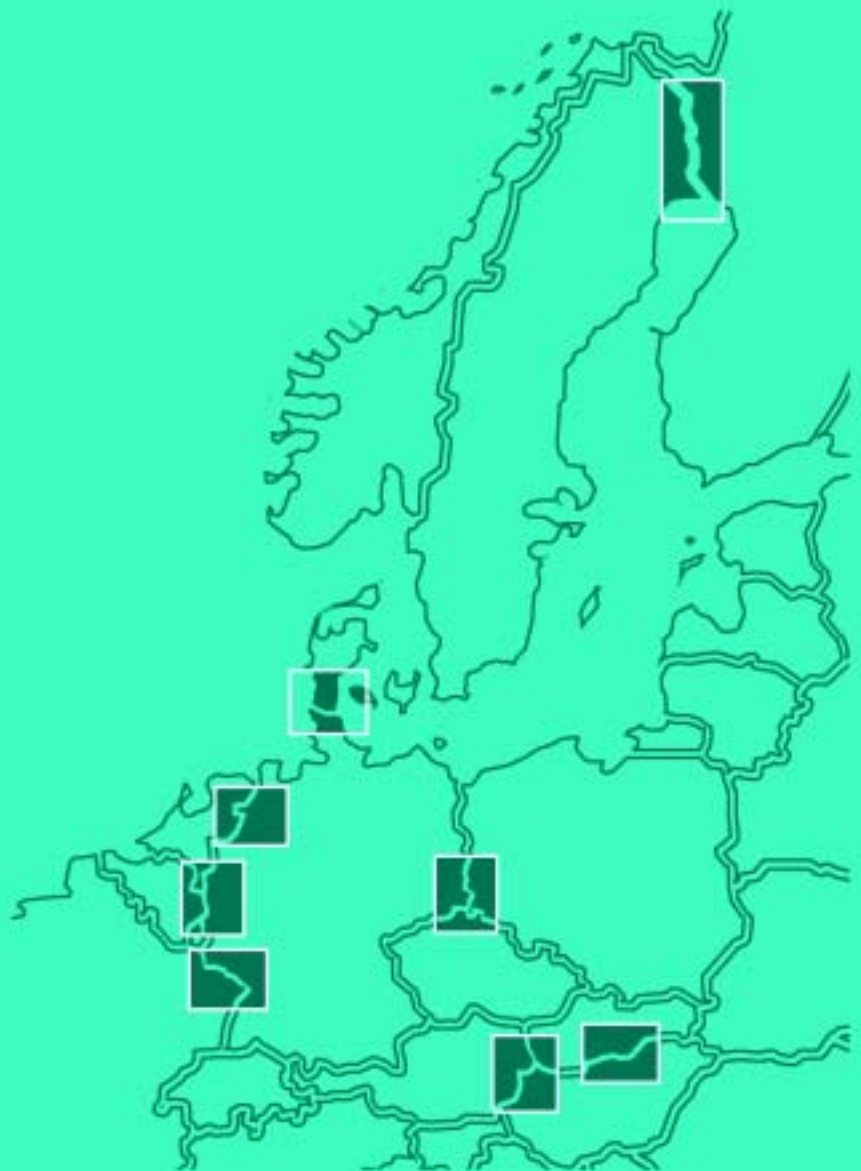


Education across Borders

Adult Education in
European Border Regions



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Preface

From October 2003 to September 2005 the SOCRATES / GRUNDTVIG 1 project CBCnet (Cross-border Cooperation Network in Adult Education in European Border Regions) united for the first time adult education institutions which have experiences in cross-border cooperation in a common project. It was the aim of CBCnet to bring together adult education institutions which participate in cross-border education activities alongside internal or external borders of the European Union to point out the specific situation of adult education institutions in European border regions and to call attention to the special significance of cross-border educational work. This was intended to intensify cross-border educational work in Europe and to support and invigorate the work of related institutions.

Fifteen adult education institutions from nine European countries and eight European border regions joined forces on the project and during the two-year project period compiled, systematised and concretised their experiences in cross-border educational work. Their efforts resulted in several concrete products: besides this publication, a website, under www.crossborder-education.net, was established and a brochure with the title "Crossing Borders", including recommendations for the promotion of cross-border adult education was published. The project consortium consisted of institutions offering general and vocational adult education as well as institutions from both the formal and non-formal educational sphere, regional development agencies and research societies.

In this publication, the introduction aims to establish a terminological difference between cross-border educational work and transnational educational work – cross-border educational work having been largely ignored in the theoretical discussion so far – and to systematise and present the different models of educational work in border regions in the form of a 4-level model. The **first chapter** gives an overview of the historical, cultural and economic backgrounds of the eight border regions represented in the project. In the **second chapter**, selected aspects of cross-border cooperation activities are described and, finally, in the **third chapter**, 15 case studies concerning cross-border education cooperation in Europe are presented. The study is completed by a description of each of the participating institutions (**partner profiles**) at the end of the publication. The CBCnet consortium hopes, with the help of this publication, to draw attention to the special needs of educational work in European border regions and to contribute towards the development of a stronger network among education institutions that are active in this area.

Alfred Lang, Nicole Ehlers, Lenny van Kempen (Eds.)

Introduction:

Cross-border Adult Education at the Interfaces of Europe

Alfred Lang

At the Lisbon summit in March 2000, the Council of Europe set itself a new strategic goal for the next decade – to become the most competitive and dynamic knowledge-based economy in the world, capable of sustainable economic growth with more and better jobs and greater social cohesion. In this context, lifelong learning was defined as one of the most important components of this strategy. But lifelong learning is not only able to contribute to increased competitiveness and employment but also to the social integration and personal development of citizens as individuals .

With this focus on lifelong learning, adult education gained enormously in significance at the European level. “Since Lisbon, the European Education and Vocational Training Policy received a previously unknown dynamic” – states the Commission in its latest draft for the creation of a new Integrated Action Programme in the field of lifelong learning for the period from 2007 onwards, which aims to integrate the two major education programmes Leonardo da Vinci and Socrates. The aim is to promote lifelong learning through the financial support of education projects in which, additional to the exchange of teachers and learners, the project-oriented cooperation of educational institutions plays an important part. For many adult education institutions, the continuous participation in European cooperation projects and mobility measures has become part of their daily routine. In fact, contemporary adult education work without the involvement of a “European dimension” is no longer thinkable.

Cross-border Adult Education as a Special Form of Transnational European Education Cooperation

One special form of transnational European cooperation in education involves cooperation among educational institutions alongside internal or external borders of the European Union. People looking for education and learners in border regions are confronted with problems such as different access restrictions to the respective educational systems, different administrative structures and certification systems that are not standardised. Furthermore, different languages and different cultural values as well as historical aspects all play an important role.

Adult education institutions that wish to participate in cross-border cooperation activities have to deal with legal settings and administrative structures which have little or nothing in

common with one another. This is true for most transnational cooperation projects, but in contrast to these, cross-border cooperation projects take place in a geographically coherent area¹. In border regions, questions concerning European integration have far more immediacy and influence the daily life of the inhabitants more directly. Learners and adult education institutions in border regions are almost inescapably confronted with the aspects mentioned above. Cross-border cooperation in adult education must therefore be seen as a special form of transnational European educational cooperation. As such, it is all the more surprising that cross-border adult education has for a long time been largely ignored, both in the political and in the theoretical discourse. Indeed, it has still to find its place in European educational programmes.

Cross-border Adult Education as a Touchstone for the Success of European Integration

Behind the immediate aim of the education programmes – to enhance innovation in education through the financial support of education projects and promote lifelong learning in all its forms – there is a further intention to obtain a “European added value”, which concerns the “project Europe” itself. Transnational project cooperations as well as mobility activities are intended to enhance the building of a common European educational area and to diminish political, economic and cultural barriers between the European member states and thus promote the process of European integration.

Here too, border regions play an important role. On many occasions, they are the touchstone for the success of European integration and they have, in many cases, provided the motor for integration. Adult education institutions face the challenge of contributing to economic and social harmonisation and to the cultural and psychological integration of border regions.

In this context, cross-border cooperation projects in regions which share a common border with one or more of the ten new member states are of special importance. Here, there is a special challenge to European integration because harmonising economic, social, cultural and – last not least – educational standards requires much greater effort than is often the case along internal borders of the former group of 15 EU member states. In other words, cooperation projects along external EU borders are of great significance. In this context, two aspects in particular show that cross-border educational work is to be seen as a special form of transnational education cooperation. The Socrates and Leonardo da Vinci programmes stress the geographically-balanced composition of project partners as an important component of selection criteria. It is presumed that the need for intercultural understanding is bigger between geographically distinct states than between neighbouring states. Apart from the fact that the assumption that border regions have a lesser need for integration is – if at all – only true in a restricted sense, these selection criteria constitute an enormous handicap for cross-border cooperation. Also another requirement, namely that at least three project partners from three different European states should be involved,

hinders cross-border cooperation. Not to mention the fact that in the practice of project selection (at least for big pilot projects) many more partners are the norm, projects in border areas are rendered impossible, because cross-border cooperation generally takes place on a bilateral and seldom on a trilateral basis.

Models of Cross-border Education Cooperation

Despite the drawbacks mentioned above, different models of cross-border education cooperation have developed and become established along many European internal borders, where the quality and quantity of cooperation varies considerably. The models range from organised study visits to the neighbouring country to common bi- or trilateral further education centres. The following forms and models of cross-border educational work can be defined:

Level 1: The Discovery of the Neighbouring Country

Cross-border educational work starts out of curiosity and interest in the neighbouring country. The very first step involves visits to the neighbouring country, mostly with a social or cultural focus (visit to a theatre, a concert or museum, to an exhibition or memorial, etc.) and which are organised by regional or local educational institutions. Typical of this level is the one-sided character of the contact and the fact that the activity is focused on a special event as well as limited to a short time-span. In many cases, the incentive for the visit comes from individuals with a special interest in the region or individuals with a personal motivation for their involvement. But at this level, one cannot yet talk of cross-border cooperation in the regular sense, even if cooperation with a contact person or institution in the neighbouring country takes place (for example, where a person from the neighbouring country acts as a tourist guide or escorts the visit as an expert). But if the activity is offered and organised by an education institution, it may nonetheless be considered to be an cross-border educational activity.

Level 2: Educational Work in Border Regions: Language Courses and Thematically Defined Educational Activities

The next level typically involves courses and educational offers from adult education institutions in border regions, which have a textual focus on the neighbouring country or the border region. One example is language courses that are offered by many adult education institutions in border regions. In a simple form, these courses are carried out by language teachers from the respective region for regional learners, sometimes accompanied by a native speaker from the neighbouring country who is employed on a part-time basis by the respective institution.

These courses qualify as cross-border educational work because participation in these courses and projects demonstrates an active interest in the neighbouring country, which aims principally to facilitate encounters with the inhabitants of the neighbouring country

and exchange with one another. In many cases, these language courses or thematically-focused courses are combined with activities that would properly be described as level 1 activities, for example in the form of excursions and trips to the neighbouring country.

As in level 1, these activities are also one-sided but they are already designed for a specific period (at least for the time-span of a particular course). However, such activities do not yet involve mutual contact and exchange with people from the neighbouring country and there is no project-related or institutional cooperation.

Level 3: Cross-border Project Cooperation

Project cooperation begins with activities at level 3. For a defined period of time, typically defined by the respective project, trainer, learners and management on both sides of a border work together to achieve specific project targets.

Examples for this form of cross-border educational work are training and further education in the field of vocational adult education. In this context, education institutions from both sides of a border work together for the time-span of a project to train, for example, skilled workers in a branch where there is a lack of suitably qualified workforce in the respective border region. This form of project cooperation also comprises the exchange of trainer and trainees to improve their professional qualification regarding intercultural competencies in the form of mobility projects.

The groups of learners / trainees can be: (a) monolingual, if they come from one country and want to learn about the language (or other aspects) of the neighbouring country to find a job there; (b) linguistically mixed groups, if the aim is to qualify them for the labour market of either country. On the managerial level, contacts between the institutions involved take place but they do not reach the level of a continuous cooperation independent of special projects.

Criteria for this form of cooperation comprise the definite time-span of the cooperation, the different intensity of forms of direct contact and exchange between trainer and learners and the management responsible for the cooperation activities.

Level 4: Institutional Cooperation and Cross-border Education Institutions

Characteristic for level 4 of cross-border cooperation in education is the permanent character of the institutional cooperation. This can have the form of: (a) the foundation of an independent institution that is run by a group of partner institutions; or (b) an education institution *sui generis* in the form of a bi- or multi-lingual joint venture.

A special case of institutional cross-border educational cooperation is the one-sided founding of a subsidiary company or branch office in the neighbouring country. The primary aim in this context is to offer tried and tested courses on a new market.

The above-mentioned forms and models of cross-border cooperation represent, of course, only a provisional attempt to systematise them. In practice, there are many intersections and changeovers which render such a systematisation rather complex. The diagram below allows us to identify qualitative and quantitative differences in cross-border educational work and to offer a vague classification, but this is not meant to be any form of assessment suggestion that only level 4 allows for an optimal cooperation. An assessment of that kind would have to take into consideration the context in which the educational activity was implemented, or the type of target groups involved, or to assess whether the cooperation activity had achieved the aims which it had set for itself.

Diagram 1: Models and Forms of Cross-border Educational Work in Europe

	Level 1	Level 2	Level 3	Level 4
Quality of the Activity	one-sided	one-sided	mutual	mutual
Duration of the Activity	singular	for a defined period of time	for a defined period of time	in perpetuity
Quality of the Cooperation	on impulse	selective	project-related	institutional

All in all it can be said that adult education institutions in border regions, as much as other education institutions in such regions, take on the responsibility to promote the concept of lifelong learning and participate in transnational cooperations to enhance the “Europeanisation” and internationalisation of education and qualification. Because of their special geographical position in border regions, they also face the challenge of how to contribute to the social and economic harmonisation and cultural and psychological integration in their respective border regions through cross-border educational work. Adult education institutions in border regions are therefore an important factor in the process of European integration. Consequently, the specific conditions of cross-border educational work need to be taken into consideration in the policies, programmes and promotion structures for adult education at the European as well as at the national level.

Alfred Lang, Research Society Burgenland (Austria), project coordinator

¹ Normally, the terms “transnational” and “cross-border” are applied synonymously, also in theoretical literature. Here, and in the following chapters, a distinction between „cross-border cooperation activities“ and „transnational cooperation activities“ is made.

Border Regions in Europe

Sweden – Finland – Norway

The North Calotte Area – Top of Europe

Ulf Olovzon / Anne Arrelo / Sirpa Hyttinen

Sweden's Norrbotten County and Finland's Lapland Province¹

Norrbotten in Sweden (Norrbottens län) and Lapland in Finland (Lapland Lääni) are the most northerly corners of Sweden and Finland. They are the biggest county and province respectively in both countries. The main part of the region is above the Arctic Circle and, combined with the northern parts of Norway, they form the so-called Top of Europe (North Calotte, se. Nordkalotten). In a wider perspective, Norrbotten and Lapland belong to the Barents region, which includes northern parts of Finland, Norway, Russia and Sweden.



*Torneälv – Border river
 between Sweden (right) and
 Finland (left).*

The extreme north of Scandinavia is also called Lapland (Samiland)². Lapland was a historical province of Sweden until the Swedish-Russian war. This war was fought from February 1808 to September 1809. As a result of the war Finland became an autonomous grand duchy under the Russian tsar. Following the Treaty of Fredrikshamn in 1809 the Torne River (se. Torne älv, fi. Tornionjoki) was chosen as a demarcation line for the new border between Sweden and the Russian Grand Duchy of Finland. The south of Lapland was split into a Swedish western part and a Finnish eastern part. Nowadays Lapland is divided between the Swedish Norrbotten County and Västerbotten County in the west, the Finnish administrative province of Lapland in the east, the northern part of Norway and the Kola Peninsula in Russia.

The counties Norrbotten and Lapland are full of contrasts, with notably high mountains and deep lakes. There are several unexploited, major national rivers, such as the Torne River.

No other Swedish or Finnish county has such large areas of pristine wilderness. In 1810, when the county of Norrbotten was formally established, about 34,000 inhabitants lived there. The current population of the county comprises almost 254,000 inhabitants. Expansion came at the turn of the 20th century with the dawning exploitation of the county's natural resources. Mining, forestry and hydropower became the primary industries, which still continue to play a vital role not only for Norrbotten but for Sweden as a whole. Agriculture and other industries are important in terms of employment in the county. Norrbotten ranks fourth among Swedish counties in terms of gross regional production. Capital city of the province is Luleå with about 75,500 inhabitants.



The province of Lapland was separated from the province of *Oulu* in 1936. After the Second World War, the *Petsamo* and *Salla* areas were ceded to the Soviet Union. The population today numbers almost 187,000 inhabitants. There are wood-processing, steel, energy and construction companies in Lapland that export world-wide. There are also companies that rely on a clean natural environment, including large holiday resorts and producers of agricultural products. Development from a period of extractive industry to an industrial society has come about quickly. In 1950, the largest part of Lapland's inhabitants lived in rural areas and more than half the workforce worked in forestry and agriculture. Today, 65% of the workforce are in the service industry, 22% in processing and 10% in primary production.

Capital city of the province of Lapland is Rovaniemi with about 35,000 inhabitants; the Arctic Circle runs near the city.

Economy and Population

3% of the Swedish population live in Norrbotten county and 3.6% of Finland's population live in the province of Lapland. The population is mainly settled in the municipal centres, centres of tourism and those villages which can offer a high rate of jobs. The villages with the most buoyant local economy are those that are near to the municipal or tourism centres, with attractive surroundings, and possessing both a long history and a strong community identity. Border trading villages also have strong economies.

*Left: Open border between Tornio (Finland) and Haparanda (Sweden).
 Right: Former customs office and border control station.*



The population density on both sides of the border is very low. Although Finland and Sweden as a whole have a very low population density in comparison to the average in the European Union, Lapland and Norbotten both have a population density that is even far behind the national average, with 2 and 2.6 inhabitants per km² respectively.

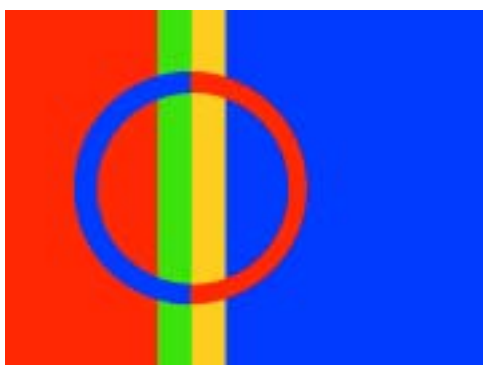
The unemployment rate in both border regions is higher than the national average. This difference is larger on the Finnish side of the border, where the unemployment rate is higher than in the Swedish border region. Yet, there is not a real difference between the levels of economic wealth on the Swedish and Finnish side today. At the end of the 1960s, however, many people of Finland emigrated to Sweden. The reason for this was that due to agrarian reform measures, Finnish farmers received government grants if they stopped farming. During the Second World War, the people living in the region along the Torne River clearly showed that traditional co-existence in the area was very firmly-rooted. The post-war decades have been more peaceful, but rapid changes could still occur in terms of currency changes and customs restrictions. These often unanticipated events have created completely new conditions for enterprise and for co-existence on both sides of the Torne River. The North Calotte Council, in which the northern regions of Norway, Sweden and Finland cooperate, has played a decisive role in cross-border cooperation³. European Uni-

on membership has made it possible to undertake concrete cross-border development projects. Today the cross border cooperation between the twin cities of Haparanda (SE) and Tornio (FI) is one of the best examples for all the European border regions.⁴

Torne River Valley – an International and Multi-cultural Place

In the Torne River Valley (se. Tornedalen) of today one encounters the cultures of the valley itself, of Sweden, Finland, Lapland and Norway. Four languages are spoken within the County of Norrbotten: Swedish, Finnish, Sami and Meänkieli. Tornedalen comprises nine municipalities along the length of the Tornie River Valley on the Swedish and Finnish sides, from Kiruna in the north to Haparanda in the south. The Swedish communities are: Pajala, Övertorneå and Haparanda; and the Finnish communities are: Enontekiö, Muonio, Kolari, Pello, Ylitornio and Tornio.⁵

Sami is a general name denoting a group of Finno-Ugric languages spoken in Lapland, including northern parts of Norway, Sweden, Finland and Russia. In 2001, there were around ten known Sami languages and 70-80,000 Sami speakers. The majority of the Sami live in Norway, about 40-50,000. 17-20,000 live in Sweden, 6-10,000 in Finland and 2,000 on the Kola Peninsula in Russia). Sami is officially acknowledged as minority language in Finland, Norway and since 2000 in Sweden⁶.



Flag of the Sami.

Meänkieli (“our language”) is the name given to Tornedalen Finnish (Tornedalsfinska), a local version of the Finnish language with an admixture of Swedish words. It is the mother tongue of people on the Swedish side of the Torne River Valley and is spoken by approximately 20–35,000 people. In addition, there are about 15–25,000 Tornedalians outside the Finnish-speaking area. Due to the fact that the Finnish speaking population of Sweden has been separated from Finland after the Swedish-Russian war in 1809 Meänkieli lost its connection to modern Finnish and was more and more influenced from the Swedish language. This was supported by the fact, that the Swedish government wanted to assimilate the Tornedalians. It was forbidden to use the language in school and so young people can

understand Meänkieli but did not learn to speak it. It was in 1999 when the Swedish government official recognised Meänkieli as one of the five minority languages in Sweden.

In principle, the language spoken in the Torne River Valley is Finnish, because people on the Swedish side of the border often speak Tornedalen Finnish (Meänkieli) and Swedish, whereas people on the Finnish side only speak Finnish. Swedish is the dominant language in public and private spheres among people up to the age of about 30 years whose parents were born in Sweden, especially in larger villages and among female inhabitants. Two languages (Finnish and Sami) are spoken within the province of Lapland. Of these, Finnish is the dominant language.

Adult Education in Finland

The premise of Finnish educational philosophy is to cater for the competence and education of the entire population. One of the tasks of education and training is to provide tools to manage changes in society and to consolidate cohesion. Central factors of change include the progress of globalisation, the trend in the population's age structure, changes in working life and structural unemployment, as well as the effects of information and communication technologies. A high standard of education, reinforcing the status of adult education and training, frequent and diverse contacts with working life and a policy of competencies based on the principle of lifelong learning are ways of preparing for the challenges.

The formal education system in Finland consists of three levels: compulsory comprehensive schools, followed by upper secondary schools and vocational colleges and at the third and highest level, polytechnics and universities. After pre-school education in schools or children's day care centres (kindergartens), each age group is provided with a general nine-year basic compulsory education from seven up to 16 years of age. The opportunity to move on to a three-year study period in general upper secondary schools or a vocational college after basic education in comprehensive school can be provided for the whole age group. Approximately 94% of each age group in Finland start upper secondary school or vocational college and some 82% complete the education. Tertiary-level studies are available for 60-65% of the age group in polytechnics or universities.

The overall responsibility for education policy and self-motivated adult education and training rests with the Ministry of Education and the National Board of Education, an expert and development office subordinate to the Ministry. The Education and Culture Departments of the Provincial State Offices are the regional expert authorities in the administrative field of the Ministry of Education. The municipalities and the federation of municipalities play a significant role in providing and financing education and training. Non-governmental organisations (NGOs) have a strong position especially in the sectors of liberal adult education and counselling. Important cooperation partners also include teacher, student and labour market organisations.

Forms of Adult Education

Until the 1980's, adult education and training were mainly associated with liberal adult education institutions. Since then, measures have been specifically directed at expanding the provision of certificate-oriented education and supplementary training for adults. Consequently, the relative proportion of liberal adult education has diminished, although, in terms of quantity, it still reaches a large number of citizens. However, in terms of educational provision, certificate-oriented adult education is more extensive since it lasts longer. The most recent form of education, the polytechnic system, also includes adult education and training and their provision has increased with the permanent establishment of the polytechnic system. When the unemployment rate reached a high point in the early 1990s, adult employment training (labour market training) was also expanded.

All the education and training intended for young people is also provided for adults, ranging from comprehensive school studies to university. Some educational institutions concentrate exclusively on adult education and training whereas for others, adult education and training form only a part of their activities. Adult education and training are also provided in the form of in-service training in companies. Adults may complete the syllabus of basic education (comprehensive school) or upper secondary school and participate in the upper secondary school and matriculation examination primarily at upper secondary schools for adults. Additional vocational training involves self-motivated training independent of the employer, aiming at enhancing vocational competence. The majority of vocational education is provided by vocational adult education centres, which are mostly municipal adult education institutions.

In the 1990s, polytechnics for vocational education and training were established in Finland. Polytechnic studies offer a practically oriented option in higher education which matches the needs of working life. Students at polytechnics receive both theoretical knowledge and practical skills in their chosen field of study. Some basic facts about Finland's polytechnics:

- There are 31 polytechnics in Finland.
- There are 100,000 polytechnic students.
- There is an average of 24,000 starting places on courses for polytechnic qualifications for the young and mature.
- There are around 6,000 starting places on courses for polytechnic qualifications for adults.

The majority of students are people with post-secondary qualifications or other vocational qualifications, who are upgrading their studies into polytechnic degrees. With regard to performance in working life and lifelong learning, the completion of upper secondary education is regarded as being the minimum requirement. All polytechnics provide open polytechnic instruction. The polytechnics are maintained by the municipalities, federations of municipalities, municipal or private companies or foundations.

Vocational education institutions generally select their students based on their school grades, but some institutions also hold separate entrance exams. Subjects required in all vocational studies are: mother-tongue language, the second national language, a foreign language, mathematics, physics and chemistry, physical and health education, social studies, entrepreneurship and workplace studies, and arts and cultural studies. The qualification also includes a diploma project. It is characteristic of Finnish vocational education that, in addition to theoretical studies in the classroom, there are practical study periods in the workshops of the educational institution and on-the-job training at actual workplaces. Adults already active in the labour market can demonstrate their knowledge and skills in competence-based tests and thereby gain initial vocational, further vocational or specialist qualifications. Preparatory training is available in vocational institutions. Vocational institutions also provide continuing training geared to upgrading knowledge and skills in response to the needs of the labour market.

All 20 universities in the country also provide study opportunities for adults. All universities have continuing education programmes of varying forms and lengths.

The field that has expanded most rapidly is open university instruction. This provides all citizens with an opportunity, independent of educational background, to complete academic study models. There is no specific Open University in Finland, but universities provide the education in a dispersed manner in cooperation with various adult education institutions. In recent years, study via information networks has particularly increased.

Liberal adult education comprises the network of educational institutions that has emerged as the result of prolonged historical development, as well as their teaching programmes. A common feature of these activities is that their objectives and contents are not determined from outside or from higher authorities but are decided by the organisations running the institutions. These sponsor organisations usually include various associations and foundations, with yet another possible form of ownership being the limited company. The sponsor organisations may represent different ideological or religious views or base their operations on local and regional educational and cultural needs. Consequently, adult education centres, mainly owned by municipalities, are also considered as liberal adult education. Liberal adult education thus includes both activities based on different value systems and those that are neutral in this respect. An essential feature is the voluntary nature of participation.

In relation to the state authorities, a central factor is the granting of a licence to maintain an institution, which entails establishing whether the underlying educational and cultural needs are sufficient and whether the applicant has adequate professional and economic resources for maintaining the institution. Once granted, the licence allows extensive autonomy and the freedom to operate, but also requires that the institution is independently responsible

for identifying and developing its tasks. The licence entails the right to a state subsidy in accordance with the relevant legislation. Traditionally, folk high schools, adult education centres and study centres have been regarded as liberal adult education institutions, but according to new legislation, physical education centres (sports institutes) and summer universities have also been brought under the same act. These institutions provide a diverse range of education options in many different forms. In particular, they offer general, social and interest-orientated studies.

Folk high schools are a nation-wide system of boarding schools. The majority (more than 80) of them are maintained by various associations and foundations, only a few are municipal. Each school may emphasise its own value system, ideology or educational objectives. Of the schools, more than 30 are classified as “GRUNDTVIGian” (independent), more than 40 have a Christian background, about 10 are maintained by political movements, trade unions and NGOs and three concentrate on education for disabled people. Folk high schools provide one-year study programmes and summer and weekend courses of different lengths. The most popular programmes are those concentrating on languages, the arts, social subjects and humanities. The range of course subjects is extensive. About three-quarters of the schools’ overall activities are non-formal studies (i.e. non-certificate-orientated). The rest consists of certificate-orientated education provided in accordance with the relevant legislation. Some schools provide exclusively non-formal liberal education, whereas certificate-orientated education accounts for a considerable proportion in others.

Adult education centres (or workers institutions) are mainly municipal adult education institutions. Adult education centres operate in all municipalities, and their activities have been dispersed into suburbs and villages. The emphasis of instruction is determined according to locality. The most popular subjects are languages, music, other arts subjects and crafts. Adult education centres also provide a wide range of open university instruction. In addition they cater for a large part of basic art education intended for children and young people. Instruction is mainly arranged in the evenings. This commonly takes the form of a study group convening once or twice a week, although short-term intensive courses are becoming more common.

Study centres maintained by culture organisations are all private adult education institutions. Half of the sponsor organisations represent political parties and the trade union movement, while independent NGOs make up the other half. Physical education centres (sports institutes) are national and regional boarding schools providing physical exercise, physical education and coaching. Summer universities are maintained by regional associations and certain Regional Councils. Their activities focus on summer courses in more than 50 localities. Summer universities provide open university instruction, language courses and supplementary vocational training in particular.

Participation

According to adult education surveys, about half of all people aged 18-64 participate in various forms of adult education. Participation among women is 53% compared to 43% among men. This gender difference has remained unchanged for the last 15 years. The participation rate was highest among people aged 30-54. However, the highest increase in participation in the 1990s occurred among those over 54. People with an extensive educational background were the most active participants in adult education. On average, studies in adult education and training took eight days per year. The main fields were information technology, languages and studies in social and in behavioural sciences.

Adult Education in Sweden⁸

The Swedish public school system is made up of compulsory and non-compulsory schooling. Compulsory schooling includes regular compulsory schools, Sami schools, special schools, and programmes for pupils with learning disabilities. Non-compulsory schooling includes the pre-school class, upper secondary school, upper secondary school for pupils with learning disabilities, municipal adult education, and adult education for adults with learning disabilities. All education throughout the public school system is free. There is usually no charge to students or their parents for teaching materials, school meals, health services or transport.

Forms of Adult Education

At the end of the 1960s, the Swedish government decided to expand accessibility to adult studies institutions. Practically all forms of adult education were to be cost free or at very low cost for the individual student. A special educational organisation of municipal adult education institutions (*KomVux*) was set up across the country. At these institutions, adults could receive formal education up to upper secondary level.

Basic adult education corresponds to the nine-year compulsory basic school. It is intended to provide a basis for participation in community life, working life and further study. The level at which studies are begun depends on each individual student's starting qualifications. Studies are concluded when individual educational targets have been met. Students decide upon their own rate of progress and studies can be combined with employment or work experience.

Adult upper secondary schooling and upper secondary schooling for young persons have the same syllabuses and as of 1994 they share the same curriculum. The courses provided may differ from those in regular upper secondary school as regards emphasis, content and scope. The students themselves determine the number and combination of subjects and the rate of progress. Supplementary education is a form of education in its own right

providing further training in a certain occupation or training for a completely new occupation. Most of these programmes take between six months and a year to complete and focus on subjects such as economics, computing or tourism.

There are many distance-learning education opportunities at different education levels in Sweden. They supplement adult education provisions for those unable to find suitable opportunities where they live. Parts of the teaching programme are in the form of distance-learning. In some education programmes, the students visit institutions at regular intervals for tutored instruction, while some education involves e-learning courses.

Labour market training is an instrument of labour market policy primarily intended as basic vocational education or further training for the unemployed. The Swedish parliament allocates money to the National Labour Market Board, which in turn distributes funding to county labour boards and employment offices. These purchase various training packages from, for example, *KomVux*, commercial training companies or folk high schools.

Non-formal Education / Popular Education

Activities are wide and comprehensive. Around 75% of all Swedes aged from 18 to 75 years have at some point taken part in a study circle, with around 40% having taken part in at least one study circle over the last three years. 13% have taken a folk high school course and 8% have participated in an extended folk high school course.

Popular education is largely financed by grants from the government, from regional governments and local councils. The parliament has laid down the aims and conditions for granting government support to popular education: People are to be given the opportunity to influence their situation in life and take part in social development. Democracy is to be strengthened and developed. Interest in culture is to be broadened and participation and the individual's own creativity is to be furthered. Popular education is to give priority to activities that aim to bridge educational gaps and that are geared towards people who are educationally, socially and culturally disadvantaged. Particularly important target groups are people of foreign descent, physically or mentally challenged participants and the unemployed.

The study circle is the most typical form of Swedish popular education. A small group of people meet regularly for a period of time, most commonly for one night per week, to study a certain subject or theme or to take part in a cultural activity. The circle consists of between five and twelve participants, one of whom is the leader. The study circles are characterised by democratic values and based upon participants' taking responsibility for the work. Together they plan their studies, based on their own needs and interests. An important part of study circle methodology is the exchange of experiences and ideas between the participants and their own analysis of the subject studied.

To summarise, the educational systems for basic education are very similar in Finland, Sweden and Norway. All countries have a nine-year compulsory schooling period and a three-year upper secondary school option, with the difference that there are no vocational schools in Sweden. In Finland, students can choose to continue their studies after completing the nine-year compulsory school at either an upper secondary school or a vocational school. In Sweden students continue to upper secondary school, which offer vocational training.

Education and Vocational Training for Adults in the Torne River Valley

The largest provider of adult education in the Torne River Valley is the Arctic Vocational Foundation (Stiftelsen Utbildning Nordkalotten / Utbildning Nord).⁹ It is a joint Scandinavian vocational training provider, commissioned by the labour market authorities in Sweden, Finland and Norway. The Arctic Vocational Foundation is located in the small village Övertorneå in Sweden, near the border to Finland. The centre was established in 1970. The upper secondary school of *Gränsälvs gymnasiet* in Övertorneå cooperates with the Arctic Vocational Foundation with the aim of offering their students high-skilled courses in four vocational training programmes.

The Nordkalotten Research and Culture Centre (Nordkalottens kultur- och forskningscentrum)¹⁰, is a centre about the Meänkieli speaking minority in the Torne River Valley (se. Tornedalen), located in Övertorneå. The centre has a library and collects books about Meänkieli and the Nordic Region and serves also as a meeting point for cultural and social activities.

On the Swedish side, two other major educational institutions are the Svefi Academy, a Swedish-Finnish folk high school (Sverigefinska folkhögskolan / Svefi)¹¹ in the border-city Haparanda and the Torne Valley folk high school (Tornedalens Folkhögskola)¹² in Övertorneå. The Svefi Academy in Haparanda is an independent adult education centre that offers programmes in such topics as computer science, art, languages and environment. It follows the tradition of liberal adult education, which aims at strengthening and supporting democracy, extending popular interest in the arts and culture, and to equalise the educational gaps in Sweden and Finland. The Torne Valley folk high school provides training in areas such as basic adult education, nature guidance, information technology, crafts, ecology and theatre and drama.

University-level education in the area is provided by the Eastern Norrbotten Research Station (Högskoleförbundet Östra Norrbotten)¹³, which is a development project whose first phase is taking place in collaboration with Luleå University of Technology and the Swedish University of Agricultural Sciences in Umeå. The main component of the Research Station is the School of Research, whose purpose is to pursue research into food, tourism, IT and the manufacture of wood products.

In the Finnish province of Lapland, there are four folk high schools in the region, of which two are located in the Torne River Valley. One of them is the *Peräpohjolan Opisto*¹⁴ in the Finnish city Tornio, whose main functions are organising liberal adult education, arranging education as outsourcing services, providing a basic vocational degree in youth and leisure education and a polytechnic degree in the study programme of civil and youth work. In addition to that, they provide catering and hostel services, education services and banqueting services. The other folk high school in the Torne River Valley is the Upper Tornio Christian Folk High School (Ylitornion kristillinen kansanopisto)¹⁵, which provides vocational education in the study programme of child and family work for those who will graduate as children's instructors. The folk high school arranges several short courses and further education in various fields, as well as education bought by the Labour Administration. Added to this, there are 21 adult education centres in the province of Lapland. The only university in Lapland is the University of Lapland (Lapin Yliopisto)¹⁶ in Rovaniemi. It provides adult education in the form of a centre for further education and open university education.

The Kemi-Tornio Polytechnic (Kemi-Tornion ammattikorkeakoulu)¹⁷ is located in the two cities Kemi and Tornio. It is part of the Finnish Polytechnic System (see above). The Kemi-Tornio Vocational College (Kemi-Tornion ammattiopisto)¹⁸ was established in August 2000.¹⁹ The five educational units offer 15 study programmes like fashion and tourism, catering business or wellbeing. All programmes include on-the-job training. The central objective of Kemi-Tornio Vocational College is to provide students with good professional knowledge



Left: Swedish-Finish adult education centre Svefi (Sverigefinska folkhögskolan) in Haparanda (Sweden).

Middle: Label on the building of the Kemi-Tornio Polytechnic in Kemi (Finland).

Right: Students in the library of the Kemi-Tornio Polytechnic.

and competence to be employed by themselves or national or international employers. The College also offers adult education. Students can study initial Vocational Qualification Programmes as a preparatory training and a competence-based examination according to each programme's curriculum. They can also complete these preparatory training and competence-based examinations in several Professional and Specialised Professional

Programmes. Training that prepares for the competence-based examinations can also be organised through Apprenticeship Contract Education. The adult education department also offers Professional Supplementary Education, Labour Market Training and Custom-Built Education. Educational units of the department are: business administration, tourism, information technology, wellbeing, hair and beauty, social and health care services, catering business and dressmaking.

Ulf Olovzon / Anne Arrela, Arctic Vocational Foundation (*Stiftelsen Utbildning Nordkalotten*), Sweden
Sirpa Hyttinen, Kemi-Tornio Vocational College (*Kemi-Tornion ammattiopisto*), Finland

Useful information:

Politics and administration:

Website of the province Norrbotten: www.bd.lst.se
Website of the Nordic Council: www.norden.org
Website of the Sami Parliament in Sweden: www.samitinget.se
Website of the Regional Council of Lapland: www.lapinliitto.fi
Website of the municipality Övertorneå: www.overtornea.se
Website of the city Haparanda: www.haparanda.se
Website of the City-Twins Cooperation Network: www.citytwins.net

Labour Market:

Website of the Swedish Ministry of Labour: www.mol.fi
Website of the Centre for Employment and Economic Development: www.te-keskus.fi
Website of the Swedish Labour Market Service: www.ams.se

Education:

Website of the Arctic Vocational Foundation (*Stiftelsen Utbildning Nordkalotten*) in Övertorneå (SE): www.utbnord.se
Website of the Kemi-Tornio Polytechnic (*Kemi-Tornion ammattikorkeakoulu*) in Kemi (FI): www.token.fi
Website of the Kemi-Tornio Vocational College (*Kemi-Tornion ammattiopisto*): www.ktao.fi
Website of the Swedish-Finnish Adult Education Centre (*Sverigefinska folkhögskolan – Svefi*) in Haparanda (SE): www.svefi.net
Website of the Tornedalen Adult Education Centre (*Tornedalens Folkhögskola*) in Övertorneå (SE): www.tornedalen.se
Website of the *Peräpohjolan Opisto* Adult Education Centre in Tornedalen (SE): www.ppopisto.fi
Website of the *Ylitornion kristillinen kansanopisto* Adult Education Centre in Tornedalen (FI): www.myrri.fi
Website of the Nordkalotten Research and Culture Centre (*Nordkalottens kultur- och forskningscentrum*) in Övertorneå (SE): www.overtornea.se/kultur_fritid/nkfc/nkfc
Website of the University of Lapland (*Lapin Yliopisto*): www.ulapland.fi
Website of the Norrbotten Research Centre East (*Högskoleförbundet Östra Norrbotten*): www.hfon.org
Website of the Swedish National Agency for Education: www.skolverket.se

Footnotes:

- 1 The text of this section is taken from: LaLapin Markkinointi Oy (2002), www.laplandfinland.com
- 2 The name Lapland has its origin in „Lapp“ as contemptuous term for the Sami people. Today the official name of Lapland in the Sami language is Sápmi (Samiland) even though the region did not gain the status of an independent state.
- 3 www.norden.org/Gransreg_samarbete_en/sidorna/nordkalotten-eng.htm
- 4 For the cross-border activities in the region see the article for Olovzon / Arrela / Hyttinen in chapter 2.
- 5 www.arctic-circle.net
- 6 Numbers from www.samitinget.se
- 7 The following section is taken from: Keinänen, Pirjo (2000). “Adult Education in Finland”. In: Lernfeld Sprache (Ed.), Towards a framework in open flexible learning, pp 119-126.
- 8 The following section is taken from the following two sources: Skolverket / Swedish National Agency of Education, www.skolverket.se; Andersson, Mikael (2000). “Short History of Adult Education”. In: Lernfeld Sprache (Ed.), Towards a framework in open flexible learning, pp 127-135.

- 9 For more information see: www.utbnord.se and chapter 2, chapter 4 and the partner profile.
- 10 www.overtornea.se/kultur_fritid/nkfc/nkfc/
- 11 www.svefi.net
- 12 www.tornedalen.se
- 13 www.hfon.org
- 14 www.ppopisto.fi
- 15 www.myrri.fi
- 16 www.ulapland.fi
- 17 www.tokem.fi
- 18 www.ktao.fi
- 19 For more information see Partner Profiles.

Denmark – Germany

Region Sønderjylland-Schleswig

Martin Klatt

Cross-Border Cooperation in the Danish-German Border Region

Cross-Border cooperation in the German-Danish border region has undergone constant development embedded in the processes of west European integration, where nationality questions have had a significant impact on developments on the ground. Today, the Danish-German border region comprises the Danish county of Sønderjylland (Sønderjyllands Amt), the two German districts (Kreise) of Nordfriesland and Schleswig-Flensburg and the German city of Flensburg which belongs to the neighbouring German county (Bundesland) of Schleswig-Holstein. The population of the whole region amounts to about 750,000 inhabitants, with one-third living in Sønderjylland and two-thirds living in the German counties. There is a Danish minority of 40-50,000 in South Schleswig as well as a German minority of 15-20,000 in North Schleswig.¹ On the west coast of South Schleswig, there is a minority of 10-20,000 Frisians.²

Regional Economy

Sønderjylland-Schleswig's economic structure as a region shows several characteristics typical for peripheral regions, though to a different extent north and south of the border. Common characteristics are a level of education and industrial qualification below the national averages and difficulties in attracting skilled labour. The region lacks facilities of higher education, resulting in outward migration of innovative, intelligent young people. The western half of the region's economy is dominated by the tourism industry, which is a vulnerable and seasonal business. Especially on the German side of the border, the regional economy lacks diversification and has long been dependent on public investments or subsidies relating to military installations, dependent industries, shipyards and agriculture. The unemployment rate is considerably higher than the German national average and about twice as high as the rate north of the border. Public administration on the German side of the border is considered ineffective and weak because of the predominance of small-scale administrative units especially at municipal level. Conditions are different on the Danish side of the border, where there exists a rather diversified and innovative industrial economy. The region has traditionally been seen as Denmark's gateway to Europe. This might change in the future, though, as companies in Southern Jutland (ge. Südjütland, da. Sønderjylland) have difficulties attracting qualified employees. The unemployment rate in Southern Jutland does not show a significant deviance from the Danish national average.

Cross-border commuting is on a small scale (about 1,200-1,300 commuters travel each way), though the rate is average relative to similar European border regions characterised by a language barrier and the absence of a significant financial incentive to commute across the border.



History

When the present-day land border between Denmark and Germany was drawn in 1920, it separated a hitherto integrated territory, the former Duchy of Schleswig. Schleswig had been a Danish fief, but with close ties to the German fief of Holstein from 1460. The population is of Danish descent, but since the Middle Ages German immigration and culture have played an increasingly important part in daily life. In the 19th century, both Danish and German national movements claimed Schleswig for their respective national projects – this resulted in a revolution (1848), two wars (1848-1850, 1864) and eventually separation after two referenda in 1920. As a consequence, national minorities have remained on either side of the border and have marked the border region with their specific characteristics. The

minorities have also been advocates for a border revision: from 1920-1945, the German minority openly campaigned for a revision of the border settlement, while from 1945-1955, the Danish minority in South Schleswig pushed for a new referendum on the region's future. Finally in 1955 the Bonn-Copenhagen Declaration was made by the government of Denmark and Germany and established the rights of the minorities in the border region.

The existence of national minorities and their attempts to revise the border dominated regional Danish-German relations at least until the early 1960s. In contrast to other West European border regions, cross-border cooperation was not an issue in the Danish-German border region before the 1970s. Until then, cross-border cultural contacts were almost exclusively limited to the minorities' cooperation with their kin-state. The only cross-border activity was a biannual Danish-German cultural event, the Danish-German Days, held alternately in Denmark and in Germany.

First Cross-border Cooperation Activities

When Denmark joined the EC in 1973, German politicians from the border region attempted to establish large-scale cooperation with the aim of integrating the border region in a similar way to already existing Euroregions on West Germany's western border. Danish regional



Left: Street corner in Aabenraa.

Middle: Church in Aabenraa.

Right: House bearing a German-Danish inscription in Aabenraa.

politicians as well as the Danish Foreign ministry were sceptical. They refused any cooperation or integration which would imply the possibility of German interference in domestic matters, insisting that cooperation should be restricted to concrete projects and not have any aims on a larger scale. One concrete project was undertaken in the 1970s, however: a regional cross-border commission for assessment, control and reduction of pollution of Flensburg Fjord was established and in operation from 1971-1983. The establishment of a permanent cross-border institution was rejected by the Danish side,

despite this being repeatedly proposed by the Germans during the 1970s and 1980s. The internal discussions between the relevant Danish actors clearly reveal the fear of German political and cultural dominance which the proposed institution gave rise to. In 1977, a communal forum was established meeting once or twice annually to coordinate cross-border activities. Few concrete initiatives evolved from the forum, but it did improve the flow of information and contacts. Study visits by public employees to public institutions on the other side of the border also became increasingly common.

In the late 1980s, a new level of cooperation was reached. The reorganisation of the EC's policies for regional funding produced a new incentive for border regions to undertake cross-border activities. A political generational change both north and south of the border had replaced politicians marked by the post-war border struggle with younger politicians. Danish fears of German interference had subsided at the political level. Thus the possibility of



Open border between Denmark and Germany (at Kruså).

Middle: Former customs office and border control station.

obtaining EC funds for regional projects led to a cross-border initiative by the provincial government of Schleswig-Holstein and the county of Sønderjylland. This initiative managed to obtain funds for five cross-border projects as well as the development of a cross-border action programme in 1988-1989. Since 1991, the border region has participated in the INTERREG programme on a considerably larger scale than the two other Danish-German INTERREG regions.

Region Sønderjylland-Schleswig

In 1995, the Schleswig-Holstein minister for Europe, Gerd Walter, introduced plans for a Euroregion Schleswig at the first borderland conference in Aabenraa. A joint Danish-German working group prepared an outline framework acceptable to politicians on both sides of the border. Public debate in Denmark started in 1997, just some months prior to the scheduled establishment of the Euroregion. The debate revealed strong positions for and against

institutionalised cross-border cooperation mixed with anti-German feelings and it was accompanied by attacks against leading Danish politicians who argued in favour of institutionalisation, as well as by an attempt to form a human chain at the border in support of retaining a visible border in future. This demonstration under the motto "There must be a border / limit" (*der må være en grænse*) was only able to attract some 2,000 participants, however. In autumn 1997, the "Region Sønderjylland-Schleswig" was established on the Euregio-model, but not using the terms Euregio or European in its name following a Danish request.³

Today, cross-border cooperation in the Danish-German border region is concentrated on several fields with the following activities:

Political

With the establishment of the Region *Sønderjylland-Schleswig*, the communal Danish-German Forum was substituted by the region's Regional Council (*Regionskontor*). The Regional Council was founded in 1997 by different groups interested in promoting the cross-border relations and activities in the area. The regional council consists of 42 members (21 from *Sønderjyllands Amt* and seven each from the three German constituents). The members are appointed by the constituents' elected assemblies. The German members are exclusively politicians, while the Danish members include administrative personnel, a member of the German minority and communal representatives as well as business and trade-union representatives. Additionally, there is one observer each representing the Danish and the *Schleswig-Holstein* government as well as two each representing the largest political groups in the Danish and the Schleswig-Holstein parliament. A board of eight persons is responsible for the continuing work between the sessions of the council. The regional council has established six committees (environmental protection, regional planning, rural districts and transportation, health and social issues, youth affairs and sports, business development, labour market and education, culture, equal opportunities and language issues). The regional council has no legal political authority but can pass resolutions on topics relevant for the region as a whole. It has a budget supplied by the constituents and has the competency to fund a limited number of cross-border activities.

Business, Labour and Transportation

The main activity is the EU-funded EURES cooperation to improve conditions for an integrated, cross-border labour market.⁴ Within the last decade, unemployment has been considerably higher on the German side of the border region, while there was actually a shortage of labour in certain branches in Sønderjylland. At the same time, the number of cross-border commuters was at a consistently low level of about 1,100 travelling in each direction. A lot of energy has been put into resolving problems for cross-border commuters as well as advertising for job-opportunities on the other side of the border. Several unemployed Germans

were placed into Danish jobs through the EURES-system. At the same time, the EURES-offices provide counselling for cross-border commuters on employment laws, taxation and social security. There have also been common initiatives to improve cross-border public transportation which have been partially successful. Passenger train services across both



Regional office of the region Sønderjylland-Schleswig at the German-Danish border at Bov (Denmark).

cross-border rail lines were increased to bi-hourly trains, the Flensburg city-bus system was extended into Denmark, and recently an express bus service was introduced between Husum (Germany), Flensburg (Germany) and Sønderborg (Denmark). Additionally, there have been projects on a common, regional marketing strategy for tourism.

Culture

The Region Sønderjylland-Schleswig administers a fund to support cross-border cultural activities. The fund gives priority to projects bringing people together across the border. Professional cooperation between the region's symphony orchestras has functioned well for many years, but there is little cooperation between arrangers of pop music concerts. Additionally, the national minorities provide an excellent programme of cultural activities from the neighbouring country with regular visiting performances of theatres, orchestras and actors of the highest calibre. Furthermore through the INTERREG programme there have evolved networks between performing artists. The population's awareness of cultural activities on the other side of the border is still considered too low by experts, however.

Health

Low capacities in the Danish health sector have led to a very successful but one-sided cooperation, according to which Danish cancer patients can choose to have radiation treatment in a German hospital in Flensburg instead of a Danish hospital outside the border region. With the imminent closure of the obstetrics ward in the hospital in the Danish border town Tønder, women will have the opportunity to give birth in the Niebüll hospital on the other side of the border. There is also an arrangement for German ambulances

to serve the communities just north of the border in emergency cases. No similar cooperation exists in the other direction, however, as the German health insurance system does not allow for regular treatment outside Germany.

Youth Affairs and Sports

Regular cross-border sports meetings have become an institution and a network exists between sports clubs on both sides of the border. Most cross-border sporting activities involve young people.

Environment

Since the establishment of the Flensburg Fjord committee in 1971, a network of Danish and German authorities has worked to improve cooperation on environmental problems. Additionally, there exists a trilateral cooperation to protect the wadden sea on the west coast of the region. However, differences in administrative structures and allocation of responsibility in the two countries have made cooperation on environmental issues difficult.

Adult Education in the Danish-German Border Region

Adult education does not yet figure highly in cross-border cooperation on governmental level. Nevertheless there are some good examples for projects which have been funded by sources of the INTERREG programme.⁵ One of the main problems in cross-border cooperation in the area is the different structure of adult education in Denmark and in Germany. Adult education in Germany is supplied by public, semi-public and private institutions with different target groups. The main public institutions in Germany are the so-called Volkshochschulen (folk high schools), which differ significantly from the Danish institutions called by the same name. Volkshochschulen provide a wide range of courses, usually in the evenings: languages, computer training, art and handicrafts are the main subjects. Some Volkshochschulen also provide regular vocational supplementary training for the unemployed. Several private and semi-public institutions also provide for training courses, usually with a specific background (relating to political parties, trade unions, the church and other organisations). In Germany, the law on "educational holidays" provides every employee, public or private, with the opportunity to take two weeks of paid holidays every other year to attend officially-recognised adult education courses.

Adult education in Denmark is supplied mainly by public institutions in terms of vocational training (AMU / employment training centres) and by semi-public and private institutions in terms of general popular education (folk high schools, da. folkehøjskole). Among the latter, some are traditionally associated with political parties and the labour movement. They offer a mix of formal and non-formal education. All semi-public and private institutions are dependent on public funds although participation fees are also required. Different from

Germans Danes in employment have no formal right to take paid "educational holiday" and participants in courses in the above institutions are primarily young people, the unemployed or pensioners. Adult education and further education for those in employment are usually provided by private enterprises on a commercial basis or by businesses themselves in-house.⁶

Perspectives

Today, there exists a broad network of actors engaged in cross-border cooperation in the Danish-German border region. Nonetheless, public participation is at a significantly low level. A cultural barrier as well as a language barrier exists. Participants in cross-border cooperation agree that they have learned more about cultural differences. A lack of knowledge of the Danish language on the German side of the border requires the use of German in day-to-day cross-border activities, whereas meetings at a higher level such as in the Regional Council are translated simultaneously at a high cost.

The national minorities de facto serve as cross-cultural institutions, even though this does not reflect their self-identification as national minorities. Several of the border region inhabitants using minority institutions are motivated to do so in support of cross-border cooperation, i. e., they want to provide a bilingual and bi-cultural education for their children, to broaden their horizons and to introduce or improve their knowledge of the neighbouring country's language. Though not verifiable by empirical methods, a certain change of attitudes in the region's population is reported by persons involved in cross-border activities. It appears that people are more willing to accept the necessity of learning more about the neighbouring country's culture, including a willingness to learn the neighbouring country's language. On the whole, cross-border contacts seem to be on the increase. Looking across the border is becoming more of a matter of course when discussing societal problems and possible solutions.

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Useful information:

Politics and administration:

Website of the region Sønderjylland-Schleswig: www.region.dk

Website of the Sønderjyllands Amt: www.sja.dk

Website of the government of Schleswig-Holstein: www.schleswig-holstein.de

Website of the RegNet D / DK (Network of the Regional Economic Development Organisation in the region Sønderjylland-Schleswig): www.regnetddk.org

Ethnic minorities:

Website of the Association of the North Slesvig minority (*Bund Deutscher Nordschleswiger*): www.bdn.dk

Website of the Association of South Slesvig minority (ge. *Verein der Südschleswiger*, da. *Sydslesvigsk Forening*): www.sydslesvigsk-forening.de

Website of the North Frisian Institute (*Nordfriisk Instituut*): www.nordfriiskinstituut.de

Education:

Website of the University of Southern Denmark, Department of Border Region Studies (*Institut for Grænseregionsforskning*): www.ifg.dk

Footnotes:

1 Today's Sønderjyllands Amt includes the historic Duchy of Schleswig. Because of this it is also called North Schleswig (ge. Nord Schleswig), in particular by the German speaking minority in Denmark.

However Danes avoid the German term as well as the ancient Danish Term Nordslesvig.

2 For further information to the German, Danish and North Frisian minority see links above.

3 www.regnetddk.org

4 EURES (EUROpean Employment Services) brings together the European Commission and the public employment services as well as other regional and national bodies concerned with employment issues (see: <http://europa.eu.int/eures/index.jsp>). For EURES Netherlands-German-Belgium see: www.eures.info

5 See also the article of Jesper Nielsen in chapter 2.

6 For further information concerning the Danish adult education system see: www.amu.dk

Netherlands – Germany

Euregio Rhine-Waal

Roland Wolf

The Euregio Rhine-Waal (ge. Euregio Rhein-Waal, nl. Euregio Rijn-Waal)¹ is a German-Dutch administrative union of more than 50 Dutch and German cities and local authorities from the Dutch provinces of Gelderland, North Brabant (Noord-Brabant) and Limburg and the German districts of Kleve and Wesel in the German county (Bundesland) of Nordrhein-Westfalen. Other members include the German urban district of Duisburg, the Lower Rhine Chamber of Trade and Industry (Niederrheinische Industrie- und Handelskammer), the Gelderland Chamber of Commerce (Kamer van Koophandel Gelderland) and the Rhineland Assembly of Municipalities (Landschaftsverband Rheinland). The aim of the Euregio Rhine-Waal is to encourage German-Dutch cooperation within its designated area.

Geography and Population

The area of Euregio Rhine-Waal lies in the Dutch-German border area alongside the rivers Rhine, Waal, Maas und IJssel. At the beginning of the great river delta, which goes on to form the southern Netherlands, about 1.3 million German and about 1.4 million Dutch



Left: Rhine bridge at Emmerich (Germany).

Right: Office of the Euregio Rhine-Waal in Kleve (Germany).

inhabitants reside between Duisburg (GE) and Wageningen (NL). The Euregio Rhine-Waal incorporates two influential conurbations: Duisburg, with about 500,000 inhabitants, on the western edge of Germany's largest high-density urban region, Rhine-Ruhr, and Arnhem-Nijmegen, the second-largest urban region in the Netherlands, with a population of about 700,000. The part of the Euregio Rhine-Waal found between these two centres consists mainly of small towns and villages. The same is also true for the Rivieren-area (De Betuwen) in Gelderland province, to the west of Arnhem-Nijmegen, and the communities within the

Euregio to be found in the provinces of North Brabant and northern *Limburg*. The most northerly part of the Euregio Rhine-Waal consists of the Netherlands' largest nature reserve, the *De Hoge Veluwe*, which is largely uninhabited.

The rivers act as an element both of connection and of separation. The rivers flowing to the north / north-west, the Rhine, Waal, Maas and IJssel, have been used throughout history as trade and transport routes. The river courses travelling east-to-west, which were surrounded by marshland until the construction of dikes, created a significant barrier to trade and transport right up until recent times, a situation depicted in Peter Attenborough's film "One Bridge Too Far" (1977) which commemorates the Allied wartime air-borne drop operation "Market Garden" at Arnhem.² Still today, many place-names in the Euregio Rhine-Waal bear reminders of the land conditions formed by the presence of water or of the landmarks which rose out of the river landscape.



History and Borders

In the course of the Gallic Wars around 50 B.C., Caesar encountered Celtic (Gallic) or celticised Germanic tribes west of the Rhine. In general, it may be said that Celtic influence

was dominant to the west of the Rhine, while Germanic tribal cultures dominated to the east of the Rhine and on the northern side of the Waal. The Rhine or the Lower Rhine (Nederrijn) and Waal rivers created an irregular ethnic border which does not correspond to the present-day Dutch-German border but rather runs across it. Here again, place-names provide a clear clue as to the ethnic background of communities: place-names carrying the suffix –ik / -ich (e.g. Emmerich) signify a Celtic background; place-names which end in -hem / -heim (e.g. Arnhem, Friemersheim) were founded later by Frankish settlers. In the first centuries A.D., the well-defended Roman “Limes” boundary wall ran along the western banks and formed a defensive border to the Roman Empire against Germanic tribes settled to the north-east. The entire trade and transport network ran at this time primarily in the direction of the Rhine-Waal Limes from the south-east towards the north-west. This arrangement is still reflected today in the form of modern road and rail networks.

Xanten (Latin: Colonia Ulpia Traiana) was the second largest garrison on the Limes in Roman Lower Germany after Cologne, while Nijmegen was also a garrison town and an important place of trade. In the 4th and 5th centuries, the Merovingian Franks – partly coming from the present-day area of the Euregio Rhine-Waal – took control of the Lower German and Gallic provinces from Rome. Here again, the Rhine / Lower Rhine (Nederrijn) served the Christianised Franks as a border, this time against the heathen Saxons. Duisburg to the right of the Rhine and Nijmegen on the banks of the Waal functioned both as places of trade and as border fortresses.

After the incorporation of the Saxons in the Frankish Kingdom by Charles the Great (Charlemagne) at the beginning of the 9th century, the lower course of the Rhine lost its function as a natural border. The current area of the Euregio Rhine-Waal belonged to the highly developed regions of the East Frankish and the later Holy Roman Empire of the German Nation. At the end of the Middle Ages, when the centre of the Holy Roman Empire was losing power, control was largely ceded to local territorial rulers.

The area of the present-day Euregio Rhine-Waal is roughly equivalent to the early modern Duchy of Gelderland, the Duchy of Cleve (ge. Kleve) and the smaller county of Moers. The 80-year war conducted by the provinces of the Netherlands against Spain and the closely connected 30-year war within the Holy Roman Empire of the German Nation led in 1648 to the Peace of Münster and Osnabrück, which separated the Netherlands from the association of states within the Holy Roman Empire. Throughout the entire 17th century, the Republic of the Netherlands was one of the most powerful and advanced states in Europe.

The present demarcation of borders between the Kingdom of the Netherlands and the Federal Republic of Germany, which marked the conclusive division of the area defined as the Euregio Rhine-Waal, was agreed upon at the Congress of Vienna in 1815 following the defeat of Napoleon and his retreat from the Netherlands and the Rhineland provinces.

Cultural Space

The region between the Rhine, Waal and Maas evolved as a unified and highly-developed economic and cultural area up to 1815, after which the Dutch and German parts of the region developed separately from one another. This was particularly true for the areas of language, cultural life, law, education, social organisation and public administration. Both parts of the region were hindered in their development as they became marginal regions within their respective national states. In the 17th-century “Golden Age” of the Netherlands, scientific understanding, technological advance and cultural expression in the Netherlands were much emulated in Germany, above all in Prussia. In contrast, the speed of economic and scientific development in 19th-century Germany meant that the Netherlands followed Germany during this period. The orientation of the Netherlands towards Germany was brought to an abrupt end by the Second World War. In the post-war period, the Netherlands have aligned themselves decisively with the Anglosaxon world in terms of cultural and scientific development. Economic ties with Germany, meanwhile, have remained as strong as ever.

Language

In Roman times, Latin failed to establish itself as the language of everyday usage in the Rhine-Waal-Maas region. However, the disastrous defeat at the hands of Caesar suffered by the Celts (Gauls) and particularly the Eburones from the region between the Rhine and Maas rivers, succeeded in weakening Celtic culture so decisively that Germanic culture gained the upper hand in the long term. The west-germanic local languages of “Theodisc” > “Diets” > “Dutch / Deutsch” produced the closely-related Low Franconian and Low Saxon dialects in the area of the Euregio Rhine-Waal. Understanding one another in the region of the Euregio Rhine-Waal was not a problem until modern times. The dialects spoken by High Germans in the southern regions of the Holy Roman Empire by contrast had become separated from the northern dialects of the Low Germans in the Middle Ages as a result of the second Germanic consonant shift (de. Zweite Deutsche Lautverschiebung).

A crucial factor that led to the current language situation in the region was the effort made by the nation-states from the 19th century onwards to impose their official national languages, High German and Dutch, upon the region. This led on both sides of the border to the far-reaching replacement of dialects by the official national languages. The linguistic division of the German and Dutch parts of the Euregio Rhine-Waal is meanwhile so deep-rooted that only rural inhabitants from the area directly on the border are able to converse using a common language. In the German area near the border, Low German and Platt German are still spoken to varying degrees in private, but the younger generation has at best a passive knowledge of Low German. In the rural areas of the Dutch part of the Euregio Rhine-Waal, the dialect has a stronger presence as the language of regional identity than in the German

area. This is particularly true for Limburg. In general, however, local dialects are threatened with extinction throughout the Euregio Rhine-Waal. Two separate linguistic areas can thus be distinguished in the region: one is High German and the other is Dutch. The linguistic barrier follows the national state borders and is the major obstacle in the way of cross-border cooperation.

Acquiring Foreign Language Skills

English is the first obligatory foreign language learned by all schoolchildren in both countries, with very few exceptions. For several years already, English-language learning has been introduced through play in the primary grades. Dutch features as a foreign language subject in none but a few schools close to the border. In contrast, interest in Dutch language and culture among German students of adult education colleges has risen sharply since the 1990s. One possible reason for this may be the existence of better employment prospects in the Netherlands.

German has traditionally enjoyed an important place as a foreign language in the Netherlands. This was encouraged from the 1960s by the reception of German television programmes in the eastern Netherlands. In most recent times, however, interest in learning German as a foreign language in the Netherlands has fallen dramatically. A total of only around 50 new students enrol on German courses at Dutch universities each year, less than those enrolling to learn Dutch at the University of Münster alone. Since Dutch students have to learn German for a minimum of one year, a shortage of German teachers in the Netherlands in future now looks inevitable.

Given the economic ties between the two countries and the fact that in the Dutch part of the Euregio Rhine-Waal roughly half of 272 companies surveyed said they require employees with good German-language skills, this development can be described as a serious problem. Out of 189 German companies present in the Euregio, one-third stated that they needed employees with good Dutch-language skills. This may mean that German companies are not primarily oriented towards the Dutch market or that they continue to rely on their business partners in the Netherlands speaking German.

Education Systems

“The Netherlands possess a school system which incorporates a wide range of different school forms, in which students specialise relatively late and which has a good degree of permeability.” (Carl Bertelsmann Prize, 1996). Nursery grades for four- to six-year-old children are integrated in the primary school system. Selection for pre-vocational and pre-university education in later grades only takes place at twelve years old. In Germany, in contrast, specialisation takes place from ten years onwards. Pre-school education is organised separately from the school system. Germany is one of the few countries of the EU in which nursery teachers have no tertiary-level qualifications.

In the Netherlands, the schools enjoy greater autonomy in relation to finances and teaching content. Dutch schools are externally evaluated by standardised criteria by the Ministry of Education. The results of this evaluation process are freely available via the internet and encourage competition on standards between schools. In both countries, compulsory schooling ends at 16 years of age. Subsequent vocational training takes place in Germany according to the Dual System, in which students visit a state-run vocational college for one or two days per week while receiving an apprenticeship training in a workplace.

In the Netherlands, vocational qualifications are mainly coordinated by the ROCs (Regionale Opleidingen Centra). In-work training makes up between 20-60% of the total time spent gaining qualifications. Alternatively, it is possible to gain qualifications whilst in work and to attend the ROC college for one day per week.

Academic preparation for university-level study takes place in the Netherlands in the general secondary education (*Hoger Algemeen Voortgezet Onderwijs / HAVO*) or in the pre-university education (*Vorbereidend Wetenschappelijk Onderwijs / VWO*) after a total of eleven or twelve school-years. Schoolchildren in the German province of Nordrhein-Westfalen attain university-level qualifications at a grammar school or in the grammar-school strand of a comprehensive school after a total of 13 school years and achieve qualifications for entry to higher education colleges / polytechnic colleges after twelve years of schooling. Education in German schools is free. In the Netherlands, schooling to 16 years of age is also free. Thereafter, education costs on average 900 Euros per year.

The fact that schoolchildren in the Netherlands are selected for different educational systems at twelve years rather than at ten years results in a more accurate assessment of schoolchildren's proper place in the system. The Dutch system has a lower rate of early-leavers among students and fewer students repeat a grade than in Germany. The wave of reform measures undergone by the Dutch school system over the last ten years, however, has created a level of disquiet among all those affected within the education system. Adult education is provided by different institutions in each of the two countries. In this context, the ROCs in the Netherlands and the municipal adult education colleges play an important role.

Economy and Employment Situation

The number of those in employment in the Euregio Rhine-Waal is currently nearly 800,000, of which c. 60% are in the Dutch part of the region. Within a radius of 100 kilometres, there is a consumer market of c. 12.5 million people. The export share of manufacturing industry lies at around 30%. The economic structure within the Euregio Rhine-Waal is based largely on small- to medium-sized businesses.

Most of those in employment in the German sub-region work in the manufacturing industry and public sector jobs. One exception is the Duisburg centre serving large companies from

the steel, chemicals and logistics industries, and another is the mining district of Wesel, in which c. 10% of jobs are to be found. The steel, chemicals and mining industries have undergone fundamental reconstruction over the last ten years and continue to shed jobs on a large scale. This has had a severe impact on both Duisburg and Wesel. Duisburg alone lost c. 100,000 jobs in the steel and coal industries during the 1990s. The new development of Duisburg as a modern logistics and microelectronics base has been unable to compensate entirely for job losses on such a scale.

In the Dutch sub-region, the service industry sector and in particular logistics dominate the labour market. The urban conglomeration of Arnhem-Nijmegen has gained a reputation as an attractive office and service sector location within the Netherlands and in contrast to the neighbouring German area. The flourishing business parks lining the A12 near Arnhem are a visible sign of this development.

In the Euregio Rhine-Waal there are three universities and one specialist further education institution, all of which are important employers in the region. On the Dutch side of the



Arnhem.

border there are the Radboud University Nijmegen (Radboud Universiteit Nijmegen)³, the HAN University (Hogeschool van Arnhem en Nijmegen)⁴ and the Wageningen University (Wageningen Universiteit)⁵; on the German side of the border lies the Duisburg Campus of the Universität Duisburg-Essen⁶.

The Euregio Rhein-Waal is lastly an important agricultural centre for fruit and vegetable production, plant nurseries and livestock farming. While in the German part of the region, the numbers of animals kept is limited according to the size of land available to farmers, in the Netherlands part of the region, meat production is intensively farmed, with numbers of livestock not dependent on the size of farmland available.

In spite of the recession since 2001, which has affected both the Dutch and German parts of the Euregio, new jobs have been created in the region over the last ten years. It should

be noted, however, that part-time work plays a greater role in the Netherlands than in Germany.

The proportion of those in work in the Euregio Rhine-Waal who travel across the state borders to their jobs lies at around 1%, with more German than Dutch workers commuting across the borders. Unemployment in the Dutch part of the Euregio Rhine-Waal is around 9% and in the German part of the region (excluding Duisburg) around 10%. In Duisburg itself, unemployment has reached c. 14%.

Infrastructure

More freight traffic passes through the Euregio Rhine-Waal than through any other border within the European single market. Nearly all important transport routes between Randstad in the Netherlands and the German Rhine-Ruhr rail link pass through the Euregio Rhine-Waal. Transport on inland waterways occurs on the Rhine / Waal and Maas rivers. The largest inland port in Europe, Duisburg-Ruhrort, serves as a distribution port for the world's largest maritime port at Rotterdam. The motorways (European Route numbers 31, 34 and 35) also connect the Euregio Rhine-Waal with the maritime ports of Antwerp and Rotterdam and to the east with eastern Europe via Berlin.

With the conversion of the former British Army airbase at Weeze-Laarbruch into a regional European commercial airport, it is now possible to access European destinations from Scandinavia to southern Europe by air. The new airport serves an equal volume of German and Dutch air travellers.

Rail freight transport from Rotterdam into the Ruhrgebiet will in future pass through the Netherlands region over the costly new *Betuwe* line. This expansion has not yet been continued on the German side of the border. Here, the two existing tracks have to be shared by the high-speed passenger train link between Amsterdam and Frankfurt, local commuter trains and freight trains. In the short- to mid-term, this is certain to bring transport delays.

Whether the "Iron Rhine", the historic freight rail link between Antwerp and Duisburg, will be restored to use remains uncertain. All cross-border commuter rail links were closed down during the last 20 years and very few bus routes cross the border. A new express coach link crossing the border between Kleve (GE) and Nijmegen (NL) has recently started with financial support from the European INTERREG programme.

Among the existing cross-border European support programmes, the INTERREG IIIa and the EURES (European Employment Service)⁷ programmes are the most important. INTERREG IIIa supports cooperation between neighbouring border regions in all areas of social and economic life. EURES focuses upon the common utilisation and flexibilisation of the

labour market and maintains a dedicated Dutch-German advisory service for this purpose. The work of both programmes in their specific areas is administered by the Euregio Rhine-Waal based in Kleve. In particular, the INTERREG IIIa, with a budget of 29 million Euros made available to the Euregio Rhine-Waal by the EU for the period of 2000-2008, is a programme with considerable financial significance for the region.

Roland Wolf, Euregio Rhine-Waal, Germany

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Carl Bertelsmann Preis (1996). Innovative Schulsysteme im internationalen Vergleich. Band I: Dokumentation zur internationalen Recherche. Gütersloh: Bertelsmann Stiftung.

Frietman, J., Buis, T. & Broekhoven, S. van (2001). Bedarf an Fremdsprachenkenntnissen in niederländischen Unternehmen in der deutsch-niederländischen Grenzregion. Abridged report of a study commissioned by the Euregio Rhine-Waal. Kleve/Mönchengladbach: Euregio Rhein-Waal/Euregio Rhein Maas Nord.

Useful information:

Website of the Netherlands Ministry for Education, Culture and Science: www.minocw.nl/english/index.html

Website of the Euregio Rhine-Waal (Euregio Rijn-Waal): www.euregio.org

Website of the common INTERREG Secretariat: www.euregio-rmn.de

Website of the Regionaal Opleidingen Centrum (ROC) Rijn IJssel: www.rocrijnissel.nl

Website of the Radboud Universiteit Nijmegen: www.ru.nl

Website of the Hogeschool van Arnhem en Nijmegen: www.han.nl

Website of the University Duisburg-Essen: www.uni-duisburg-essen.de

Website of the EURES Netherlands-Germany-Belgium: www.eures.info

Footnotes:

1 www.euregio.org

2 The operation "Market Garden" was an Allied military operation in the Second World War, which took place in September 1944. It was an attempt to take bridges over the main rivers of the German-occupied Netherlands, enabling the Allies to advance into Germany without any remaining major obstacles. The operation was initially successful, but was a failure overall as the final Rhine bridge at Arnhem was not held. It is considered the last German victory of the Western Campaign.

3 www.ru.nl

4 www.han.nl

5 www.wau.nl

6 www.uni-duisburg-essen.de

7 EURES (EUROpean Employment Services) brings together the European Commission and the public employment services as well as other regional and national bodies concerned with employment issues (see: <http://europa.eu.int/eures/index.jsp>). For EURES Netherlands-Germany-Belgium see: www.eures.info

Germany – Belgium – Netherlands

Border Triangle Germany – Belgium – Netherlands

Nicole Ehlers / Filip Dedeurwaerder-Haas

Historical, Political, Cultural, Economic and Social Development

The region around Aachen (Germany), Lüttich (Belgium) and Maastricht (Netherlands), also known as the Maas-Rur-Region (Hardach, 1996), was an area of cross-border commerce in early capitalist Europe, in which a high density and diverse range of industries were present. The most important of these were the coal mining and iron industries and the woollen and textile industries. Although the region was divided until 1795 into numerous dominions, each of them pursuing a more or less independent economic policy, there was a close cooperation across these borders nonetheless.



Left: Landmark at the German-Belgian border at Aachen.

Right: Border triangle Germany-Belgium-Netherlands at Vaals (Netherlands).

French rule not only brought an end to the feudal divisions by bringing the region together as one administrative unit, but also signalled the beginning of economic expansion. The defeat of the French led to the political reorganisation of the area and with this, the drawing of new borders. The area of the modern-day German-speaking Community (ge. Deutschsprachige Gemeinschaft / DG)¹ and the Rhineland were ceded to Prussia in 1813-1815. To the west, the United Kingdom of the Netherlands emerged. In 1830, further borders were created by the division of the United Netherlands and the founding of the Kingdom of Belgium.

Different policies aiming to foster the development of each region's economy led to the various parts of a once-united economic area growing apart. Despite this, many common socio-cultural interests remained. Family ties across the political borders remained strong, and the region as a whole was united by the common Catholic faith of its inhabitants. The Protestant royal houses of Prussia and the Netherlands were regarded as "foreign" to the region. It was only in the last years of the 19th century that national feeling developed in the modern-day border triangle. A decisive influence on this development was the founding of the German Reich in 1871. While this development was generally welcomed on the German side, the economic and military dominance of this new entity led the Dutch to distance themselves from Prussia and strengthened national feeling in the Netherlands (Knippenberg, 1999).

The First World War brought with it "dividing" borders. Belgium's neutrality was not respected by Germany and the atrocities perpetrated during that war continue to undermine the relationship between the two countries. The Netherlands, by contrast, remained neutral during the war. Although the Netherlands gained economically from this circumstance, the country did take in 100,000 Belgian refugees in the course of the war. After the war, the relationship between Belgium and the Netherlands became strained when Belgium attempted to annexe Limburg as compensation for losses suffered during the war.



Ministry of the German-speaking community in Eupen (Belgium).

After the First World War, the borders in the region changed again. This had particular impact upon German-Belgian relations, when the *Ostkantone* (the area around Eupen and Malmedy) became a part of Belgium on the basis of an illegal referendum in 1920 (Cremer & Minke, 1990). The inhabitants of the region felt betrayed by this development. Furthermore, the region suffered economic decline following the Congress of Vienna, marked only occasionally by weak economic upturns. This changed in the 1930s. Although during the period 1920-1940 a majority of the population was in favour of a return to German rule, the

developments in Nazi Germany led to protests against integration within Germany. Such protests notwithstanding, the Eastern Cantons became a part of Germany (“Drittes Reich”) in May 1940.

When the Second World War came to an end, peace proved rather elusive. The Belgian state undertook measures against real and rumoured collaborators of the Nazi regime, which the inhabitants of the Eastern Cantons saw as overly harsh and unjust. This view was encouraged by the fact that Belgium had failed to respond seriously to the one-sided annexation of the region by Germany and in the post-war situation had shown little understanding for the particular situation of the border region. This situation changed



fundamentally when, in the mid-1960s, Belgium underwent a federalisation process. This led to the establishing of the German-speaking Community (Deutschsprachige Gemeinschaft / DG) in 1984, which, as with the Flemish and the French Community, was thus granted political autonomy in the areas of education and culture. The autonomy statute of the German-speaking Community, which constitutes a mere 0.7% of the total Belgian

population, is seen as a model throughout Europe, although within Belgium itself, few people see the advantages of such autonomy. Since the DG lies entirely within the bounds of the Wallonian region, this region has overall responsibility for the DG area, according to its competencies. These involve primarily economic policy and regional development planning. The DG for its part has a long-term strategy of expanding its autonomy within the Wallonian region.

The border between the Netherlands and Germany has not changed since 1815, with the exception of tiny border alterations made after the Second World War. However, it is important to note that the Second World War caused those on the Dutch side of the border to erect a psychological barrier between themselves and their German neighbours. The German destruction of Dutch neutrality and the five-year period of occupation are among the most traumatic events in the history of the Netherlands.

The Euregio Maas-Rhine and the Influence of the European Union

The painful experiences of the Second World War led in 1976 to the creation of the Euregio Maas-Rhine³. The Euregio's area of operation can be roughly defined as the earlier Maas-Rur region (the southern part of the Dutch province of Limburg, the Regio Aachen, the province of Lüttich and the DG), together with the province of Belgian Limburg in the north-western part of the region. In total, 3.8 million people live in the Euregio Maas-Rhine. The most densely populated part is the Aachen region, while the DG in Belgium is not only the smallest community, with c. 72,000 inhabitants, but also the least densely populated part of the region.



Former border control station between Germany and Belgium at Aachen.

Left and Middle: Abandoned customs office and border control station.

The initial thinking behind creating the Euregio was to give symbolic impetus to positive forms of coexistence in the region. This cooperation received a boost at the end of the

1980s due to the EU and the allocation of European financial support, which enabled several cross-border cooperation projects to be undertaken, e.g. in the fields of economy and infrastructure. The German-speaking Community was the main beneficiary of this *Euregionalisierung*. A decisive factor here was the role the DG was able to play as a mediator between different cultures. When the DG was voted European Region of the Year in 2004, the following quote appeared on the DG's official website: "The European Idea is an integral part of the identity of the DG and cross-border opening and openness belong to the everyday lives of its inhabitants."⁴ There are also alliances at a regional level, such as the cooperation between the Regio Aachen, the *Parkstad Limburg* (seven districts within Dutch Limburg) and the DG in the framework of the *Euregionale 2008*. This could also be described as the central core of the Euregio. The distances between the participants are shorter and there are fewer communication problems since two rather than three languages are involved. Since the cooperation between the Adult Education Centre in Aachen and the Adult Education Centre in the Eastern Cantons focus upon this central core area, the following description makes no reference to the Belgian provinces of Limburg and Lüttich. We limit ourselves here to the definition of the "border triangle", as this inner core is often called.

Employment and the Labour Market.

In economic terms, developments in Dutch Limburg and the DG have been most positive. Both areas have not only a lower unemployment rate than the Regio Aachen, but the rate is actually falling. This is a particular achievement given that Dutch Limburg was in a deep crisis regarding employment at the beginning of the 1980s. In the DG, there are a number of larger companies and numerous small- to medium-sized businesses, many active in the export industry. Employment figures showing the proportion working in the secondary sector vary from 29% in the province of Limburg and 33% working in the DG to nearly 40% in the Regio Aachen. In total, the proportion of workers employed in industry in the Euregio Maas-Rhein is relatively high. Another noteworthy aspect is the clear east-west disparity concerning the cross-border labour market. In the DG, about 36% of workers commute to jobs across national borders. Most of these travel to Germany, although more than 1,500 commute daily to work in Luxembourg. There is also a long-standing tradition of people in the Dutch part of the region travelling to work in Germany, on account of the higher salaries there. Only recently has the rising unemployment rate in Germany led German job seekers in a few cases to consider commuting to the Netherlands border area for work.

Structural Change

One of the reasons for bringing together the Euregio Maas-Rhine was the coal-mine closures which began in the 1960s. Until that point, mining was the most important pillar of the economy. The closure of the mines meant not only the loss of jobs but also a transformation

of values. People lost an important factor in terms of identification. In general, the region has survived this economic crisis although economic disadvantage is still felt in some areas. Today, the region promotes itself as a centre for knowledge, with a high number of educational institutions active in the area. The Euregio is also developing into a location for high-tech industries. Although various attempts have been made to obliterate the traces of the coal-mining era, there are many initiatives underway to revive the industrial legacy of the region. This finds expression particularly in attempts to restore monuments to industrial history. Meanwhile, new methods of generating energy are also being explored⁵.

Adult Education

Although there have been adult education colleges in all three of the sub-regions since before the Second World War, we limit ourselves in the following description to the developments since 1945, as the role of such colleges has in some cases undergone significant changes during this time.

In East Belgium, adult education has a primarily (party-)political origin. Some adult education institutions were founded as research organisations of particular parties or social movements (e.g. trade unions). The large number of such organisations (24) in relation to the size of the population, the dependence on varying project funding sources and the political affiliation of the organisations generally makes for a very difficult relationship between the adult education institutions in eastern Belgium. Although cooperation between individual organisations is a complex undertaking, it is becoming every more frequent, not least because of official support.

The Council for Adult Education⁶ (Rat für Volks- und Erwachsenenbildung) has worked for 25 years as an umbrella organisation advising ministers responsible for this issue within the German-speaking Community of Belgium. The Council provides expert opinions and advice on specialised areas of adult education, e.g. subsidisation criteria, budget decisions for the German-speaking Community or adult education projects by organisations meriting sponsorship. It is hoped that the Council for National and Adult Education can foster solidarity among adult education institutions in its dealings with the political world. The Adult Education Centre of the Eastern Cantons (Volkshochschule der Ostkantone) has three major aims: socio-political activities and education, social-vocational integration of the unemployed and vocational re-integration and qualification of working persons. To achieve this, the college aims to appeal to different target groups both within and outside the Christian Workers Movement (Christliche Arbeiterinnen- und Arbeiter-Bewegung).

Adult education centres (Volkshochschulen) were established in Nordrhein-Westphalia after the end of the Second World War, tasked with redressing the balance caused by a deficit in personal, vocational and democratic skills training created by the Nazi dictatorship on one hand and wartime on the other. It was not until 1976 that a system of continuing

education and financing for such programmes was established in law (through the “*Weiterbildungsgesetz/ WbG*”). The founding and financing of adult education colleges thus became the obligation of local authorities. Continuing education institutions run by other organisations also receive support on the basis of this law. In contrast to the continuing education institutions run by independent governing bodies (so-called “freier Trägerschaft”), adult education centres have neither ideological nor religious affiliations and are not run on a commercial basis. They are, however, obliged to observe good economic practice, not least because public funding has become increasingly restricted over the years. The law stipulates a minimum number of hours of educational programmes to be offered by individual adult education centres and also sets a minimum staff requirement. The financial support for adult education centres consists of allocations from the budgets of federal provinces, from local authorities and fees paid by course participants, together with third-party funding, e.g. for activities commissioned by public employment services, special programmes for private companies, for German-language education for foreigners, etc. The importance accorded to continuing education in German society was confirmed by the adoption in 1985 of a law providing all employees with the right to take five days annual leave of absence from work in the form of an “educational holiday” (“*Bildungsurlaub*”).

The profile of individual adult education centres (*Volkshochschulen*) is determined by their particular range of programmes. In all cases, however, the centres offer a broad spectrum in terms of educational content. The Adult Education Centre Aachen (*Volkshochschule Aachen*) receives 71% of its funding allocation from the City of Aachen and from the province of Northrhine-Westphalia. A large part of this consists of grants for graduation with school-leaving certificates. However, the financial difficulties currently faced by the province of Northrhine-Westphalia have led to debate about whether the adult education centres would do better to focus on programmes which give the unemployed improved chances on the labour market. A change of focus would be likely to cause problems for the area of political education, which has a special role in continuing education in Germany, in terms of explaining how democracy works and how individuals can be active participants in the democratic system.

In the Netherlands, there are around 100 adult education centres (so-called *Volksuniversiteiten*), almost all of which belong to the umbrella organisation *Bond van Nederlandse Volksuniversiteiten*⁷. These institutions serve an average of 200,000 course participants each year. The *Volksuniversiteiten* reached a high point in the 1950s and nearly tripled their number in comparison to the pre-war period. Soon after, however, this expansion ground to a halt. In the 1960s these institutions were nonetheless able to profit from national allocations of funding to support new target groups. The new programmes which developed, including language courses for foreigners or courses for people having left school with low qualifications, nowadays come under the general heading of adult education. Since the early 1990s, these courses have no longer been offered by the *Volksuniversiteiten* since they are not

really included in the remit of these institutions. A decisive split came in 1996, when the Netherlands government decided that adult education and vocational training should be brought together and coordinated by so-called Regionale Opleidingen Centra / ROC, or regional training centres. Adult education programmes offered by the ROCs comprise primarily courses in Dutch as a second language, literacy classes and general qualifications at school-leaving level via the second route to tertiary education. As a result of coordinating measures, c. ten Volksuniversiteiten have merged within the ROC system.

It is generally the case in the Netherlands that the Volksuniversiteiten are not regulated by legal provisions, most of which have the status of independent foundations or associations. Whereas the ROCs are financed by the Dutch state, the Volksuniversiteiten have to cover the costs of their own activities. They do, however, receive subsidies from roughly a third of the local authorities with Volksuniversiteiten in their catchment area. This is generally the case in the larger cities. On average, Volksuniversiteiten can cover 9.5% of their costs with local authority funding. The advantage of their being independent institutions is that they have autonomy in designing their teaching programmes. A characteristic of the Volksuniversiteiten is that they offer no exam-based courses with certification upon completion.

Languages in the Region

The mother-tongue of the inhabitants of the German-speaking Community is almost exclusively German. French is the second language of the area and the majority of the population have good French-language skills. Many people are able to understand Dutch. On this basis, the DG can certainly be defined as a multilingual region. In the Netherlands, people generally speak a number of foreign languages although German-language skills have clearly declined in recent years, even in the border region. This partly stems from the fact that the language has a poor image in popular opinion (Westheide, 1997). On the German side of the border, a contrary development can be observed. In the border region, Dutch-language programmes are expanding both at primary-school level (early-start programmes) and at secondary-school level. Despite such progress, German remains the most commonly-used language for everyday communication in this European region. Occasional attempts to use English as the lingua franca for cross-border cooperation have been hindered mainly by the reluctance of Belgian partners to do so. At this point one should mention the common dialects, which have in part a cross-border setting. Since, however, with few exceptions such dialects are becoming increasingly obsolete in terms of every day interaction, they are unable to play a role in terms of intercultural exchange.

Ethnic Groups in the Region

Although it is hard to compare the proportion of foreign nationals living in the respective parts of the region, the following statements may be considered true: in early 1998, 10.7%

of the population in the Aachen region were foreign nationals, whereby the majority of these were living in the city environs. In the German-speaking Community (DG), the percentage of foreign nationals was 16.7%, of whom the majority were German nationals. In the southern part of Limburg province, by contrast, only 5.4% of the population were foreign nationals, of which a markedly high number came from western countries (together with the former colony of Indonesia). Many of these foreign nationals, as in the DG, are so-called border migrants, who have moved their place of residence to the neighbouring country for economic reasons, while retaining close ties with their place of origin.

The “guest-workers” (“Gastarbeiter”) of the 1960s (in the DG coming mainly from Spain, in the Aachen region coming mostly from Turkey) are almost completely integrated in social terms. Currently, most asylum claims made in eastern Belgium are made by east



Bilingual Eupen.

Europeans (from countries of the former Soviet Union). In Aachen, on the other hand, these immigrants do not appear in the official statistics for foreign nationals, since as ethnic-German immigrants they possess German passports. A similar situation exists in the Netherlands concerning migrants from the former Dutch colonies.

From time to time, the voice of prejudice against foreign nationals is raised, with negative media coverage of Moroccan youths currently giving cause of concern. Although extreme right-wing parties nonetheless have little political weight, right-wing populist parties have succeeded in winning many votes, for example in the German-speaking Community, where right-wing populists have entered the East Belgian parliament for the first time following recent parliamentary elections. Meanwhile in Dutch Limburg, the right-wing populist Pim Fortuyn attracted many votes too. These developments have somewhat tarnished the reputation of the Netherlands as a model of an openness and tolerance.

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www.interregemr.info/site_de/infomaterial/PIC_DE.pdf (17.03.05)

Useful information:

- Website of the German-speaking Community of Belgium (Deutschsprachige Gemeinschaft Belgiens): www.dglive.be
- Website of the Adult Education Centre Aachen (Volkshochschule Aachen): www.vhs-aachen.de
- Website of the Adult Education Centre of Eastern Belgium (Volkshochschule der Ostkantone): www.vhs-ostkantone.de
- Website of the Council for Adult Education (Rat für Volks- und Erwachsenenbildung) of the German-speaking Community of Belgium: www.rve.demetec.net
- Website of the Bond van Nederlandse Volksuniversiteiten: www.volksuniversiteit.nl

Footnotes:

- 1 The German-speaking Community of Belgium (Deutschsprachige Gemeinschaft Belgiens) is the smallest of the three communities in Belgium.
- 2 Debate surrounds not only the Deutschsprachige Gemeinschaft but also the Ostkantone and eastern Belgium. Both the latter entities were created in 1920, when the newly-founded League of Nations accepted the annexation of the formerly Prussian cantons of Eupen, Malmédy and St.Vith by Belgium. The "Eastern Cantons" and the German-speaking Community are not identical, since the communities of the Malmédy canton belong to Belgium's French Community.
- 3 www.euregio-mr.org/emr_site/index.php
- 4 www.dglive.be (17.03.05)
- 5 www.mijnwaterproject.info (31.03.05)
- 6 www.rve.demetec.net
- 7 www.volksuniversiteit.nl

Germany – France

Saar-Moselle Region

Wilfried Schmidt

The Special Role of Saarland between Germany and France¹

After the collapse of the Roman empire following the migration of peoples and Christianisation of the territory, the Saar region came under the control of the Metz diocese and the archdiocese of Trier. Territories were created from the late Middle Ages onwards, whose existence is commemorated in the coat-of-arms borne by Saarland today: in the centre lay the county of Nassau-Saarbrücken, surrounded by the Electorate of Trier, the Duchy of Pfalz-Zweibrücken and the Duchy of Lorraine which extended into the modern-day territory of Saarland. In between lay a number of smaller territories. In the 16th century, the Reformation took hold in Nassau-Saarbrücken and in Pfalz-Zweibrücken. From 1680 until 1697, France drew the smaller territories together within a Saar province in the context of her policy of reunion.



*Memorial of the
battle of Spichern.*

Following the French Revolution, the aristocratic rulers of the area were banished in 1793 and the entire left bank of the Rhine was incorporated within French territories. After the Congress of Vienna, modern-day Saarland came under the control of the Prussian Kingdom and Bavaria and a number of smaller states within the German Federation. The acquisitions made during the French Revolution remained in the law of the Rhine area. After initial developments in the 18th century, coal mining and iron and steel industries grew in the region throughout the 19th century. Following the Franco-Prussian War of 1870 / 71 and the battle of Spichern at the gates of Saarbrücken, the founding of the German state and the annexation of Alsace-Lorraine led to the creation of a common economic area extending to the French border. On the Saar there developed the centre of the third-largest heavy industry region in the German state.

After German defeat in the First World War, the Saar region was separated from Germany by the Treaty of Versailles and placed under the control of a ruling commission of the League of Nations. For the first time, the Saar region existed as an autonomous administrative unit. France had sought to annexe the region, but it obtained only the ownership of the coal mines and with this increased economic influence over the area. During a referendum of 13 January 1935, more than 90% of those entitled to vote voted for the territory to return to the German state, despite the presence there of National Socialist rule. The Second World War led to a new annexation of the Département Moselle within the Westmark Gau, which also incorporated the Pfalz Palatinate.

In the post-war years, France established autonomous status and economic integration for Saarland, which was laid down in the Saarland constitution of 15 December 1947 and endorsed by the population via provincial elections of 5 October 1947. After prolonged arguments between France and the newly-founded Federal Republic of Germany, the two states agreed on a European statute for Saarland, which, however, was rejected by a



referendum on 23 October 1955. This paved the way for the Luxembourg Treaty of 27 October 1956, in which France and the Federal Republic of Germany agreed to the return of Saarland as a German federal state as of 1 January 1957. Economic reintegration, with a currency exchange from the franc to the deutschmark, followed on 6 July 1959. In the years afterwards, the law, economy, society and politics of Saarland were harmonised with the Federal Republic of Germany, and the infrastructure of Saarland was expanded.

Languages in the Saar-Moselle Region

In the German-French border region, Germanic and Romance linguistic areas meet, whereby it must be noted that numerous border changes over the centuries have meant that the political and linguistic borders are not identical. The borders of the German-speaking area lie some 30 kilometres inside the French border to the west. Above all, older inhabitants of this French border strip speak Mosel Franconian or Rhine Franconian dialect, very similar variants of which are also spoken across Saarland and remain the languages of everyday interaction. Younger inhabitants of Saarland also use these dialects, although not in their original form but rather mixed with elements of standard German.

In contrast, younger inhabitants from the French border region have generally lost the use of this dialect form, known as *Francique*. They speak French and regard both German and the German dialect form as foreign languages. This is also true for the French language on the Saarland side of the border, where most people have at some time learned French with varying degrees of success. However, the Saarland population shows a great affinity for the neighbouring country and its culture, although this interest is not so strongly reciprocated from across the border. Historically speaking, the negative experiences with their eastern German neighbour clearly play a role for French border inhabitants. Although enmities have been overcome at least at the level of everyday contact with one another, long-term consequences are felt even today.

Given the border location of Saarland, its close relationship with the partner region of Lorraine², particularly with the Département Moselle³, and on the basis of the numerous binational agreements on Franco-German cooperation in education between the Saarland Ministry of Education and the *Académie de Nancy-Metz*⁴, the language of the national neighbours is particularly encouraged in schools in Saarland and Lorraine. Thus, for example, French has been taught as an obligatory class in grades three and four of Saarland primary schools. More than half of all schoolchildren attending secondary schools in *Saarland* learn French as their primary foreign language.

The increased focus upon foreign language learning means not only that children can encounter French from an early age at kindergarten or primary school but also that they are better placed to take advantage of the bilingual schooling option available to students. This option facilitates the development of bilingualism and opens the way for multilingualism,

as well as passing on intercultural skills in the process which represent an advantage for career chances and mobility. Alongside bilingual German-French educational structures or bilingual German-French teaching of specific subjects, Saarbrücken⁵ also has a German-French grammar school (ge. Deutsch-Französisches Gymnasium, fr. Lycée Franco-Allemand à Sarrebruck)⁶ with a binational focus, while in the French Sarreguemines (ge. Saargemünd)⁷ so-called “*classes européennes*” are available.

In the area of higher education, Saarland-Lorraine cooperation, which has always entailed a close involvement with the language of the neighbouring country, takes the form of cross-border study programmes at the University of Applied Sciences in Saarland (Hochschule für Technik und Wirtschaft des Saarlandes)⁸ : a binational study programme in the framework of the *Deutsch-Französisches Hochschulinstitut* of the University of Applied Sciences in cooperation with the University of Metz (Université Paul Verlaine-Metz)⁹ or the *Etudes transfrontalières franco-allemandes* at the University of the Saarland in Saarbrücken¹⁰ . In addition, Saarbrücken forms the location of the virtual German-French University (ge. Deutsch-Französische Hochschule, fr. Université franco-allemande)¹¹ .

However, despite all efforts to promote the neighbouring languages in pre-school, school, university and adult education institutions, interest in these languages is waning and being replaced by the wish to learn English. It is now beyond dispute that English is unavoidable as the international language of communication, yet it is also true that an understanding of the neighbouring language for those living in a border region is indispensable. This means that trilingualism has now become the proper goal.

The Education System in Lorraine and in Saarland

The education systems in Saarland (GE) and in Lorraine (F) exhibit fundamental differences. This is true both for the school system and for the system of adult and further education. French primary schools last for five years and the German equivalent only for four years. On the Saarland side of the border, children leave the primary school system after the fourth grade and move on to different forms of secondary schooling (*Realschule* / six-year secondary school, *Erweiterte Realschule* / extended six-year secondary school, *Gesamtschule* / comprehensive school and *Gymnasium* / nine-year grammar school). In France, all children go to *Collège* after the *Cours Moyen 2* (fifth grade). Thereafter they have the option to spend three years at the *Lycée* where they may take university entrance examinations. The French *École Primaire* incorporates also the nursery classes, the *École Maternelle*, which thus also form part of the state education system. In Germany, in contrast, kindergartens are not part of a national system but are rather run privately, municipally or by church organisations. The training and further qualification of teachers is also differently organised in both countries. These differences in the education system are a common source of difficulty when organising cross-border projects and contacts.

A system such as the German adult education centres (Volkshochschulen) only exists in partial form in France. Thus the French *Université Populaire de Forbach* directly on the border is engaged in cross-border cooperation with the Volkshochschule Völklingen (Université Populaire Transfrontalière)¹², run by the Municipality of Saarbrücken. Otherwise, further education in France and thus also in the Département Moselle (Lorraine) either forms part of the traditional education system in connection with education in leisure time (including the Universities of the Third Age or special further education institutions) or is undertaken as part of vocational training organised by the unions. The association of French adult education colleges plays by no means as powerful a role as the German equivalent, the Deutscher Volkshochschul-Verband¹³.

The dominant factor in the French system of further education is in fact the system of professional continuing education (formation professionnelle continue). In the public sector, schools have been grouped together at local or regional level in *Groupements d'établissements pour la formation continue / GRETA*¹⁴. The GRETA network serves the whole of France, with over 5,000 educational institutions and 1,300 advisors who are responsible for developing tailored continuing education programmes for businesses and complete qualification programmes for specific fields of work. Given the way the French system is organised, it is difficult for adult education centres in Germany that have developed projects with a cross-border focus to find partner institutions in eastern France. The challenge is to find a suitable partner to organise adult education projects from the many institutions active in the field, and one which has an organisational and educational content structure sufficiently similar to that of the German partner institution.

Cross-border Economic and Social Ties¹⁵

The “Germanophone” part of Lorraine was already distinguished in a special way by cross-border contacts, family ties and private and economic relationships even before the establishment of the single European market. The present-day border between Lorraine and Saarland splits an economic region which had grown together during the high-point of industrialisation and which was dominated by the existence of coal in the Saarland-Lorraine area. The economic decline of this traditional branch of industry (mining, iron and steel) in the second half of the previous century therefore affected the region on both sides of the border and presented both areas with the need for fundamental structural change.

As in the case of many other border regions, differences in terms of work opportunities, working conditions and salary levels lead to commuter traffic, which is unequally distributed. Generally, commuting takes the form of short-distance travel in which commuters cross the border and return each day. Attracting about 46,300 commuters daily from Lorraine (France), the job market in the Grand Duchy of Luxembourg is clearly the preferred destination of regular cross-border travellers, followed by Saarland (Germany), which receives

about 24,600 daily commuters from *Lorraine*. In return, only about 1,000 inhabitants of Saarland commute to work in Lorraine. These figures take account only of regular employees paying social insurance and do not include freelance and low-wage workers, for example in the cleaning and restaurant businesses, or those commuting to study or shop across the border. When looking at the area in detail, we see that the vast majority of commuters from Lorraine live very near to the border with Luxembourg and Saarland. This involves the two mining areas in Lorraine for coal and iron ore, which were hit hardest by the restructuring of the economy in Lorraine. More than 60% of those commuting to Saarland have their workplaces in the Municipality of Saarbrücken, which encompasses the majority of people in employment in Saarland as a whole.

Given the shared history of the region, interdependent cross-border relationships had developed in the traditional industries such as iron, steel and glass and ceramics manufacturing, which to some extent endure today. In more recent times, particularly since the development of the single European market, a number of foreign companies, particularly from Germany, have established a presence in the border region of Lorraine. Low real estate prices, state subsidies and the presence of skilled and relatively cheap



Saarbrücken.

labour persuaded both companies from Saarland and those from, for example, Baden-Württemberg and Nordrhein-Westfalen to move or build new manufacturing plants there. Currently, 175 businesses employ more than 21,000 persons, whereby the number of businesses and also of employed persons has risen greatly over the last five years, particularly in the cantons near the border. The car-making industry and its suppliers play a particularly significant role here. In terms of the numbers of people they employ, businesses in the call centre branch have also gained in importance in most recent times. In the border area between Saarbrücken and Forbach, a cross-border industry and trading area is developing as a result of the Eurozone¹⁶.

Given the low real estate and construction costs, increasing numbers of Saarland businesses, particularly from the area around Saarbrücken, established branches in the border towns of

Lorraine. This led in turn to a rise in the number of homes inhabited by Germans in the Lorraine border area from 6,000 in 1990 to 12,500 in 1999. The economic boom of the 1950s and 1960s led people to travel abroad more for pleasure, bringing, for example, frequent visitors from Saarland to the lakes of Lorraine.

Overall, however, both sub-regions struggle with the impact of structural transformation. This is demonstrated by the unemployment rate, which has reached c. 11% in Saarland and c. 10% in Lorraine.

European Support Programmes in Saar-Lor-Lux-Rhein-Region

In a broader geographic sense Saarbrücken is part of the so called European Großregion Saar-Lor-Lux-Rhein (Greater Region Saar-Lor-Lux-Rhein) , which includes Saarland (Germany), Lorraine (France), the Grand-Duchy of Luxembourg, Rheinland-Pfalz (Germany), Wallonia (Belgium) and the French- and German-speaking Community of Belgium.¹⁷ Beside this in 1995 the EuRegio SaarLorLuxRhein (fr. EuRegio SaarLorLuxRhin)¹⁸ was founded. At the present it includes 40 members from different municipalities and counties in Saarland, Lorraine, Rheinland-Pfalz und Luxembourg.



Top left: Bridge crossing over the Mosel from Germany to Luxembourg (Schengen).

Top right / down to the right: Schengen at the bank of the Mosel.

Down to the left: Memorial in remembrance of the signing of the Schengen Agreement on the ship "Princess Marie-Astrid".

The area around Saarbrücken participates in the INTERREG IIIa programme Eastern Moselle – Saarland – Westpfalz. During the support programme period of 2000-2006, the INTERREG IIIa programmes in which Saarland participated in the German-French-Luxembourg border area were allocated a total of around 34.5 million Euros. The themes chosen for support, such as encouraging European skills or aiding civil society projects brought particular benefits to educational institutions.

INTERREG IIIb on the other hand is a transnational cooperation programme in the area of regional planning and development. The *Regionalpark Saar* is incorporated in a cooperation project supported by the European Union. This INTERREG project is concerned with the development of urban environments. Experts from Saarland and five other conurbations in northwestern Europe have come together to form SAUL (Sustainable and Accessible Urban Landscapes), which is working on strategies and concepts for a new approach to urban regions¹⁹.

INTERREG IIIc supports interregional cooperation in the Saar-Lor-Lux region, for example through the e-BIRD (e-Based Interregional Development) project, which receives 6.25 million Euros and is charged with strengthening identity-building networks in the greater region. Lastly, we should draw attention to the EURES²⁰ project *Grenzgänger Saarland-Lorraine-Luxemburg-Rheinland-Pfalz*, which has among its aims to provide information for professionals, employees and those looking for work in the partner regions, and facilitating information exchange concerning job vacancies and job seekers in the border regions, to function as a job agency, and to design and encourage cross-border vocational training.

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Useful information:

Politics and administration:

Website of the community Saarland: www.saarland.de

Website of the city Saarbrücken: www.saarbruecken.de

Website of the region Lothringen / Lorraine: www.cr-lorraine.fr

Website of the Département Moselle: www.moselle.pref.gouv.fr

Website of the community Sarreguemines / Saargemünd: www.sarreguemines.fr

Website of the grand region (*Großregion*): www.grossregion.net

Website of the EuRegio SaarLorLuxRhin (*EuRegio SaarLorLuxRein*): www.euregio.lu

Education:

Website of the *Volkshochschule Stadtverband Saarbrücken* (Adult Education Centre of the cities association Saarbrücken): www.stadtverband-saarbruecken.de/vhs

Website of the *Grenzüberschreitende Volkshochschule / Université Populaire Transfrontalière*: www.vhs-voelklingen.de.vhs/upt.htm

Website of the *Deutsch-Französisches Gymnasium / Lycée Franco-Allemand à Sarrebruck*: www.dfg-ifa.com

Website of the *Deutsch-Französische Hochschule / Université franco-allemande*: www.dfh-ufa.org

Website of the French-German cross-border studies (*Etudes transfrontalières franco-allemandes*) at the University of the Saarland: www.htw-saarland.de

Website of the University of Metz (*Université Paul Verlaine-Metz*): www.univ.metz.fr

Website of GRETA (*Groupements d'établissements pour la formation continue*): www.education.gouv.fr/fp/greta.htm

Footnotes:

- 1 This paragraph is largely based upon the following source: *Bildungsserver Saarland* – Impressions and Themes – History (www.saarland.de)
- 2 www.cr-lorraine.fr
- 3 www.moselle.pref.gouv.fr
- 4 www.ac-nancy-metz.fr
- 5 www.saarbruecken.de
- 6 www.dfg-lfa.com
- 7 www.sarreguemines.fr
- 8 www.htw-saarland.de
- 9 www.univ-metz.fr
- 10 www.uni-saarland.de
- 11 www.dfh-ufa.org
- 12 www.vhs-voelklingen.de/vhs/upt.htm
- 13 <http://vhs-dvv.server.de>
- 14 www.education.gouv.fr/fp/greta.htm
- 15 This section is largely based on the following source: Christian Schulz / Peter Dörrenbächer: Economic relationships in the Saarland-Lorraine border region, Introduction; Information published as part of the “deuframat” project (www.deuframat.de)
- 16 www.eurozone-saarbruecken-forbach.org
- 17 www.grossregion.net
- 18 www.euregio.lu
- 19 www.saulproject.net
- 20 EURES (EUROpean Employment Services) brings together the European Commission and the public employment services as well as other regional and national bodies concerned with employment issues (see: <http://europa.eu.int/eures/index.jsp>). For EURES Netherlands-German-Belgium see: www.eures.info

Germany – Poland

Oberlausitz Region

Detlef Heuke / Ute Grun

Economic Development

The region around the city Hoyerswerda¹ in eastern Germany on the border with Poland and the Czech Republic has historically always been a rural area. The draining of the broad marshlands began in the the 5th and 6th centuries A.D., thus enabling crops to be sown and grazing lands to be reclaimed. From the middle of the 1950s, lignite mining began in the region. The high point of the lignite mining industry occurred during the 1970s and 1980s. The mining industries developed together with the processing industry and coal power stations to form a mono-economy, which with very few exceptions effectively destroyed the rural and agricultural character of the region. The political development of the region during the previous century was particularly affected by the influence of communist ideology. For the then GDR, lignite was one of the few raw materials the country possessed which could be converted into something useful. The entire economy depended upon this resource and indeed was built upon it, since no costly foreign exchange had to be made to obtain domestic lignite. As a consequence, the country's leadership and the ruling party paid great attention to the development of the lignite-producing region. Thus in the 1950s gigantic lignite processing plants connected to numerous coal-powered power stations were built. New strip mines were also opened up. The largest and probably most advanced lignite processing plant in Europe of the period was constructed.

These gigantic industrial complexes required workers and the workers needed housing. For this reason a party resolution was also passed according to which the small market-garden town of Hoyerswerda was to be developed and expanded as a "socialist city". At that time, the old town had no more than 6,000 inhabitants and the surrounding land was flat, providing ideal conditions for the building of a "socialist city". City districts were designed and built much as they had appeared on the drawing-board. A revolutionary aspect of the city's design for the times was the use of pre-cast concrete slabs in housing. This form of building design was used for the first time on a grand scale in Hoyerswerda. Pre-cast concrete slabs and house-sections were, rather like a house of cards, assembled on site to create housing blocks of up to 12 storeys. This form of building design was relatively cheap and enabled the construction of large quantities of housing within a short period of time, as well as providing a degree of relative comfort for their inhabitants. With this development, Hoyerswerda grew quickly into an "almost"-metropolis. Workers came in their thousands to settle in the new city and were immediately given new flats to live in –

at a time when it was common to have to wait years for new accommodation – served by a district heating system from the power stations, an absolute luxury in the 1960s. An offer of above-average salaries attracted workers to the gas combine plant Schwarze Pumpe (ge.). Meanwhile, even the supply of foodstuffs and consumer goods in Hoyerswerda was far above that available in the rest of the GDR. All these measures brought economic prosperity to Hoyerswerda. Today, one would say that the situation at that time in the region was comparable to a “special economic zone”.

The outward expression of the economic boom took the form of a demographic explosion, largely as a result of the incoming labour. The population of Hoyerswerda, as the regional centre, grew from c. 5,000 to 85,000. Hoyerswerda was a “young” city with a high birth rate. The increase in population made the development of social and cultural institutions necessary, and these were built too. The city and the region profited from an enormous boom in development. However, this economic boom came at a high cost. The continual



development of new strip mines caused maximum damage to the natural environment. Because of the high water table in the region, enormous quantities of groundwater had to be pumped away continually. This contributed further, along with the actual strip mines

and the gigantic “holes” they created, to the destruction of the environment, as did the sulphur-rich emissions from the lignite processing plants.

Structural Change

This “economic zone” functioned more or less efficiently until the collapse of the GDR regime. Soon thereafter, the consequences for both the city and the region of 40 years of one-sided social, cultural and economic development built essentially upon the resource of lignite had to be faced. Upon unification, lignite was rapidly seen as too expensive and furthermore as having a lesser burning capacity compared with coal and a greater cost to the environment. Strip mines were closed down and the lignite processing plants stopped working. This development took away both the employment and future prospects of almost the entire population of the city within a relatively short time-span. Due to the mono-economic system, no other form of industry existed which could have offered re-employment to those laid off work.

Added to this, the region surrounding Hoyerswerda (following a referendum) belongs politically to Sachsen, yet it remains a peripheral zone economically, indeed as it would be in Brandenburg. The only potential for the region lies in the damaged natural environment. This might sound paradoxical, but it is nonetheless true. The lignite was extracted using strip mine techniques, which made the process cheaper but which also led to so-called strip-mine landscapes. These were previously seen as a problem when the mining industry came to an end. More recently, however, they have developed into a chance to develop tourism in the region, since the strip-mine landscapes have been re-colonised by nature over the last ten years and continue to be so. When the pumping of groundwater from the strip-mine cavities ceased, they became rapidly filled with water and large lakes appeared. The natural balance is recovering and landscaping intervention has linked the lakes with one another. This has led to the development in the region of one of the largest-scale lake landscapes in Central Europe, offering facilities for leisure and sport tourism. In this manner, the destruction of the environment has been halted and an opportunity to create new jobs in the tourist industry has been opened up.

Social Problems

The social consequences for Hoyerswerda region of structural change have been devastating: high and above-average rates of unemployment (mid-year c. 22%), high outward migration (particularly high among young people; at present, Hoyerswerda has a population of 42,000), low birth rate and a rapidly ageing population. At the beginning of the 1990s, a series of attacks on foreigners took place which lent Hoyerswerda international notoriety. The photographs of attacks on foreigners in their hostels and of local people either failing to help the victims or actively participating in such attacks were sent around the world. Demonstrations and riots were a daily occurrence. Hoyerswerda developed into

one of the hotspots of the reunited German Federal Republic. An important catalyst for the events was the fact that a very large sector of the population was unable to cope with deep frustration and that this frustration needed an outlet. The reputation of the city of Hoyerswerda was greatly damaged as a result and it was exactly here that the most unpleasant side of the new Germany revealed itself, after 50 years of positive political, cultural and social development and more than 20 years after the last series of Germany-wide riots relating to the '68 movement. The fact that this negative trend then spread to Rostock and Solingen did nothing to diminish the impact of its having started in Hoyerswerda, which was stigmatised by the events which took place in the 1990s.

Politicians were forced to address this development and strenuous attempts were made, with much financial support, to restore social harmony within the city. This was achieved to some extent over the following years and a degree of peace returned to the community. The name of the city, however, continued to be associated with serious social unrest. This hindered attempts to foster inward investment, with a view to building new forms of industry in the region and the city and creating new jobs. Thus the problem of high unemployment remained, although this would be still higher again had not more than half of the former population migrated elsewhere in search of work.

This wave of outward migration produced new problems. Among those who left were those who were the active wealth-creators of the urban community. Those who remain are the inward migrants of the 1950s and 1960s, who are now pensioners. This trend has made Hoyerswerda a city with a largely ageing population. Related to this of course is a low birth rate. Furthermore, the history of the city is such that there is a lack of so-called cultural bourgeoisie, which is fed by the existence of the intelligentsia as a social class. This problematic social trend will, however, not necessarily lead to the same kinds of outrages as took place in the 1990s. The city and the region will have to come to terms with this development and seek strategies early on for dealing with such issues. Although this evolution is a tragedy for the community, it is also a normal development when compared with other centres based on mono-economies which have passed their prime.²

Adult Education

In this context, adult education following the transition took on new significance. In particular, two aspects characterise adult education: (1) adult education as continuing education for career development and (2) adult education in later years as a special form of further education in leisure time and also as a platform for social contact and communication. Where young people are concerned, since the mid-1990s higher school and university examinations have no longer been available via the adult education centres (Volkshochschulen), resulting in a deficit in access to qualifications in the region as a whole. Structurally speaking, adult education in the region is dominated by the adult education centres system. The Adult Education Centre Hoyerswerda (Volkshochschule

Hoyerswerda)³ offers courses in the traditional field of adult education and also in continuing education for career development. The principle that adult education centres should offer services area-wide helps here, since this ensures that the Volkshochschule Hoyerswerda also serves neighbouring rural areas via extra-mural departments. In addition, there are a number of individual private educational institutions, although their role in terms of adult education may be seen as marginal.

Ethnic Groups

A special factor arising from the history of the region, which continues to have contemporary relevance, concerns the confluence here of Germans (coming from the West, in particular from Thuringia) and Sorbs⁴ (coming originally from Bohemia), as a result of migration of peoples. Both ethnic groups shared access to the land between them and have a history of peaceful co-existence with few exceptions. This can certainly be attributed to the fact of both ethnic groups having settled the area during the same period and having divided land ownership between them. There were no “native inhabitants” in the sense of an original populace in the region of Hoyerswerda. The only exception to this peaceful co-existence came during the period of National Socialism in German and the years thereafter. The Sorbs, after their experiences during fascist rule, pushed for their ethnic group to be accepted within the Czech Republic or Poland. Both countries refused to take the group in at that time. The Czechs regarded them as Germans, while the Poles were glad to have won back some territory when the Oder-Neiße border was established and were reluctant to do anything that might make the redrawing of the border a possibility. Thus the Sorbs remained in Germany, or rather in the GDR, and have retained since then certain rights as an ethnic group with constitutional guarantees. The Sorbs, although identified as a minority in domestic law, define themselves as a national group. They have managed to retain and practise their distinctive traditions and culture. The region continues to have a bilingual character. The Sorb language is the second official language along with German, as laid down in the Saxonian constitution.

Sorbian language courses offered by the Adult Education Centre Hoyerswerda are generally taken up by state employees who are obliged to attend. There are however other people wishing to learn Sorbian as a hobby. With Sorbian increasingly seen as a bridge between Germany and the Slavic neighbour countries, Sorbs have hopes that Sorbian arts and culture will play a more important role in intra-state cultural exchange in future. In this context, however, the dwindling population of Sorbs in the region is a problem. At present, c. 30,000 Sorbs are still living within their ancestral territories of Lausitz. Such changes notwithstanding, the Sorb minority may manage to function as a bridge within Hoyerswerda too, since there is currently rather little orientation towards Poland.

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Useful information:

Website of the city Hoyerswerda: www.hoyerswerda.de

Website of the Adult Education Centre in Hoyerswerda: www.vhs-hoyerswerda.de

Website of the Sorb minority: www.sorben.de, www.sorben.com, www.stiftung.sorben.com, www.serbski-institut.de

Footnotes:

1 www.hoyerswerda.de

2 An exception would be Saarland, where the transition from a heavy industrial mono-economy to a high-tech location for new technologies worked well. See the contribution from Wilfried Schmidt in this chapter.

3 www.vhs-hoyerswerda.de

4 www.sorben.de, www.sorben.com, www.stiftung.sorben.com, www.serbski-institut.de

Slovakia – Hungary

South-Slovakian Border Region

Miroslav Michela

Borders and History¹

The fall of the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy and the subsequent emergence of new states in its territory in 1918 brought grave geopolitical changes in the region of Central Europe. This was the time when the territory of modern-day Slovakia was demarcated from the Hungarian Kingdom. The Slovak political elite united under the Slovak National Council in appealing to the Wilsonian right of national self-determination, demanding in the Declaration of the Slovak Nation of 30 October 1918 that Slovakia should become part of the future Czechoslovak state. This act supported the efforts of those Czech and Slovak exile politicians who during the war lobbied the Entente governments for the dissolution of the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy and the founding of an independent state of Czechs and Slovaks.

One of the most serious problems related to the separation of Slovakia from the Hungarian Kingdom was the definition of its borders. The Hungarian government was determined under any circumstances to maintain the territorial integrity of the Hungarian Kingdom. It referred to the Kingdom's long historical tradition and represented it as an ideal geopolitical unity in the territory of the Carpathian Basin. Despite the efforts of Hungarian diplomacy to preserve the Hungarian Kingdom's unity, the Czechoslovak delegation to the Paris peace conference successfully forced through its idea for redrawing the borders of Slovakia. That border – more or less identical with the borders of modern-day Slovakia – was later ratified in the Trianon peace treaty between Hungary and Czechoslovakia on 4 June 1920.

However, alongside the newly-established Czechoslovak borders, there were areas with numerous national minorities neighbouring their “mother nations”. In the southern territory of Slovakia there was the Hungarian minority, which had to come to terms with the radical change of its status from membership of the ruling nation within pre-1918 Hungary to being a minority within Czechoslovakia. The rise of Nazi Germany in the 1930s had grave consequences for Czechoslovakia. As a consequence of the Munich treaty, the First Vienna Arbitration on 2 November 1938 decided on the attachment of Slovakia's southern territories – mainly inhabited by the Hungarian minority – to Hungary. However, after the Second World War the decisions of the First Vienna Arbitration were annulled and Czechoslovakia was restored more or less within its pre-war borders. Despite the fact that in the inter-war period the Hungarians had their own minority schools up to the end of the

1940s, there were no proper conditions for mutual cooperation in the field of education and culture between democratic Czechoslovakia and the revisionist Hungarian Kingdom.

After the Second World War, the Czechoslovak government decided to displace or “exchange” its non-Slavic minority population. In the southern areas of Slovakia this meant depriving minority Hungarians of their rights as citizen and forcibly removing a proportion of them to Hungary. The Hungarian minority in Czechoslovakia thus lost a considerable part of its intelligentsia and the forced removals policy continues up to today to be a source of bitter nationalist conflicts on both sides. Indeed, it was as late as 1949 before the Hungarians regained their citizenship in Czechoslovakia, and the right to organise themselves. In that respect CSEMADOK², the central organisation of Czechoslovak Hungarians established in 1949, played an important role. However, only a tragedy – the disastrous flooding of the Danube River in the region inhabited mainly by Hungarians in 1965 – eased the tensions and brought Hungarians and Slovaks in Czechoslovakia together.



Economy

One of the consequences of the dissolution of the Hungarian Kingdom in 1918 was the serious disruption or even entire disintegration of the economic structure of the region. The industrial as well as the agricultural production of Slovakia suddenly lost access to their old markets almost entirely and were forced to reorient themselves towards serving the Czech markets. However, due to this change the Slovakian industry declined because it was not able to compete with the much stronger Czech industry.

After the Second World War, the communist regime swung to another extreme and launched an excessive industrialisation programme – laying particular stress on heavy industry – in Slovakia. Despite this, the Slovak economy stabilised and has been in the process of transformation to a market economy since 1989. This process affected certain sectors in industry rather painfully, yet forced other sectors to transform and accommodate. In the case of Komárno district in Slovakia, in the last years of the pre-1989 regime 63% of all economic production was dominated by the primary and the secondary sectors, while nowadays this figure has changed to 86.6% of industry being dominated by the tertiary and the secondary sectors. From that number, 61.6% involves the production of commercial services and industry. In comparison to 1988, the share of the primary sector in economic production decreased strikingly from 28.9% to 13.4%, while the percentage of the secondary sector decreased only slightly from 35.2% to 32.9%, but the production of the tertiary sector increased considerably from 35.9% to 53.7%. The remarkable growth of the latter is due to the expansion of the commercial sector, whose share of total economic production is 28.8%.

However, despite its immense growth, the tertiary sector was not able to absorb all the labour force released from other sectors in the process of economic transformation. By 30 June 2003, the unemployment rate in Komárno district had risen to 20.2%. The population growth rate in recent years shows a negative trend. But in contrast to that, the share of people in the age group of economically active persons rose from 60,2% in the year 1991 to 65,3% in the year 2001.

After the capital Bratislava, the district Komárno has the second best accessibility to the target markets of all regions of Slovakia. Its location close to the strategic triangle of Vienna-Budapest-Bratislava and its relatively good connection to the main transportation systems in Hungary and other European countries – particularly the railways, motorways and the river Danube – mean that the region of Komárno has great potential for development. Despite this, the Komárno district is suffering from economic depression because of the crisis faced by the traditional sectors of production on which the local economy was based before 1989. As a consequence of the economic structure under the former regime and its subsequent transformation, the region lacks resources to overcome the economic crisis. The region's insufficient infrastructure means that conditions do not favour larger-scale economic initiatives, despite sufficient primary sources in the district. As such, the economic plight of the region is set to deepen. Overcoming the crisis and further development of the district will be to a great extent dependent on the presence of subsidies from national sources as well as on complementary sources from the EU. Access to and forms of subsidy will be contingent upon the development of Slovakia's regional policy.

In this context, the need for a skilled labour force and for properly-trained professionals will grow as will the need for new education facilities in the region. Hitherto, the human and

natural resources of cross-border regions in South Slovakia were not sufficiently exploited. Doing so would give rise to great opportunities for cross-border cooperation, thus enhancing the dynamics of the southern Slovakia border region's economic development. In the economy of northern Hungary, several important industrial companies play a key role. Some of these, for instance the Nokia factory in Komárom, employ a number of Slovak citizens among their staff.

Cooperation in Education

The most serious conflicts in Southern Slovakia from 1918 up to the present time have all had their origins in ethnic tensions. These have arisen due to a lack of mutual understanding, a situation encouraged by the assimilationist policies of the state and the nationalist counter-response. The Hungarian minority has been striving since 1918 to define its identity and position within Slovakia. This can be seen as a constant redefinition of the minority's relationship with the Slovak majority on the one hand and with the Hungarian "mother nation" on the other. This process is closely connected with the education system.

After the "velvet revolution" in 1989, there was suddenly room for free cooperation unrestrained by the ideological ties of communism. While there had been some contact and cooperation in the field of minority education and culture between Czechoslovakia and Hungary during the last decades of communist power, after 1989 these forms of contact and cooperation multiplied. In Czechoslovakia and later in Slovakia, new institutions appeared with the aim of promoting cooperation with Hungary.

Insufficient financing of the education system and cultural activities in Slovakia inevitably affected the funding of minority schooling as well. In the early 1990s, the Hungarian government in particular began to finance various projects aimed at promoting mother-tongue education for Slovakian Hungarians. In early 1990 A Szlovákiai Magyar Pedagógusok Szövetsége (The Association of Hungarian Educators in Slovakia)³ was established to promote minority education of Hungarians in Slovakia. This organisation has been working successfully for 13 years now; it organises so-called Summer Universities, which are in fact 30-hour summer courses for Hungarian educators. Around 300 teachers attend these courses annually. The success of these activities is also confirmed by the fact that in recent years such courses were also organised during the school year.

Another civic association specialising in teachers' education is Comenius Pedagógiai Intézet (Comenius Institute of Education) whose functioning is partly guaranteed by an agreement on cooperation with the Hungarian Komárom-Esztergom County. It organises special courses where teachers are acquainted with new methodological approaches in education. These courses usually take place in Slovakia, although there is also a chance to take part in short-term summer courses in Hungary, where the participants are encouraged to attend lecture series announced beforehand and usually organised by Hungarian

universities. One typical form of support for young people and adults involves special scholarships for students and researchers to Hungary granted by Hungarian governmental as well as non-governmental organisations. In Slovakia there is one major organisation responsible for assigning stipends, the Agora Iroda (Agora Office) and also other similar organisations, e.g. the János Selye University Foundation, which has organised a “Summer University” for three years now and which organises several educational courses during the school year.

The János Selye University Centre (sk. Univerzitné Stredisko Jána Selyeho, hu. Selye János Egyetemi Központ)⁴, located in Komárno⁵, has also played a significant role in the process of creating a Hungarian cultural centre in Slovakia. One of the most likely candidates as a location is the city of Komárno. With an important historical and cultural tradition and with close ties to its neighbouring “twin” city of Komárom⁶ on the Hungarian bank of the river Danube, the city would seem to be an ideal location.

In recent years, cooperation between Hungary and Slovakia has greatly increased and the two countries’ joint accession to the EU has furthered this positive trend. However, the domestic political climate in both countries is still an immensely important factor for mutual relations. In spite of occasional conflicts at the level of local government, strong links and ties exist whose further development will undoubtedly yield positive results regarding cross-border cooperation.



Komárno (Slovakia).

The “status law” on Hungarians living abroad which was passed by the Hungarian parliament in 2001 had a great impact on the Hungarian minority itself as well as on the relationship between the Slovak and Hungarian states. The law applies to all members of the Hungarian minority in the neighbouring countries. With this law, the Hungarian Government tries to support Hungarians living in Slovakia, Romania and Austria mainly in the form of financial benefits, provided they have accepted the status of a “Hungarian living abroad”. In order to bring this act into practice, Hungary sought official approval in every country affected by the law. The whole issue stirred a huge wave of political debate. Slovakia, and indeed

Austria too, rejected the content of the new law, claiming that it clashed with their own domestic legal provisions. Furthermore, the Hungarian government had no right to interfere in the internal matters of any other country. Because of these issues, the law has never been implemented in Slovakia. Despite the endless bitter discussions alleging unconstitutionality and nationalist motivations in its adoption, this law had a far-reaching influence on cross-border cooperation in the field of education. It extended and provided new funds for various activities aimed at children's and adult education in the region of South Slovakia. The accession of Slovakia and Hungary to EU, however, brought other changes.



Border control station over the Danube from Komárom (Hungary) to Komárno (Slovakia).



European Union

In the territory of Slovakia and Hungary six Euro-regions have been delineated: Ipeľ, Váh-Danube Ipeľ, Slaná-Rimava, Neogradensis⁷, Košice-Miskolc, Bratislava-Brünn-Wien-Győr. The strategic document for cross-border cooperation, PHARE CBC, formulated a common agenda elaborated for every border region, which set the priorities of cooperation and directions of border regions' development. However, upon accession to the EU, the PHARE CBC programme ceased to be applicable in the new member states. Slovakia has now to apply for finances from EU structural funds. One such fund is the INTERREG programme. Within that initiative, three basic forms of cooperation are defined as follows: 1. cross-border; 2. transnational; 3. interregional. The programme mostly gives preference to projects involving cities, towns and municipalities and civic associations, but also to non-profit institutions and to individual citizens from border regions. The main objective is to eliminate barriers dividing border regions and to overcome problems that impact negatively on co-existence. It is obvious that the future of Slovakia and Hungary's bilateral relationship is dependent on cross-border cooperation between border regions as guaranteed by particular agreements and partnerships between the two neighbours. Due to its ethnically-mixed

population of Hungarians and Slovaks, Southern Slovakia is a region in which broadening the forms of mutual cooperation would certainly be beneficial.

According to the last census, approximately 10% (520,528) of the population of Slovakia is ethnic Hungarian. The knowledge of the language and the cultural kinship of the Hungarian minority create ideal preconditions for dynamic cross-border cooperation.

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Useful information:

- Website of the Nitra county (Nitriansky samosprávny kraj): www.unsk.sk
 Website of the city Komárno: www.komarno.sk/default_deu.asp
 Website of the city Komárom: www.komarom.hu
 Website of the Euroregion Neogradensis: www.euroregion-neogradensis.sk
 Website of CSEMADOK, the central organisation of Czechoslovak Hungarians: www.csemadok.sk
 Website of the association of Hungarian pedagogues in Slovakia (A Szlovákiai Magyar Pedagógusok Szövetsége): www.szmpsz.sk
 Website of the János Selye University Centre (sk. Univerzitné Stredisko Jána Selyeho, hu. Selye János Egyetemi Központ): www.selye.sk

Footnotes:

- 1 See also the article of Alfred Lang in this chapter.
- 2 www.csemadok.sk
- 3 www.szmpsz.sk
- 4 www.selye.sk
- 5 www.komarno.sk/default_deu.asp
- 6 www.komarom.hu
- 7 See also the article of Findra / Hullová in chapter 2.

Austria – Hungary – Slovakia

History of the Border Region between Burgenland, Western Hungary and Western Slovakia and the Austria-Hungary-Slovakia Border Triangle

Alfred Lang

Despite the many aspects of shared history in the area of the Austrian-Hungarian-Slovakian border triangle, recent history – above all since 1945 – has drawn many dividing lines through the region which still have an impact today. Based on the existing structures of local administration and politics, the area may be taken to include the province of Burgenland on the Austrian side of the border, the region of Western Transdanubia (Nyugat-Dunántúl)¹ on the Hungarian side, and the districts of Bratislava (Bratislavský kraj)² and Trnava (Trnavský kraj)³ in Slovakia. The longest common border runs between Burgenland and western Hungary for a distance of 356 km, while the shortest shared border runs for 26 km between Burgenland and Slovakia. In the northern part of this border area, the border triangle between the states of Austria, Hungary and Slovakia is located by the village of Deutsch Jahrndorf (A) / Rajka (H) / Rusovce (SK).

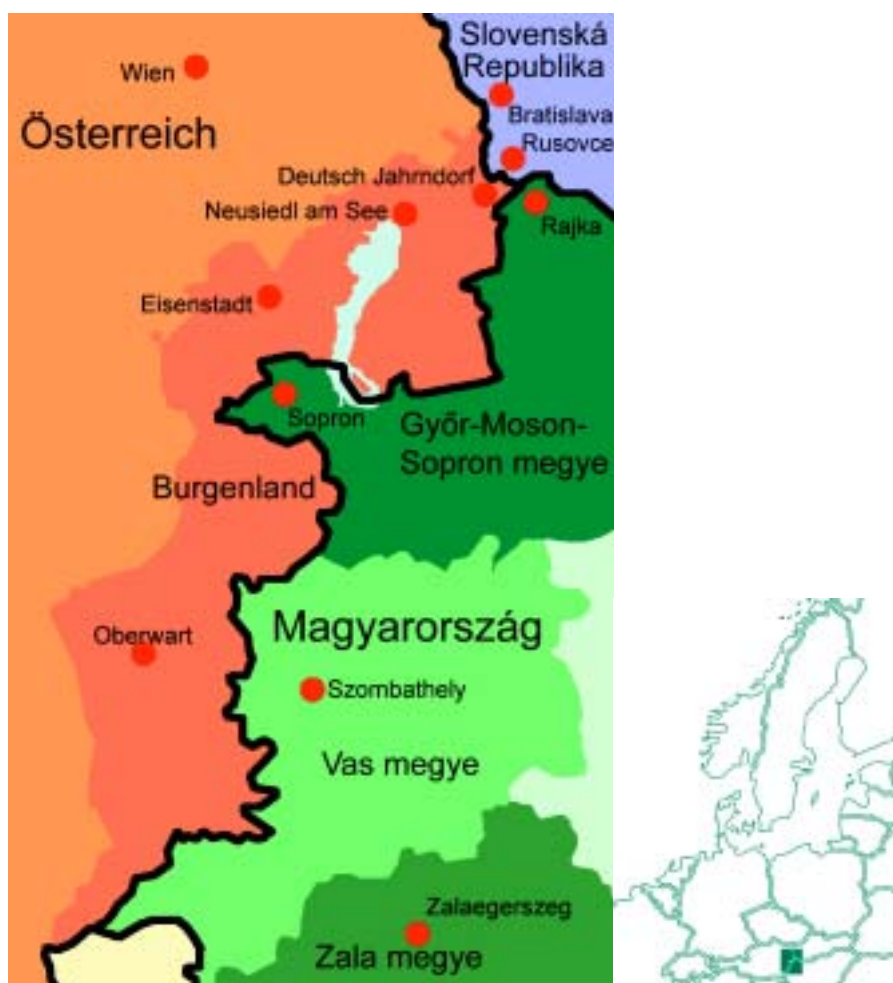


Border triangle Austria-Hungary-Slovakia at Deutsch Jahrndorf (Austria) / Rusovce (Slovakia) / Rajka (Hungary).

The Border Region During the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy

In historical terms, the entire border region belonged until 1918 to the Hungarian kingdom within the Austro-Hungarian Dual Monarchy⁴. The Monarchy was ruled by the Austrian imperial House of Habsburg, yet it constituted a multinational and multiethnic state (ge.

Vielvölkerstaat) with an internal border separating the two halves of the empire, Austria and Hungary. Although the border was permeable, it was nonetheless significant in terms of the administration of the region and its inhabitants under constitutional law. The border at that time was not identical to the current state borders between Austria, Hungary and Slovakia, nor did it correlate with the ethnic and linguistic affiliation of the inhabitants. The current Austrian federal province of Burgenland belonged for more than one thousand years to the Hungarian Kingdom, while being settled in the majority by German speakers,



thus leading to the informal description of the area as “German West-Hungary”. Slovakia too had become part of the Hungarian Kingdom as early as the 11th century and was referred to in geographical terms as Upper Hungary (hu. Felvidék, slov. Horná Zem). Even today, Hungarian speakers form a majority of the inhabitants of southern Slovakia⁵ and indeed Bratislava⁶ was the capital of Hungary for two centuries. However, because of its border location, Bratislava remained a trilingual city with an extensive German-speaking population until the second half of the 19th century.

On the borders of settlement areas, mixed populations of the respective Hungarian, German and Slovakian majority populations existed. In addition, there existed minority populations of Croat, Roma and Jewish inhabitants who had made their home in the border areas. The Croats had arrived in the region in the course of the Turkish wars and had settled in villages in the German-, Hungarian- and Slovak-speaking areas. In addition, a large number of Jewish communities existed scattered across the entire border region, together with partly settled and partly itinerant Roma and Sinti populations.

The end of the feudal system of government in the revolutionary year of 1848 led to a polarisation within the structures of agrarian society. On one hand, there were the large estates of the Hungarian barons (e.g. the Esterházy family) and on the other, a large number of peasant farmers, where land ownership was, in accordance with local inheritance customs, divided equally among all descendants into ever smaller parts, with the result that many families found themselves living on farms too small in size to be sustainable. Many families were only able to survive by sending family members to neighbouring Austria to work as migrant workers in trade and industry, or as household servants in Vienna, the imperial capital. The Hungarian government reacted to the increasingly close connection between German West-Hungary and Austria with concern.

Towards the end of the 19th century, Hungary pursued a policy of “Magyarisation”⁷ with respect to all its national groups and ethnic minorities, aimed at integrating the non-Hungarian population within an emerging Hungarian nation state. This policy also affected the German-speaking areas of western Hungary and the Slovakian districts in Upper Hungary. When this development reached its zenith at the beginning of the 20th century, Hungarian language was introduced successively throughout German- and Slovak-speaking schools as the obligatory teaching language, while German and Slovak were taught only as foreign languages. At the same time, transport infrastructure was developed exclusively to flow eastwards from the central Hungarian region.

Although the district around Bratislava, in particular the locality around Petržalka (ge. Engerau) on the southern edge of the city, was one of the most highly industrialised areas of the empire, the economy of the wider border area was characterised by poverty and backwardness. This resulted in significant waves of emigration, particularly to the USA, which also affected the border regions. From 1871–1914, c. 650,000 people emigrated from Slovakia, of which 500,000 went to the USA alone.

The Border Region Between the Two World Wars

In 1918, after the end of the First World War, the Habsburg Monarchy was broken down into a number of nation states. A small rump state called the Republic of Austria emerged from the former Habsburg empire. The only territorial gain which the young Republic of Austria managed to obtain was the largely German-speaking region of western Hungary,

granted to Austria by the victorious powers in the Peace Treaty of Saint Germain (1919). However, Hungarian resistance to this decision meant that it was not until 1921 that this region under the new name of Burgenland⁸ finally became a part of Austria.⁹

At that time, Austria's youngest federal province, covering c. 4000 km², contained c. 286,000 inhabitants of whom c. 227,000 (80%) belonged to the German-speaking majority population, 42,000 (15%) belonged to the Croat population and 15,000 (5%) were ethnic Hungarians¹⁰. Furthermore, there were many local communities with a (sometimes large) Jewish population (according to the 1934 Census, a total of c.3,600 individuals). The Roma ethnic group numbered between 5,000 and 7,000¹¹. Apart from these, there were a few German-speaking communities or communities with some German-speaking inhabitants remaining in Hungary, as was also the case with some Croatian-speaking communities.

Thus a new border was created in 1918 between Austria and Hungary, which although it generally corresponded with the linguistic border, nonetheless cut through a region that had been geographically, economically and administratively integrated since ancient times. The most profound impact was felt with the separation from medium-sized and larger towns in the region, such as Wieselburg (Moson), Ödenburg (Sopron), Güns (Kőszeg) and St. Gotthard (Szentgotthárd), which, despite Austria's attempt to claim them, remained a part of Hungary. The loss of Ödenburg / Sopron was a particular blow, since it had been expected to take on the role of the new provincial capital. The remaining territory of Burgenland was a strip of land with a predominantly agrarian character and lacking any important municipal centres. This led not only to the loss of local administrative and political structures but also, through the partition of the cities from the region, to the loss of nearly the entire middle and secondary schooling system and all cultural institutions. Furthermore, important markets for agricultural products now lay on the other side of the border.

This situation meant that when Burgenland joined Austria in 1921 as the youngest federal province, it was also by far the poorest and most underdeveloped province, a situation which changed little during the period leading up to the Second World War and which also characterised the province in large measure long after the war came to an end. Problems caused by the difficult economic situation included the fact that many people saw little hope of securing their future in their native land and emigrated elsewhere. Most emigrants from Burgenland wished to settle in the USA. Between 1919 and 1923 alone, 13,600 people left Burgenland for America. It is estimated that c. 22,500 people left Burgenland during the period between the wars.

As a consequence of the Peace Treaty of Trianon (1920) after the First World War, Hungary lost not only 68% of its state territory but also 58% of its population. This included not only the current province of Burgenland but also the entire territory of Slovakia. In the case of Burgenland, the border delineation largely accorded with the linguistic affiliation of the

local population, however, this was not true of the Slovakian part of the new Republic of Czechoslovakia, founded in 1918 (CSR). A Hungarian-speaking majority continued to inhabit the territory along the (Czecho-)Slovakian southern border¹²; at the same time, isolated Slovakian-speaking communities remained within Hungarian territory. The border between Hungary and Czechoslovakia now followed the course of the Danube river until just before Bratislava (ge. Pressburg), where a border triangle between Austria, Czechoslovakia and Hungary emerged, to the south of the industrial area of Petržalka (Engerau). The border with the Austrian province of Burgenland was at that time limited to a few kilometres. The new border triangle also ran right through a Croatian-speaking settlement area, whose communities were now divided between the states of Austria, Czechoslovakia and Hungary¹³.

In 1918, the former Kingdom of Hungary became firstly a democratic republic and, following a short interlude as a communist republic governed by workers' councils, thereafter a kingdom again. This time, however, since there was no pretender to the throne, Hungary was to be ruled by a so-called "imperial administrator" or "regent". In contrast to its neighbours, Czechoslovakia, Yugoslavia and Romania, Hungary made no serious demand for revisions of border delineations in relation to the ceding of Burgenland to Austria and relations between Austria and Hungary remained relatively close. One reason for this was that the national-conservative regime led by the Hungarian Regent Admiral Miklós Horthy was too weak in itself to implement in practice its open policy of revisionism aimed at regaining all territories lost in the Treaty of Trianon concerning Hungary's neighbour states. At the beginning of the 1930s, Horthy therefore adopted a policy of alliance with the fascist Italy of Mussolini and also with the equally authoritarian regime of Federal Chancellor Engelbert Dollfuss in Austria. As the foreign policy weaknesses of both these states became increasingly apparent, Horthy came to rely more and more upon Nazi Germany, which was gaining in strength.

1938 Border Revisions

On 12 March 1938, Austria was annexed by Hitler's Germany and became a part of the "Third Reich". The province of Burgenland lost its status as an independent federal province and was divided between the neighbouring Gau territories of Niederdonau and Steiermark. It thus came to form the southeastern border of the Third Reich.

In October 1938, in the course of the so-called Sudetenland Crisis¹⁴, Slovakia declared firstly autonomy and shortly afterwards independence in March 1939, with Prime Minister Jozef Tiso submitting to pressure from Hitler¹⁵. Although Slovakia thus became independent for the first time in its history, it remained very much dependent upon Hitler's Germany. In 1938, Horthy, the Regent of Hungary¹⁶, managed to regain control of, e.g., the majority Hungarian-speaking areas in southern Slovakia, so that the border to Hungary ran not

along the Danube itself but to the north of the river. Furthermore, Slovakia¹⁷ had to cede control over the industrial town of Petržalka (Engerau)¹⁸, lying to the south of Bratislava and on the border to the German Reich, to Germany. The town came under the control of the Niederdonau Gau, as had the northern part of former Burgenland, and during the war became an important location for armaments production for the Third Reich.

In 1941, Hungary and Slovakia took an active part on the side of Germany in the war against the Soviet Union. In 1944, the Regent, Horthy, attempted to sign a separate peace deal with the Soviet Union, a plan which fell through. Thereafter, German troops occupied Hungary and the country was ruled until 1945 by the Hungarian fascist Arrow Cross movement, which continued with Hungary's participation in the war until the end of fighting in 1945. In Slovakia, a rebellion against Nazi rule in the town of Banská Bystrica was put down with great violence.

One of the most terrible chapters of this period was the expulsion and murder of Jewish and Roma people in the areas occupied and controlled by the Germans. Immediately



Left: Holocaust memorial at the place of the former synagogue of Bratislava.

Right: Historic pharmacy with trilingual inscription (sk/ge/hu) in Bratislava.

following the annexation of Austria to Germany in 1938, the c. 3,600 Jews and Roma in the territory of the former Burgenland were among the first to be persecuted, expelled and murdered; and the great majority of Burgenland Roma were sent to their deaths in the Nazi concentration camps. In Hungary, deportation of the Jewish inhabitants began immediately following the arrival of the German occupying troops in March 1944. More than 200,000 of the Jewish population living in Hungary in 1937 died in concentration and extermination camps. A further 200,000 victims came from the territories occupied in 1938 by Hungary in modern-day Slovakia, Ukraine and Romania. Of the c. 90,000 Jews living in Slovakia, 10,000 managed to flee the country, while c. 70,000 died in German concentration camps.¹⁹

New Borders after 1945

On 29 March 1945, Red Army troops crossed the border into the German Reich for the first time near the small Burgenland community of Klostermarienbergr. This marked the beginning

of Austria's liberation from National Socialism. Shortly before this, the Red Army had also taken control over Hungary, Czech lands and Slovakia.

In 1945, the Czechs and the Slovaks once again formed the Czechoslovak Republic (CSR); in Hungary, a republic was called into being in February 1946. Austria too obtained status as an independent state in 1945, although it remained occupied by the Allies (USA, the Soviet Union, Great Britain and France) until 1955. Burgenland was reinstated as an independent Austrian federal province and was part of the Soviet zone of command until 1955. Destruction caused by the war and the hardship faced by the population in the post-war period made a new start for Burgenland very difficult to achieve. The economic reconstruction of this underdeveloped region progressed more slowly than in other parts of Austria. Only a small amount of the resources made available by the so-called "Marshall-Plan"²⁰ set up by the USA found their way to Burgenland, while Soviet occupation there deterred potential investors. Economic progress stagnated, not least because of the inadequate and dislocated transport infrastructure of the province. Developing efficient road and rail connections is a painstaking process, and this disadvantageous aspect of Burgenland as a location remains a relevant factor, decades later.

Resettlement and Displacement after 1945

In 1945, Hungary was required to return the areas annexed in 1938 to Slovakian control (at that time, the Republic of Czechoslovakia), with the result that the Danube river once more formed the border between Hungary and Slovakia. The Hungarian minority population, however, had their right to citizenship removed between 1945 and 1948. The Allies refused to sanction expulsions similar to the expulsion of Germans from Czech territory. However, a "population exchange" was allowed, in the course of which c. 68,000 Hungarians from the Hungarian-speaking region of southern Slovakia were resettled in Hungary and in return c. 73,000 Slovaks from Hungary were resettled in Slovakia. Immediately after the war's end, c. 44,000 Hungarians from the former Sudetenland in the Czech half of the country had been forcibly resettled²¹, of whom nearly half were able to return to southern Slovakia in 1949. A further number, c. 32,000, of Hungarians were expelled because they had first arrived in the area after the annexation of southern Slovakia by Hungary in 1938. This period, in which the Hungarian minority found itself de facto without rights, continued until the communist revolution of 1948, after which the Hungarians received Czechoslovakian citizenship and all their rights as citizens were reinstated. Of the c. 720,000 ethnic Hungarians (Magyars) who had been living in southern Slovakia until 1945, c. 120,000 were expelled after 1945. Today, 580,000 ethnic Hungarians are living in Slovakia.

Prior to 1945, a total of some 250,000 ethnic Germans lived in Hungary, of whom around 65,200 lived in western Hungary. These people, including the majority of the inhabitants of German-speaking communities in the area along the Hungarian border to Burgenland, were expelled from the country between 1946 and 1948.

A territorial change also took place in the Burgenland (Austria)-Hungary-Slovakia border triangle. Hungary was obliged to cede the three Croatian-speaking towns to the south of Bratislava to (Czecho-) Slovakia, and the town on the southern edge of Bratislava that had been annexed by the Germans, Petržalka (Engerau)²², was also returned to Slovakia. As a result of these changes, the border triangle migrated further to the south and Burgenland acquired a larger common border with Slovakia.

Communist Takeover of Power in Hungary and Czechoslovakia

Between 1947 and 1949, the Hungarian Communist Party succeeded in gradually shutting down all the opposition parties and finally transforming Hungary into a “People’s Republic” according to the Soviet model. Until 1953, Hungary pursued Stalinist policies under party leader Mátyás Rákosi. From June 1953, following Stalin’s death, Prime Minister Imre Nagy introduced a period of cautious liberalisation. When Nagy was removed from power in 1955 by the largely non-reformist party leaders, a restoration period was ushered in. The political situation remained tense and finally, in 1956, a popular uprising took place in the course of which Imre Nagy was named Prime Minister once again. He formed a multi-party government, called for parliamentary democracy and Hungarian neutrality. However, the uprising was suppressed in violent manner by the Soviet army. Around 100,000 Soviet soldiers remained in Hungary as an army of occupation. Imre Nagy was condemned to death in June 1958 during a secret trial and was executed shortly thereafter. In the period up to 1963, around 400 individuals, most of them workers, were condemned to death in



*Left and middle: Border between Austria and Hungary – the reconstructed „Bridge of Andau“.
Right: Memorial stone in remembrance of the Hungarian national uprising of 1956 at Andau (Burgenland).*

retaliation for the uprising. Many Hungarians fled the country following the unsuccessful revolt and emigrated to Western Europe and the USA. Due to its border location, Burgenland acted as the first place of refuge for Hungarian refugees. In the first few days that followed the suppression, as many as 20,000 people fled through Burgenland into Austria. Temporary lodging and collection points were hastily organised in Burgenland. One location

attained particular significance during this time: a small bridge over the so-called Einsenkanal, a man-made outflow from the Neusiedler See lake in northern Burgenland (Seewinkel), which also forms the border to Hungary. This bridge remained until its eventual destruction an important route for refugees.²³ In all, c. 180,000 Hungarians left their homeland in the aftermath of the uprising. From 1968, under the leadership of János Kádár, party leader from 1956 to 1988, first economic reforms were introduced, which were also referred to as “Goulash Communism”.

In Czechoslovakia too, communists obtained power in 1948, following a Stalinist course in close alliance with the Soviet Union. Following the election of Alexander Dubček, the Communist Party began to implement a liberalisation and democratisation programme in spring 1968. This development was influenced and supported by a rapidly growing critical and reform-oriented public mood. This attempt to create “Socialism with a human face” entered the history books under the title the “Prague Spring”. However, the invasion of Czechoslovakia by Warsaw Pact troops in August 1968 put an end to these efforts to bring about reform. Dubček was removed from power and replaced by Gustáv Husák who reversed Dubček’s reforms by the early 1970s.

The Iron Curtain

The erection of the so-called Iron Curtain became the most visible symbol after 1945 of the segregation in the border region. During a speech in Fulton in the USA in March 1946, Winston Churchill spoke eloquently of the Iron Curtain as a symbol of the sealing off of the Eastern Bloc from the West: “From Stettin in the Baltic to Trieste in the Adriatic an Iron Curtain has descended across the Continent”. Hungary had begun in 1948 (as had other East European states) to erect a barbed wire barrier about one metre high along the Austrian-Hungarian border and to build watchtowers along the border. In similar fashion, Czechoslovakia closed its border to Austria with barbed wire and by laying mines. After the suppression of the popular uprising in Hungary in 1956, the frontier barriers were developed further. At a ten-metre distance from the Austrian border, a c. 2.5-metre high metal fence was erected behind a 3-metre wide minefield laid like a chequer-board. After an increasing number of mine detonation accidents, the minefield was removed between 1966 and 1971. Instead, Hungary erected a second, closely-meshed wire fence about 200-1,000 metres inside its territory from the Austrian frontier, equipped with an electronic alarm mechanism. In spite of these border fortifications, countless individuals managed to flee to the West. Those who were unsuccessful were usually given long prison sentences for attempting to leave the state. Many hundreds were killed as they attempted to cross the border, although the exact number of successful and unsuccessful attempts remains unknown to this day.

The Iron Curtain created lasting divisions in the border region. Many of the previously existing connections between neighbours on each side of the border were lost over the

years. For economic activities too, the border constituted a dead end; existing businesses moved elsewhere and it was difficult to establish new ones. On the Hungarian side, kilometre-wide prohibited areas were established, which the local population was partly forced to vacate and which were placed under the control of the military. Special permission had to be obtained to enter or leave towns right next to the border, such as Sopron (Ödenburg). As a consequence, many inhabitants of the border region left the area. Linguistic barriers also became far greater than before, since hardly any people in western countries learned the language of the neighbouring countries, which remained inaccessible. Given its neutrality, Austria was able to gently push the barrier to the east to some extent, if not on a political level then certainly on a cultural level. As a result, Austrians were able to travel to Hungary without a visa much earlier than other Europeans.

1989

From 1987 onwards, Hungary began a peaceful process of systemic change with the creation of the first opposition groups. Economic reformers took power in the Communist Party and on 23 October 1989, the third Hungarian Republic was declared. The dismantling of the Iron Curtain in Europe began on the Austro-Hungarian border. “Technically outdated and no longer politically acceptable” was the motion upon which a defence committee investigation was launched by the Hungarian Parliament during a meeting in Sopron (Ödenburg) in September 1988. On 2 May 1989, Hungary finally began to remove the barriers along the border with Austria, observed by the international media. On 27 June, 1989, a symbolic dismantling of the border barriers was performed by the Foreign Ministers of both



Closed down former communication road between Halbturn (Burgenland) and Albert Kázmér-puszta (Hungary).

countries, Alois Mock (A) and Gyula Horn (H), near the Austro-Hungarian border crossing at Nickelsdorf. Even before this took place, visa, passport and currency exchange restrictions had been lifted.

Since strict conditions for exit permits were still in place at the beginning of 1989 in East Germany, the Soviet Union and Romania, people from Central and Eastern Europe took

advantage of the liberalisation in Hungary to attempt to flee across the Hungarian border. The first great wave of asylum seekers came from East Germany in summer 1989, accumulating at the so-called “green” (non-fortified) border. Thousands of East German citizens managed to cross fields, meadows and vineyards via Burgenland to the West during the summer of 1989. Some border inhabitants on the Burgenland side offered indirect help to those seeking to flee, by marking out escape routes and pathways across the border. The first spectacular mass escape to the West took place on the occasion of the



Memorial stone in remembrance of the figurative demolition of the „Iron Curtain“ by the two foreign ministers Gyula Horn (Hungary) and Alois Mock (Austria) at Nickelsdorf (Burgenland).

so-called Paneuropean Picnic on 19 August 1989. This was a peace demonstration on the Austro-Hungarian border near Sopron (Ödenburg), at which both countries had given permission for a border entry-point to be opened symbolically for three hours. Over 600 East German citizens used this first ever opening of the Iron Curtain to escape to the west without Hungarian border guards taking any action to prevent them doing so. The organisers of the picnic were members of the Hungarian opposition movement the Democratic Forum and the Paneuropa Union²⁴. The event is generally seen as a significant milestone heralding the end of East Germany and the advent of German reunification.

Communist rule in Czechoslovakia also came to an end in 1989 with the “Velvet Revolution”, a relatively peaceful and non-violent people’s revolution. As early as December 1989, Czechoslovakia ordered the dismantling of the Iron Curtain and in the middle of the month, the border fortifications around Bratislava were removed. From December 1989, it was also possible to leave Czechoslovakia without a visa. It also rapidly became clear that Czechoslovakia would not be able to sustain its existence as a single state. The Prime Ministers of the Czech federal state (Václav Klaus) and the Slovak federal state (Vladimír Mečiar), elected in 1992, negotiated an agreement by which the Czechoslovakian federation would be peaceful dissolved. On 1 January 1993, Czechoslovakia split into two states, the Czech Republic and Slovakia. On 1 May 2004, Slovakia acceded to the EU.

In March 1990, Hungary called free elections and in 1991, the Soviet army withdrew from the country, the Communist government resigned and Hungary left the Warsaw Pact. On

1 May 2004, Hungary became a member of the European Union. Nonetheless, even after the accession of Hungary and Slovakia to the EU, border controls have remained in place, since Hungary and Slovakia are still unable to fulfil the conditions of the Schengen Agreement²⁵, i.e., to secure their external borders regarding illegal immigration. Border crossing is thus only possible in possession of valid travel documents and at existing border control points. The entire length of the remaining border is controlled by the army on the Austrian side.



Left: Border control station between Nickelsdorf (Austria) and Hegyeshalom (Hungary).

Middle and right: Service of the Austrian Federal Armed Forces at the Austrian-Hungarian border at Andau.

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Footnotes:

1 Comprising three western Hungarian districts Győr-Moson-Sopron, Vas and Zala. These districts (ge. Komitate, hung. megye) are regional administrative units in Hungary.

2 Comprising municipal districts I to V of Bratislava, Malacky, Pezinok and Senec.

3 Comprising the districts of Trnava, Dunajská Streda, Galanta, Hlohovec, Piešťany, Senica and Skalica.

4 After the Hungarian estates had managed to successfully defend themselves against Habsburg ambitions to integrate Hungary within the Austrian empire in the second half of the 19th century, the Austro-Hungarian Dual Monarchy was created in 1867, within which the Hungarian nobility was guaranteed wide-ranging rights.

5 See also the article by Miroslav Michela in this chapter.

6 The name Bratislava came into existence in 1919. The city was previously known in Slovak as Prešporok (or Prešporek), in Hungarian as Pozsony, and in German as Pressburg.

7 In Hungarian language, the same word denotes “Hungarian” and “Magyar” (magyar).

8 The name derives from the ending “-burg”, denoting the German-language name given to the four Hungarian districts, Pressburg (hung. Pozsony), Wieselburg (hung. Moson), Ödenburg (hung. Sopron) and Eisenburg (hung. Vasvár), from which the territory of the present-day Burgenland emerged.

9 Regional and local amendments to the border continued to take place until 1923 / 1924.

10 Figures are estimated on the basis of census records from 1923.

11 Census and estimated figures vary.

12 After the First World War, a total of more than 3 million Hungarians remained as national minorities in Romania and Czechoslovakia.

13 This refers to the communities of Jarovce (ge. Kroatisch Jahrdorf, hung. Horvátjáfalu), Rusovce (ge. Karlbürg, hung. Oroszvár) and Čunovo (ge. Sarndorf, hung. Dunacsúny) following the railway line to Csorna (H), which belonged to Hungary until after the Second World War (today, these towns belong together with Petržalka / Engerau to the four Burgenland-Croat towns in Slovakia), and also the Burgenland towns of

Kittsee (croat. Gijeca), Pama (croat. Bijelo Selo) and Neudorf (croat. Novo Selo).

14 As a result of this, Czechoslovakia had to cede its entire border area with Germany to the control of the Third Reich.

15 Hitler used this “dissolution” of Czechoslovakia as a pretext to invade Czech territory one day later.

16 On the basis of the “Vienna Awards”.

17 Based on an agreement included in the Treaty of Munich.

18 Together with the town of Devín (ge. Theben) north of Bratislava and a total of c. 16,000 inhabitants living in territory covering 43 km².

19 In the immediate post-war period, c. 10,000 Jews were living in Slovakia, some of whom became assimilated and some of whom emigrated from the country.

20 Named after US Foreign Minister George Marshall, this was the most significant economic reconstruction programme in Western Europe after 1945 (officially named the European Recovery Program, or ERP).

21 Following the evacuation of the German population just before the end of the war.

22 As well as Devín / Theben to the north of Bratislava.

23 A literary portrayal can be found in the book “The Bridge at Andau” from James A. Michener.

24 www.paneuropa.org/de

25 In June 1985, five EU member states signed the so-called Schengen Agreement. This envisages the dismantling of border controls and the introduction of unrestricted movement of persons and goods between these member states; in return, it was agreed that external borders (Schengen borders) would be strictly controlled.

Austria

Burgenland – From the Periphery to the Centre of Europe

Alfred Lang / Andreas Polsterer

Population and Society

In terms of area and population size, Burgenland constitutes the smallest geographical unit within the Austrian-Hungarian-Slovakian border region. The population of Burgenland stands currently at c. 279,000, spread over an area of 3,966 km². Burgenland is characterised by the small-scale structure of its human settlements. The provincial capital Eisenstadt is by far the largest population centre in the province, yet has only c. 12,000 inhabitants. Burgenland borders on Slovakia to the northeast, on Hungary to the east and shares a short common border with Slovenia to the south. Because of the pronounced north-south elongation of the province, stretching over 160 km yet having a width of between 4 and 60 km, it has proved very difficult to develop as a regional unit. There remain economic disparities between the peripherally located southern part of the province and the northern part, which lies in part only 50 km from the Austrian capital city of Vienna.



*Landscape in
Southern Burgenland.*

In general, the resident population has grown in recent decades due to immigration, yet there are strong regional differences in this trend. The rural southern districts struggle to survive the effects of emigration, as do the communities along the borders with Hungary and Slovakia. In particular, younger and better qualified individuals consider leaving the region and there is a marked upward trend in the average age of the population.

The demographic structure of Burgenland was always characterised by diversity. Approximately 10% of the current population belong to one of the three officially recognised

ethnic groups in the province. The largest group consists of Burgenland Croats. According to the 2001 census, there are c. 20,000 people (7.3%) who have Burgenland-Croatian as their language of everyday speech. The ethnic Hungarian minority group comprises some 5,000 persons (2%). There are no confirmed figures for the numbers of Roma living in Burgenland, since on one hand, association with this ethnic group is still connected with a certain social stigmatisation and on the other hand, Burgenland-Romanes as the language of the Roma is barely in use among the younger generation, thus there is no simple categorisation criterion which can be used. The ethnic minority groups in Burgenland are organised in a number of associations and represent their interests via the Austrian Ethnic Groups Advisory Board (Volksgruppenbeirat).

Concerning religious affiliation, Burgenland contains a relatively high proportion of Protestants (13%) in an otherwise predominantly Catholic Austria, a situation deriving from the more liberal laws governing religion in the Hungarian half of the Habsburg empire, to which Burgenland belonged.

Education

After the Second World War, inadequate educational provision meant that on one hand Burgenland became a source of cheap labour and on the other that many young people were forced to leave the province to study elsewhere and thereafter – given the lack of job opportunities for skilled workers – few returned to the province. Until recent years there was practically no tertiary education provision. In the 1990s, the first so-called university of applied sciences study programmes were established, offering a practice-oriented education at tertiary level. However, there remains no university in the province and the number of academics in the province is still below the Austrian average.

Economy

The economy of Burgenland faced difficulties following the Second World War. Following on from the damage caused during the wartime years, the Soviet occupation of the province lasted until 1955 and resulted in Burgenland receiving less resources from the ERP Fund¹, set up to aid the economic recovery of Europe after the Second World War. Furthermore, hardly any companies were willing to invest in the Soviet occupation zone. Even after the Soviet withdrawal from the province, conditions there were affected by Burgenland's peripheral location alongside the Iron Curtain. Burgenland's GDP at this time lay significantly below the Austrian average.

The structure of the economy underwent profound changes over the decades that followed. The rural economy still contributed 63% of all domestic added value for the province in 1951, whereas today, that figure comprises a mere 4,8%. The regional employment market was unable to offer new work for those leaving agricultural occupations, resulting in a very

high rate of work-related migration. An increase in incoming investment by industrial firms after the expansion of local infrastructure (roads, schools, hospitals, etc.) did not occur until the late 1960s and early 1970s. From 1951 the proportion of industrial sector economic activity in the province rose sharply and then fell to about 30%. This concerned primarily further manufacturing firms, for example, in the electrical supplies industry and in textile manufacturing, with a low-skilled workforce and a large proportion of unskilled female employees, low wages and low regional added value. These so-called “extended workbenches” (subcontracting manufacturing companies) did manage to create economic growth and jobs in the mid-term, but could only partly halt the outward migration taking place.

The most important employers in the secondary sector are the building industry followed by the metal processing industry. Even today, more than one-third of the working population resident in Burgenland is forced to commute to another province to work, most of whom return home only for the weekends. The majority of these commuters travel into central Vienna to work. A further unusual feature of the Burgenland job market concerns the high number of seasonal jobs. Almost a third of all unemployed persons come from seasonal occupations (e.g. tourism and building work).

Such workplaces, an important element of Burgenland’s economic growth in the 1960s and 1970s, came increasingly under pressure from competitors after the fall of the Iron Curtain. The opening to the east created a new situation regarding competitiveness for Burgenland’s economy, which was already suffering from structural weakness. In particular, the so-called “extended workbenches” were often moved to Hungary, Slovakia or Romania, and also to low-wage countries in Asia. The textile and clothing branch of industry suffered the heaviest job losses, from which women and unskilled workers were disproportionately affected.

1995 – Austria’s Accession to the EU. Burgenland Becomes an “Objective 1 Area”

The entry of Austria to the EU on 1 January 1995 formed the next decisive step with which Burgenland began to move away from the periphery. During the referendum of 1994, the population of Austria voted by 66% to join the EU, and in Burgenland 75% of the population voted in favour of EU membership. Burgenland was categorised by the EU on the basis of its weak economic power as an “Objective 1 Area”². This ensured that Burgenland had access to a wide range of resources from the EU Structural Funds, which were invested in the years that followed.

The EU support provided attractive conditions to encourage different investors to start up companies in the region. This led to the creation of industrial and trading estates as well as technology centres in order to encourage the industries of the future to move into the

region, bringing with them innovative working opportunities which would provide a spur to local economic growth. The development of tourism as a significant branch of the economy has also been given great support. The focus for this has been the expansion of the lakeside bathing developments around Neusiedler See in the north of the province as well as thermal spa developments and nature parks in the middle and southern regions of the province. The concept of “leading enterprises” is a key aspect of regional policy. Large-scale investment in a core enterprise is intended to provide further benefit to supplier enterprises and thus contribute to the growth of economic prosperity in the region as a whole. New tertiary-level courses offered by universities of applied sciences have been set up to provide the qualifications required by employees working in these fields.

In the first Objective 1 period from 1995 to 1999, around 165 million Euros flowed to Burgenland in the form of EU grants, which together with national co-financing arrangements and private investments amounted to total investments of 831,370,000 Euros. For the current period (2000-2006), 283 million Euros are provided by the EU and total investment comprises 1.75 billion Euros.

During the period from 1988 to 2002, the number of employees rose from 64,000 to 82,800 individuals. However, the unemployment rate did not fall and the current rate of 8.6% remains above the Austrian average of 6.9%. In terms of purchasing power, Burgenland remains well below most of the other Austrian federal provinces.



The 1994 founded „Lyocell Faserproduktion“ of Lenzing Fibres Ltd. in the cross-border business park Heiligenkreuz (Austria) – Szentgotthárd (Hungary).

The numbers of foreigners finding employment in Burgenland rose dramatically after the borders to Hungary and Slovakia were opened in 1989. Areas such as tourism, the transport and construction industries and agriculture employ above average numbers of foreign workers. These include in particular many daily commuters, or cross-border commuters, and seasonal workers from border communities in Hungary and Slovakia. Because salaries

are three times greater in Burgenland, a Hungarian or Slovakian worker can earn proportionately far more in Burgenland than in his own country. In the run-up to the expansion of the EU, there was considerable concern in Burgenland about salaries being forced downwards by the inward flow of low-cost migrant workers from neighbouring countries to the east. Because of this, Burgenland's politicians argued that there should be no immediate liberalisation of the employment market following Hungary's accession to the EU. A seven-year transition period was agreed during which, against the wishes of Hungary and Slovakia, a quote for Hungarian and Slovakian employees in Burgenland was put in place.

The Burgenland economy currently relies heavily on service industries, above all in the area of tourism. Whereas in 1951 service industries accounted for 11.3% of value added, this proportion rose to 65.0% by 2001. Tourism today focuses particularly on nature holidays and health and wellbeing (Wellness), and the existence of natural springs has encouraged the building of spa resorts in the central and southern parts of the province.

Alfred Lang / Andreas Polsterer, Research Society Burgenland (Burgenländische Forschungsgesellschaft), Austria

Useful Information:

Website of the Federal County of Burgenland: www.burgenland.at

Footnotes:

1 European Recovery Programme, also known as the "Marshallplan".

2 This denotes the EU regions whose economic power measured in terms of GDP per capita is less than 75% of the EU average.

Hungary

West Transdanubian Region. Gateway to Europe

Kornélia Csontos

The West Transdanubian Region (West-Pannonia) was once a territory of the Roman Empire under the name Pannonia.¹ Nowadays, the region consists of the three Hungarian counties of Győr-Moson-Sopron, Vas and Zala and its territory extends in a north-south direction. The region borders on four countries: on Austria to the west, on Slovenia and Croatia to the southwest, and finally on Slovakia to the north. The surface area of 11,100 km² constitutes 10% of the entire area of Hungary. The natural geography of West-Pannonia is highly varied. There are three major areas: Kisalföld (Small Plain), Alpokalja (Lower Alps) and a part of the West-Pannon hill country. These three areas are complemented by the northern and western edges of the West-Pannon mountain range. This varied terrain is rich in watercourses as well as in natural and artificial sources of standing water. There are a number of nature conservation areas protected at the national level (Fertő-Hanság National Park², Őrség National Park³). In terms of natural resources, there is a great abundance of thermal and therapeutic water springs, distributed roughly evenly through the entire territory of the region. Despite the existence of significant industrial centres, the region does not suffer from serious environmental problems. After the fall of communism, production in several industries presenting serious hazards to the environment (e.g. the textile industry and mining) either ceased or was reduced or considerably altered. Likewise, the impact of agricultural production on the environment has been reduced, primarily due to the fact that the price gap between industrial and agricultural products keeps widening. Preserving high levels of bio-diversity is essential for the region in terms of both the economy and society (tourism and quality of life, respectively).

Economy

Following the radical transformation of the political system in 1989, profound changes occurred in Hungary's economic structure and labour market. The economy of West-Transdanubia is a classic example of the development of the economy in Hungary after the fall of communism. The large-scale enterprises created under socialism were closed down and thousands of workers were dismissed. The number of registered unemployed reached its peak in 1994. Unemployment, formally unknown under socialism, became a serious problem that required new, innovative solutions. In addition, the structure of demand for labour was significantly transformed: the establishment of new foreign and domestic enterprises led to important changes in qualification requirements. Investment took place and new jobs were created in areas where the infrastructure and the appropriately qualified

workforce were available. This has had a negative impact on some specific groups, particularly low-skilled workers, early school-leavers, people wishing to reintegrate into the labour market, and specialists whose qualifications have become obsolete in the current job market.

The structure of the economy is fairly diversified. The industrial sector is dominated by processing activities in mechanical engineering and the textile, food, timber and paper industries. Service industries, primarily tourism, are of increasing significance for the region. Agriculture is declining, with its share in total employment having dropped from 12% to 7% since 1992. The standard of living in the region in terms of GDP per capita is 15% above the national average.

During recent years, the region has, particularly in centres of industrial growth, enjoyed dynamic economic growth, which, however, is distributed unevenly. There are significant disparities between urban and rural areas on the one hand and geographic locations on the other. Low value added production activities are centred in industrial growth centres that are often lacking the conditions in terms of skills and knowledge for economic development. Independent research and development (R&D) capacity is modest even in the national context. Transport infrastructure within the region is relatively poor and as a consequence, qualitative and quantitative development of transport connections are among the highest priorities of regional development planning.

Today, the Hungarian economy is an open, strongly export-oriented economy. The West Transdanubian region of Hungary is the only gateway of the country to the European Union. Since the collapse of the socialist regime, it is one of the most important target areas in Hungary for foreign direct investment. More than 70% of all Hungarian outward transportation activities are concentrated on the border-crossing points of this region. The export output of the country tripled between 1990 and 2000 (from 10 billion USD to 28 billion USD). Hungary was one of the first of the countries in transition to actively support foreign direct investment. During the same period, foreign direct investment grew five-fold (from 311 million USD in 1990 to 1.6 billion USD in 2000). Despite the falling trend in global economic growth, the investment levels flowing into the Central-East European region altogether have remained stable. One of the greatest challenges for Hungary today involves integrating foreign investment organically into the Hungarian economy (supply chains, clusters) while replacing the production of low added value based on cheap labour with production of higher added value.

The fact that a decisive portion of major companies are under private foreign ownership demonstrates on the one hand the overwhelming relative power of the private economy in Hungary and on the other the significance of foreign companies for the Hungarian economy. An analysis of the economic figures for the 1990s shows that the proportion of at least

partly foreign-owned companies has appeared to stabilise at around 30%. It is also demonstrable that these (foreign-owned) companies offer their employees better remuneration than Hungarian-owned companies. The dominance of large companies (along with the relative weakness of small- and medium-sized enterprises) poses considerable risks: one single business decision taken by an individual company (be it a decision to make changes in the product portfolio, to downsize or to pull out) causes economic shock the impact of which may be difficult for the labour market of an individual region to absorb in the short-term.

After the end of 2002, several business decisions involving considerable redundancies were made and signals indicate that the worst is not over yet. This has not yet had an impact on the relatively positive employment figures, however, in a number of sub-regions, hardship has increased considerably (including in the region analysed here, e.g., in Körmend, Szentgotthárd and most recently in Kapuvár). These redundancies have had a major impact only at a local level and have not affected the national situation. This is true even in the light of the fact that real unemployment figures are much higher due to the supply chain

Settlements of companies in the Hungarian border region in the 90ies:

Left: Opel-factory in Szentgotthárd, 1992.

Right: "Vossen" terry towelling manufacturer in Szentgotthárd (Hungary), 1994.



factor and the practice of consultancy-type or fixed-term employment. Beyond the current downsizing trend itself, the forecast is also of importance: Hungary (and the West Transdanubian region) appears to be less and less attractive for certain business activities (and their foreign investors). Lost opportunities for growth must also be taken into account, in terms of investments that eventually failed to materialise in Hungary, such as the planned investment, to involve a 3,500-strong workforce, by Peugeot-Citroën. The redundancies discussed above also mean reduced tax revenues for the state and local government. However, although the immediate effects of this process pose serious problems, the wider picture is more complex and gives some cause for optimism. After the success of economic growth based on the investments made by large foreign – often multinational – companies in Hungary, the entire Central European region, including countries such as the Czech Republic and Slovenia, which previously adopted an alternative approach

to development, has chosen to follow this model. At the beginning of the apparent recession of the world economy, i.e., around 2001, the disadvantages associated with the development model based on large foreign companies started to come to light.

Cross-Border Relations with Austria

Contacts with Austria have traditionally been good. The opening up of the border has made cross-border relations more intensive regarding movement of labour, trade, and institutional cooperation. This has proved to be a useful starting point for the formulation and implementation of common development strategies across the borders. Such cross-border programmes, which have been given high priority by the European Union, are being launched with the objective of strengthening the connections between people living on the two sides of the border, promoting cooperation in the economic sphere, and reducing disparities between the neighbouring border regions. Simultaneously, cross-border programmes are serving the purpose of preparing candidate countries to receive and manage EU resources after accession.

In recent years, the three Western Transdanubian labour centres have built up a close relationship with each other as well as with Austrian partner institutions, enabling them to build upon regional as well as foreign (Austrian) experiences. However, a dilemma is emerging as a consequence of this. On the one hand, the western border region is an area which fulfils all the criteria for cross-border cooperation in terms of the PHARE CBC programme⁴; on the other hand, the promotion of this area by means of PHARE resources does not necessarily contribute to solving the problem of regional disparities within the country.

Minorities

The two largest minorities in the West Transdanubian region are the German and Croatian minorities, while further groups are constituted by the Roma minority and the Slovenian minority in the southern part of the region.

Number of inhabitants according to the language used in the family, among friends and in the community, (2001)

Language	Győr-Moson-Sopron			
	West Transdanubian	County	Vas County	Zala County
Hungarian	953.347	414.522	256.398	282.427
Croatian	6.678	2.027	2.139	2.512
German	6.210	3.757	1.631	822
Other	7.899	1.610	2.758	3.531

Source: EuRegio számokban – EuRegio in figures

Apart from the minority languages in use in the region, the foreign-language knowledge of the inhabitants of the West Transdanubian region is higher than in the rest of Hungary,

although it lies well below the European average. German is spoken by 4% of the population. Other major foreign languages are English (0.8%) French and Italian.

Kornélia Csontos, *West Transdanubian Development Agency*, Hungary (*Nyugat-dunántúli Regionális Fejlesztési Ügynökség Kht.*)

Useful Information:

Website of the West Transdanubian Development Agency (Nyugat-dunántúli Regionális Fejlesztési Ügynökség Kht.): www.westpa.hu

Website of VÁTI – Agency for Spatial Planning: www.pharereg.hu

Website of the Regional Research Centre (BUTE RRC – BME TKK) of the Budapest University of Technology and Economics (Budapesti Műszaki és Gazdaságtudományi Egyetem Területfejlesztési Kutatási Központ BME TKK): www.tkk.bme.hu

Footnotes:

1 In Pannonia Superior the ancient towns of the Amber Road such as Sale (Zalalövő), Savaria (Szombathely), Scarbantia (Sopron), Arrabona (Győr), Ad Flexum (Mosonmagyaróvár), Quadrata (Lébény) were flourishing. These settlements all exist to the present day.

2 www.ferto-hansag.hu

3 www.orseginpi.hu and National Park Raab-Órség-Goricko: www.naturpark-raab.at respectively

4 The objectives of the PHARE Cross-Border Cooperation Programme Hungary-Austria are to assist regions that are adjacent to the European Union in overcoming their specific development problems and promoting the creation and development of cooperation networks on either side of the border. The objectives are set in the 1994 Commission Regulation underlying the CBC programme. See Article 3 of Commission Regulation (EC) No 1628/94 of 4 July 1994 concerning the implementation of a programme for cross-border cooperation between countries in central and eastern Europe and Member States of the Community in the framework of the PHARE Programme (OJ L 171, 6.7.1994, p. 14).

Slovakia

Bratislava-Trnava Region. Within the Golden Triangle Vienna-Bratislava-Győr

Eva Rajčáková

In territorial terms, the Slovak part of the Slovak-Austrian cross-border region includes the Bratislava region¹ and the Trnava region², covering a total area of 6,201 km² and with a population of 1,150,600 inhabitants³. It is one of the most densely populated regions in Slovakia. The region's strategic location has had an influence on its development. In the past, this territory was a part of the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy. The present cross-border region borders on the territories of three countries – Austria, Hungary and the Czech Republic. The central part of this region forms a part of the development axis of international importance following the course of the River Danube (Munich-Salzburg-Linz-Vienna-Bratislava-Budapest-Belgrade). Bratislava, together with its immediate hinterland is situated in an area with the highest density of population of the residential belt between the two major cities of Vienna and Budapest, with an approximate total number of 5 million



*Bridge over the Danube
in Bratislava.*

inhabitants. After the fall of the Iron Curtain, Bratislava together with its surrounding area became a part of the most dynamic development region of Central Europe – the so-called “Golden Triangle” (Vienna-Bratislava-Győr). The conditions favourable to development are facilitated by a service, technical and communications infrastructure of national and international importance, enabling the region to form an integrated part of the European transport system.

Economic Characteristics of the Region

During the last decade, the region has experienced positive trends in terms of economic development. Monthly incomes are higher than in other regions of the Slovak Republic.

The region contributes most to GDP creation and has a leading position in the structure of the national economy. In 2000, the Bratislava region exceeded the average GDP per capita levels of the EU15 (101%), yet the Trnava sub-region exhibited approximately average levels of per capita GDP for the Slovak Republic (48%). Nearly three quarters of the total volume of foreign investments is directed into the region, and has significantly contributed to the restructuring and development of the regional economy.

Successful economic transformation through the activities of companies such as Volkswagen, Siemens, SONY, Slovnaft, Henkel, Jacobs Suchard Figaro or Coca-Cola, mainly in Bratislava itself, has contributed to the above-average rate of gross added value. Monthly incomes, mainly as a consequence of the concentration of banking industry and insurance industry companies as well as of international and foreign forms of private property are higher in the Bratislava region than in other regions of the Slovak Republic. There is a high concentration not only of financial sector institutions in the region (including banks, financial non-banking institutions and leasing companies) but also of primary medical care institutions, (non-)state and hospital establishments, and specialised medical institutions of national importance. There is a high rate of employment in the region. The structure of employment is similar to the national average (5.4% employed in the primary sector, 23.1% in the secondary sector, and 71.5% of employees involved in the tertiary sector of the economy). The unemployment rate was 7.2% in 1997 and 9.1% in 2002.

Demographic Structure, Human Resources and Employment

Demographic trends and population structures show marked differences within the region. The region is characterised by uneven population distribution with a high population density in the Bratislava region (especially within the district of Bratislava I) and relatively low population density in the border region. In recent years, there has been a downward trend in demographic development, both in the region and in Slovakia as a whole. In easily-accessible communities of the Bratislava hinterland, sub-urbanisation has occurred. The demographic structure is characterised on one hand by an increase in the number of population of above working age and on the other hand by a decrease in the population below working age. Approximately three quarters of the population in this region are religious believers with the largest number being Roman Catholic (71% of all believers), followed by the Evangelical (Lutheran) Church of the Augsburg Confession (5%). 18.3% of the population of the region lacks any religious affiliation. In the district of Dunajská Streda, approximately 10% of the population, mainly ethnic Hungarians are members of the Reformed Christian Church.

Education

There has been an increase in the general educational level of the regional population. In 1997, nearly three-fifths of the region's population (Bratislava region 47%, Trnava region

70%) had completed primary and vocational education and only 12% (Bratislava region 18%, Trnava region 5.5%) had obtained university education. However, by 2002, the share of the population having completed university-level education had increased slightly (13% in the region as a whole), but proportion having completed high school education had increased substantially (entire region, 54%). Furthermore, the language skills among both the younger and the economically active population with high school and largely also university education had improved.

There is a concentration of educational, research, scientific and cultural institutions in the region. Many of these operate on a national level. The Comenius University in Bratislava (Univerzita Komenského)⁴ is the largest and most important centre of university education in the Slovak Republic (with a total of twelve faculties). The region also contains the Slovak University of Technology (Slovenská Technická Univerzita)⁵ (five faculties), the University of Economics (Ekonomická univerzita v Bratislave)⁶ (five faculties), the Academy of Fine Arts (three faculties) and Design (one faculty) all of which offer university-level education. Including the Faculty of Theology in Trnava, these institutions serve a student population of approximately 35,600 attending daily courses and 8,200 external students. There are also other universities in Trnava, including Trnava University (Trnavská Univerzita)⁷, the Faculty of Machine Technology of the Slovak University of Technology, and the University of Saint Cyril and Methodius with faculties of Philosophy, Natural Sciences and a Communications and Media Studies. For senior citizens, there is a University of the Third Age, which operates both at the Comenius University and at the University of Technology, both in Bratislava.

Minorities and Cultural and Linguistic Diversity

Linguistic diversity in Slovakia is closely connected with its historical development as well as the geographical and political changes that Slovakia has undergone. In the past, when Slovakia was a part of the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy, it was typically the case that in addition to the Slovak mother tongue, Hungarian and German was spoken. These two languages were taught at all types of schools. During the existence of the Czechoslovakian Republic (1918-1938), there was a considerable decrease in the number of people who could speak Hungarian or German, due to the changes in state organisation. National consciousness became more pronounced and the Slovak language became the language of everyday communication as well as the language of literature and science.

Nowadays the largest minority group comprises ethnic Hungarians (constituting 14% of the regional population as a whole; in the sub-regions of Bratislava 4.6% and Trnava 23.7%). In the southern districts of the Danube Plain, ethnic Hungarians form the majority of the population (e.g. in Dunajská Streda 83%), and in other regions form a significant share of the population (Galanta 28.6%, Senec 20.4%).

Ethnic Czechs form a less numerous minority (1.3%), living in the districts of the Slovak-Czech border region (Skalica 2.6%, Malacky and Senica both 1.1%). Ruthenians, Russians, and Ukrainians (in the northeastern parts of Slovakia) constituting about 25-33% of the population in regions like Medzilaborce, Snina). A relatively numerous minority speaks the Roma language. The popularity of German language in Slovakia is centred mainly in Bratislava, or in regions with a tradition of German settlement (mining towns such as Kremnica, Štiavnica, Spiš).

EU Structural Funds, INTERREG, PHARE and Cross-border Cooperation

The construction of investment centres built by foreign investors (such as Peugeot Citroën in Trnava) and also the granting of structural funds from the EU (resulting in the development of industrial parks in Malacky-North, Malacky-South, Pezinok-Lazarňa, and Pezinok-South) has had a positive impact upon the situation in the regional labour market. Cooperation in the Austria-Slovakia cross-border region started in the framework of the INTERREG II a PHARE CBC Programme. From 1995-1999 in the framework of the PHARE programme for bilateral cooperation between Slovakia and Austria, a total of 13 million Euros was



View over the Austrian-Slovak border from Kittsee (Austria) to Bratislava / Petržalka (Slovakia).

fixed but which in 1999, as a part of PHARE CBC, was enlarged by a further 4 million Euros. Environmentally significant infrastructure was built, including sewage systems and treatment plants in the municipalities of Zohor, Malacky and Gajary, a reduction of air pollution in southwestern Slovakia, the development of transport infrastructure like the ferry border crossing point over the River Morava between the municipalities of Záhorská Ves (SK) and Angern (AT); a proposal to build a bridge over the River Morava between Moravský Sv. Ján (SK) and Hohenau (AT), the planned construction of a highway junction at Stupava and infrastructure for tourism (including a project called the March Panorama involving cycle paths in the district of Malacky). Cross-border cooperation has also taken place in the form of studies required to build industrial parks in Jarovce (SK) and Kittsee (AT) and scientific-technical parks (Bratislava).

In the years 2000 and 2001, in the framework of the Slovak-Austrian PHARE CBC programme, several concrete projects were begun such as creating a railway connection between Bratislava and Vienna or an anti-flood protection scheme in the micro-region of Petržalka (SK), Wolfsthal (AT) and Kittsse (AT).

Since the entry of Slovakia into the EU, the Bratislava and Trnava regions receive resources from the European Fund for Regional Development (ERDF) and the European Social Fund (ESF) in the framework of programming period 2004–2006. The Bratislava region is included in funds drawn from the Single Programming Document Objective 2 and Objective 3. The Trnava region is based on less favourable indicators included in funds drawing from Objective 1. This includes support for development and structural changes in regions where GDP per capita measured in terms of purchasing power is less than 75% of the EU average.

Eva Rajčáková, Comenius University Bratislava (Univerzita Komenského), Slovakia

Footnotes:

1 Districts Bratislava I up to V, Malacky, Pezinok, Senec.

2 Districts Trnava, Dunajská Streda, Galanta, Hlohovec, Piešťany, Senica, Skalica.

3 The residential structure of the region is formed by 290 rural residences and 23 urban sites, that differ much in size (Bratislava 427.049, Trnava 69.868 inhabitants).

4 www.uniba.sk

5 www.stuba.sk

6 www.euba.sk

7 www.truni.sk

Cross-border Cooperations in Europe

Sweden – Finland – Norway – Russia

Cross-border Cooperation in North Calotte and the Barents Region

Ulf Olovzon / Anne Arrelo / Sirpa Hyttinen

Interaction between people in the Swedish-Finnish border region of the Torne River Valley (se. Tornedalen) has a long history. People living on both sides of the Torne River (se. Torneälv) clearly show that traditional co-existence in the area is very firmly-rooted. The post-war decades have been peaceful, but rapid changes occurred in terms like currency changes on the one side and customs restrictions on the other side of the border. These sometimes unanticipated events often created new conditions for people and enterprises and were a main reason to decrease more and more existing barriers of cross-border cooperation in the region.



*View from Sweden to Finland
over the frozen border river
Torneälv. In the winter the frozen
river is being used as a natural
bridge between the two
countries.*

The North Calotte Council¹, in which the northern regions of Norway, Sweden and Finland cooperate, has played a decisive role in this process in various ways. It was established in August 1967 on the initiative of the Nordic Council². Official Nordic co-operation is channelled through two organisations: the Nordic Council and the Nordic Council of Ministers. The Nordic Council was formed in 1952 and is the forum for Nordic parliamentary co-operation. The Council has 87 members, representing the five countries (Denmark, Finland, Sweden, Norway, Iceland) and three autonomous territories (Faroe Islands, Greenland, Åland). The members of the Council are members of the national parliaments, who are nominated by their respective political party, then elected by the parliament. The Nordic Council of Ministers, formed in 1971, is the forum for Nordic governmental co-operation. Despite its name the Council of Ministers consists of several individual councils of ministers. Most of the Nordic ministers for specific policy areas meet their Nordic counterparts in the Council of

Ministers a couple of times a year. The Nordic Council and the Nordic Council of Ministers each has its own secretariat in Copenhagen. Moreover, the Nordic Council has national secretariats in the Nordic parliaments, attached to the delegations of the respective countries.

Initially the remit of the North Calotte Council was limited to cooperation on labour-market issues, but with the INTERREG programme and increased international involvement in local authority affairs, the Council has assumed a new role in regional policy. It has initiated many cooperation projects and broadened the cooperation network. The events in Russia in the 1990s completely transformed the situation and opportunities to cooperate with north-western Russia were significantly improved. The Barents region³ (again) played a central role in cross-border cooperation in the North of Europe. European Union membership of Sweden and Finland finally has made it possible to undertake concrete cross-border development projects.

Eurocity Haparanda and Tornio

Today the cross border cooperation between the twin cities⁴ of Haparanda⁵ on the Swedish and Tornio⁶ on the Finnish side of the border is one of the best examples for all the European border regions. Both cities are located on the border between Finland and Sweden where the Torne River meets the northern most part of the Gulf of Bothnia. Tornio and Haparanda have a shared history that reaches far into the past. Until 1809 Tornio was the most important



Open border between Haparanda (Sweden) and Tornio (Finland).

city in the north of Sweden. After the war between Sweden and Russia (1808-1809), the border between Russia and Sweden split the area into two.⁷ Despite the national border, peaceful relations between the people continued as always, but in many contexts the border was seen as a hindrance and a disadvantage. Cooperation between the towns started in the beginning of the 1970s, and individual projects proved that cooperation was useful for both parties, and the troublesome border could offer resources and opportunities. In 1987 the cooperation between Tornio and Haparanda was formalised and organised under the name *Provincia Bothniensis Haparanda-Tornio*⁸ and the two communities have formed a “border-free Swedish-Finnish union”.

Today this cooperation extends to almost every area of local government activity; the towns have unified their district heating systems, they have a joint sewage treatment works, jointly-funded rescue services, a shared comprehensive school and language school and a common upper secondary school programme. When Sweden and Finland entered the European Union, this cooperation was given additional impetus and in the spring of 1995, Haparanda and Tornio proclaimed themselves to be a new unified town, called Eurocity⁹, with 35,000 inhabitants and 2,000 businesses. At present, Tornio and Haparanda are in the process of involving both their police forces in a common patrolling scheme for the border municipalities. The experiment is unique in character. Another project is to build a new common downtown area, complete with a shopping centre, administrative building and large park.¹⁰ Officials in Haparanda even decided to accept the Euro as legal tender alongside the Swedish Krona after Finland joined the single currency earlier this year, although Sweden is not a member of the Euro-zone.

Eurocity Jobcentre

There is also cooperation between the employment offices of Tornio and Haparanda in the form of the Eurocity Jobcentre. The Eurocity Jobcentre cooperates with employment offices in Finland and Sweden and supports the work of employment offices by supplying contacts over the borders. The Jobcentre informs people of work and learning opportunities on both sides of the border, supports cooperation with companies, schools and colleges and transmits information about companies, as well as organising company meetings. The Eurocity Jobcentre is involved in exhibitions, organising events with work and learning related topics, and staff members also visit schools and companies to gather information. The centre is part of the network of EURES (European Employment Services)¹¹ offices of the EU, from which it is also financed.

Guides for Nordkalotten

The project “North Calotte Guide” is an INTERREG IIIa project, coordinated by the Kemi-Tornio Polytechnic (Finland)¹². It aims to create a training and development model, specifically tailored to the needs of the Nordkalotten region, to train tourism guides and develop

sightseeing and cultural tourism concepts. The project plans to develop cultural tourism in Nordkalotten by training professional guides and regional guide trainers who will then continue the work in their local communities. To encourage sustainable regional development and training cooperation and to develop cultural tourism programmes, a guide network and “North Calotte Guide” organisation will be built. The “North Calotte Guide” aims to maintain training and development work after the project has been finished. Cross-border product development and marketing activities will also be encouraged. The target group for the project comprises guides from each country (Finland, Sweden, Norway). The partners in this cooperation project are Kemi-Tornio Polytechnic (coordinator), *Aqua* (Piteå, Sweden) and *Nordland Reiseliv* (Bodö, Norway).

From Drug Path to Care

“From Drug Path to Care” is another project of the Kemi-Tornio Polytechnic. The objectives are: to get into contact with drug / intoxicant users and to persuade them to seek access to the care system. Furthermore to project aims to increase social healthcare workers’ vocational skills and knowledge of working methods concerning how to work with drug users and their families. Another aim is to discover the drug routes in the Barents region and to utilise the experiences of those who have worked with drug users in the region, and finally, to model a treatment path for drug users and establish common instructions. The partners in cooperation are, besides the Kemi-Tornio Polytechnic, the Rovaniemi and Oulu Polytechnic (both in Finland), Murmansk College of Education (Russia), Murmansk health care institute and Murmansk youth committee and youth station.

Womennet – Creation of a Network for Businesswomen in the Barents Region and Scotland

“Womennet” is an INTERREG IIIb / Northern Periphery pilot project, coordinated by the Arctic Vocational Foundation (Utbildning Nordkalotten)¹³ in Övertorneå, Sweden. This pilot study was funded by the Norrbotten County Administrative Board, Västerbotten County Administrative Board and also received Baltic Region funding. The purpose of the pilot study was to find a model for creating a network to promote female entrepreneurship in an international perspective that has the capacity to be self-supporting. The partners in this project were the Arctic Vocational Foundation (Sweden), Kemi-Tornio Polytechnic (Finland), *Kirkenes Kompetansesenter* (Norway)¹⁴ and the UHI Millennium Institute in Inverness (Scotland)¹⁵.

Profile

Another IIIb / Northern Periphery project coordinated by the Arctic Vocational Foundation is “Profile”. “Profile” is a project aimed at creating a network for female leaders from companies, organisations and authorities in the area of the Northern Periphery and north-west Russia.

The project will strengthen female leaders in their work situation by promoting new patterns of leadership, and better use of networks, handling diversity and training in a collaborative and communicative culture. Participants will be able to use these skills to develop their own organisation, and practical work in the project will support business development between companies. The participants come from Sweden, Finland, Russia and the Faroe Islands. Concrete activities include fostering competence through seminars / workshops, exploration work in small groups, practice in other countries, contact with other networks in Europe, and training in communication technologies. Partners in the project are, beside the Arctic Vocational Foundation, the Kemi-Tornio Polytechnic, the Faroe Islands Trade Council and the Administration of Arkhangelsk Region in Northern Russia. The project is financed by the partners and by INTERREG IIIb / Northern Periphery, by the partners, with national financing from County Administrative Boards of *Norrbottnen* and *Västerbottnen*, the North Calotte Council and the Finnish Ministry of the Interior.

Tornedalen Apprentice School

Tornedalen Apprentice School is a INTERREG IIIa pilot project, coordinated by the Arctic Vocational Foundation in Övertorneå, Sweden. The vision is to offer more practically and professionally oriented vocational training using “non-traditional” teaching methods in an apprentice school. The purpose of the project was thus to determine the needs and opportunities for an apprentice school in Torne Valley and to produce an educational model adapted to the apprentice school situation. The target group of the pilot study comprises companies, municipalities, authorities, labour market actors, existing schools with a strong vocational profile, and students (young people in the 16-25 age group). The project encompasses principally the municipalities of Pello and Ylitornio in Finland, and Övertorneå in Sweden. Partners and participants in this project are: *Länsi-Lapin ammatti-instituutti*¹⁶ in Tornio, Finland, *Breivika videregående skole*¹⁷ in Tromsø, Norway and *Gränsälvgymnasiet* in Övertorneå, Sweden. The project is funded by the European Regional Development Fund, Pello Municipality in Finland, Ylitornio Municipality in Finland and Övertorneå Municipality in Sweden.

Ulf Olovzon / Anne Arrelø, Arctic Vocational Foundation (*Stiftelsen Utbildning Nordkalotten*), Sweden
Sirpa Hyttinen, Kemi-Tornio Vocational College (*Kemi-Tornion ammattiopisto*), Finland

Useful information:

Website of the Nordic Council: www.norden.org

Website of the Barents Region: www.barents.info

Website of the city Haparanda: www.haparanda.se

Website of the city Tornio: www.tornio.fi

Website of the City-Twins Cooperation Network: www.citytwins.net

Website of the Provincia Bothniensis Haparanda-Tornio: www.provinciabothniensis.org

Website of the Eurocity: www.eurocitynet.nu

Footnotes:

1 www.norden.org/Gransreg_samarbete_en/sidorna/nordkalotten-eng.htm

2 www.norden.org

- 3 www.barents.info
- 4 www.citytwins.net
- 5 www.haparanda.se
- 6 www.tornio.fi
- 7 See chapter 1 (Nordkalotten)
- 8 www.provinciabotheniensis.org
- 9 www.eurocitynet.nu
- 10 www.pagransen.com
- 11 EURES (EUROpean Employment Services) brings together the European Commission and the public employment services as well as other regional and national bodies concerned with employment issues (see: <http://europa.eu.int/eures/index.jsp>).
- 12 See: Partner Profile
- 13 See: Partner Profile
- 14 www.kirkeneskompetansesenter.no
- 15 www.uhi.ac.uk
- 16 www.llai.fi
- 17 www.brevika.vgs.no

Denmark – Germany

Cultures in Dialogue. Cross-border Cooperation Projects of the Højskolen Østersøen and in the Region Sønderjylland-Schleswig

Jesper Nielsen

Højskolen Østersøen as a Regional Resource for Intercultural Learning

Since its founding in 1993, the Baltic Sea Folk High School (Højskolen Østersøen) in Aabenraa (Denmark) has established itself over the years as a resource for intercultural learning in the region. Højskolen Østersøen has a reputation for being a meeting place for Germans and Danes and Danish and German cultures and languages and for having expertise in cross-border cooperation between Denmark and Germany. That reputation is a result of Højskolen Østersøen's experience with cross-border activities and its mix of Danish and German students and staff, which has led to a number of cooperations.



Højskolen Østersøen, the Baltic Sea Folk High School.

In connection with the Højskolen Østersøen's short one-week courses, municipalities and counties on the Danish side of the border have enrolled many of their employees as participants seeking not specialised language teaching but rather a broad introduction to German culture and language and the chance to meet ordinary people from Germany. One instance of this is Danish municipalities and counties in southern Denmark sending social workers, among others, to attend the courses.

As part of an INTERREG project in 2001 involving cooperation between the Danish and German border police forces, all Danish border policemen in the region, about 150 policemen in total, participated in German-language courses over a one-year period. The project managers understood the usefulness of the folk high school as a learning space, where the

policemen would learn about the culture and language while meeting ordinary German citizens.

Another example of an INTERREG project in 2001 in need of the expertise of Højskolen Østersøen in the area of intercultural learning was a project involving the nursing colleges of Sønderborg in Denmark and in Flensburg, Germany, which aimed to establish cooperation between the schools concerning joint curricula, joint courses, etc. However, when the project began, the project leaders discovered that not only were they unable to cooperate because of language problems, they were also unable to cooperate because they did not understand each other's working cultures, mentalities and educational and health systems. Højskolen Østersøen organised two seminars in cooperation with the project management not only focussing on language but also on how to improve their sense of personal understanding as a basis for improving cooperation. Participants could only achieve an understanding of the differences in mentality between workers, institutions and systems in Denmark and Germany by building on personal understanding: for example, Germans are more direct in their approach than Danes, while Danish institutions are more flexible, quicker to react and not so often in need of approval higher up in the system. The project management later suggested that Højskolen Østersøen manage the project throughout the project period. However because of a lack of staff-resources, Højskolen Østersøen was unable to take on any organisational responsibilities beyond the organising of seminars. Similar seminars, giving project participants the necessary tools to carry through their cooperation projects, were organised with regional police authorities.

With the European Year of Language in 2001, Højskolen Østersøen together with the Associations of German Teachers in Denmark and Danish Teachers in the region of Schleswig-Holstein carried out a course with the title "Learning languages of and with each other". The participants were teachers involved with teaching at both primary and secondary school level and in adult education. The aim was to discuss and experiment with new learning methods and strategies such as the use of tandem methods and various IT-based methods. The one-week course also involved Danish and German pupils meeting each other at Højskolen Østersøen "learning language through play". The purpose was also to form partnerships for future cooperation projects between teachers and classes in southern Denmark and Schleswig-Holstein. The course was a great success, a number of partnerships were established and there was even a short follow-up weekend seminar in 2002. There would also have been interest in organising more courses, but Højskolen Østersøen was not able to spare staff resources for managing the project. Højskolen Østersøen originally applied for EU funds under the programme created in connection with the European Year of Language, but the application was not approved. However, funds were made available at the last minute by the Region Sønderjylland-Schleswig. Højskolen Østersøen has established a good cooperation with the Regional Council of the Region Sønderjylland-Schleswig¹ and their officials. Funds have been made available for the school's projects and contacts have

been facilitated by their Regional Office between the school and other projects in need of assistance in terms of intercultural learning. The informal educational approach of Højskolen Østersøen and its boarding school format has acquired a good reputation within the region. An example of this has been that regional Danish and German politicians who are members of the Regional Council of the region have held weekend seminars at Højskolen Østersøen to learn about differences between Danish and German working cultures but also to use the school setting as an open and free space for socialising on a personal level (including with their families), a precondition for any successful cooperation. The Regional Council of the Region Sønderjylland-Schleswig has also facilitated the founding of a cross-border association of language teachers. This association has established working groups on language learning and intercultural understanding, in which Højskolen Østersøen participates and which are working together to produce common teaching materials.

Furthermore, Højskolen Østersøen is a member of a cross-border working group in adult education run by the German association of adult education colleges (de. Volkshochschulen) in Schleswig-Holstein. The working group meets now and again to exchange experiences, with a view to forming partnerships and in order to make common information about courses available to the German public in Schleswig-Holstein (via a joint website). However it has proved difficult from the perspective of Højskolen Østersøen, to commit to real cooperation with relevant German educational institutions, both because of competition for the same students and because of differences in the German and Danish sources of course-funding, which makes cooperation on e.g. joint courses very difficult.



Left: Flensburg (Germany). Middle and right: Danish upper secondary school in Flensburg.

As Højskolen Østersøen's reputation for expertise in intercultural learning and as a meeting place between Danish and German cultures has grown over the years, other forms of cooperation have developed: In particular, the German teachers at the school are often invited to give lectures at local teachers' associations, at the Open University, and elsewhere.

Minority – Majority. Cultures in Dialogue

In 1997, Højskolen Østersøen started to provide three- to four-week long summer courses for young Europeans active in NGOs under the title “Minority Course”. Between 1997 and 2001, about 325 young people with minority and majority backgrounds from eastern, central and western Europe have participated (c. 65 participants on each course, half the participants should belong to a minority). The Minority Courses examined how to promote minority-majority coexistence and how to safeguard the political, cultural and linguistic rights of minority populations, especially but not only in border regions. The courses were not academic courses but courses bringing young people with diverse backgrounds and experiences together for a joint debate on why and how to protect cultural and linguistic diversity based on their personal experiences and that of their communities. The key learning methodology used involved the participants in a joint working process, which over the course of the three to four weeks produced concrete results benefiting a wider public in the Danish-German border region as well as in the participants’ own communities. Activities included: publishing booklets on minority issues, organising debate meetings, launching websites, etc. During their experience of working in smaller project groups, the participants shared their stories of belonging to either a minority or majority population-group, they contributed with their own personal experiences and resources, and they brought to the project the traditions of their countries, regions and communities. In Højskolen Østersøen’s experience, it is this kind of real and intense joint working situation, and not simulations / role-play, etc., which results in greater intercultural understanding. The process of acquiring intercultural understanding was further nurtured by the relatively long duration of the courses and their overall setting, the Danish folk high school’s boarding school format, in which participants live, debate, work, eat and sleep under the same roof, which all in all results in a sense of close community. Over the years, the courses have also included shorter study trips to Transylvania in Romania, West-Friesland in the Netherlands, and to Latvia, Poland and the Czech Republic (with the purpose of designing cross-border projects bringing young people into dialogue). The overall purpose of the study trips has been to compare the situations of minorities in eastern and western Europe.

One reason why Højskolen Østersøen chose to organise European courses on minority issues was because of the institution’s location in the Danish-German border region with a Danish, German and Friesian minority. As a precondition for starting up the courses it was crucial for Højskolen Østersøen to establish close cooperation with the minorities and their organisations and institutions on both sides of the Danish-German border (cultural associations, media, political parties, researchers, youth organisations, etc.). This was aimed at getting their overall endorsement of the project, encouraging them to introduce the minorities to the course participants in order for their experiences to serve as a point of departure for debate, and finally in order to build up contacts with young minority representatives throughout Europe. The close cooperation with the minorities gave the project

regional legitimacy and exposure, which were crucial for obtaining political support regionally and nationally, and were necessary also for fundraising.

The cooperation with the minority organisations in the Danish-German border region has been extremely valuable. Højskolen Østersøen together with the cultural and youth organisations of the minorities planned an expanded “Minority Course under the title “Cultures in Dialogue” for 180 young Europeans in the summer of 2005 at the Højskolen Østersøen as well as at two other schools belonging to the Danish and German minorities. “Cultures in Dialogue” 2005 marked the 50th anniversary of the Copenhagen-Bonn Declarations agreed on by the Danish and German governments in 1955 with the aim of securing the rights of the minorities in the Danish-German border region². The Declarations have been important sources for the development of peaceful coexistence among minority and majority population-groups in the region. “Cultures in Dialogue 2005” concluded with participants presenting a resolution to the European public and decision-makers on why the safeguarding of minority cultures and languages and the promotion of minority-majority coexistence is a model for European diversity and recommendations on how to make the idea a reality in today’s Europe. For the purpose of carrying out “Cultures in Dialogue”, an association has been founded consisting of the main cultural association and youth association of the German minority, a German minority school, the folk high school of the Danish minority, the main cultural association and youth association of the Danish minority, the Danish Border Association (providing support for the Danish minority) and of course Højskolen Østersøen itself. The association has established a secretariat at Højskolen Østersøen and employed a Højskolen Østersøen project manager to be in charge of the project. This is yet another example of how Højskolen Østersøen is a regional meeting place between Danish and German cultures.



German central library and office of the Association of Germans in North Schleswig in Aabenraa (ge. Apenrade).

Højskolen Østersøen continued after 2001 to provide annual courses for young Europeans, however not on minority issues but on EU-related issues such as EU enlargement, the prospect of a Europe of the regions, the new EU Constitution, active citizenship, etc.

Two further education projects which have been funded by INTERREG resources are worth mentioning. “Hallo Region” is a collection of German-Danish teaching material for pupils in upper secondary schools. It is the aim of this collection of material to focus on common and different cultural, historical and economic aspects in the border region as well as to refer to its different languages and dialects and raise the interest for multilingualism. The teaching material should help teachers to include these topics in their lessons. There are issues and exercises to be done online and others to do on printed sheets. Many exercises can be finished within a few lessons, others are more time-consuming and invite to go into details. There are exercises to be done on one’s own, in pairs or groups as well as suggestions for project-oriented instruction. The different issues are not tied to specific lessons but should enhance an interdisciplinary approach and broaden the general knowledge of the pupils. Generally, the issues and exercises are designed in a way that enables pupils to discover the region Sønderjylland-Schleswig virtual on their own. The teaching material can be obtained as a hard copy and via the internet.³ The project has been financed by INTERREG resources and co-financed by the county Schleswig-Holstein, the two German districts (ge. Kreise) of Nordfriesland and Schleswig-Flensburg and the German city of Flensburg as well as the Danish county of Sønderjylland (da. Sønderjyllands Amt) and the Danish association for lotto and sweepstakes.

IRSAM (interregional cooperation, ge. InterRegionale zuSAMmenarbeit) is an internet-based teaching programme for German and Dutch as a foreign language.⁴ It is designed for individual learning, for learning at the workplace or as a combination of lessons and private study. The programme contains diverse issues referring to everyday-life on more than 400 pages with interactive exercises. All texts have been written by native speakers. Learners can work on their own pace and repeat exercises if they want to. IRSAM is a joint project of the primary schools in Husum, Flensburg and Schleswig as well as the VUC Sønderjylland and has been co-financed by INTERREG IIIa.

Jesper Nielsen, The Baltic Sea Folk High School, (Højskolen Østersøen), Denmark

Useful information:

Website of the Danish Ministry of Education: www.amu.dk

Website of the Højskolen Østersøen (The Baltic Sea Folk High School): www.hojskolerne.dk,
www.people.hojoster.dk

Website of the Danish folk high schools: www.hojskolerne.dk

Website of the Danish Institute of Border Region Studies (Institut for Grænseregionsforskning):
www.ifg.dk

Website of the University of Southern Denmark (Syddansk Universitet): www.sam.sdu.dk

Website of the network of vocational training schools in the Region Sønderjylland-Schleswig:
www.hla.flensburg.de

Website of the VUC Sønderjylland: www.vucsyd.dk

Website of the Association of the Folk high schools in Schleswig-Holstein: www.vhs-sh.de

Website of the Association of Education Flensburg: <http://weiterbildung-flensburg.de>

Website of the German Gymnasium for Northern Schleswig: www.deutschesgym.dk

Website of the Danish-German Library Alliance: <http://bib.region.dk>

Footnotes:

1 About the Regional Council and the Region Sønderjylland-Schleswig see the article of Martin Klatt chapter 1.

2 For the Copenhagen-Bonn-Declaration see the article of Martin Klatt in chapter 1.

3 www.halloreregion.com

4 www.irsam.de

Netherlands – Germany

The Learning Euregio Rhine-Waal

Lenny van Kempen

The administrative union of the Euregio Rhine-Waal¹ currently brings together 51 cities, local authorities, regional authorities and organisations, such as the Chamber of Industry and Commerce (Kamer van Koophandel) in the Germany-Netherlands border region. The operating area of the Euregio comprises over an area of 4,000 km² the regions of Arnhem, Nimwegen, Northeast Brabant and northern Limburg on the Netherlands side of the border and the administrative districts of Wesel and Kleve together with the City of Duisburg on the German side of the border. A total of 2,500,000 people live in this border region.

A Learning Region

The project “The Learning Euregio Rhine-Waal” aims to improve cooperation between the regional actors and to support the development of a Euregional labour market and qualification infrastructure. The concept of a learning region is still relatively new, yet it has gained in popularity within the short time since its introduction, not only in academic debate but also in terms of policy and practice.

There appear to be two reasons for the popularity of this concept: on one hand, it has developed out of the growing need especially for businesses to position themselves effectively on the market in the context of globalisation and internationalisation trends by learning to interact and cooperate in regional associations; on the other hand, it is the consequence in the political sphere of the decreasing importance of the national level in favour of the international, but also the regional / local level.

There are various definitions of the term learning region. It can be used to a certain extent to denote a social construct, which may be employed by different actors to develop strategies with advantages for all sides. In other words, the learning region concerns the production of networks consisting of different actors in so-called win-win situations, that is, constellations that have advantages and uses for all those involved. The learning region may be seen in this context as an innovation strategy, that focuses on optimal development, distribution and usage of the competence potential to be found in the region. Keywords are: communication, cooperation and information.

The characteristics of a learning region are: a common goal, learning from one another, using the knowledge / skills of all actors, geographical proximity, an effective support structure.

The effectiveness of a learning region is dependent upon mutual trust, a bottom-up approach, cooperation that is future-oriented and long-term in scope, open and flexible networks in which information exchange and other forms of cooperation play a central role, transparent and practice-oriented decision-making processes, neutral network management.

The greater the progress made towards European unity, the more the importance of the regions acquires sharper focus. As areas of activity, regions have some significant advantages like offering clarity in terms of policies and policy makers (the impact of decisions taken is immediately evident), geographical proximity (partners need little time to develop mutual trust), the need to seek out win-win situations, since all involved have an interest in achieving the greatest possible synergy effect and seeking long-term agreement on their particular living and working situation.

These advantages of large-scale planning are particularly relevant for the areas of the labour market and education, where not only businesses and institutions, but also those in work, those seeking work and those undergoing education / training are required to be active players and to show initiative. It is precisely in this area that regional networks would appear to play an increasingly important role: on both sides of the border there is a variety of regional networks in which actors from industry, the labour market and the education sector work together in an institutionalised or, at the least, a stable form of cooperation. This type of regional initiative has produced new, unbureaucratic forms of cooperative activity.

The Learning Euregio

The project “The Learning Euregio”² has a dual purpose. On one hand, it aims to create conditions that enable the development of a “Learning Euregio”, i.e. an information and experience network in the Euregio Rhine-Waal with the capacity to adapt continually to the demands of the time and that strengthens the connection between developments on the labour market and those taking place within the qualifications structure. On the other hand, the project focuses on the development, evaluation and optimisation of the underlying methodology in use. On the basis of experience gained through developing and implementing the “Learning Euregio I” project, the following project goals have been set:

- (1) To expand the existing network to create a comprehensive information system, in order to document and exchange experience, knowledge and data concerning vocational training.
- (2) To develop and update a series of digital maps of the Euregio Rhine-Waal, in order to facilitate easier access by schools and small and medium-sized enterprises to sectoral and theme-based information.
- (3) To develop sectoral networks for schools and enterprises in those branches where a demand for information and experience exchange exists.

- (4) Relating to Point 3: to develop a series of Euregional projects focussing on vocational training and the labour market in different sectors.
- (5) To initiate, develop and implement different cross-border innovation projects in vocational training, including the acquisition of financial support from non-INTERREG sources.
- (6) To compile and describe a list of “best practice” cases if possible involving all projects in the Euregio dealing with vocational education and the labour market.
- (7) To facilitate access to relevant information from other Euregios concerning initiatives in the area of vocational education and the labour market.

IBER – Information Point Vocational Education in Rhine-Waal

One of the core activities of the project involves expanding the network by encouraging dialogue and communication between the actors. The aim of this activity is to formulate a catalogue of tasks for introducing innovations into vocational education in the Euregio. A project in this context is IBER – Information Point Vocational Education in the Euregio Rhine-Waal (IBER-Informationspunkt Berufsbildung)³. The aim of IBER is to encourage contacts between vocational training schools in the Euregio Rhine-Waal. An example of this kind of contact is the cooperation between the vocational training colleges *Berufskolleg Wesel* (Germany) and *ROC Rijn IJssel* in Arnhem (Netherlands), which aims to build understanding of the schooling system and the labour market in the neighbouring country and to offer careers advice and improvement of languages skills. A class from the Netherlands (20 schoolchildren) and a German class (20 schoolchildren) took part in the project. On the project days, 10 German schoolchildren visited the Netherlands and 10 Dutch schoolchildren visited Germany. In each mixed class, parallel teaching took place on the theme of “photovoltaic energy” in both Arnhem and Wesel. Language problems were solved by the participating teachers.

Meeting of Internationalisation Contact Persons

In March 2004, a meeting took place between contact persons responsible for the area of internationalisation from all vocational training schools in the Euregio Rhine-Waal. Fifty people took part in the meeting. The participants learned about developments and activities of the “Learning Euregio”, projects already given approval were presented, and a very interesting and inspiring workshop took place. Further to this, many contacts were made and numerous ideas for future cooperation were discussed.

Exchange in Education Netherlands-Germany

Information concerning the numerous opportunities for educational cooperation in the framework of a German-Dutch exchange programme may be found on the Internet at www.austausch.nl. The website’s primary focus is practice-oriented, looking at schools

and teachers seminars, but it also refers to extracurricular exchange and to the background issues concerning educational policy.

EURES Work Placement Database

The EURES⁴ Work placement database⁵ is a sector-based compilation of over 400 addresses. It offers users direct access to contact persons in enterprises operating within the German-Dutch border area.

E-learning in the Retail Industry

This project is a Euregional initiative to strengthen the quality of training programmes in the retail industry in the border area. The aim of the project is to develop material that can be used for trainees in the retail industry known as “*Detailhandel*” in the Netherlands and as “*Einzelhandel*” in Germany.

Communicating across the Borders

The primary aim of the project is to survey the relevant materials and methods used in teaching language skills and for communicating and understanding of the culture of the neighbouring country. The results of this research will be shared with colleagues from other vocational training schools in both parts of the Euregio. A user group will take part in a series of meetings to evaluate the results and to produce a concluding report of interest to all participating schools.

Working Conference: Scope and Competencies of School Management

To design a sustainable form of cross-border cooperation, the existing limitations to the scope of schools policy should be the subject of debate and common solutions should be sought. This and other similar issues were the focus of the conference “Scope and Competencies of School Management”. The aim of the conference included exchanging experience and ideas concerning the use of new methods in the field of school management.

Lenny van Kempen, Regional Education Centre Rijn IJssel (Regionaal Opleidingen Centrum ROC Rijn IJssel), Netherlands

Footnotes:

1 www.euregio.org; see also the article of Roland Wolf in chapter 1.

2 www.leurning.org

3 For more information about the IBER project see chapter 4.

4 EURES (EUROpean Employment Services) brings together the European Commission and the public employment services as well as other regional and national bodies concerned with employment issues (see: <http://europa.eu.int/eures/index.jsp>).

5 www.euregio.org/stage

Belgium – Germany – Netherlands

Learning without Borders in the Belgium – Germany – Netherlands Border Triangle

Nicole Ehlers / Filip Dedeurwaerder-Haas

Working Group Without Borders

Since 1982, the Adult Education Centre of Eastern Belgium (Volkshochschule der Ostkantone)¹ in Eupen (Belgium) has focused on a critical exploration of regional labour, social and contemporary history. This began with the project “Workers Research their History”. At the same time, the Adult Education Centre in Aachen (Volkshochschule Aachen / VHS Aachen)² on the German side of the border designed an exhibition, in the context of district outreach work, looking at the history of the City of Aachen in 1933. An exchange of ideas took place between the two institutions and over the following years, a close cooperation developed between the two adult education colleges, involving a reciprocal exchange of information about cross-border history from the grass-roots in this European region. The aim was to increase awareness and understanding on both sides of the border for the different ways in which that history was interpreted. Excursions and guided tours were a regular aspect of shared activities.



*US Military Cemetery
Henri Chapelle (Belgium).*

The experiences gained from this cooperation led in the mid-1990s to the creation of a working group “Without Borders” (Grenzen-Los), which was founded in 1994 in the run-up to the 50th anniversary of the ending of the Second World War. The group’s founders wanted to produce something more substantial in contrast to the routine aspects of such celebrations, and also to do something to contradict the premise that this theme is over and done with. Apart from the VHS Aachen and the VHS der Ostkantone, church organisations, local authority representatives and other continuing education institutions

from Belgium, Germany and the Netherlands joined the group. A special mention should be made here of the Euregio parish office of the Protestant churches in the Euregio Maas-Rhine, from which the initiative for founding the group came.

The first activity organised by the working group involved a joint tour of sites associated with resistance and repression lying in the border triangle. This led to encounters with contemporary witnesses from all three countries in the border triangle in the setting of a religious memorial ceremony. This Euregional Tour has nowadays become a regular aspect of the working group's activities. The tours always involved course instructors from all three countries. It was often the case that participants, particularly schools, would ask if follow-up tours could be planned. This provided the motivation for setting up a continuing education programme for teachers at schools and adult education centres in the Belgian-German-Dutch border triangle, with the aim of enabling these teachers to organise and lead such tours themselves or in tandem with others. These two-day seminars also provide historical background information, present transnational aspects and encourage participants to include

The highest elevation of the Netherlands at Vaals (322,5 m) in the border triangle Germany-Belgium-Netherlands, a popular destination.



the Euregional history of those years in their teaching programmes. This continuing education programme has taken place annually since 1998. In the meantime, other thematic areas have been included, such as smuggling in the border triangle, (employment-related) migration in the Euregio and the period of the First World War in the border triangle.

Particular attention is also given to the choice of location for the seminars. This should not simply be a different district of the border triangle on each occasion, but the location should also have a particular resonance with the theme under discussion. At the beginning, discussions with contemporary witnesses formed the focus of the course. Now, however, examples for use in teaching practice have become an important course component, in response to the many requests coming from participating teachers. Worksheets are provided to inspire teachers to include case studies in teaching programmes from the local

environment of the school, or from the region. These can also be given by teachers to students preparing a dissertation or presentation on relevant subjects as resource material.

We may use the example of the theme “Smuggling in the Border Triangle” to briefly depict the way in which these courses are structured. The first day of this seminar was devoted to information about the history of smuggling. Along with the lectures, participants were shown historical photographs and extracts from films. On the second day, participants visited a border-crossing customs point and learned about the present-day work of customs officials. Precisely these contemporary structures were completely unknown to the course participants, who only had experience of customs as a control organ regulating foreign travel. In the afternoon, different projects were presented, taking smuggling now and in the past as a theme. The Customs Museum in Antwerp was also visited and participants heard a report on crime prevention activities of the Rotterdam police working with young people. Such insights into practical working life are intended to give participating teachers ideas about how the theme of smuggling can be built into their teaching programmes.

Out of an average total of 25 participants, most come from the German part of the border region. Although the number of Dutch participants has increased in recent years, it remains difficult to attract Belgian participants to the course, despite the cooperation with the Volkshochschule der Ostkanton in Eupen, Belgium. One reason for this is that Belgian teachers are rarely given permission to take time off to participate in continuing education of this kind. Until now, no participants at all have registered for the course from the Belgian provinces of Lüttich or Limburg. This is partly a question of distance. Since the working group “Without Borders” sees itself as an organisation serving the border triangle, the province of Belgian Limburg is simply too far away. Where Lüttich province is concerned, a language problem exists too, since until recently, the seminars were held in one or at most two languages. If persons from Lüttich wished to take part, it would be necessary to provide translation into French. In 2004, French-language invitations to take part were sent out to teachers in the province of Lüttich, but no replies came back. More work will have to be done to reach a new range of participants.

Another area of the working group’s activity involved the organisation of a Euregional event for 27 January, the memorial day commemorating victims of the Nazi dictatorship, in which as many different categories of victims of National Socialism were to be included as possible. The preparatory committee has invited participation since 1998 in a schools competition in the border triangle which looks both at World War Two history and also at the present situation. Participants are able to present their work in whatever form and using whatever methods they choose, including wall displays, video or audio recordings or computer animation. The results will be presented to the public on 27 January. Last but not least, “Without Borders” intends its activities to help counteract the tendencies and activities of far-right, racist, anti-semitic and xenophobic groups and individuals, which began to gain in importance at the beginning of the 1990s.

Cooperative work by the working group takes place in the context of the professional competencies of the various partners. The working group also has no dedicated budget, although some activities are financed by third-party funds. The continuing education programmes for teachers receive support, for example, from the government of the German-speaking Community in Belgium, as well as from the Regio Aachen and the Provincial Centre for Political Education of Nordrhein-Westfalen. The 27 January project was also made possible in its larger form in 2005 thanks to financial support from four sponsors. The working group received structural funding in 2003, when the VHS Aachen became a partner in the project “Learning without Borders” (Lernen ohne Grenzen / LoG)³ in the context of a federal government programme “Learning Regions” (Lernende Regionen)⁴. “Learning without Borders” is a network strengthening the educational landscape and aiming to make qualitative improvements in educational programme structures and to develop new forms of learning in the Regio Aachen in the area near the border. The aim is to raise the profile of the Regio Aachen in terms of educational policy and to help design the educational landscape in the Euregio Maas-Rhine in the sense of a European learning region equipped to meet the challenges of the future. Cooperation partners include, beside the VHS Aachen, the Centre for Learning and Knowledge Management at the university Aachen RWTH (Zentrum für Lern- und Wissensmanagement der Rheinisch-Westfälischen Technischen Hochschule Aachen / RWTH Aachen), the specialist department of Waste Management at the RWTH Aachen, the Solarinstitut Jülich at the University of Applied Sciences (Fachhochschule) Aachen and the Aachen Industrial Area Confederation of Industry (Vereinigung der Unternehmerverbände im Aachener Industriegebiet e.V.).

The Department for Political Education at the VHS Aachen is responsible for the sub-network “Learning for a Euregional Future” (Lernen für eine euregionale Zukunft / EuZ). This sub-network connects educational actors in the Euregio, with the aim of encouraging a cross-border identity to develop. This depends upon removing the psychological borders first. Steps towards this can be taken with the development and testing of new forms of Euregional educational excursions, Euregional multiplier-qualifications and Euregional educational modules as well as innovative measures aimed at helping unemployed young people in the Euregional area to gain new qualifications. The VHS der Ostkantone is involved in the sub-network EuZ as a sub-contractor of the VHS Aachen. Many of the activities undertaken by the working group “Without Borders” meanwhile receive financial support and above all organisational support from the VHS.

Border History

From the experiences gained by the working group “Without Borders”, the idea was conceived to apply for an INTERREG project. In doing so, the aim was to undertake critical exploration and documentation of the Euregional border history in the 19th and 20th centuries, from an educational and popular science perspective. The results should be made accessible

for schools and tourist organisations in particular. Since the Euregio Maas-Rhine consists of five sub-regions, it was also intended that a partner should represent each of these sub-regions in the project. Five partners are involved in this transnational study: the *Gemeente Kerkrade*⁵ in the Netherlands, the *VHS Aachen* in Germany, and in Belgium, the *Fondation André Renard*⁶ in Lüttich, the *Limburgs Universitair Centrum*⁷ in Diepenbeek bei Hasselt and the *VHS der Ostkantone*. The latter also functions as the project coordinator.

The aim of the “Border History” (GrenzGeschichte) project is to trace and explore the region’s little-known history. The everyday experiences and daily life of the people of the border region will be documented and explored. The project plans to uncover the cultural layers present in the region and to enable people to get a sense of their diversity, to document aspects of everyday history that divide and unite the peoples of the region and present them rather as aspects of identification. Further aims are to organise the transformation of historical knowledge into knowledge for the future, to map out the border area and accord it a new and special status, to reduce infrastructural fragmentation, to preserve the memories of an active association with the border itself. The project hopes to bring the (Euregional) diversity within the (European) unity into focus as well as creating common points of connection, exchange and marketplaces.

An important aspect of the project “Border History” should also be the degree to which history can be lived and experienced. In this context, the following points have been developed for future users: popular history studies about the common border area, teaching materials and teaching concepts, cooperation projects, continuing education for teachers, exhibitions, excursions, Euregional cooperation between teachers, publications, conferences, expert discussions, etc.

The overall budget amounts to 648,000 Euro, of which 50% will be financed from INTER-REG funds, 30% will come from public funding sources in the partner regions, and 20% must be provided by the partners as their own contribution to the project.

Further Cross-border initiatives in the Euregio Maas-Rhine

A project of Euregional importance is the cooperation platform entitled Qualifications and the Labour Market in which the three Euregional educational networks ALMA⁸, HORA EST⁹, ProQuA (Project Qualifications and the Labour Market) and the European network of employment services, EURES¹⁰, are partners. The cooperation platform supports the implementation of the INTERREG programme by obtaining expert assessments in the areas of the labour market and qualifications. ALMA is a Euregional university association founded in 1991 and bringing together the *Universiteit Maastricht*¹¹, *Limburg’s Universitair Centrum*, the *Université de Liège*¹² und the *Rheinisch-Westfälische Technische Hochschule*¹³. It aims to encourage cooperation between the partners in the areas of education,

research and community service provision. Since 1998, the technical colleges within the Euregio Maas-Rhine have worked together in a similar network under the title HORAEST.

The project “Qualifications and the Labour Market / ProQuA” has been run since 1998 in the framework of the INTERREG II programme of the Euregio Maas-Rhine. The project looks at the varying structures of vocational training and continuing vocational training in the Euregio and the needs in terms of additional qualification are assessed. The results are



*EU information bus
in Aachen.*

brought together in the concept “Euregiocompetence”, which is meant to contribute to sustainable improvement in Euregional qualifications standards in vocational training and continuing vocational training. “Euregiocompetence” signifies the systematic expansion of vocational qualifications in the individual sub-regions and of foreign language skills for the Euregional labour market, as well as intercultural understanding in the workplace and knowledge of the legal framework regulating working abroad (employment legislation, social insurance legislation, taxation system and regulations on establishing businesses). These programmes are intended to be integrated as certificated additional qualifications within the system of elementary vocational and continuing vocational education.

A network workshop has also been organised between HORAEST, ALMA and the project “Learning without Borders”. The workshop provided an opportunity for exchange and the joint development of future visions, for the exploration of synergy potential and for establishing new contacts. Until now, however, initiative has only come from the *VHS Aachen* to work in cooperation with ALMA and HORAEST. This produced a preliminary concept for organising a Euregio tour in the sub-network of EuZ (Learning for a Euregional Future). The tour, to be organised by the *VHS Aachen*, was intended to offer students the chance to get to know the region better. The plan failed however, due to different opinions concerning financial management of the activities involved.

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Useful information:

Website of the national programme Learning Regions (*Lernende Regionen*): www.lernende-regionen.info

Website of Learning without Borders (*Lernen ohne Grenzen*): www.lernen-ohne-grenzen.de

Website of the Adult Education Centre in Aachen (*Volkshochschule Aachen*): www.vhs-aachen.de

Website of the Adult Education Centre of Eastern Belgium (*Volkshochschule der Ostkantone*): www.vhs-ostkantone.de

Website of the Euregional Education Network ALMA ALMA (*Euregionales Bildungsnetzwerk*): www.alma-emr.nl

Website of the Euregional Education Network HORA EST T (*Euregionales Bildungsnetzwerk HORA ES*): www.hora-est.org

Website of the University of Maastricht: www.unimaas.nl

Website of the University Centre of Limburg:

www.universities.com/Schools/L/Limburg_Universitair_Centrum.php

Website of the University of Liège: www.ulg.ac.be

Website of the Rheinisch-Westfälische Technische Hochschule: www-zhv.rwth-aachen.de

Footnotes:

1 www.vhs-ostkantone.org

2 www.vhs-aachen.de

3 www.lernen-ohne-grenzen.de

4 www.lernende-regionen.info

5 www.kerkrade.com

6 www.far.be

7 www.universities.com/Schools/L/Limburg_Universitair_Centrum.php

8 www.alma-emr.nl

9 www.hora-est.org

10 EURES (EUROpean Employment Services) brings together the European Commission and the public employment services as well as other regional and national bodies concerned with employment issues (see: <http://europa.eu.int/eures/index.jsp>).

11 www.unimaas.nl

12 www.ulg.ac.be

13 www-zhv.rwth-aachen.de

Germany – France

Cross-border Cooperation in the Saar-Moselle Region

Wilfried Schmidt

Geographic Demarcation of the Region under Discussion

There are different opinions regarding the exact demarcation of the entire region, which is defined differently depending on the criteria used but generally based pragmatically on the dimensions in specific cases of cross-border cooperation among local authorities of the region. The following description refers to a German-French border region within the far larger Saar-Lor-Lux-Region¹, that is within the actual border areas of the sub-region of Saarland (here: Municipality of Saarbrücken, Germany) and Lorraine (here: Département Moselle², France) which is in fact represented together with the provincial government of Saarland in the permanent delegation of the province of Saarland at federal government level in Berlin).



*Bridge over the Mosel from
Germany to Luxembourg at
Schengen.*



While there are a great number of organisations at the level of the larger region of Saar-Lor-Lux that support cooperation within the sub-regions, where the theme of cross-border cooperation on education is concerned, cooperation at the micro-level of small communities along the actual border between Saarland and the Département Moselle is of most interest. For one, these exist on a relatively manageable scale and the inhabitants of the border region find them easiest to identify with and to participate in actively.

This is also the case concerning the cross-border activities undertaken by the Adult Education Centre of the Cities Association Saarbrücken (Volkshochschule des Stadt-

verbandes Saarbrücken), which takes place mainly with institutions within the Département Moselle. In this area in particular, numerous projects involving diverse project partners have developed over recent decades, based on different cooperation agreements and in all possible fields. In general, it may be noted that while there are a great number of organisations involved in cross-border activities, no effective coordinating structure concerning cross-border cooperation – and particularly where this concerns education – exists in the larger region as a whole, with the result that each organisation works in isolation. The failure to manage the situation ultimately hinders the efficiency of cross-border activities. Plans for the creation of a future institutional architecture for the larger region are currently under discussion.

Cross-border Cooperation at Local Authority Level

Local public bodies brought together by administrative agreements created by urban networks do cooperate in many areas, for example, business development or cultural projects. The association *Zukunft SaarMoselle Avenir* has been active for many years in



Open German-French border at Saarbrücken:

Left: A French (left-hand) and a German (right-hand) telephone booth side by side.

Right: Sign-board Département Moselle.

projects involving local level cooperation in Saarland-Lorraine and it forms the basis of the planned Euregio *Eurodistrikt Saarbrücken-Moselle-Est*. This encompasses 77 cities and districts on both sides of the border. With the signing of the memorandum of understanding marking the founding of the Euregio in May 2004 and the holding of a conference at which views and know-how were exchanged with already existing Euregions, institutionalised cooperation in the Saarland-Lorraine border region has come a step closer.

Cross-border Education and Further Education

Although there are numerous forms of cross-border cooperation on education and further education in the area of general education and vocational education establishments as well as at university level, which are supported in the framework of agreements and contractual arrangements between the provincial government of Saarland and the French Ministry of

Education (German-French teacher training and continuing education, work placements abroad, German-French study courses, etc.), cross-border further education, as represented by the adult education institutions in Saarland in particular, has not taken institutional form yet. Thus it remains limited to individual activities, which could very well be translated into lasting forms of cross-border cooperation.

The structure of further education in France in general and in the French border area in particular remained largely unknown to the adult education colleges and thus also to the relevant institution of the Municipality of Saarbrücken until fairly recently. The only form of cooperation involved the organisation *Peuple et Culture*³, which offered e.g. common seminars on political themes in the 1960s and 1970s. More intensive and increasing forms of cooperation and exchange relating to adult education and in particular concerning adult education institutions have only been in evidence over the last 20 years. Specific to the border region of Saar-Moselle is the development of the cross-border Adult Education Centre of Völklingen-Forbach (Völkshochschule Völklingen-Forbach / Université Populaire Transfrontalière)⁴, which grew out of an urban partnership and offers courses on both sides of the border. However, cross-border further education projects that are intercultural, targeted and results- or product-oriented in their approach are still few and far between.

Cross-border Activities of the vhs Stadtverband Saarbrücken⁵

The Adult Education Centre of the Cities Association Saarbrücken (vhs Stadtverband Saarbrücken) is at once both a municipal and local community adult education college, since its area of operations includes both the city of Saarbrücken and around ten larger local government parishes in the surrounding area, where the college has extra-mural departments. Both the city of Saarbrücken and also several of these local communities lie directly on the border with the neighbouring French region. Thus it is natural that a proportion of their customers, i.e. of the course participants, come from the French side of the border region.

This participation can be explained by the fact that there is no equivalent form of further education organisation with a comprehensive range of courses in the French part of the border region⁶. Larger adult education colleges in the German-French border region can only be found much further away in Alsace, in Strasbourg and Mulhouse, but not in the Lorraine border region. The following section summarises a number of cross-border cooperation activities carried out by the vhs Stadtverband Saarbrücken.

Cooperation between the vhs Stadtverband Saarbrücken and GRETA

Since 1988, the vhs Stadtverband Saarbrücken has undertaken educational cooperation in the framework of a cooperation agreement in partnership with the GRETAs (*GRoupements d'ETAblishissements pour la formation continue*⁷) in the French border region. The GRETAs represent further education institutions offering vocational training and run by the French

Ministry of Education. These are attached to schools (generally to grammar schools) and managed by their administrative authorities. One of their major focuses is offering German language proficiency certificates. The GRETAs offer a diverse range of continuing education courses and seminars for companies, in which multilingual qualification always forms an important part. To provide evidence of the language skills obtained through such study, participants take proficiency certification examinations in German (Zertifikat Deutsch, Deutsch für den Beruf / Professional German, Goethe Institute examinations) at the vhs Stadtverband Saarbrücken. Furthermore, an average of four French exchange teachers who are currently undergoing further training at the GRETAs are on placement at the VHS each year. The GRETA Freyming-Merlebach, lying directly on the border, was a partner in the project Saar-Lor-Curriculum (see Chapter 4.).

Cooperation between the vhs Stadtverband Saarbrücken and Metz University

The cooperation with the GRETAs described above places much emphasis on training in foreign language skills in a work-oriented context. As such, cultural and inter-cultural issues play a secondary role. In contrast, the cooperation established with the University of Metz (Université Paul Verlaine-Metz)⁸, which has its own further education department targeting the non-student population, has a stronger emphasis on foreign language teaching and cultural exchange. There has been intensive contact between the vhs Stadtverband Saarbrücken and Metz University since 1986. One year later (as was the case with the GRETAs), the contact led to a cooperation agreement between the two organisations. Over the years, a wide range of activities have developed: French-language summer courses and sabbatical training courses in French at the University of Metz, study tours with German and French participants, excursions and day-trips in the Saar-Lor-Lux region, German-French evening courses and the Saar-Lor-Curriculum project.

Cooperation Project Language Networks in Border Regions

This is a project run jointly by the vhs Stadtverband Saarbrücken, the Saarland Ministry for Education, Arts and Sciences and the Saarland County Institute for Education and Media in the framework of the BLK model pilot project for lifelong learning⁹, supported by the German Federal Ministry of Education and Research and the European Union (European Social Fund). The body responsible for overseeing the programme is the German Institute for Adult Education (Deutsches Institut für Erwachsenenbildung). The project took place as a trial programme from January 2001 to December 2004. It extended to all areas of education and included both French and German schools, universities and advanced teacher training institutions. The concrete aim of the project was to introduce educationally-disadvantaged young people and those with learning disabilities to the respective language of their neighbour country.

The starting point for the project was the observation that good knowledge of the French language was an absolute requirement for success in the job-market in *Saarland* – far more so than in other federal provinces. Of all the German federal provinces, *Saarland* has the highest percentage of its territory bordering another country, and in each instance the border is shared with a French-speaking country (Luxembourg, France). France is also geographically-speaking the neighbouring country in which most students would consider looking for work. Thus French-language skills are not only required for highly-qualified professional posts but indeed particularly for those vocational fields which are most relevant for educationally-disadvantaged young people and those with learning disabilities. For this reason the acquisition of everyday competence in French-language skills on the German side of the border – and in German-language skills on the French side of the border – is of great importance for the further career of students. Such educational pilot projects, however, generally fail in the cases of educationally- and learning-disadvantaged young people when this is presented as “merely” a case of anticipated enhancement of career prospects. For this reason, a “diversionary” approach is used using themes of particular interest to young people (such as pop music), although precisely in the area of popular culture there is the problem that English tends to take precedence over the language of the neighbouring country.

The second major aim of the project was to allow for as much self-management of learning tasks using new media at the school as possible. Media skills are of similar importance to French-language skills for the target group, since in their future careers the ability to work with new information and communication technology is seen as indispensable. Learning with New Media is also seen by young people as a positive experience, which in turn increases motivation. In the framework of the project, joint German-French media products were created by German and French students working together.

The project showed that the methods chosen were essentially effective. The young people involved exhibited markedly greater motivation and performance in the context of school as an institution at the end of the project than they had done at the beginning. Precisely those students who can only concentrate with great effort in the “normal” classroom context found this new approach to learning very helpful. It is to be hoped that this type of project will be extended on a permanent basis.

Cooperation between the vhs Stadtverband Saarbrücken and the Chambre de Commerce et d'Industrie (IHK) Nancy

The latest form of cross-border cooperation activity is the cooperation with the IHK Nancy. Nancy is the capital of the Département Meurthe-et-Moselle, a neighbouring Département to that of Moselle. The IHK Nancy offers training and advanced training to young adults working in the hotel and tourism industry. The programme includes a stay of several weeks

in Saarland, in this case in the vhs Stadtverband Saarbrücken, in the course of which the VHS offers a career-specific language course and organises visits to businesses in the sector. The cooperation is only one-sided at present, since the VHS lacks the clientele that would be able to take advantage of this programme. Over the next few years, it is anticipated that the Hotelfachschule Saarbrücken (Hotel business school Saarbrücken) and the Tourismuszentrale Saar (Saar tourist office) will become partners in the programme. It is also hoped that young people from Saarland can be offered bilateral exchange visits to be co-financed by the German-French Sekretariat für den beruflichen Austausch (Secretariat for vocational exchange) in Saarbrücken.

Cooperation Project EUROP'AGE

Since 1990, a working group concerned with exchange visits for older citizens has been in existence at the VHS: the *Europäische Altenwerk Saar-Lor-Lux*, or *EUROP'AGE*¹⁰, which also includes Luxembourg. This association organises cross-border events and exchange activities for older citizens and also publishes a bilingual newsletter.

Cooperation between the vhs Stadtverband Saarbrücken and the Communauté d'Agglomération Sarreguemines Confluences (Sarreguemines Parish Council)

The parish council of Sarreguemines (ge. Saargemünd), a French border town, which has already worked together with the Municipality of Saarbrücken for several years in the area of tourism and environmental protection, plans to found an adult education college in 2005 to work in close cooperation with the vhs Stadtverband Saarbrücken. This is certainly a development with much potential for offering numerous forms of cooperation in future.

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Useful information:

Politics and administration:

Website of the city Saarbrücken: www.saarbruecken.de

Website of the region Lothringen / Lorraine: www.cr-lorraine.fr

Website of the Département Moselle: www.moselle.pref.gouv.fr

Website of the community Sarreguemines / Saargemünd: www.sarreguemines.fr

Website of the grand region (Großregion): www.grossregion.net

Education:

Website of the Adult Education Centre of the cities association Saarbrücken (*Volkshochschule Stadtverband Saarbrücken*): www.stadtverband-saarbruecken.de/vhs

Website of the *Grenzüberschreitende Volkshochschule / Université Populaire Transfrontalière*: www.vhs-voelklingen.de.vhs/upt.htm

Website of EUROP'AGE: www.altenwerkkultur.de

Website of the pilot project Lebenslanges Lernen: www.blk-III.de

Website of the University of Metz (Université Paul Verlaine-Metz): www.univ.metz.fr

Website of GRETA (Groupements d'établissements pour la formation continue): www.education.gouv.fr/fp/greta.htm

Footnotes:

1 www.grossregion.net

2 www.mosell.pref.gouv.fr

3 www.peuple-et-culture.org

4 www.vhs-voelklingen.de/vhs/upt.htm

5 The current chapter of this study is limited according to the remit of the project CBCnet to direct forms of cross-border cooperation. This does not include activities of the Volkshochschule (VHS) Stadtverband Saarbrücken that are part of a wider European context and extend beyond the specific area of border cooperation due to their transnational approach.

6 For further information see the article of Wilfried Schmidt in chapter 1.

7 www.education.gouv.fr/fp/greta.htm

8 www.univ-metz.fr

9 www.blk-III.de

10 www.altenwerkkultur.de

Germany – Poland

Oberlausitz Region

Detlef Heuke / Ute Grun

A common language is essential to facilitate communication and cultural exchange. The Adult Education Centre Hoyerswerda (Volkshochschule Hoyerswerda) lies in a region adjoining the border triangle of Poland, the Czech Republic and Germany. Although German would be a suitable common language which, based on episodes of shared history, is also spoken in parts of Poland and the Czech Republic, it is only used with reluctance in those areas, equally for historical reasons. Generally speaking, Germans speak neither Czech nor Polish, Czechs speak no Polish and Poles do not speak Czech. History is the major cause of this dilemma. After the Second World War, German was discredited as a language and relations between the countries which at that time formed part of the “socialist brotherhood” were reduced to the bare minimum. Courses in the Czech or Polish language at adult education centres (Volkshochschulen) are rare events.

Individual projects such as German-Czech kindergartens and schools should help remedy the situation, although in fact they remain isolated examples. Among the younger generation, a clear preference is shown for using English, which in this special case is seen as a neutral language. English increasingly serves as the language of communication between the strongly national-oriented Czechs and Poles and also for cultural exchange between Germans, Czechs and Poles. This development may be criticised by outside observers, yet it seems at present to be the only real option for the region, given that history, and prejudices associated with it, play a more influential role here than in other parts of Europe.

The key event in this history is certainly the Second World War. However, attempts at coming to terms with the war and its causes and consequences have been almost entirely suppressed as a taboo. The Poles suffered the longest period of Nazi German rule, leaving a trauma which is still not healed today. This took on a personal form in the case of a visit to a partner institution of the Adult Education Centre Hoyerswerda (VHS Hoyerswerda) in Opole, Poland. The director of the institution knew the German language but was unable initially to speak German for psychological reasons, as attempting to do so brought back traumatic memories of the years of occupation. It was only after several subsequent meetings that she managed to find the strength to use the language. This example shows the very deep historical fissures that exist.

The Munich Agreement of 1938¹ is similarly etched into the consciousness of the Czechs. On the other side, many Germans have still not come to terms with the trauma of forced

expulsion of the German-speaking inhabitants of Poland and the Czech Republic and the massacre of Germans in the Czech Republic as a consequence of the Beneš Decrees² and the impact has been passed on to succeeding generations. These problems also play an important role in current political life. Both Austria and Germany insisted right up until the last moment that the issue of whether the Beneš Decrees would be declared as “unjust” should be a prerequisite for the accession of the Czech Republic to the European Union. Although this demand was retracted at the last minute, the fact that the Czech Republic and its leading politicians felt themselves unable to criticise the Beneš Decrees publicly, doubtless fearing the domestic unpopularity of such a move, did as little to encourage mutual understanding between the countries involved as the taboos surrounding the issue. Further education institutions have an important role to play here.

Some attempts have already been made. The experience of the Volkshochschule Hoyerswerda indicates, however, that it is more effective to seek cooperation on political “neutral” projects. Projects which aim directly at political education are seen as discredited by the people of all three nations. This is directly connected with the later common experience of socialism and the “closed societies” associated with it. The turning of historical problems into a taboo has its roots here. Any attempts at discussion were condemned out of hand as revanchism. Fourteen years after the collapse of the socialist system is clearly not a long enough time for opinions to change on all sides of the border. In this case, we can truly speak of a “generational question”, since as the experience of cooperation in Poland shows, it is still mainly the case that management positions in further education institutions are held by the generation directly affected by the experience of socialism.

The inhabitants of the border region have to learn to deal with the prejudices that have grown to form part of everyday life and to foster cultural exchange. This exchange has become a reality not least with the accession of Poland and the Czech Republic to the EU. Since this affects the entire border region, a “learning region” could be established on this basis. Cultural exchange should be a priority in this context, as already initiated by the Volkshochschule Hoyerswerda. One relevant project placed cultural exchange at the centre. The chosen theme of “Silesian stately homes in Poland” incorporated a historical and political approach and encouraged discussion about this – a case of using culture as a vehicle for gaining deeper knowledge, understanding and mutual acceptance. However, this is not a case of simply harmonising different cultures, in whatever form. Each national group has its own culture and cultural origins, even when in special cases such as that of the German-Polish-Czech border region these cultural origins are sometimes shared or co-dependent. These cultures will however continue to evolve and modernise and precisely for this reason, there is a need to deal sensitively with common culture and to foster tolerance and acceptance. The border region between Germany, Poland and the Czech Republic has many reasons to make up for lost time. In this process of rapprochement, adult and continuing education institutions can make a significant contribution.

EU-financed projects have played a crucial role in turning such ideas into reality on both sides of the border, particularly in the context that financial support is generally in short supply as a result of national political considerations. National politics in the three countries has very little financial room for manoeuvre and relies therefore on individual large-scale projects.

Finally the interest of cross-border contacts depends as well on the economic development of the border region. Where economic decline occurs in all three countries, as has indeed occurred over recent years, with resultant social problems, then people become more concerned with securing their existence and have less time for questions of cross-border communication and cultural exchange.

On the other hand, the positive interplay between domestic politics and industry and European support can help to bring a border region out of its marginalised status to create a successful regional centre, as developments in other European border regions have shown. The inclusion of Poland and the Czech Republic in the European Union has eased cooperation between Hoyerswerda (Germany) and Opole (Poland). Further examples of cross-border cooperation include, e.g. the German-Polish University in Frankfurt an der Oder (ge. Europa Universität Viadrina)⁹ and individual German-Czech school cooperation projects.

There is great potential for development in the border region between Germany, Poland and the Czech Republic. With the accession of the two former Eastern Bloc countries to the European Union, the political basis for cooperation has been achieved. Adult education in the region has already made it a priority to seek cross-border contacts. It remains the task of adult education to encourage intercultural exchange and to help dismantle prejudices on all sides of the border. In doing so, it is important to retain an approach on a very direct and personal level, from person to person, so to speak. The legal and financial basis for such cooperation has to be created by the politicians, while last but not least, a vibrant economy can act as an important motor to advance cultural development.

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Further information:

Website of the city Hoyerswerda: www.hoyerswerda.de

Website of the Adult Education Centre in Hoyerswerda: www.vhs-hoyerswerda.de

Websites of the European University Viadrina: www.euv-frankfurt-o.de

Footnotes:

1 On 29 September 1938, the Prime Ministers of Great Britain and France, through the mediation of Mussolini, signed the Munich Agreement with Hitler in Munich, according to which they agreed to the ceding of those parts of Czechoslovakia that were settled by a majority of Sudeten Germans to the German Reich, and the annexation of the Teschen province by Poland. The Munich Agreement is remembered today as a black day

in the history of the Czech people.

2 Eduard Beneš was Prime Minister of Czechoslovakia from 1945 to 1948. In this role he published a total of 143 decrees, of which c. 15 dealt with the disfranchisement and removal of property rights of the Germans and Hungarians in Czechoslovakia and thus formed the legal basis for the expulsions.

3 www.euv-frankfurt-o.de

Slovakia – Hungary

Cross-border Cooperation in the Euroregion Neogradiensis

Tomáš Findra / Danica Hullová

The scope of the Euroregion Neogradiensis¹ includes the area of the historical Novohrad – on the Slovak side, containing the districts of Lučenec, Poltár and Veľký Krtíš and on the Hungarian side, the county of Nógrád. After the Austro-Hungarian Dual Monarchy created the Ausgleich (compromise) in 1867², the region underwent a process of rapid development, which was interrupted by the advent of World War I. Following the disintegration of the Austro-Hungarian monarchy, the northern part of Novohrad was integrated into the new republic of Czechoslovakia (except during the years 1938-1945, when part of Slovakian Novohrad belonged to Hungary). After liberation in 1945, the Slovakian region belonged to the county of Banská Bystrica, and later to the county of Central Slovakia. The founding declaration of the Neogradiensis Euroregion was signed in September 1999 by the representatives of the Nógrád county on the Hungarian side and by the representatives of the districts of Lučenec, Veľký Krtíš and Poltár on the Slovak side. The objective is to help create a successful and competitive economic area in the Neogradiensis Euroregion, which is supported by both countries, making joint use of its resources and ensuring a good quality of life and a future perspective for its inhabitants. Activities and projects that have been undertaken to date are: Language and Knowledge exchange programme for high schools, “The Filákovovo stronghold – saving our historical heritage for future generations” or the feasibility study “Building a bridge through the Ipeľ river”, near Koláre.

Development of Relations in the Field of Culture and Sports

The Euroregion's strength in the field of culture and sports cooperation have roots in the historic past. The historical Novohrad area lies in the southern part of Banská Bystrica county, that is, in central Slovakia. It lies partly on the Krupina plain and partly in the Slovakian Ore Mountains. To the south, it is defined and also connected by the state border with the Hungarian part of the historical Novohrad area, Nógrád (Novohrad) county. Evidence of the cultural-historical links between these areas is shown by the fact that the centre of the historical county was at first the castle of Novohrad (in the 10th and 11th centuries) and then from the 16th century, the centre was alternately Lučenec and Balassagyarmat. For this reason, both cultural and economic cooperation among the inhabitants living in Novohrad are deeply rooted. Innumerable historical monuments and localities of regional, European and indeed world significance, cultural traditions and

centuries-old crafts and architecture add to the significance of the Neogradiensis Euroregion. In the modern history of Slovakia and Hungary, cooperation in the fields of culture and sports was the aspect of cross-border cooperation with the longest traditions. There are associations and organisations for the preservation of Slovak culture on the Hungarian side of the Euroregion and of Hungarian culture on the Slovak side of the Euroregion. Most of the cultural institutions operating in the Euroregion have relations with partner organisations on the other side of the border. In this area, education institutions, as well as cultural centres, libraries and museums, play an important role in the further development of cross-border cooperation. Informal relations in the area of culture and sports have always had a positive impact on mutual relations. They create a basis for improving relations between Slovaks and Hungarians and thus increasing the quality of life of the inhabitants of the Euroregion.

The difficult socio-economic situation facing the region and its inhabitants has also left its mark in this area. The lack of resources in the municipalities and institutions, the poor economic situation and high unemployment all hinder the development of activities in the field of culture and sports, and have in some cases even caused a regression. The situation is made worse by the lack of interest among the younger generation for maintaining and developing such activities. Cross-border cooperation loses its meaning when there is no revitalisation of cultural relations and joint activities, or protection of historical values and cultural heritage, especially in the era of globalisation. That is why it is important to preserve Slovak and Hungarian identity through the common development of Slovak-Hungarian culture and the preservation of the cultural heritage of our ancestors for later generations in the area of the Neogradiensis Euroregion. The richness of Slovak and Hungarian tradition and the social synergy of individual communities, localities and micro-regions create a unique situation not only for residents, but also for visitors to the region. Therefore, it seems important to raise awareness and interest among the regional population.

Development of Human Resources

In the area of the Euroregion, there is sufficient educational provision in terms of institutions and schools to raise the standards of skills and qualifications among the inhabitants in line with the needs of the contemporary labour market and to prepare them for entry into the EU. As such, these institutions and schools form an important pillar of the Euroregion and help prepare the younger generation for human resources development. Educational provision in the region includes public elementary and secondary schools (vocational secondary schools and apprentice schools), grammar schools, and also regional departments of universities. Existing programmes concerning health promotion, educational psychology advisory centres, special classes, and spare-time activity centres also strengthen the development of cross-border activities in the Euroregion. The tradition of active cooperation in the field of education between Hungarian and Slovak institutions in

the Euroregion can be revived again. In previous years, a lack of funding and investments caused cooperation development to slow down or in some cases to stop altogether. Nowadays, in the interest of securing socio-economic development and integration into the European Union, partnerships between schools, teachers and other educational and vocational institutions can be restored and expanded in the framework of cross-border cooperation. The relatively small distances involved in the labour force commuting according to the needs of the expanded labour market of the Euroregion will contribute to the creation of new chances for job-seekers from the region. The qualifications possessed by the labour force in the Slovak and Hungarian parts of the Euroregion do not always meet the needs of the economy, which was and is going through a process of transformation and which already has a new structure. There are more people looking for work than there are jobs in the region. The unemployment rate among those of working age is rising and is higher than other comparable regions of Slovakia and Hungary.

Another common problem of this Slovak-Hungarian area concerns the migration of qualified workers from the region and the comparatively low average salaries, which has led to a lack of qualified workers in different sectors of the economy. This trend is amplified by the generally low educational level of the inhabitants, the increasing numbers of unskilled job-seekers (especially within the Roma population) and the inadequate state of some school buildings and facilities. The common effort of Slovak-Hungarian cross-border cooperation in the area of preparation and development of human resources should be aimed at the structural modification of schooling and the educational system so that it may contribute to increased competitiveness of the regional labour force on the internal market (inside the Euroregion, on the Slovak and Hungarian labour markets) and also on the external labour market (outside the Euroregion). The weak aspect of the Neogradiensis Euroregion is also the fact, that neither citizens looking for employment or a better position on the labour market, nor the employer organisations have adequate information at their disposal; for example, there are no common databases, which would track the current situation on the labour market. For this reason, it is important to create an agency to disseminate information about the requirements of the labour market on both sides of the border, about free education provisions and about opportunities for cooperation. The collaboration of all interested organisations in this area could slow down the emigration of the younger generation to the industrially more developed regions and could create new possibilities for the development of a cross-border labour market. A new information network should be created based on the databases of existing offices. This network should be located within the municipalities, should have a cross-border scope and should provide a clear and accessible database according to common needs. Similar forms of cooperation could help increase employment and educational standards among the rural inhabitants of the Euroregion. This kind of cooperation is also important for attracting investments and investment sources into the Euroregion.

Experiences with Cross-border Cooperation

Cross-border cooperation between Slovakia and Hungary in the border region has mainly involved labour mobility, cultural activities (meetings organised between twin towns and villages) and limited exchange activities organised by secondary schools in Slovakia with their partners in Hungary. However, much of this has been insufficiently well-organised. This applies to partner organisations as well as to municipalities. There has been a lack of concrete programmes or projects which would secure the long-term sustainability of such cooperation. From the practical point of view of institutions working in cross-border cooperation, there is a more critical approach to the issue of effective support from the authorities. The work of institutions providing support and assistance (e.g. information centres run by municipalities) is rather vague and ineffective and is not organised according to a practical system. As a result, their potential clients – organisations able and willing to carry out projects of cross-border cooperation – are denied any real assistance. The rules applied to calls for proposals concerning cross-border cooperation are not clear and transparent and there seems to be a certain level of corruption in the approval processes. If this situation continues, it may have a rather discouraging impact on organisations participating in cross-border cooperation. “The Fundament” is a civic association actively working towards the development of civil society. The association supports projects submitted by municipalities, active groups of citizens or non-governmental organisations. They cooperate with large Slovak foundations and with foreign donor organisations. For the past three years, “The Fundament” has cooperated with a Hungarian partner, *Életfa Környezetvédő Szövetség Eger*. The cooperation involves a continuous exchange of information concerning individual activities.

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Useful information:

Website of Euregio Neogradiensis: www.euroregion-neogradiensis.sk

Footnotes:

1 www.euroregion-neogradiensis.sk

2 For more information see the article of Alfred Lang in chapter 1.

Austria – Slovakia – Hungary

From the Iron Curtain to a Common Border Area

Alfred Lang

The relationships in the border area between Austria, Hungary and Slovakia after 1945 were defined by the so-called Iron Curtain¹. Until its destruction at the end of the 1980s, cross-border contacts were only possible under very restricted conditions. Not until the regime change in Hungary and Slovakia in 1989 was cross-border contact a possibility. An initial phase of euphoria was quickly followed by sober recognition of the real opportunities that existed and more intensive contact did not take place until the entry of Austria into the EU in 1995 and the later accession of Hungary and Slovakia to the EU in 2004. The practice of cross-border cooperation remains a new concept in many places. This is true also and, indeed, especially of the field of adult education.



Left and middle: Remains of the former „Iron Curtain“, watchtower and pole.

Right: Protest in a border community in the Burgenland against the opening of a border crossing to Hungary at the beginning of the 90ies.

1989 – New Perspectives and Old Borders

In the years immediately preceding the fall of the Iron Curtain in 1989, the removal of restrictions on travel and marked differences in prices had already encouraged brisk but one-sided consumer tourism among shoppers travelling from Austria to buy goods in Hungary and Slovakia (especially in Bratislava). Popular products were petrol, food, alcohol and tobacco products, clothing and household goods. Restaurants and thermal baths also

attracted many visitors from Austria, as did service sector businesses such as beauty salons, hairdressing salons, opticians and dental surgeries.

As early as 1 January 1988, that is, more than a year before the actual removal of the Iron Curtain, international passports were distributed in Hungary, facilitating largely unhindered entry to Austria. This led to rapidly growing consumer tourism in Austria. In the Austrian communities by border entry points from Hungary, and particularly along the transport route from the border crossing point at Nickelsdorf / Hegyeshalom to Vienna, largely improvised shops were opened up (often in garages or hastily erected trailers), selling all kinds of goods. This rapidly produced significant problems for Hungary in terms of foreign exchange movement. When tariff regulations were tightened in April 1989, 114,000 Hungarian citizens flooded the border area over two days; Hungarian customs statistics record the following declared purchases during 3 and 4 April 1989: 5.664 video recorders, 4.013 colour televisions, 4.714 computers and computer parts as well as 3.506 freezers. When the new tariff regulations came into force in mid-April, consumer activity showed a marked decrease and many of the improvised shops had to shut down again as a result. At the same time, the Hungarian government made the founding of joint venture companies much easier and provided guarantees for foreign investors of a five-year tax exemption period as well as unhindered profit transfer.

On 2 May 1989, Hungarian special units began to dismantle the barriers along the Austro-Hungarian border and on 27 June 1989, the Foreign Ministers of each country, Alois Mock (Austria) and Gyula Horn (Hungary), cut through a part of the Iron Curtain in an act of high symbolism in open fields near the border crossing at Nickelsdorf / Hegyeshalom.

The massing of people at the borders within a relatively short space of time created resentment among many Burgenland inhabitants. This was caused by the completely overfilled transit routes through the province, an increase in road accidents and a rumoured or actual increase in petty criminal activity, smuggling and clandestine employment. In this context, a significant degree of resentment built up, fuelled by some factions in Austrian politics.

At the same time, a growing number of Romanian and Polish citizens arrived in Austria. Many Romanians in particular applied for political asylum upon their arrival; out of c. 23.000 asylum seekers in Austria in 1990, more than 12,000 came from Romania. This led Austria to reintroduce visa restrictions for Polish and Romanian citizens. Subsequently, the number of illegal immigrants crossing Austrian borders rose dramatically, particularly along the Hungarian-Austrian border. The highly emotional debate in Austria concerning the inflow of refugees and tourists from central and eastern Europe in the summer of 1990 coincided with the upcoming national elections due in October 1990. The then interior minister claimed at the time that, “the border controls can no longer guarantee the security

needs of our citizens. There are hundreds of illegal border crossings taking place daily. The current situation is unsustainable”, thus justifying a decision to deploy Austrian soldiers along the border. Subsequently, the number of illegal border crossings fell significantly, whereby the countries of origin of illegal immigrants changed over the years, to reflect the crisis flashpoints in Europe, Asia and Africa. The non-military nature of this deployment was emphasised, according to which the military was officially being deployed in support of the police and customs officials, hence the term “assistance deployment” (“Assistenz-einsatz”) was used.

Critics spoke of the erection of a new Iron Curtain, this time as a protection for the “rich” West from the economically backward East. This situation was not only further consolidated by the entry of Austria to the European Union in 1995 but, in the context of the border being a Schengen border (an EU-external border), such strict border controls also constituted an obligatory condition of Austrian EU membership².



Temporary opening of the border between Loipersbach (Austria) and Ágfalva (Hungary) in 1991 on the occasion of the project “Zaungespräche” by the Research Society Burgenland.

On the political level, cooperation had already begun in the late 1970s and early 1980s between Burgenland and the western Hungarian Komitate Győr-Moson-Sopron and Vas. In 1978, the “Planning Community East” was founded and in 1985, the Austrian-Hungarian Regional Development Conference (ÖUROK) took shape, which consisted of various working groups containing representatives of both Burgenland province and the western Hungarian Komitate. In 1992, this was followed by the foundation of a cross-border Pannonian Regional Council, with the aim of creating a form of regional parliament that should act as a common decision-making body to resolve cross-border issues, although in fact it limited itself to producing “recommendations”.

In the context of Burgenland adult education programmes, initial contacts were established in 1989 with Hungarian and Slovakian neighbours. In 1991 and 1992, the *Europahaus*

*Burgenland*⁸ organised a series of so-called intercultural discussion forums under the title *Bunter Tisch* (meaning approximately “rainbow table”), held in rotating locations in Burgenland, Hungary and Slovakia, with participants coming from Austria, Hungary and Slovakia. These were informal get-togethers allowing individuals and institutions from the fields of culture, education and research to learn about each other. Course organisers, primarily the adult education colleges in Burgenland⁴, registered an increased interest in Hungarian language courses during this period, to which they responded by offering the innovative Tandem teaching concept or IST (Interkultureller Sprachentausch or international language exchange) courses⁵.

In the autumn of 1989, after the opening of the Iron Curtain, the Research Society Burgenland (Burgenländische Forschungsgesellschaft) organised so-called Fence discussions (*Zaungespräche*) in communities along the Burgenland-western Hungarian border. The aim of these events was to bring together inhabitants of neighbouring communities that had been separated from one another by the border. These meetings examined the differences in development of the various communities, the impact of the border divisions and the future and potential changes ahead. They took place in local inns or village halls, alternately in Hungarian and Burgenland villages and were undertaken in both languages⁶. Work began in January 1991 on the *Zaungespräche* research project. Four communities were chosen as the focus for the survey on the basis of their geographical proximity and common language⁷. Major themes of the study were language and language development and the impact of border divisions upon patterns of social contact within the region⁸.

Initial excitement at the prospect of cross-border cooperation was replaced in the mid-1990s by sober realisation that many of the initial contacts were not being maintained and that interest in language learning was also ebbing away. Cross-border cooperation only returned to the agenda when Austria and later Hungary and Slovakia became members of the European Union.

1995 – Austria’s Entry into the European Union

Austria’s entry into the EU on 1 January 1995 also heralded the creation of new perspectives for cross-border cooperation with Hungary and Slovakia. EU entry had a particularly significant impact upon Burgenland, since it was the only Austrian federal province to receive status as an Objective I region and thus to have access to the spectrum of financial support options provided by the structural funds of the EU. During the referendum on EU entry held in Austria on 12 June 1994, Burgenland produced the highest vote (c.75%) of any federal province in favour of EU entry.⁹

The catalyst for increased cross-border cooperation was primarily the INTERREG programme, through which financial support for cross-border cooperation between Austria and Hungary and Austria and Slovakia was channelled.¹⁰

In 1996, the Research Society Burgenland took this new funding framework as an opportunity to host a new specialist conference (Burgenland Research Days / Burgenländische Forschungstage)¹ looking at the new perspectives which were thus created. Talks and workshops over two and a half days gave international specialists and national and regional politicians the opportunity to discuss the two themes of EU regional funding and cross-border cooperation in Europe. This was the first such comprehensive discussion of this type to take place in Burgenland following Austria's EU entry. One of the discussion themes concerned cooperation on cultural and educational policy.

During the initial programme phase from 1995 to 1999, the INTERREG IIa Austria-Hungary programme made 28.2 million Euros available, 11 million Euros of which was financial support obtained from the EU. Important projects which were undertaken during this period included the Technology Centre in Eisenstadt, the cross-border Business Park in Heiligenkreuz-St. Gotthard and three nature parks also set in cross-border locations, as well as the biogas plant in Güssing and a number of cycle paths.

Since, in contrast to border regions only involving EU member states, INTERREG funding for projects on the Austrian-Hungarian border was only available for investment on the Austrian side of the border, cooperation with Hungary during this first phase from 1995 to 1999 was often of a formal nature only. Although the European Union had set up specific support programmes for the accession candidate countries in central and eastern Europe, among these the PHARE CBC programme specifically for border regions (from 1995 to 1999, Hungary had access to 42 million Euros for projects in the framework of the PHARE CBC programme with Austria), joint projects (so-called "mirror projects", which had to be applied for in Hungary under PHARE CBC and in Austria under INTERREG IIa) often failed because the formal procedures for application, implementation and processing defined in the two programmes were not harmonised with one another.

The interim evaluation of the first period of the INTERREG programme from 1998 revealed that only 10% of the projects demonstrated a joint aspect of planning, financing and operation; a further 53% were assessed as having at least some cross-border impact in Hungary and 36% were assessed as taking place in the border region but as having no direct cross-border impact. From the Hungarian side, criticism was voiced during this first funding period on the grounds that Burgenland only gave support for Hungarian projects that in no way represented competition for Burgenland's own investment plans, and that Burgenland was "extremely vigilant" where the modernisation process in western Hungarian *Komitate* was concerned.

During the second funding period from 2000-2006, the follow-up programme INTERREG IIIa Austria-Hungary has earmarked some 77 million Euros from regional, national and EU funding sources. A further 55.8 million Euros are available via the PHARE CBC programme

for Hungary. The joint programme planning document for Austria-Hungary 2000-2006 has as its common aim for the seven-year programme period “the development of an economic, social and psychologically integrated border region”. Projects to receive the go-ahead should demonstrate that “they lead to a continual process of exchange in terms of cross-border perspectives, experiences and visions involving as wide a community as possible”. Furthermore, clearly drawing upon the experiences of the first programme planning period, the document states that: “it is far more difficult to support the implementation of a strategy that is truly cross-border in character than to support a series of projects that are merely located in the border region”. The practical experience of running such projects does indeed show that the bilateral partnerships established within such projects often fulfil merely the formal criteria of such a partnership, ie. that project partners in the neighbouring countries take part with the sole purpose of achieving greater recognition, while each project partner pursues its own national projects. Although the interim evaluation from 2003 judged that 74% of the projects had achieved the highest quality assessment grades regarding cooperation and impact, these criteria were in fact relatively easy to fulfil.

INTERREG and PHARE CBC were certainly catalysts for increased cooperation in the Austrian-Hungarian-Slovakian border region after the euphoria of the years immediately following 1989. Activities and projects nonetheless, as mentioned above, remained strongly influenced by national and regional political interests and did not always possess the transnational, cross-border components which characterise programmes such as SOCRATES or LEONARDO DA VINCI. It is also the case that the great majority of projects involved partnerships between Burgenland and western Hungary. From the beginning, there were far fewer cooperation projects with Slovakia, partly due to the fact that Hungary has a much longer shared border with Austria than Slovakia¹², and partly to the fact that western Slovakia is dominated by the presence of the capital city, Bratislava, making the nearby Austrian capital Vienna the natural partner for cross-border cooperation projects. The INTERREG Austria-Slovakia programme thus received a much smaller budget than the equivalent programme with Hungary.

Eventually, in 1998, the EuRegio West / Nyugat Pannonia was founded between Burgenland (Austria) and the bordering west Hungarian *Komitate* (Győr-Moson-Sopron and Vas, accompanied after 1999 by Zala). In the EuRegio area roughly 1.3 million people live in an area covering some 15,000 km². The EuRegio Council consists of 40 representatives from the four EuRegio partners. The Steering Committee comprises four political representatives charged with shaping the EuRegio’s development strategy and setting mid-term goals. The concrete work of the Council is undertaken by eight working groups. The mission statement of the EuRegio West / Nyugat Pannonia emphasises the following thematic areas: innovative development of the rural area, recreation and wellness and cluster building. In the new mission statement produced in 2004 for the EuRegio West / Nyugat Pannonia, the organisation presents highly ambitious aims for the future: “From I to We: the EuRegio

integrates local people and their ideas within the decision making process, thereby strengthening cross-border identities. Creating favourable conditions: the EuRegio is more than an abstract institutional construct. That is why transnational administrative obstacles are being dismantled.¹³

It is indeed the case that the EuRegio West / Nyugat Pannonia operates almost exclusively as an instrument of cooperation in the political and administrative sphere and has very little impact on the everyday lives of people living in the border region. In a survey from 2001, 79% of Burgenland inhabitants questioned stated that they had never heard of the EuRegio West / Nyugat Pannonia; it is unlikely that this situation has changed much in the intervening years. Although this is in itself not an argument against the EuRegio – it certainly has an important role to play as a networking and coordinating instrument between official bodies and administrative units of the participating countries – the involvement of the local population mentioned in the mission statement remains a goal to be fulfilled in the future. A further weakness in this context is the lack of cooperation with and integration of regional civil society organisations (NGOs) and adult education organisations. It is precisely the civil society organisations that could form an important link between the EuRegio and the local population and that would be able to make a significant contribution to the development of the cross-border identity mentioned in the EuRegio document. It is also worth noting that the neighbouring Slovakian and Slovenian border areas are not integrated within the EuRegio.

2004 – The Accession of Hungary and Slovakia to the European Union

The discussion surrounding the accession of Hungary and Slovakia to the European Union on the Austrian side was dominated by the question of the potential impact on the domestic employment market. In the EuRegio alone (the Austrian-Hungarian border region), there is currently a working population of c. 560,000, of whom c. 85,000 are in Burgenland. After the fall of the Iron Curtain, there was a far too great difference between salary levels in Burgenland and Hungary, at the time representing a relation of 1:13.¹⁴ Because of their geographical proximity to the accession countries, Germany and Austria had most to fear in terms of the impact of unhindered mobility of working populations in a situation of continuing stark differences in income levels. The other EU member states and the EU Commission initially had little interest in limiting mobility on the employment market. However, unease grew particularly in areas bordering the new member countries regarding unhindered labour mobility. While in Austria, fierce debate on the issue centred on “cheap labour”, in Hungary, the positive aspects of the situation for both sides were emphasised. Hungary did not view the migration issue as a real problem, since Hungarians were in any case not really a very mobile population. Furthermore, it was felt that a rapid process of EU integration would revive the Hungarian economy and thereby dampen the migration trend.

During this phase, political figures in Austria from all camps, and of course particularly from the labour organisations, repeatedly demanded transitional regulations in order at least to soften the anticipated negative impact on the domestic employment market. With an eye also to increasing public acceptance of EU expansion within existing member countries, it was agreed during the accession negotiations that during a transitional period quotas would be agreed for migrant workers to limit labor mobility in terms of time and quantity. The model agreed foresaw a review of the limitations within up to seven years, in which context at an interval of several years an extension or new definition of quotas may be agreed. After the EU and the accession candidates reached agreement on this compromise formula, Hungary and Slovakia voted in favour, upon the condition that they should also be allowed to safeguard their own domestic employment markets.

The bilateral agreements which arose as a result did fulfil their short-term regulatory purpose, yet politicians, employees and employers are confronted with the difficult question of how to find the right balance in an ever more deregulated employment market between Austria and Hungary between fixing quotas on the one hand and allowing labour mobility on the other, to secure employment and economic growth in the Pannonian region as a whole.

Since July 2002, union representatives from Burgenland and western Hungary have been working together in the framework of INTERREG (IGR – Interregionaler Gewerkschaftsrat), to soften the potential negative impact of EU enlargement. Since March 2004, the IGR has provided Hungarian-language legal advice for Hungarian workers employed in Burgenland. The bilingual legal advisory service provides such individuals with information about their employment and social rights. By October 2005, nearly 4000 people had made use of this service, demonstrating the great need for such services in this area.¹⁵

Transnational Adult Education Services in the Austrian-Slovakian-Hungarian Border Region

Looked at critically, cross-border activities in the field of adult education in the border area between Burgenland, western Hungary and western Slovakia remain in their infancy. Although there is a growing interest in transnational cooperation on education and the initiation of educational partnerships and joint participation in Europe-wide projects, actual contacts and cooperations are still the exception to the rule. The few existing cooperation projects are built in most cases upon individual initiatives with a limited time scale and their impact is limited to the local level.

As mentioned above, the INTERREG programme was a catalyst for increased cross-border cooperation, above all between Burgenland and western Hungary, yet adult education only partially benefited from this. Moreover, the few projects financed by INTERREG in the area of adult education have almost without exception been related to vocational training and continuing education for those in work. In particular, the *Berufsförderungs-*

*institut Burgenland (bfi Burgenland)*¹⁶ established itself as a pioneer in terms of cross-border cooperation.¹⁷ Examples of activities include the project described in Chapter 4 concerning hospitality services personnel in health tourism or the project *WGL-Wellness Grenzenlos*, providing training for personnel working at thermal spas in the region. A cross-border educational network offers a three-year training programme for skilled metalworkers from Hungary and Austria. Both groups are required to learn the language of their neighbours and the training programme takes place alternately in Szombathely (Hungary) and Großpetersdorf (Austria). The bfi Burgenland has also regularly participated in the annual education trade show Szombathely for several years. Since August 2002, a subsidiary organisation of the bfi Burgenland has operated in Szombathely. The bfi Bildungshaus Szombathely (Burgenlandi Felnőttképzési Intézet Szombathely)¹⁸ has since received accreditation as a Hungarian adult education organisation. Courses are offered for groups of up to twelve participants and there is much demand for language courses.

In the area of general adult education, the Research Society Burgenland (Burgenländische Forschungsgesellschaft) together with the *Burgenländischen Konferenz der Erwachsenenbildung (BuKEB)* have been prime movers in terms of encouraging cross-border cooperation in the Burgenland-Hungary-Slovakia border area and building up information and communication networks.

The first significant project in this context was a so-called GRUNDTVIG 2 Learning Partnership started in 2001 with the title, “Cross-border Cooperation in the Field of Adult Education in Europe” (Grenzübergreifende Zusammenarbeit im Bereich der Erwachsenenbildung in Europa). This project, initiated and coordinated by the Research Society Burgenland, involved educational organisations in Burgenland, together with the West-Transdanubian Regional Development Agency (Nyugat-dunántúli Regionális Fejlesztési Ügynökség Kht.) from Hungary and the Education Centre for Non-profit Organisations (Centrum vzdelávania neziskových organizácií, CVNO)¹⁹ from Slovakia. The Swedish partner, the Arctic Foundation for vocational training and continuing education (Utbildning Nordkalotten) provided a good example of cross-border cooperation on education projects.²⁰

It did indeed prove possible to increase the frequency of contacts with Hungarian and Slovakian educational institutions. Among other developments, a close cooperation evolved between the Research Society Burgenland and the Education Academy (Akadémia vzdelávania). The Akadémia vzdelávania²¹ is the largest and oldest adult education institution in Slovakia with c. 40 subsidiary institutions throughout the country. In the framework of a PHARE CBC project, in which the Research Society Burgenland was the Austrian partner organisation, study visits and get-together workshops were organised between Burgenland and Slovakian adult education institutions.²² On the Hungarian side, a cooperation developed with the Dániel Berzsényi College (Berzsényi Dániel Főiskola)²³ in Szombathely. The Research Society Burgenland was and is a partner in a number of PHARE CBC and SOCRATES / COMENIUS projects.

The Research Society Burgenland had no success in its attempts to set up a cross-border networking platform via the INTERREG IIIa programme. Despite great efforts being made, the application from the Burgenland side was not successful. In contrast, a European cooperation project involving the development of an adult education institution working in a cross-border setting in the framework of SOCRATES / GRUNDTVIG met with more success: CBCnet, the Cross-Border-Cooperation Network in Adult Education.

The latest project of the Research Society Burgenland involving an EQUAL Development Partnership on the theme of gender mainstreaming concerns the founding of a trilateral women's network between Slovakia, Hungary and Austria, which continued beyond the EQUAL funding period in the form of a SOCRATES / GRUNDTVIG 2 Learning Partnership with respectively a Hungarian and a Slovakian partner organisation.

Thus the Research Society Burgenland has undertaken a series of initiatives in cooperation with Burgenland adult education institutions, with the common aim of creating a basis for cooperation in this border region in the future. In each case, it is intended that personal contact should help to dismantle historical, economic and cultural barriers that divide the people of the region, and to build appreciation of the opportunities which a united Europe can offer.

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Footnotes:

- 1 See the article by Alfred Lang in Chapter 1.
- 2 In June 1985, the so-called Schengen Agreement was signed between five EU member states. It foresees the dismantling of border controls and the introduction of unhindered personal and goods traffic between the EU member states; a counter measure also agreed was the strict control of external borders (Schengen borders).
- 3 At that time known as Europahaus Eisenstadt (www.europahausburgenland.net)
- 4 See partner profile.
- 5 See project description in Chapter 4.
- 6 Events were organised in seven Burgenland and western Hungarian villages: Ober- and Unterbildein / Felső- and Alsobeled – Pornapáti / Pernau, Eisenstadt / Kismarton – Sopron / Ödenburg, Narda / Nahrung – Schandorf / Cemba, Loipersbach / Lépesfalva – Ágfalva / Agendorf, Rábafüzes / Rabfidisch (Szentgotthard / Sankt Gotthard) – Heiligenkreuz / Rábakeresztur, Lutzmannsburg / Lösmand – Zsira / Tening.
- 7 Ober- and Unterbildein / Felső- and Alsobeled – Pornóapáti / Pernau, Schandorf / Cemba – Narda / Nahrung.
- 8 See the publication: Traude Horvath, Eva Müllner (Hg.): *Hart an der Grenze. Burgenland und Westungarn*. Vienna, Verlag für Gesellschaftskritik 1992.
- 9 With a positive vote of 86%, the small Burgenland settlement of Draßburg produced far and away the highest approval vote in Austria.
- 10 The EU funding programme INTERREG was founded in 1995 to serve the border regions of the European Union. It aims to support cooperation with respective neighbour states.
- 11 9th Burgenländische Forschungstage, 21. – 22. November 1996, Eisenstadt.
- 12 See Chapter 1.
- 13 RMB Burgenland (Hg.): *“Leitbild. EuRegio West“*, Eisenstadt 2004, p. 9.
- 14 Figures from the latest cohesion report of the European Commission, 2004.
- 15 www.igr.at
- 16 See partner profile
- 17 See for example the project on hospitality services staff in health tourism in Chapter 4.
- 18 www.bfi.hu
- 19 See partner profile

20 See partner profile

21 See partner profile

22 See the case study of the adult education network in the region of Bratislava – Trnava – Burgenland in Chapter 4.

23 www.bdf.hu

Cross-border Education in Europe Case Studies

Institutional Cooperation

Stiftelsen Utbildning Nordkalotten – The Arctic Vocational Foundation

The Arctic Vocational Foundation is for some reasons an exceptional example for cross-border cooperation in adult education on intergovernmental level, tailor-made for the requirements of the Arctic region. It is located in the small village Övertorneå in the North of Sweden, close to the Finnish border. The governments of Finland, Norway and Sweden have joint responsibility for the foundation.

Border area: Sweden – Finland – Norway
 Institution: Arctic Vocational Foundation (Stiftelsen Utbildning Nordkalotten), Övertorneå (Sweden)

More or less all activities of the Arctic Vocational Foundation (Stiftelsen Utbildning Nordkalotten, in short: Utbildning Nord)¹ are examples of vocational cross-border cooperation in practice. The goal of Utbildning Nord is to create favorable conditions for every student to compete for work opportunities in Finland, Norway and Sweden and to contribute to increased mobility in the Nordic labour market. Utbildning Nord provides both initial vocational training for the upper secondary school and continuing education and vocational training. The governments of Finland, Norway and Sweden share responsibility for Utbildning Nord. The activities are regulated by the statutes of the foundation and by a cooperation agreement between the three countries.

The four main areas of vocational training are

- Crafts,
- Information technology,
- Tourism service,
- Engineering industry.

Utbildning Nord has a capacity to train about 350 students at any one time. The students are in the age-range from 16 to 60 and come from Finland, Norway and Sweden. According to an intergovernmental agreement between Sweden, Finland and Norway 70 students come from Finland, 85 from Norway and 195 from Sweden, including 50 students from the upper secondary school. The students usually stay at the centre for about a year. They are taught in their own languages and course literature is available in Finnish, Norwegian and Swedish. Sometimes literature is also offered in English (e.g. in the IT sector). The trainers are skilled in their own fields, and use a teaching approach that encourages self-reliance and commitment among trainees. All trainees take an active part in planning their own training, and target-fulfillment is closely monitored. The pedagogical profile is characterized by a continuous intake of trainees. They are at different levels and the curriculum is adapted to each individual. About 95% of Utbildning Nord's staff are Finnish and Swedish/ Norwegian speakers.

Utbildning Nord is also working to ensure the vocational training courses are validated in Finland, Norway and Sweden. This means that students who have graduated from Utbildning Nord will obtain a certificate that is valid in Finland, Norway and Sweden. This is possible through agreements with upper secondary schools in Norway (*Brevika vidaregående skole*, Tromsø) and in Sweden (*Gränsälvs gymnasiet*, Övertorneå) as well as with some colleges of higher education. Eight teachers of Utbildning Nord have participated in further education in Finland so that they can offer students the chance to qualify in line with the Finnish system of vocational examinations. Utbildning Nord has been approved for mobility projects in the framework of LEONARDO DA VINCI. Exchange and placement projects are currently undertaken with Austria, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Ireland, Portugal, Spain and the United Kingdom.

Utbildning Nord provides accommodation such as students' rooms for single persons and flats for families. Accommodation is provided at Utbildning Nord's lodgings in Övertorneå (Sweden) and in Aavasaksa (Finland) about three kilometers from the school, or in rented flats in Övertorneå-Hedenäset. Leisure activities for the students are also arranged during weekdays and at weekends.

Utbildning Nord works together with two local organisations. Firstly with the local Hotel Tornedalia in Övertorneå, to enable the vocational training courses for hotel and restaurant services students to be carried out in a real life situation. Teachers from Utbildning Nord work at the hotel to train the students and hotel employees also act as instructors for the



Utbildning Nord. Left: Administrative building in Övertorneå. Middle: Trilingual (Swedish, Norwegian, Finnish) informative sign. Right: Snowmobile for the training of mechanics.

students. Secondly, the foundation also cooperates with the local upper secondary school, Gränsälvs gymnasiet in Övertorneå, and runs parts of their curriculum concerning initial vocational training in the following areas: hotel and restaurant services; mechanical engineering; electrical engineering; automation; motor industry. In specific training programmes, the AVF cooperates with local companies or in a cross-border setting with institutions and companies in Finland.

European Welding Training / EWS

An example of cross-border cooperation in practice is the EWS (European Welding System) training in *Pello*, Finland, about 50 kilometres from Övertorneå, Sweden, where the headquarter of the AVF is located. In cooperation with the Finnish *Länsi-Lapin Ammatti-instituutti* Finnish trainers educate students from Sweden and Norway for the Norwegian labour market. The welding trainees will complete the course as highly skilled workers for employment on oil rigs (Snow-white, Hammerfest) in Norway. Utbildning Nord cooperates on this training programme with the Barents Technology Centre (BarTech) in Hammerfest, Norway.

Bricklayer and Concrete Handling Training

The second example involves vocational training in bricklaying and concrete-handling. Because of the reason that it is difficult and very expensive for an institution like the Utbildning Nord to arrange practical exercises in concrete reinforcement, the trainees carry out all practical exercises and 40–80 % of their curriculum in a Finnish concrete company (*Ylitornion Betonituote OY*), which is situated in Ylitornio, Finland, about 10 kilometers from Utbildning Nord's headquarter in Övertorneå.

Assistant Nurse Training

The third example is assistant nurse training. There are differences in the curriculum between Sweden, Finland and Norway. This means that, for example, a trainee who has studied according to the Swedish curriculum is not qualified in Finland and vice versa. As a result, Utbildning Nord has had to develop a curriculum that is valid in Finland, Norway and Sweden. This development work was carried out in collaboration with education institution partners from Finland, Sweden and Norway. This training programme admitted its first students in January 2005, with 16 trainees who will obtain a certificate which is valid in all these three countries. *Gränsälvs gymnasiet* in Övertorneå acts as subcontractor to the Arctic Vocational Foundation.

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Footnotes:

1 For more information see Partner Profile.

The Euregional Academy

In the border triangle of Germany, Belgium and the Netherlands, there is much talk of Euregional networks that should make it easier for people living in the area to relate to one another. However, few people are aware of the wide range of educational options that exist in the region.

Border area:	Belgium – Germany – Netherlands
Institutions:	Adult Education Centre Aachen (Volkshochschule Aachen), Aachen (Germany) Adult Education Centre Ostkantone (Volkshochschule der Ostkantone), Eupen (Belgium) Arcus College, Heerlen (Netherlands)
Funding:	Federal Government Programme Learning Regions (Bundesprogramm Lernende Regionen)

The border triangle of Germany – Belgium – Netherlands is an area where three states and three different cultures, in terms of history and traditions, politics and everyday life, educational systems and local regulations, come into contact with one another. This situation also means that an enormous range of education alternatives are to be found within a radius of only a few kilometres. But only very few people in the area are aware that such options are available. The reason lies largely with the psychological perception of national borders and does not truly reflect recent political developments. Ruled by the clichéd image of “neighbours as strangers”, many people are unwilling to take a first step into unfamiliar territory. Correspondingly, the educational provision across the national border is not even noticed or regarded as a possible option when it comes to making educational choices. The Euregional Academy (Euregionale Academie) aims to provide help in the context of adult education. The goal of the project is to make the wider public more aware of the diverse range of courses and study programmes available, as well as to develop new teaching programmes.

The Partners

Three institutions from three different countries have founded the Euregional Academy. The partner on the German side of the border is the Adult Education Centre of Aachen (Volkshochschule Aachen)¹. This is the second largest education institution in the city of Aachen (after the Aachen University of Technology / Rheinisch-Westfälische Technische Hochschule Aachen²) and offers a programme in the areas of general and vocational continuing education. The teaching programme, with some 1,400 different courses, is drawn up on a semester basis.

The Arcus College³ in Heerlen, the Netherlands, is a Regional Education Centre (Regionaal Opleidingen Centrum / ROC)⁴ in the eastern part of South Limburg. The programme offered

by the Arcus College ranges from management studies and trade through tourism and engineering to health and wellbeing.

The Adult Education Centre of Eastern Belgium (Volkshochschule der Ostkantone)⁵ in Eupen is an educational institution of the German-speaking Community in Belgium and part of the Christian Workers Movement (Christliche Arbeiterbewegung / CAB), the largest social movement in Belgium. The Adult Education Centre offers primarily socio-political studies, includes a history workshop (working group) and is active in the area of social economy through its rehabilitation organisation BISA.

Origins

In the 1990s, bilateral relationships existed between the individual institutions of the Euregional Academy. On this basis, Arcus College and the Volkshochschule der Ostkantone had founded a Euregional Academy for Senior Citizens in 1999-2000. Since European funding for this project ceased early on, only a few joint events could be held, while a long-term institutionalisation of the Academy did not take place. An informal but intensive form of cooperation has operated between the Volkshochschule Aachen and the Volkshochschule der Ostkantone for over ten years in the context of the “Without Borders” working group (Arbeitskreis Grenzenlos)⁶.

In the context of the support programme “Learning without Borders” (Lernen ohne Grenzen / LoG), these contacts were renewed. “Learning without Borders” is one of 70 network projects of the German Ministry for Education and Research, financed by the European Social Fund⁷. There were also opportunities for project support through the Euregionale 2008 which is an exhibition of the different regions of Nordrhein-Westfalen.

Establishing the Academy

On 1 March 2004 was the official opening of the Euregional Academy, attended by the Director of the Aachen Municipal Department of Culture (Germany), the Mayoress of Vaals (Netherlands) and the Culture Minister of the German-speaking Community (Belgium). The cooperation agreement was signed by the directors or executive chairpersons of the partner organisations. As the first ever formal and institutional cross-border cooperation in adult education, the establishment of the Academy received detailed coverage in the media.

The Euregional Academy has been officially established and its aims defined in the signed agreement, yet it continues to lack juridical form. This may be necessary to gain access to (European) funding. The most likely form the Academy would take as an association would be as a European Economic Interest Group (EEIG). An institutionalisation of this kind has not yet been attempted, largely out of a fear that this further step towards formalisation might disturb what has been up to now a very productive working relationship. The partners have tended to opt instead for a gradual, and thus sustainable, development of the Academy.

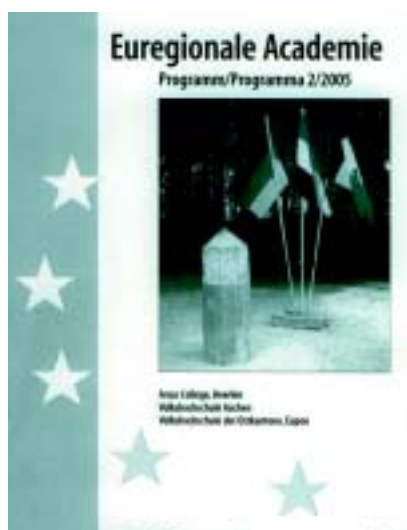
The next phase will involve the development of a common marketing strategy, to ensure that the Euregional Academy enjoys recognition in the border triangle. An internal organisational and communications structure needs to be developed so that applications for the Academy's activities can be processed effectively.

Euregional Education

All three partners organise activities and courses with a Euregional focus. However, until now, there has been no joint marketing in a cross-border sense. The lectures, study trips and guided tours with a Euregional focus have been brought together by the Euregional Academy and this compilation has been published altogether on three occasions as a joint programme booklet.

The Euregional Academy plans to raise cultural interest in the regions across the border and to develop its own programme of activities to this end. Thematic examples include: Living and working abroad, The cuisine of our neighbours and Common stories.

The thematic connection to everyday life and the communicative character of the activities is intended to encourage exchange. The central methodological element consists of encouraging people to use their own initiative in seeking cross-border contacts. The three partner organisations develop accompanying modules tailored to the needs of individual target groups. Cross-border meetings can then be repeated and extended where it is necessary, requested or possible to do so.



*Programme of the
Euregional Academy.*

A concrete example of this kind of exchange activity took place between local history societies and historians from the three countries in June 2004. The event was initiated by the partner institutions of the Euregional Academy, which observed and presented the activities on the day of the meeting. At the same time, the tools needed by participants

themselves to create a subsequent meeting were communicated. This is planned for 2005, on the initiative of the German participants and accompanied by the Euregional Academy in a monitoring capacity.

Another project example is the Euregional competence. The term Euregional competence incorporates skills, attitudes and patterns of behaviour that facilitate orientation in the area of the Euregion Maas-Rhine. This involves extending one's personal area of activity, for example, greater opportunities open up on the Euregional labour market. With this aspect in mind, young people or young adults constitute the most important target group. For this purpose information about the Euregio is integrated in teaching materials and structured in modules: the modules form independent units which may be taught independently and in any order and may be applied either in a national or in a cross-border setting. They may also be assembled within an educational programme or alternatively integrated in existing programmes (personal training, careers advice or language courses).

Financing

As already mentioned above, the work of the Euregional Academy is partly financed by "Learning without Borders" and partly via the Euregionale 2008. This funding is nonetheless insufficient in itself. The costs of the Academy's products (programme booklets, development of specific educational activities) are far above the funding currently available to the Academy. Other regional funding sources are not available to any of the partner organisations. European funding sources such as SOCRATES or LEONARDO DA VINCI may also not be applied to for this purpose because of the criterion of the selection criterion of "geographic balance" for projects, although the aims of the Euregional Academy fit very well with both programmes. The reason for this is precisely the geographical proximity of the three partners. INTERREG III funding does not match entirely in a thematic sense with the development focus of the Academy, but in terms of the geographical situation it would be the most appropriate funding programme. However, here too a problem arises since organisations are only entitled to receive INTERREG funding for one project. Since the partners already receive INTERREG funding for other projects, a new joint application would clash with these and lead to the application being rejected.

Nevertheless, a Europe of the regions will only become a reality when citizens – particularly in border regions – become more consciously involved in cross-border concepts and activities. The Euregional Academy aims to contribute to the creation of the requisite Euregional awareness, which builds upon a sense of Euregional identity. An important prerequisite for the cultivation of a Euregional awareness is active communication among citizens from the different parts of the border region.

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Footnotes:

- 1 For more information see Partner Profile.
- 2 www-zhv.rwth-aachen.de
- 3 www.arcuscollege.nl
- 4 For more information about ROC's see the article of Nicole Ehlers / Filip Dedeurwaerder-Haas in chapter 1.
- 5 For more information see Partner Profile.
- 6 For information see the article of Nicole Ehlers / Filip Dedeurwaerder-Haas in chapter 2.
- 7 For information see the article of Nicole Ehlers / Filip Dedeurwaerder-Haas in chapter 2.

Intercultural Language Learning

Language Learning and Intercultural Learning for Danes and Germans

The Baltic Sea Folk High School (Højskolen Østersøen) in the Danish-German border area provides language and culture courses, where the aim is not only to improve the student's skills in German or Danish language; intercultural learning is just as important. Intercultural learning means familiarising oneself with the social conventions and traditions of the other country and discovering that people are persons and not simply Danes or Germans.

Border area: Denmark – Germany
 Institution: The Baltic Sea Folk High School (Højskolen Østersøen), Aabenraa (Denmark)

Højskolen Østersøen's primary activity since its founding in 1993 has been language and culture courses of between two and four months duration, which has since been supplemented with one-week courses. Originally the longer courses only taught Danish students with an average age of around 35 and for the most part already receiving further education. Their motivation was to enhance their chances of getting into a new area of employment by improving their skills in German language (in trade, transport, academia, etc.). However since Danish legislation subsequently changed, the students are now on average aged 25 and are young people, many of whom are taking a break before starting their further education and using the opportunity to experience life at a folk high school,



Programme of the Højskolen Østersøen.

and to experience life and work in another country, in the German-speaking world, for which they need to know more German language. However there are many other reasons for attending an extended course at the folk high school, such as preparing to study German language at university or simply taking time off for personal reflection.

Initially, there were no German students attending the courses. Højskolen Østersøen therefore established cooperation programmes with schools and German adult education centres (Volkshochschulen) in Schleswig-Holstein and also further south in Germany in order to organise meetings and study visits where Danish students could test their German language with “real Germans” as well as familiarising themselves with German culture, everyday life and society. However, in the last five years or so, Højskolen Østersøen has also been attended by German students with a somewhat different profile than the Danish students: They are on average 35 years old and are professionals with further education qualifications seeking work in Denmark. Many are medical doctors (about 85 have attended the school in the last five years). Some are pensioners with a lifelong interest in Denmark and Danish culture. Having both Danish and German students living and learning together under the same roof over a relatively long period of time of course improves the value of the language- and culture-learning enormously.

Højskolen Østersøen has also provided one-week language courses for Danes and Germans for many years. Most Danish students are adult professionals working in such areas as teaching and tourism. The same applies to the German students, although many of these are also pensioners with a general interest in Denmark, Danish culture and language (having visited Denmark many times on summer holidays). Although many of the participants are working in a wide range of professions, the Danish or German language teaching is not related directly to their profession, although of course tailored to their level of language competence.

Although there are presently both Danish and German students participating in Højskolen Østersøen’s long and short language and culture courses, cooperation with schools and other institutions in northern Germany, such as churches, nursery homes, businesses of various sorts, continues to facilitate study visits to familiarise students with various aspects of German culture and society.

The students in both the long and short language and culture courses are not necessarily living in the Danish-German border region; indeed, the majority come from outside the region. Recruitment of participants in the courses is done by way of the internet, the network of former students, by sending leaflets to educational institutions and associations in Denmark and Germany, and, in the case of the short one-week courses, in some cases through formal cooperation with organisations in Denmark or in Germany (for more about the one-week courses, please see below).

Intercultural Learning

As Højskolen Østersøen provides language and culture courses, the aim is not only to improve the student’s skills in German or Danish language. Intercultural learning is just as important. Intercultural learning means familiarising oneself with the social conventions

and traditions of the other country and discovering that people are persons and not simply Danes or Germans. Acquiring such understanding is necessary to prepare the student to be able to live and work in the other country. It would for instance be impossible for a German medical doctor to obtain work at a Danish hospital without knowing something about the non-hierarchical structure and informal social norms of a Danish hospital, including the important relation between doctors and nurses. The Danish folk high school format, where the students live and learn under the same roof for up to four months at a time is very useful for initiating such learning and preparation. The key word in terms of the methodology for language learning is the “free room”: As a folk high school, Højskolen Østersøen is not restricted by laws and regulations in terms of content and there are no tests and examinations. This means that learning takes as the point of departure the group and the individual in terms of their level, their knowledge, their interests and experience in a very flexible way. Emphasis is on the verbal use of the languages and not grammar and the written word. It is an important dimension of the teaching that the students take responsibility for their own learning.

Tandem Learning

An important aspect of the teaching is the so-called “tandem method”, a method developed by Højskolen Østersøen to suit its needs and the needs of the participants: Danish- and German- speaking participants work together in groups of two or in small groups to solve tasks related to life in one of the two countries (e.g. visits to the post office or to the doctor, shopping, etc.). The course also includes excursions to institutions on both sides of the Danish-German border, lectures and debates about historical, societal and cultural links between Denmark and Germany and between Danish and German languages. The programme starts off with a verbal test of participants, in order to form groups with the same level of language competence, and folk dancing, to break the ice in terms of social interaction. Language training consists of twelve hours of Danish and German language lessons respectively, and participants are divided up into Danish and German groups of maximum 14 participants with the same approximate language competence. In addition, three tandem modules are included where Danish and German participants learn with and about each other, including evening workshops and a “language in motion” module carried out in a nearby sports hall. The course is concluded with a more prolonged role play in which one round is carried out in German and one round carried out in Danish, where participants can test what they have learned throughout the week in various everyday situations. Additional lectures and morning sessions are carried out in both Danish and German with the aim of providing participants with insights into the culture and society of Denmark and Germany. The courses are generally seen as very valuable by the participants. This is confirmed by the high number of participants returning for further courses. The course contents and methodology have therefore not been changed or developed much in the last few years. However, the themes, etc., are changed continuously so to take into

account the latest developments in the region and in Denmark and Germany in general. Discussions about targeting specific professional groups and thus focussing content on themes more specifically related to one professional group have taken place. However, Højskolen Østersøen values the fact (and it is also a requirement by law) that courses should be accessible for all citizens and of general interest, which limits the possibilities for more specialised courses.

Promoting Cross Border Labour Mobility

It is an important aim of Højskolen Østersøen to promote cross-border labour mobility, by equipping participants with the necessary language and cultural skills to be able to work in the other country. Højskolen Østersøen additionally assists participants attending longer courses in looking for employment whilst at the school and facilitates contacts to employers in both Germany and Denmark, in the Danish-German border region but also beyond (further north in Denmark and even as far south as Austria). Højskolen Østersøen believes that personal development and empowerment, a main aim of its work, and the experience of living and working in another country complement each other.

The Danish students wanting to work in Germany are mostly young people seeking jobs in shops or restaurants, in trades such as carpentry or as a journeyman, etc. Højskolen Østersøen has established cooperation with chains of Danish shops and businesses present



Posters of the Højskolen Østersøen:
 Left: "Boundless Possibilities".
 Right: "What do you still need the passport for?".

in Germany including LEGO, *Dänisches Bettenlager* and others, such as in 2000 at the Danish Pavilion at the EXPO 2000 in Hannover. These local contacts then conduct their own job interviews with the students either while they are at Højskolen Østersøen or just after (most of the cooperation agreements are initially made with the Danish branches of the businesses). Højskolen Østersøen also has local contacts of Danish origin employed

in Hamburg who are setting up job interviews in northern Germany in relevant fields (depending on students' experience and interests). Højskolen Østersøen does not guarantee jobs for the students, but in certain cases does guarantee job interviews. Since 2000, about 125 young Danes have gone on to work in Germany and Austria, some with support through the LEONARDO DA VINCI programme.

As the German students are older and for the most part professionals, primarily medical doctors, the task of assisting them in their employment search is somewhat different from the younger Danish students. Since 2000 when Højskolen Østersøen decided to also become involved in actively assisting the students in finding work, about 110 German students have succeeded in finding work in Denmark, of which about 85 are medical doctors. The majority of these have found work with the active assistance of Højskolen Østersøen. In the first couple of years, the doctors were relatively young, having just graduated from university. At that time there was a severe shortage of doctors at Danish hospitals, especially in a periphery region such as southern Denmark, and it was very easy by means of telephone calls and short visits to the hospitals to facilitate contact with senior consultants in the hospitals and to set up job interviews. This meant that the young doctors came to Denmark and Højskolen Østersøen without employment but with the knowledge that it would be very easy to obtain employment. However in the last couple of years, Danish hospitals, even in the peripheral regions of Denmark, have not been so willing to take on young doctors (because of an anticipated reform of the Danish healthcare system, whereby some small hospitals will be closed in the near future). This means that Højskolen Østersøen has now directed its attention to helping specialised doctors, for which there is still a great need. However since these are for the most part settled adults with families, they are less willing to go to Denmark and participate in a language course without having obtained employment first.

Cooperation with the Employment Agency in Flensburg has also been established aimed at recruiting students with other professional backgrounds than doctors in the far north of Germany. There is a high unemployment rate in northern Germany while there is a lack of qualified workers in many professions in the region of southern Denmark. Generally speaking, labour mobility in the Danish-German border region is not high in spite of the fact that there is high unemployment south of the border and a great need for many professional workers north of the border. Language is the main barrier, and it is hard work to convince both job-seekers and employers to take up the opportunities which such cross-border cooperation offers.

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1 For more information see Partner Profile.

Intercultural Language Exchange Hungarian-German / German-Hungarian

After the borders between Hungary and Burgenland (Austria) were opened in 1989, schools and other education institutions from both countries made contact with one another, but their lack of common language skills made understanding difficult. This led to the idea of designing a course in which participants learn each other's language from one another.

Border area: Austria - Hungary
Institution: Association of Adult Education Centres in Burgenland
(Landesverband Burgenländischer Volkshochschulen),
Eisenstadt (Austria)

The Intercultural Language Exchange (Interkultureller Sprachentausch / IST) language model contained two relevant aspects: the principle of intercultural learning as a social, shared and mutual form of learning and the application of the most recent methods of second- and foreign-language teaching. The target group thus consists primarily of persons who live alongside the common border and who are interested in learning the respective languages with each other and from each other. The groups, made up of German- and Hungarian-speaking participants, learn together and from one another in courses led by Hungarian-speaking and German-speaking course teachers. Participants were required to demonstrate a willingness to work with a project-oriented course and learning programme and a desire to learn more about their neighbours than the language alone.

The course model and educational concept for trainers was developed by the Association of Adult Education Centres in Burgenland (Landesverband Burgenländischer Volkshochschulen)¹ together with the Burgenland Institute of Education (Pädagogisches Institut Burgenland) and with academic supervision by the University of Klagenfurt.

After several years of successfully running these courses, the interest in learning the language of the neighbouring country began to diminish in the mid-1990s. Furthermore, obtaining funding for the courses became increasingly difficult, with the result that the scheme had to be brought to an end. In 2001, however, the course concept was revived for use and developed further.

The Concept

The model of Intercultural Language Exchange (IST) contains an educational concept with an intercultural focus and a language-learning component and is guided by certain basic parameters. The educational concept of the IST course programme is based on the idea that learners help define the themes and course progress to a great extent, through the experience and existing knowledge they bring with them. Their encounters with one another

and with the language form the central focus of the evening courses. An important form of social interaction here involves working with partners. Each of the participants thus has a personal language trainer in the form of their partner. Work is also undertaken in single-language or mixed-language groups either containing a small number of participants or the entire group.

Mixed groups of learners provide an ideal opportunity for shared learning with and from one another. The mother-tongue resources existing within in each mixed group should be put to full use and learners should be presented with situations in which they can help teach each other their respective languages.

The intercultural approach is oriented primarily towards the culture of everyday life. Encounters with the everyday culture of the neighbours is influenced to no small extent by the degree to which the language is understood. The more familiar the sound, melody and rhythm of the language, the more one understands and the more open one is to learning, meaning that one can more quickly put oneself into the shoes of the other, empathise with them and gain understanding of how they think and feel.

Course participants may choose the themes which they wish to study. The choice can reflect the interest of participants in the social, linguistic, cultural and political situation of their neighbours. Direct communication lies at the core of the learning approach. The study of grammar is subordinated to the goal of communication. The conceptual approach to language-teaching used here borrows much from a range of modern methods and approaches to foreign and second language skills.

Framework

The IST courses are attended by people with two different native languages. The two language groups should where possible be represented in equal numbers, although in terms of language skills, groups may include participants with different levels of knowledge. The courses take place alternately in border towns on both sides of the Austrian-Hungarian border. The IST course programme is planned, run and evaluated jointly by two teachers coming from both language groups. At least one teacher must be able to speak both languages, to make understanding possible.

Trainer Education

The trainers have the opportunity during their training to experience a range of language-teaching exercises for themselves and to reflect on the learning experiences involved. At training seminars, similar criteria are followed to those used for the IST courses. At the core lies the concept of interactive shared learning, in which the different languages and levels of existing knowledge are taken into account.

Preparation / Working Materials

For this kind of learning and teaching situation, there are no ready prepared teaching materials. This means that the preparation for individual course evenings is a time-consuming and intensive aspect of the teachers' work. Both teachers must work together to design the lessons, which means that much time is required for planning, preparation and follow-up and for the production of materials. Furthermore, there may be differences of opinion about what kind of preparation is needed (e.g. about language learning, about the role of the students, about the concept itself, and about which aspects of a theme should be dealt with and how this should be done). It is not possible to produce ready-prepared teaching materials for this form of collaborative working. Different approaches to learning, presenting and organising have to be brought within a common scheme. Only some of the trainers were able to look beyond their own habitual way of working and to practice this form of intercultural team teaching in such an open situation.

The Learning Experience

The participants found this approach particularly useful in terms of conquering their inhibitions about speaking ("no fear of speaking"). They spoke of developing a "feeling for a new language", about "having fun with learning" ("I had to wait all these years to find out how much fun learning could be") and about the fact that there was no talk of "doing the wrong thing" on this course. While the Hungarian participants had almost all learned German for several years at school, the Austrian participants were generally learning Hungarian for the first time.

Organisational Structure and Student Initiatives.

The organisational structure encourages intercultural learning. Some course participants invited the entire group to pay a visit to their workplace. Business connections developed and the members of the group also celebrated particular events such as birthdays, Christmas and Easter with their own special or common traditions. All these aspects of everyday culture became the subject of language learning during the course. During the time between lessons, participants often arranged private meetings with one another. The idea of the project was to bring people from border communities together in the course groups. Finding organisational support and adequate infrastructure in these small border communities was not an easy task. It also proved impossible for both phases of this course project to find a Hungarian project managing organisation as a partner, which worked in a similar way and could take on the organisational work (finding participants, organising teaching locations) locally. Although partners could be found for individual courses, the cooperative work diminished rapidly when it became clear that few costs would be covered; Hungarian education institutions have to find significantly more of their financial resources via project

funding than is the case in Austria and can therefore rarely manage to take on cooperative work unless structural financing is included.

Funding

Intercultural language exchange courses are and have always been particularly costly undertakings. On the one hand, two teachers must be paid for each course programme, and on the other, intensive preparatory work for the courses must also be remunerated.

The different salary and price levels in the border region also create a range of problems. Both the Hungarian and the Austrian trainers are employed by the project-managing organisation and receive the same salary. This sometimes produces a situation where the Austrian colleagues feel underpaid, in the context of the salary and price differences between the two countries. Course fees in contrast are calculated in accordance with the respective price levels, which means that Hungarian participants pay accordingly lower course fees than the Austrians. Here too, there was criticism from Austrian participants who suspected that their higher course contributions were being used to subsidise the lower contributions asked of the Hungarian participants.

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1 For more information see Partner Profile.

The Saar-Lor Curriculum

The aim of the project entitled Saar-Lor Curriculum was to develop a prototypical course concept for foreign-language acquisition coupled with information about the Saarland-Lorraine border region. This foreign language course was designed to give learners not merely language skills but also greater insight into the respective other culture and mentality.

Border area:	Germany – France
Institution:	Adult Education Centre Saarbrücken (Volkshochschule Stadtverband Saarbrücken)
Funding:	INTERREG IIa

The transnational Saar-Lor Curriculum aims to improve foreign language skills, regional knowledge and intercultural competence among inhabitants of the Saarland-Lorraine border region. In addition, the concept interlinks the integration of language acquisition with regional knowledge of everyday life, and the social contexts of learners with continuing education requirements.

As part of the project, teaching, learning and working materials were created dealing with various themes. The thematic areas are intended to reflect a lively and accurate picture of the sub-regions of Saarland and Lorraine, one which captures the reality of cross-border contacts and activities in the everyday lives of the inhabitants, whether undertaken from a private or a professional perspective. The individual thematic areas are conceived as teaching modules which are essentially independent of each other, which means that in principle courses may be combined in different variations according to the needs and interests of participants.

The group of project partners comprised the following institutions:

- the *Volkshochschule Stadtverband Saarbrücken* (Germany) as project coordinator,
- the *Stiftung für die deutsch-französische kulturelle Zusammenarbeit* in Saarbrücken (Germany),
- the *Faculté des Lettres et Sciences Humaines de l'Université de Metz* (France), especially the *Service d'Education Permanente de l'Université de Metz (S.E.P.U.M.)* in Metz (France),
- the *Groupement d'Etablissements Scolaires du Bassin Houiller Lorrain (GRETABHL)* in Freyming-Merlebach / Forbach (France).

The project was funded in the framework of the Community Initiative INTERREG II of the European Union. It had a duration of three years. Work on the project began in 1 March 1988 and ended on 28 February 2001. Fifty percent of the costs were financed via INTERREG IIa, with the remaining 50 % coming from the contributions of the participating institutions.

The courses themselves took place during the evaluation phase and were run in parallel by the project partners in Saarbrücken, Metz and Forbach under the title “Living and working on the border – a tour d’horizon”. An integral component of the current courses and of the overall course concept involved mutual encounters among course participants. This “educational encounters” approach used the geographical border situation as a resource to encourage learning and motivation and it is a central element of the intercultural focus of the entire project.

Producing New Materials

The following basic procedure was formulated early on in the project development phase:

- a) definition of the regional studies inventory by the project team,
- b) compilation of concrete contents (expert studies) by external consultants,
- c) transformation of expert studies into working and teaching materials through Tandems,
- d) evaluation.

Following comprehensive research into materials on regional themes and issues raised by situations in every day life, external consultants, both German and French, were contracted to work out the content in detail:

Focus on daily life: This teaching unit involves concrete situations and conditions relating to daily life, e.g., shopping trips to buy various goods in shops and particularly on the marketplace, a city guided tour and the use of public transport.

Regional identity: The historical unity of both sub-regions is elaborated through focusing on common threads in history since Roman times, on the different characters of village and settlement forms and on special features in terms of art history and architecture in the cities of Metz and Saarbrücken. The division of this shared history is a recent development due to the development of hard political borders.

Politics and administration: This module explores the different structures and allocation of responsibility in regional administrative bodies, resulting from differences in the political systems of France and Germany. The module thus involves detailed treatment of the central institutions and structures of political offices to provide a clearer understanding of the bigger picture.

Communication and culture: This area of the course involves on one hand the elaboration of different working practices and reporting styles of print and audio-visual media and, on the other hand, an excursion into the landscape of literary life in the region today, giving particular attention to dialect literature. Regional dialect forms often remain the most important form of communication for daily interaction among many inhabitants of the region.

Economy: The special features of the economy, labour market, future and development prospects in the region are presented, using social and economic data as evidence and highlighting the different approaches taken to solving structural problems concerning the economy.

Working life: This module looks on the one hand at the different social security systems in the region and on the other at the various individual options and strategies for use by jobseekers looking for employment in the neighbouring country. In addition, institutions offering (vocational) continuing education are presented, particularly the transnational study courses offered by the university partnership association of Saarbrücken and Metz (Universitätsverbund Saarbrücken-Metz).

During a specialist conference in summer 1999 in Saarbrücken, the consultants' reports were presented to a specialist audience for discussion, while the conceptual approach to the educational theory and methodology underpinning the teaching materials to be produced and the subsequent course programmes was also presented in detail. After partial reworking of the expert studies as the result of the specialist conference, the project team were faced during the subsequent project phase with the complex challenge of translating the expert studies on regional studies themes into working and teaching materials. It was suggested that creating binational teaching-theory teams would help to ensure the intercultural orientation of the project played an active role even during the project development phase. These tandems were made up of two members from the participating project partners and external persons for each thematic area, tasked with turning the existing expert reports into materials appropriate for teaching adults. This organisational approach simultaneously ensured that an intercultural approach was integrated in the project design and also that the materials would be produced in bilingual form.

The teaching materials, produced in each case in both German and French languages, were created for two different course levels: for an introductory level, the so-called *tronc commun*, and continuing on from this, an advanced level, the so-called *options de spécialisation*. Participants were expected to have an intermediate level of language competence to take part in the *tronc commun* course.

Aside from the general focus of the project focusing on the special character of the border region, there was also a specific intention to use the "learning through encounters" approach to shared learning to expand the traditional approach to institutional learning. It should thus be possible to learn French and German not only in (traditional) course settings, in Saarbrücken, Forbach and Metz, respectively, but also together in situ. Course programmes containing encounters of this kind facilitate the direct use of acquired language skills in the relevant country, allow a deeper understanding of the respective neighbouring country and thus encourage participants to see the culture and mentality of that country in another

light. Furthermore, the aspect of mutual encounter strengthens the intercultural approach of the course, which the student groups can also support insofar as it is possible, e.g. for misunderstandings to be resolved mutually and without the intervention of teachers.

Test Phase

The testing and evaluation phase of the project took place in the form of field tests of the new teaching materials during a period lasting two semesters. The first field test involved the modules looking at everyday life, regional identity, and politics and administration, at the *tronc commun* level, together with two full-day opportunities for course participants to meet each other and a shared excursion. The mutual encounters themselves were related in terms of content to the theme being dealt with at that time in the course programme. Course leaders were usually individuals who had been responsible for developing the learning materials, while an exchange of teaching staff took place between the partner institutions in Saarbrücken (Germany) and Forbach (France). The evaluation was carried out by course leaders in each case at the teaching location, and also via feedback from participants in the form of questionnaires. The results of the test phase suggest that the overall concept was received positively by participants in Saarland and in Lorraine and also that the working materials which were used, notwithstanding changes and modifications in the details, clearly fulfil their purpose both in terms of content and methodology.

Following this, the question arose of methods to be used in training qualified course leaders. As a first step in this direction, the Folk High School Saarbrücken organised a two-day continuing education seminar in May 2000, to introduce potential course teachers for German / French as a foreign language to the new course, both in terms of content and teaching theory.

Innovation

At first sight, the teaching and learning approach seems rather mundane in terms of its synthesis of foreign language acquisition and regional studies. Nearly every language course and standard coursebook offers students some regional information concerning geographical, political, cultural or historical aspects: French language teaching includes information about the Carmargue, the French Revolution of 1789 or about Paris, which is appropriate for students in Berlin or Munich, for example. In the case of Saarland and Lorraine, however, at least for the Département Moselle situated directly on the national border, the project placed emphasis on the aspect of regional studies as a lived experience directly affecting inhabitants of the border region.

To this end, the project initially undertook to combine foreign language learning with regional studies in concrete rather than abstract form, which integrated the daily life of inhabitants into the learning process. The importance of regional knowledge is generally accepted in

politics and industry, and yet continuing education programmes with such a focus are at present few and far between.

The concrete working approach taken here consistently involved a cross-border focus, to ensure that wherever possible an intercultural character was retained. This approach began with the themes from which the German and French consultants compiled the regional studies topics and ranged from the establishment of teaching-theory teams producing bilingual working and teaching materials, through the organisation of parallel courses with the exchange of teaching staff, to joint evaluation *in situ*.

A qualitative innovation which should be highlighted is the targeted use of the geographical border location as a methodological resource, which builds the everyday life of inhabitants on both sides of the border into the course contents, and facilitates shared forms and processes of learning by organising parallel course programmes in which mutual encounters are an integral part. This level of intercultural training allows the both the depth and range of normal language courses to be extended.

The project attempted, alongside the general learning goal of improving language skills, to go further in setting standards for interregional understanding, in the sense of appreciation of and a willingness to engage with a foreign, or other, culture.

Long-term goals extending beyond the project's scope included institutionalising and rendering permanent the cooperation among central institutions dealing with adult education across the borders. There would be much to gain by transforming the rather sporadic forms of cooperation existing until now on the political level into a continuing education network with common structures, through the implementation of concrete measures such as a continual programme of teacher exchange, shared marketing by participating institutions in relation to their continuing education programmes, etc.

Assessment

The work of the teaching-theory teams to distil homogeneous working and teaching materials in accordance with the defined requirements out of the expert reports produced by external consultants proved to be extremely difficult. The problem arose from the varying standards of the expert reports, for example in terms of the level of abstraction related to content, which proved unavoidable because of the different themes and professional backgrounds of the consultants, despite the detailed specifications given to those concerned.

The fundamental decision to define first the contents and thereafter the method(s) of the teaching programme proved with the benefit of hindsight to be problematic. It would perhaps have made the work of the teaching-theory teams easier if there had been an initial discussion concerning methodological and teaching theory issues.

The intercultural substance or character of the individual modules also varied, i.e. the intercultural aspect came to the fore in one case, while in another, because of the thematic complexity, the focus lay with communicating content-based knowledge, although the intercultural approach remains the common thread running through the entire project.

A critical problem in the short-term concerns the broad availability of teaching staff with sufficient specialist and methodological / teaching-theory skills, since more modern foreign-language teaching methods and intercultural training methods do not always form part of teacher training courses. At the same time, it should be mentioned that the institutions taking part in the project have at least internally begun to raise awareness of these issues among their teachers through a special continuing education course.

In connection with the aims of the project, the transfer of the project results which in principle may take place horizontally (to other border regions) or vertically (to other areas of education such as general secondary level, vocational level or tertiary level education) was noted. The concept of vertical transfer remains a clear challenge for the future, since apart from the chronological issues in both Saarland and in Lorraine, the differences in (educational) political structures in France have created obstacles, since curricular innovations fall under national jurisdiction (Éducation nationale).

Outlook

With the formal end of the project and the concluded assessment of results during the two evaluation phases, modules from the project were taken on as fixtures of the continuing education programmes of the project partners. Further activities may be organised which enable the transfer of content and methodological approaches (tailored to specific target groups) to other areas of education (schools, universities), in which this vertical transfer is simultaneously conceived with academic institutions in the neighbouring region of Lorraine in mind. Finally, the long-term aim remains the development of certificated (continuing) educational qualifications that are recognised interregionally. This, however, depends upon continuing guarantees of resource provision for data administration, ongoing development of standardised tests, etc.

Should the project be continued, it would be essential that results obtained up to now be made available in new form via the use of new media in the form of information and communication technologies. The “old” pilot project was entirely based on the use of classical, traditional media, i.e. on printed text and (audiovisual) video materials. Apart from the (naturally also available) option to make use of self-learning and self-study, the focus of the learning process lay with institutional learning. A follow-up project should aim to change this basic principle, by concentrating on the development and provision of self-learning resources. A multimedia treatment of working materials requires not only the

integration of video extracts, oral practice and comprehension exercises, but also the interactive networking of individual modules; also requiring that the means (in terms of teaching theory and methodology) should suit the new medium.

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Vocational Training

Nordic Studies in Nursing

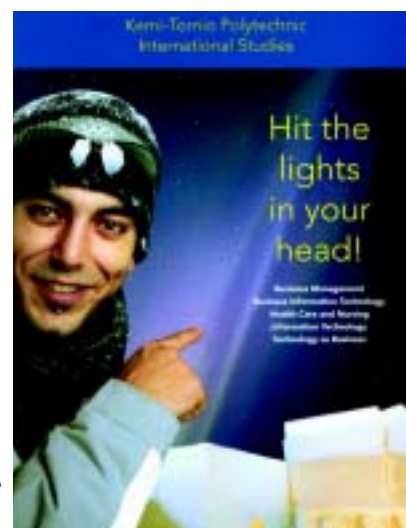
Some border municipalities in the Swedish-Finnish border area have established a common health care service. The health care emergency service, including patient transportation, is organised in turns by the municipalities and it is very important that staff are able to speak both languages.

Border area: Finland – Sweden
Institution: Kemi-Tornio Polytechnic (Kemi-Tornion Ammattikorkeakoulu), Kemi (Finland)

A few years ago when the profession of nurses experienced a high rate of unemployment in Finland, while at the same time in Sweden there was a shortage of staff, the Kemi-Tornio Polytechnic¹ in Kemi, Finland, arranged Swedish language courses for unemployed Finnish nurses. The nurses could also complete their training period on the Swedish side of the border. After graduating from the course, many Finnish nurses found work in Sweden.

This was a starting point for the degree programme in healthcare – Nordic Studies in Nursing. This programme offers studies which enable students to work as registered nurses (RNs) in hospitals or health centres as well as in homes for the elderly, service houses and other residential settings.

Programme of the international office of the Kemi-Tornio Polytechnic.



The aim of the programme is to provide the students with a broad core knowledge base as well as the advanced knowledge necessary to fulfil current and future needs in health care. The students receive a good knowledge of nursing science and nursing research so as to be able to contribute to the development of nursing. In the learning process the student

formulates links between practical experience and theoretical concepts. These links require the integration of theory and practice and that is facilitated by, for example, reflection on practice. Students are offered a good opportunity to promote their personal growth and development also in international environments. The role of the lecturer is that of a resource and facilitator of the learning process. Each year includes a period of clinical practice in a specific area. The clinical practice can be done in Finland or abroad.

The degree programme comprises

- Basic Studies
- Professional Studies
- Advanced Professional Studies
- Practical training and learning at work
- Elective Studies and
- Bachelor's Thesis

The students who complete the course successfully are qualified to work in Finland as well as in Sweden and in other European countries. Education complies with the relevant EU directives. The degree is accredited automatically in Finland and it can also be accredited in the student's home- and / or working country. The duration of the degree programme is 3.5 years and it concludes with the title of "Bachelor of Health Care". The language of instruction is a combination of Swedish and English, which means that students must have adequate skills in both languages.

Most of the students in this programme come from Sweden, but there are some Finnish students too. Almost all students who come from Sweden also speak Finnish and have some links to Finland, e.g. they live near the border and have relatives on the Finnish side of the border. Because Kemi is situated so near to the Swedish border (about 25 km), they may easily cross the border on a daily basis.

Some border municipalities in the Swedish-Finnish border area have established a common health care service, like Haparanda (SE) – Tornio (FI) , Övertorneå (SE) – Ylitornio (FI) and Pajala (SE) – Pello (FI). The health care emergency service, including patient transportation, is organised in turns by the municipalities and it is very important that staff are able to speak both languages. Students who will graduate from this programme are sought-after employees, especially for the border municipalities, and most of them will stay in the Torne River Valley.

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1 For more information see Partner Profile.

Hospitality Service Assistants in Health Tourism

A geological hot springs area runs through Burgenland and West-Hungary. This joint resource should be marketed more effectively. The needs of spa operators in the region provided the motivation for a joint cross-border project: a training programme for hospitality service assistants in health tourism.

Border area: Austria – Hungary
Institute: Health Academy Burgenland
(Gesundheitsakademie Burgenland), Oberwart (Austria)
Funding: INTERREG IIIa

Following the entry of Austria into the European Union in 1995, the province of Burgenland became an Objective 1 area and was thus recognised as a European region particularly in need of development funding. As a result, new, future-oriented coordinates were drawn up for pinpointing areas of the Burgenland tourism industry that could be improved in terms of quality. The aim of developing health-spa and wellness tourism became a primary goal. Significant investments were made, supported by structural funding from the EU, to build new thermal baths, since a geological fault line giving rise to hot springs runs through this region bordering Hungary and Slovenia. Together with infrastructural developments, the training and qualification of skilled staff became essential to enable the health-spa and wellness resorts to offer a competitive service. In autumn 2000, a trilateral conference of employment agency directors from Austria, Hungary and Slovenia took place. The participants agreed to join forces to market the common tourism potential of the region more effectively and to investigate the requirements for qualified personnel in the industry.

The results of a survey and of workshops organised with spa operators in Burgenland showed that there was a need for skilled personnel in the area of health activity services, and a training programme was conceived by the Vocational Training Institute Burgenland (bfi - Berufsförderungsinstitut Burgenland)¹ for hospitality services staff working in health tourism.

Hospitality services staff provide a point of connection between health specialists (medical doctors, sport scientists, dieticians, etc) and the guests at health spas, supporting them with advice and personal care. They are needed to assist guests in health resorts, wellness and health hotels, at thermal baths and in health and guest care centres, in fitness studios and their responsibilities may also include project management concerning health tourism provision. The content of such a training programme ranges from anatomy, physiology and health psychology through to relaxation techniques, communication, educational play, animation, nutrition and movement studies and forms of sport.

The target group for the training programme consists of female and male job seekers aged 20 and above, who have completed vocation studies or have a minimum of three years' experience working in the area of health or tourism. The programme lasts nine months and includes 1,100 teaching hours. In Burgenland, the training programme is provided at the Health Academy (Gesundheitsakademie) of the Vocational Training Institute Burgenland at Schloss Jormannsdorf. Those who complete the programme are supported in finding work with the help of integrated job coaching.

Apart from the Vocational Training Institute Burgenland, Austrian partners included the operator of the health spa centre at Bad Tatzmannsdorf (Kurbad Tatzmannsdorf AG)² and the Burgenland Employment Agency (Arbeitsmarktservice Burgenland)³. The project was financed by the INTERREG IIIa Austria-Hungary programme⁴.

Cross-border Cooperation

The Hungarian project partner was the Regional Workforce Development and Training Centre ReMeK in Szombathely (Szombathelyi Regionális Munkaerőfejlesztő és Képző Központ)⁵. This education institute aims to apply labour market policy developments within educational and continuing education programmes for adults. The Vocational Training Institute Burgenland had already worked together with ReMeK as a partner in earlier cross-border educational programmes (career orientation courses). In the course of the project, cross-border information exchange took place, concerning already existing qualifications programmes for health tourism, setting up working groups and translation and adaptation of the Austrian course programme by the ReMeK training centre to suit the needs of the Hungarian health spa operators.

Nineteen people took part in the first training course held between October 2004 and June 2005 in Burgenland, Austria; but only one person came from the Hungarian health spa at Bük⁶ and was given educational leave from the employer. Nevertheless the Austrian participants found the presence of the Hungarian classmate to be a great bonus as it provided a chance to learn about the language and culture of the neighbouring country. The participants were particularly interested to learn about the differences in working conditions in the health and fitness branch of both countries. On the other side, the Hungarian participant learned a great deal in the course of the training programme about Austria, which will prove extremely useful to her when providing services to Austrian guests in Hungary.

Excursions to Hungary (Kőszeg, Bük health spa) also formed part of the programme. The four-week obligatory work placement was undertaken by four Austrian participants at the health spa in Bük or the nearby Hotel Répce in Hungary. The Hungarian participant carried out her work placement at the health resort Bad Tatzmannsdorf in Austria. Both the

participants and the health resort operators learned a great deal through the work placements. Equally, the two partner institutions, Vocational Training Institute Burgenland and ReMeK, organised a regular exchange of information in the form of working meetings in Hungary and in Austria. Following the successful completion of the project, it may be concluded that the cooperation between the project partners was extremely constructive and effective.

In the meantime, an application for a further INTERREG project has been made, to enable the training programme to be offered in Hungary as well as in Austria. It is foreseen that 20 participants will undergo the training at the Bük health spa.

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Footnotes:

- 1 www.bfi-burgenland.at
- 2 www.kuren.at
- 3 www.ams.or.at/neu/bgld
- 4 www.interreg.at
- 5 www.remek.hu
- 6 www.buk.hu

IBER – Information Point for Vocational Training in Euregio Rijn-Waal

Easy-access exchanges and mutual encounters result in concrete forms of cross-border cooperation in vocational training

Border area: Netherlands – Germany
Institute: Regional Education Centre Rijn IJssel
(Regionaal Opleidingen Centrum Rijn IJssel / ROC Rijn IJssel),
Arnhem (Netherlands)
Funding: INTERREG IIIa

Since 1999, schools for vocational training in the Euregio have been exploring opportunities to cooperate. With INTERREG funding, a first joint project began entitled “The Learning Euregio”¹. This first project resulted in the creation of a joint website with information about all vocational training schools and the educational programmes they offered. The website, in combination with conferences for teachers, provided schools that were looking for cooperation with useful information and also the opportunity to meet and get to know each other.

However, although both Dutch and German schools showed an interest in cooperation, there were only very limited actual exchanges or meetings between students. There were two reasons for this: Schools (especially the German schools) do not have financial means at their disposal to finance student exchange activities. Furthermore, it was apparently felt that the procedure of applying for funding for exchange programmes was too costly in terms of administrative resources.

IBER – Information Point for Vocational Training

These conclusions formed the starting point of the follow-up to the Learning Euregio project: the IBER project, also funded by the INTERREG programme. IBER stands for Information point for vocational training in Euregio Rijn-Waal (Informationspunkt Berufsbildung Euregio Rhein-Waal). The main objective of IBER is to support schools that are looking for a partner with which to establish a student exchange programme, with the focus on schools in the area of the Euregio Rijn Waal.

IBER promotes exchanges and work placements for students and links suitable schools with one other. To that purpose, IBER publishes useful publicity material and fact sheets on the education systems of Germany and Holland.

Schools can apply to IBER (by using a very easily accessible procedure) to receive financial support to finance student exchange visits. There is only one condition stipulated regarding

the content of the exchange programme: as part of the programme, students must meet with their counterparts from the other country. Furthermore, the exchange programme may involve social or sporting events, joint lessons, theatre or museum visits, sport clinics, excursions to care centres for the elderly and to security services in stores and shopping centres.

IBER for example enables students to get acquainted with their neighbours and to learn about Euregional themes in the company of fellow students. The programme has been used for various purposes. For instance, teachers of German as a foreign language have used IBER to facilitate study visits to Germany in which students may obtain language practice for assignments in the form of direct communication with German-speakers.

Teachers of technical subjects have used IBER to organise joint visits involving Dutch and German students to companies working in the field of solar energy in Germany. During another visit, the students made a joint excursion to a huge football stadium making use of solar energy. The students produced reports and presented their impressions in German. In this way, obtaining knowledge about solar energy was combined with improving German-language skills.



Brochures.

Left: Project IBER.

Right: Euregio Rhine-Waal.

Results

The financial means available, the easy application procedure and the useful information concerning possible partner schools have proven to be a successful combination: over a two-year period, some 1,700 students went on one-day exchange visits and 650 students took part in exchange visits of several days' duration.

The example of the IBER project shows how concrete forms of cross-border cooperation are facilitated by easy-access exchanges and gaining mutual understanding through getting to know one another.

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Footnotes:

1 For further details see the article of Lenny van Kempen in chapter 2.

Hungarian – Slovakian Vocational Cross-border Training for Young People

The remit of the project is to give young people in the border area of Heves county in northern Hungary and the district of Rimaszombat in southern Slovakia vocational education to increase their prospects of finding employment and to avoid social welfare dependency. Course participants are young people in disadvantaged positions for various reasons, whereby the most important criterion for selection will be unemployment.

Border region: Hungary – Slovakia
Institution: EVENTUS Professional Training School of Arts and Business
(Üzleti Tudományok Szakközépiskola), Eger (Hungary)

Heves County in northern Hungary has about 12,000 inhabitants and the neighbouring district of Rimaszombat in southern Slovakia approximately 14,000 inhabitants. Of these, 5,000 and 6,000 respectively are aged under 30 years. Of these people, about 50% (c.5,700 people) left the education system after primary schooling. Adding to this a group comprising c. 5% of the total, which are disadvantaged for other reasons, the potential target group for such a course numbers c. 6,000 people.

The most serious problem such young people face is that they lack the necessary qualifications to obtain work. For this reason, the project offers vocational training courses for students with a low level of educational qualification in the professions basket-weaving and wicker furniture making and pottery. The reason why professional training of potters and basket weavers was chosen is that these professions are still popular today, that skills can be acquired relatively easily and have roots and a tradition in the region. Through introductory courses for the professions of potter, basket weaver and wicker furniture maker, the project helps preserve the traditions of the region of northern Hungary. If they complete these two courses, they will receive a professional certificate which is recognized within the OKJ (Hungarian List of officially registered professions), allowing them to practice as potters, basket weavers and wicker furniture makers. Further support is provided to help these participants find employment or start up in business themselves.

The project offers those students having higher qualifications than primary school certificates but who are unemployed or have lost their job for some reason, and those planning to start their own independent businesses, the opportunity to take the ECDL exam combined with business skills training. The reason for starting a course which prepares students for the ECDL exam is that within this target group there is a demand for information and communication technology and business skills training, both of which may help job seekers' employment prospects.

The project begins with one class for each profession and with 15 students per class. The project is organised by the Hungarian institute EVENTUS Professional Training School of Arts and Business and the First Grade Institution of Arts Education and Students Hostel in the city of Eger.

There is also a focus upon training Hungarian young people in Slovakia. The Slovakian partner institution is the Rimavská Sobota branch of the Academy of Education (Akadémia vzdelávania). On the Slovakian side, the Academy of Education plans to start a so-called “mirror programme”, offering similar courses to those provided on the Hungarian side of the border and also in Hungarian-Slovakian shared classes.

Each class has students from both Hungary and Slovakia. The rationale for involving Hungarian and Slovakian partner institutions in running joint classes is that on both sides of the border, young people face similar problems in getting into the labour market as a result of the transformation of the political and economic systems in both countries after 1989. The project also aims to use the mixed classes to give the students deeper insight into Hungarian and Slovakian working cultures and value systems, the economic situations of the neighbouring country and the opportunities to gain entry to the labour market.

EVENTUS, the Hungarian partner in the project, already has experience in teaching Slovakian citizens; at the present time, nine such people attend courses in the art department. They are well assimilated in the classes and their approach to work and diligence is above the average, with their “foreigner” functioning as a spur to their motivation. Slovakian students do not remain in Hungary after they have finished their courses but return to Slovakia, where they find jobs very quickly or are able to take part in further education at their local Hungarian-language higher education institutions. EVENTUS has a strong, close, and ongoing relationship with the schools of the Upper Hungarian area. EVENTUS distributes details of its programmes to Slovakian primary and secondary schools and has a regular connection with the organisation CSEMADOK¹ in Rimaszombat, the most important social and cultural organisation in Slovakia. In addition, EVENTUS organised a conference about the provision of lifelong learning in Hungary and Upper Hungary in which both Hungarian and Slovakian teachers took part.

The project also contributes to the National Development Plan concerning the aim of enhancing cooperation between Heves County and the District of Rimaszombat to harmonise the differences on both sides of the border.

At the result of the project, sixty people have so far obtained professional certificates giving them good chances to obtain employment, while on the Slovakian side, 120 people have been granted certificates, which together represent two percent of the entire target group mentioned above. Students are provided with up-to-date knowledge and skills conforming to European standards, which they can use on either side of the border.

EVENTUS wishes these training courses to become part of the regular course programme. It is anticipated that cooperation at the professional level with the Slovakian partner will be strengthened over time and eventually take on institutional form. Last but not least, the project contributes towards the process of European integration.

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Footnotes:

1 For more information see the article of Miroslav Michela in chapter 1.

Joint Training of Careers Advisers in Burgenland (Austria) and Vas (Hungary)

Qualified careers advisers in this field of specialisation get enabled to organise and carry out subsequent career orientation training courses for unemployed persons, young people without qualifications and adults forced to undertake a change of career as an instruments for an active labour market policy in the Hungary-Austria border region.

Border area:	Hungary – Austria
Institute:	Labour Market Bureau of the Vas County (Vas Megyei Munkaügyi Központ), Szombathely (Hungary)
Funding:	PHARE CBC Hungary-Austria INTERREG IIa Austria-Hungary

The training course for careers advisers was designed as a mirror programme: A close cooperation between Hungary and Austria was initiated and the project was implemented on both sides of the border: in Szombathely on the Hungarian side, funded by the PHARE CBC programme, and in Oberwart on the Austrian side, funded by INTERREG IIa. Trainers graduating from the programme are supposed to organise training courses themselves and to provide career orientation for their respective target groups.

The beneficiary of the project was the Labour Market Bureau of the Vas County (Vas Megyei Munkaügyi Központ), located in Szombathely, Hungary. This organisation carried the ultimate responsibility for management and supervision of the project activities. The implementation was carried out by *Reginnov Tanácsadó KFT.*, a firm located in Vasvár which was contracted for this purpose. The project involved a close cooperation between the Vas County Labour Market Bureau and the Vocational Training Institution (Berufsförderungsinstitut Burgenland) located in Oberwart on the Austrian side of the border.

After passing through entrance tests, 14 Hungarian participants were selected. Equal numbers of Hungarian and Austrian students participated both at Szombathely and at Oberwart in mixed groups in the training. The lectures were held by Austrian, Hungarian and German area specialists or lecturers. The actual duration of the project was from January 1998 to September 1999.

The structure of the training programme was divided into three parts: theory, practical application and group supervision and evaluation of the course. The curriculum of the theoretical part included German-language training, seminar planning, communication and negotiation techniques, labour market studies, issues relating to employment and unemployment, professional practice, conflict handling and the specific practice of careers advising. By the end of the theoretical training, the participants had to prepare a concluding essay on a subject covered during the course. This represented the final examination the

successful completion of which enabled them to obtain a certificate after the successful organisation of a training course conducted by the individual participants themselves. For the Hungarian participants, the curriculum included an intensive training in German language. During the course, the Hungarian participants made good progress in German language and became acquainted with new and innovative methods to deal with labour market problems.

The project has resulted in the graduation of qualified careers advisers in this field of specialisation, who are enabled to organise and carry out subsequent career orientation training courses for unemployed persons, young people without qualifications and adults forced to undertake a change of career, in different Hungarian counties. So far, about 10 training courses have been carried out and more than 200 unemployed persons have participated in these courses. Documentation of conference results, handbooks on career orientation methods and further written material in order to disseminate information relating to such programmes have been published and distributed throughout the country.

The project has suffered from several delays: Firstly, during the preparation of the tender documentation, and again during the time interval between tender evaluation and the conclusion of the service contract. For the first sub-project, the contracts were finally concluded in March 1997. In the case of the second sub-project, a serious problem emerged when the funds for the Austrian partner were approved but no approval was confirmed for the Hungarian partner. Without PHARE CBC approval, no joint project could have been implemented. Finally, the project started in January 1998.

Follow-up activities, including a symposium and a study trip to Bavaria. Despite some time delay due partly to incompatibilities between the PHARE CBC and the INTERREG programme, the project has been completed. The Hungarian Labour Market Fund has undertaken to finance the subsequent training courses.

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Education Networks

The Euregio Maas-Rhine Education Network

The Euregio Maas-Rhine Education Network (Bildungs-Netzwerk Euregio Maas-Rhein) is a communication platform supporting networking between teachers in the Euregio Maas-Rhine, aiming to offer opportunities for continuing education on Euregional themes.

Border area:	German – Belgium – Netherlands
Institution:	Adult Education Centre Aachen (Volkshochschule Aachen), Aachen (Germany)
Funding:	Federal Government Programme Learning Regions (Bundesprogramm Lernende Regionen)

The Euregio Maas-Rhine¹ Education Network was officially launched in June 2004, to build on the activities of the working group “Without Borders“ (Grenzen-Los)², which has organised an annual two-day course in continuing education for teachers since 1998. Since most of the average total of 25 participants came from the German part of the border region, the aim was and remains to expand participation to other areas. To achieve this, contact was made with already existing working groups for specialist teachers in the areas of geography, history and foreign-language teaching in the Euregio Maas-Rhine (*Euregio Historici*, *Euregio-Geographen* and *Euregiomag*).

In the mid-1990s, a cross-border working group for history teachers with the name *Euregio Historici* was founded. The group leaders came from the Netherlands and Belgian Limburg, the Region Aachen and the Belgian province of Lüttich. The events organised by the group took place in each of the participating regions in turn. The participants came from all the participating regions. Special mention should be made of the participation of up to twenty students from Lüttich, which thus meant that this region was also well-represented in the student group. In general, the participants came from a larger geographic area than was usually the case at continuing education courses organised by the working group “Without Borders”. For financial reasons, however, and due to decreasing involvement by some of the organisers, activities were scaled back and by 2002, the continuing education programme ceased altogether.

The working group Euregio-geographers (Euregio-Geographen) was founded around 1980 by a professor at the Geographical Institute at the *Rheinisch-Westfälischen Technischen Hochschule Aachen*, with the aim of increasing awareness of the diverse aspects of the region’s geography. The working group, including a geography teacher from each of the four sub-regions, organised an annual event, the Euregio geography days (Euregio-Geographentage) in all four regions. The conference programme combined one to two academic lectures in the morning with afternoon excursions. Half of the costs of the event were covered by the Euregio Maas-Rhine. Participants, roughly 30 men and 30 women, came primarily from South Limburg and the Region Aachen, with a few coming from the Belgian provinces of

Lüttich and Limburg. This working group, however, also suffered from a decline in involvement over time. One of the major problems was the lack of foreign-language skills among younger colleagues. The last geography day took place in March 2001 in South Limburg.

Since the late 1970s, language teachers in Belgium from the Catholic education system have worked together to produce common teaching materials. In 1994, the idea arose of seeking contact with colleagues in other sub-regions of the Euregio. In 1996, the working group *Euregiomag* received financial assistance for the first time from the Euregio Maas-Rhine. This enabled an exchange programme for schoolchildren and continuing education programme for teachers to be funded. A noteworthy aspect of this was that the working group also received support from the greater region of Saar-Lor-Lux³. Up to 100 teachers have attended continuing education courses run by the working group *Euregiomag*; in other words, far more than in the courses run by the other two working groups mentioned above. It remains a problem, however, that despite the participation of a partner institution in the Netherlands, few Dutch teachers could be persuaded to get involved in running the project. In 2003, funding ceased from the Euregio Maas-Rhine.

The three working groups were thus all fighting the same problems at the same time: the lack of funding for the continuing education programme. The reason why funding was discontinued was that the Euregio Maas-Rhine only wished to finance projects run jointly by the three working groups, and pushed for the groups to be merged into one working group. Just at this time, the Adult Education Centre Aachen (Volkshochschule Aachen)⁴ had established contacts with each of the three working groups separately. This led to the suggestion that one application should be made to the Euregio for the next programme of continuing education courses. The Education Centre was not only the applicant in this case but also took over the organisational role. There were many good reasons for this. For one thing, there were too few younger geographers and historians getting involved, with the result that a few individuals had to carry the organisational burden alone. Only the *Euregiomag* working group actually had an active steering committee. The Education Centre was able to use the support given via the project “Learning without borders” (Lernen ohne Grenzen / LoG) in the framework of the Federal Government Programme Learning Regions (Bundesprogramm Lernende Regionen)⁵ to take on the organisational management, particularly concerning the time-consuming process of making funding applications. Furthermore, the Adult Education Centre Aachen had gained wide experience through its participation in other projects involving cross-border cooperation and also in producing new teaching materials and organising guided tours in the border region. The latter is an important component of the continuing education programmes, particularly those involving geographers and historians.

To assess the needs for euregional continuing education for teachers, a questionnaire was compiled and sent to various continuing education institutes for teachers and also to a

number of schools. In total, 47 questionnaires were completed, from which the following conclusions could be formulated: A euregional teaching approach seems to be regarded as less essential than teaching on national, local and regional themes. In fact, a little more than one tenth of responders said that they had never touched on euregional themes during teaching. When asked why this might be so, two-thirds of responders said that this would not fit into existing curricula. Roughly half of responders said that they lacked the time necessary to gain an understanding of this theme. Forty percent of responders blamed a lack of background knowledge. At the same time, all those responding agreed that the theme was an important one. Among German responders, the problems with the curriculum and lack of time were more often mentioned. Among Dutch responders, in contrast, lack of background understanding was more often given as the reason for not covering the theme. Responders held the production of new teaching materials to be as important as expanding their knowledge of the region. Further down the list came the wish to receive concrete suggestions for teaching approaches to this theme. Exchanging ideas with other colleagues was clearly seen as less relevant. Getting to know new colleagues was seen as more important than exchanging ideas with colleagues already known to the responders. The generally strong interest shown by German responders in euregional themes was also reflected in their response to the question of participating in euregional continuing education courses for teachers. To summarise: continuing education programmes for teachers on euregional themes were seen as important or, to formulate it differently, continuing education for teachers on euregional themes was seen as something which should receive funding.

Further questions in the survey referred to the production of teaching materials. The most positive response was given to the theme of “The Beginning of Industrialisation in the Euregio”. However, other themes such as “The Social Aspects of the Coal Mining Industry in the Euregio” were also among those where many teachers indicated they would like to have more information. The great interest shown in these themes may be connected with the fact that many of those who responded had already completed a continuing education course on the theme of industrialisation. It may also be seen however as an indication of the strong economic cross-ties within the Euregio Maas-Rhine. Other themes which were also judged important were (labour-related) migration, the *Westwall* (a defensive fortification line from the time of the National Socialists), the persecution of Jewish people during the Nazi period and the revolutionary year 1848. Where some themes were concerned, there was an obvious difference of interest between German and Dutch teachers. In general, the German teachers showed greater interest, except where the theme of cultural conflict and dialects was concerned; here, Dutch teachers showed most interest. This may be explained by the fact that dialects have remained stronger on the Netherlands side of the border. The Catholic Church also played a more important role in social life on the German side of the border. Themes which both Dutch and German teachers found equally important were the First World War, border alterations, living and cross-border commuting over the years,

infrastructure, folk-tales and sayings, and the importance of the European Union for the Euregio. To summarise: there are many themes to choose from when designing a joint programme of continuing education for teachers.

On 1 June 2004, the Euregio Maas-Rhine Education Network was formally founded with the signing of a cooperation agreement. It was agreed that a joint meeting would be organised as a rule once a year, each time in a different participating sub-region of the Euregio. This meeting should offer both further training and the chance for teachers to exchange views and experience with colleagues. In autumn 2003, the Adult Education Centre Aachen had organised two continuing education courses, together with the working group of historians and geographers, on the themes “The industrial Development of the Textile Industry in the Euregio” and “Structural Transformation of the Former Mining Areas of the Euregio Maas-Rhine”, in which 40 and 15 participants respectively took part. In October 2004, the first joint course in continuing education organised by the education network took place on the theme of *Verviers*⁶. Although 100 participants had been expected, only 80 actually took part. Nonetheless, a positive aspect was that, as hoped, new participants were involved. And although there was generally low participation in the course on structural transformation of the mining areas, several people attended from Belgian Limburg, an area which the working group Without Borders had been previously unable to attract to such events. The Verviers event in contrast received many participants from the Belgian province of Lüttich. Most of these, however, were language teachers, for whom Euregional cooperation comes more naturally.

The working groups involved in the Education Network have up to now dealt differently with the problem of linguistic diversity. The geographers initially offered translation services which were later dropped for financial reasons. Language teachers naturally had no problem with this issue. In addition, they always offer several workshops at the same time, so that each workshop can take place in one language only. Nonetheless, it would be important for participants to encounter the languages of the neighbouring regions in order to increase interest in language learning as a whole. This is the reason why courses offered by the “Without Borders” working group involved all regional participants in the same event. Although the idea behind this is that all participants should have the chance to speak in their own languages, for practical reasons the courses take German as the conference language. Where lectures are given in Dutch, a summarised translation is provided in German. This is not provided in simultaneous form but is limited to summaries provided at intervals throughout the lecture. This is always received positively by participants, yet there is still a problem where a third language is involved, since this form of communication is then no longer practicable.

Problems arise where joint courses are organised for foreign-language teachers on the one hand and history and geography teachers on the other. Their interests are simply too

divergent. There are also different expectations in terms of course fees between the historians and geographers on one side and the language teachers on the other. Furthermore, Belgian colleagues push for as low as possible course fees since they are expected to carry the cost themselves. There are also differences in relation to the day on which such events should take place. Geography and history teachers have always met on a weekday, while language teachers have held their meetings on Saturdays. After November 2004, when the historians and geographers experimented with holding their meeting on a Saturday and met with disappointing attendance levels, it was decided that meetings should take place on separate days, with geographers and historians meeting on Fridays and language teachers a day later, on Saturdays. The hope was that by offering the courses on consecutive days, the two events could be presented as a single course unit. A small discount for those attending both events was offered to make joint attendance more attractive.

Last but not least, these small organisational details show just how many obstacles remain both in cross-disciplinary and cross-border cooperation for the Euregio Maas-Rhine Education Network to overcome. Since their work is just beginning, however, the chances of successful future cooperation nonetheless seem high.

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Footnotes:

- 1 www.euregio-mr.org
- 2 For further details see Ehlers / Dedeurwaerder-Haas in chapter 2.
- 3 www.grossregion.net / see also the article of Wilfried Schmidt in chapter 1.
- 4 For more information see Partner Profile.
- 5 See www.lernen-ohne-grenzen.de and www.lernende-regionen.info. For further details see Ehlers / Dedeurwaerder-Haas in chapter 2.
- 6 Up to the 20th century Verviers was worldwide known as centre of wool and textile industry.

Cross-border Adult Education Network Bratislava – Trnava – Burgenland

Growing interest in cross-border cooperation in the field of adult education following the fall of the Iron Curtain and Slovakia's accession to the EU were the catalysts for networking activities in the area of adult education in the Austria-Slovakia border region.

Border area:	Slovakia - Austria
Institutions:	Academy of Education (Akadémia vzdelávania), Bratislava (Slovakia) Research Society Burgenland (Burgenländische Forschungsgesellschaft), Eisenstadt (Austria)
Funding:	PHARE CBC Slovakia-Austria

Since the fall of the Iron Curtain in 1989, or at least since Slovakia's entry into the EU on 1 May 2004, there has been a growing interest in cross-border educational cooperation, in the development of educational partnerships and joint participation in Europe-wide projects in the Austria-Slovakia border region. Many adult education institutions are interested in cross-border cooperation and looking for partners in neighbouring countries. The "Cross-border Adult Education Network in the Austria-Slovakia Border Region" project thus aimed to link up institutions, businesses and initiatives concerning general and vocational adult education as well as university and university-level education and continuing education in the Austria-Slovakia border region.



From the right to the left: Study Visits at the Economic Chamber of Burgenland, at the Adult Education Centres of Burgenland and at the Vocational Training Institute Burgenland.

In particular, the project was intended to increase the general level of knowledge and mutual awareness of the education and qualification system in the neighbouring countries, as well as to provide a basis for future cooperation (both institutional and project-related) between educational and qualifying institutions in the border area. It was also anticipated that the activities should support the development of common and sustainable strategies

to address the challenge of lifelong learning, to prepare institutions and businesses for the then imminent EU expansion into eastern Europe, and to strengthen the European and international dimensions of adult education programmes.

The target groups were institutions providing formal and non-formal vocational and general adult education, NGOs and private businesses involved in education and continuing education, as well as university and non-university continuing education institutions.

The project ran between January and September 2003 and was undertaken jointly by the Academy of Education (Akadémia vzdelávania) in Bratislava and the Research Society Burgenland (Burgenländischen Forschungsgesellschaft) in Austria. The project-executing organisation was the Academy of Education, which had made the project application in the framework of the PHARE CBC programmes Slovakia-Austria. The project leaders were a representative of the Research Society Burgenland and representatives of the Academy of Education.

In April 2003, a preparatory meeting took place at the headquarters of the Academy of Education in Bratislava. Participants representing numerous education institutions came from both Austria and Slovakia. At this meeting, the following project activities were planned:

- (1) Two cross-border study trips to Eisenstadt, Austria, to include both a tour of adult education institutions and also shared get together meetings. The visits were to last 2 to 3 days with 15 people / institutions coming from the defined target group. The study trips aimed to strengthen contacts between education institutions in Burgenland and Slovakia and cross-border cooperation in the field of education, in the context of Slovakia's forthcoming entry to the EU. A long-term goal was the transfer of know-how between education institutions in the border region, setting up exchange programmes for students, teaching staff and management, and joint participation in Europe-wide education and research programmes in the form of project partnerships. The workshops encouraged contact between the institutions as well as between individuals, with the aim of mutual exchange of cross-border perspectives, experiences and expectations, and helped raise awareness about the positive impact of future regional cross-border cooperation activities.
- (2) A jointly-organised concluding conference in Bratislava on the theme of cross-border cooperation to which institutions from both Slovakia and Burgenland that had taken part in the study trips in Austria were to be invited.
- (3) Creation of a website with a database containing adult education institutions in the project region of Bratislava and Trnava. To this end, a survey questionnaire was to be formulated and sent to relevant institutions in the region. Return of the questionnaire by the institutions was a prerequisite for their inclusion in the database. The Slovakian version of the website was funded by the budget of the PHARE CBC programme. However, a German- and English-language version of the website should also be created.

German and English were chosen as the working languages of the project, and the involvement of interpreters during joint activities was agreed.

Cross-border Study Trips in Austria

The first study trip to Eisenstadt, Austria, took place in July 2003 and was organised on location by the Research Society Burgenland. Participants from Slovakia included staff from the Akadémia Vzdelávania and a number of the Academy's regional branches, and staff from the Centre for Continuing Education at the Bratislava University of Economics. The aim of both workshops was to provide an opportunity to meet with the education institutions from Burgenland and to discuss the potential for cross-border cooperation and for joint projects. Another important part of the study visits involved the tours of the Economic Promotion Institute of Burgenland (Wirtschaftsförderungsinstitut Burgenland, or WIFI)¹ and the Eisenstadt College of Higher Education (Fachhochschule Eisenstadt)², as well as the adult education institution Volksbildungswerk Regionalstelle Nord in Burgenland.

The second study visit took place in September 2003. On this occasion, representatives of different education and academic institutions from Slovakia took part in the exchange and networking meetings. This study trip was also organised by the Research Society Burgenland. In total, 16 institutions from Burgenland and Slovakia were represented at the workshop meetings. During this visit, a date was agreed upon for the planned joint conference in Bratislava. A tour of an organisation was also included in this study trip, this time to the practice firm operated by the Vocational Training Institute Burgenland (Berufsförderungsinstitut Burgenland)³ in Eisenstadt.

Concluding Conference in Bratislava

The concluding conference finally took place in September in Bratislava. Adult education institutions from Burgenland were also invited to participate. Themes covered included the perspectives for cross-border cooperation - this concerned the chances and opportunities for participating in EU projects - which were discussed by many specialists present at the meeting. The entire conference proceedings were simultaneously translated into German.

Internet Portal

The Internet portal of the project went online in December 2003. It was created by the Academy of Education and is available in Slovak, German and English languages. The database forms the core of the portal and lists all the members of the adult education network. A questionnaire produced by the Academy of Education and sent to education institutions in the Slovakian border region had produced a body of data which could be presented in this Internet database. On the Burgenland side of the border, institutions that

had taken part in the study trips and the concluding conference were included in the database.

Problems

The project had relatively little time for implementation, since approval was given after some delay in January 2003, the contract was signed at the end of February 2003, and the project was due to end on 30 September 2003; by this time, all project activities had to have taken place. Furthermore, a so-called mirror project, for which the Research Society Burgenland had applied for funding in the context of the INTERREG IIIa Austria-Slovakia programme, was not successful in obtaining funding. Despite great efforts to persuade them otherwise, the Provincial Government of Burgenland had refused to approve the project. This meant that project activities on the Burgenland side of the border were limited and, in particular, the joint database could not be created as planned.

Outlook

A follow-up activity involved the participation of two representatives of the Research Society Burgenland in a “Lifelong Learning Week” in Slovakia at the beginning of November 2003, at the invitation of the Academy of Education. Mobile teams made a tour of regional branches of the Academy throughout the week, during which the visiting partners from other countries (the Burgenland Research Society together with colleagues from the Bavarian Association of Adult Education Colleges and the Comenius Academy in Prague) reported on their experiences of European cooperation projects in order to encourage the regional outposts of the Academy to seek to participate in such projects themselves. In the process, many new contacts were made which have already led to new project plans being formulated.

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Footnotes:

- 1 www.bgld.wifi.at
- 2 www.fh-burgenland.at
- 3 www.bfi-burgenland.at

European Cooperation Projects Organised by the Folk High School Hoyerswerda as a Means to Combat Racism and Xenophobia

The negative publicity generated by the xenophobic riots of 1991 in Hoyerswerda formed the fundamental consideration and catalyst for the European cooperation activities run by the Adult Education Centre Hoyerswerda. The adult education college wanted to use its resources to improve the image of the city and the region as a whole.

Border area: Germany – Poland
Institution: Adult Education Centre Hoyerswerda
(Volkshochschule Hoyerswerda)

The cross-border activities organised by the Adult Education Centre Hoyerswerda are closely allied to European programmes and have involved partners in more than 10 European countries since 1994. The European activities of the Adult Education Centre Hoyerswerda began, when a partnership agreement was signed between the Adult Education Centre and Greenwich Community College in London. It was seen as important that the partnership should not only be confirmed on paper but also be brought alive through the exchange of course participants and lecturers. The next step in this cooperation involved the implementation of European cooperation projects (pilot projects), which required finding at least one further partner institution. The adult education college Huittisten Kansalaisopisto in Huittinen, Finland, duly became the second European partner institution of the Volkshochschule.

All three institutions, the Adult Education Centre Hoyerswerda, Greenwich Community College and Huittisten Kansalaisopisto, agreed upon a common theme in the area of political education. The institution responsible for managing the project was Greenwich Community College. The aim was to formulate a common teaching programme for a seminar on the theme of Europe that could be offered with the same content at all three institutions. The cooperation between the institutions concerned not only discussion about specialist content material but also about the methodology to be used. Following the involvement of the two partners from Great Britain and Finland, new partners joined the project from Ireland, Sweden, Italy, Spain, Belgium and Poland. Pilot projects in the area of culture / creative work were undertaken with England and Finland and with Finland and Poland. In each case, the coordinating and managing institution was the Adult Education Centre Hoyerswerda. Exchange in terms of vocational and linguistic continuing education with appropriate partner organisations was undertaken in the framework of the EU programmes LEONARDO DA VINCI and SOCRATES / GRUNDTVIG.

Impact

The impact on the region and the Adult Education Centre Hoyerswerda as an institution itself was in both cases substantial. To begin with, this was the first time that a course for vocational and linguistic continuing education was offered in the region, and the programme was expanded, year on year. In the form of diverse pilot projects, these European activities also had an impact on the Volkshochschule. New course programmes could be provided, which were designed in cooperation with the other European partners, particularly in the subject areas of politics / society and culture / creative design. Courses which started life as the result of pilot projects have meanwhile become important constituents of the overall course programme in adult continuing education at the Adult Education Centre. These activities also boosted the reputation of the Volkshochschule, since it was the only such institution in the region to have integrated this European dimension within its course provision. Indeed, the Adult Education Centre Hoyerswerda was the only Volkshochschule in Germany with a specialist subject area, European relations, run by a full-time member of staff, which enabled the application and accounting procedures to be carried out with more speed and in a more focused way.

Problems

The reason why the Volkshochschule showed such engagement in the European context was, as described at the beginning, the desire to help improve the reputation of the city of Hoyerswerda in Germany and in Europe. However, local politicians showed a consistent lack of interest in the successes achieved in the process. This is all the more mystifying since such politicians speak constantly of the need to create a positive image for the city and the region as a whole. This meant that regular contact with the local authorities of the Hoyerswerda municipality brought problems rather than real support and recognition for the work of the Volkshochschule.

Town Twinning

Following on from a number of successful joint projects, the Volkshochschule tried in particular to strengthen its relationship with the adult education college in Huittinen, Finland. In the course of this, the director of the Adult Education Centre Hoyerswerda held talks with the respective mayors about the opportunities for extending connections between the schools in both cities. In 1998, the cities signed a town twinning agreement. Following this, the Volkshochschule together with the municipal department for culture organised the first Hoyerswerda culture festival (Hoyerswerdaer Kulturtage) in Huittinen in September 2001. Over three days, the culture of the city and region of Hoyerswerda was presented in the Finnish twin town. In May 2003, the Volkshochschule and the municipal department

of culture organised a return visit, presenting a Huittinen culture festival for the first time in Hoyerswerda. Thus, the initial partnership between two adult education institutions developed into a continuing partnership between the two cities.

Adult Education Centre Against Xenophobia

In order to offer clients of the Adult Education Centre Hoyerswerda an adequate programme in vocational continuing education, study visits of several weeks' duration at various European partner institutions were organised in the framework of the Leonardo da Vinci programme. In addition to language courses in the national language of the host institution, a specialist course on the theme of the project and work experience with appropriate companies and institutions, participants also learned about the social differences and similarities, mentalities, history and culture of the host country. On the other hand, the study trips helped combat the image of Hoyerswerda as a xenophobic city. At the end of these vocational continuing education courses, participants received certificates according to a scheme recognised and standardised Europe-wide, the Euro pass. This records the various periods of education or continuing education undertaken by the participant abroad, which is of great use to those seeking employment, as confirmation of personal engagement, flexibility and motivation. Furthermore, special further training programmes in other countries were offered to teaching staff at the adult education centre too. This initiative began through a collaboration with Bay Language School in Inverin, Ireland. Language lecturers were funded by the EU-programmes SOCRATES and LINGUA B, to expand their knowledge of methodology and teaching theory in courses specifically focused on the clientele of adult education colleges. The skills they obtained in these courses made an immediate impact on the quality of language learning courses at the Volkshochschule. Since 1995, freelance lecturers have regularly taken part in this form of continuing education. This course provision was later extended to lecturers teaching other subject areas. Since 1999, regular events have been held at partner institutions, in which the course directors from all subject areas of the Volkshochschule have had the chance to update their knowledge. This form of continuing education has been financed by the SOCRATES / GRUNDTVIG 3. In this context, the Adult Education Centre Hoyerswerda now operates across Germany as a facilitator. In the SOCRATES / GRUNDTVIG 2, the VHS also operates in a learning partnership together with institutions from five other European countries. The theme of the project is the active integration of ethnic German resettlers, foreign immigrants and asylum seekers in their respective communities. For this purpose, new teaching programmes are to be developed, which support linguistic and social integration.

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Partner Profiles

Volkshochschule Aachen / Adult Education Centre Aachen

General Information on Type of Institution

The Adult Education Centre Aachen (Volkshochschule Aachen / VHS Aachen) is the second largest institution for education in the region of Aachen, preceded only by the Technical University Aachen, and offers a variety of activities within the area of general and professional continuing education. It is a non-profit organisation and an authorised centre for continuing education in the city of Aachen with the legal status of an *Öffentlich-rechtliche Einrichtung in Form eines Eigenbetriebes*.

A total of 120 people are employed (80 full-time employees). Approximately 60,000 students (of whom 70% are women) from nearly 70 nations attend courses, seminars, lectures and study trips at the VHS annually.

Aims, Objectives, Programmes, Target Groups

There are three main fields which distinguish the Volkshochschule Aachen and create its profile: (1) second-chance education, (2) advanced vocational training, including data processing and computer applications and finally (3) there is a very extensive language programme, with a particularly strong emphasis on German courses for foreigners. Besides this, there are programmes in the field of political and cultural education, physics and technology, medicine and health, dance and movement, and much more. Tailored training programmes are also available for companies and other institutions, which include the entire educational range of courses offered at the Volkshochschule Aachen. Of particular interest is the observatory of the Education Centre, at which opportunities are provided to observe the planetary system. In addition to the regular semester programme from September to June, the Centre offers special courses during the summer school holidays.

Cross-border Relations

The Volkshochschule Aachen is experienced in organising in-service training for teachers in the German-Dutch-Belgian border region. The seminars deal with historical topics that concern the border regions. An integral part of these in-service training programmes are study visits to places of historical interest. Additionally the Education Centre develops training materials that deal with the border region. Recently, the Centre also started to participate in cross-border projects that have been financed by European programmes such as INTERREG and SOCRATES / GRUNDTVIG. An important reason for the involvement in cross-border cooperation is that peaceful coexistence in the border region is only possible

where there is knowledge about each other's historical background. There have been conflicts in the past that have their influence on community relations today. A major concern for the Volkshochschule Aachen is exploring the regional history of the Second World War and how this memory is kept alive. This is not possible without involving the neighbours, who suffered from the German occupation in the period 1940-1945.

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Akadémia vzdelávania (AV) / Academy of Education

General information on type of institution

The Academy of Education (Akadémia vzdelávania / AV) is a non-formal and non-profit making educational institution in the field of adult and further education. AV is the largest and oldest institution for the education of adults in Slovakia with more than 37 branches across the country. The headquarters are in Bratislava. AV comprises more than 2,000 registered members working as elected officials in professional bodies, as lecturers, course leaders, professional counsellors and education coordinators; more than 80,000 students attend its courses annually.

Aims, Objectives, Programmes, Target Groups

The Academy of Education focuses on lifelong education aimed at attaining and extending professional, cultural and social knowledge in the name of humanism, democracy and political pluralism. The AV's activities are oriented towards all social groups. Its purpose is to enable all students to improve their chances on the labour market and improve their professional skills and their knowledge of foreign languages and to give them a competitive advantage.

The clients of the AV are important Slovak institutions, reputable companies in many spheres of the private sector, employment agencies and self-financing citizens. Thanks to a portfolio offering training courses and seminar meetings, AV attracts clients from almost all areas of social life: banking, insurance, industry, education, civil service and many others.

The network of more than 37 branches throughout Slovakia offers an extensive range of programmes. The AV's vocational and educational programmes consist of: vocational training for the unemployed; economics and management programmes; social work and teacher training programmes; language courses; IT training; employment consultancy services; handicrafts and salon services training; collaborative degree-level programmes in cooperation with several Slovak and foreign universities; non-vocational study programmes.

Being oriented especially towards the lifelong education of adults, the AV offers a wide variety of courses for students, managers and professionals from various disciplines, including preparation for internationally approved certificates. AV issues certificates accredited by the Ministry of Education of the Slovak Republic as well as internationally

valid certificates, for example Xpert (European Computer Passport), TELC (The European Language Certificate) and the IMA certificate (in cooperation with City & Guilds).

Since the Project Centre Department was established within the AV, this administrates all activities related to a wide variety of projects. Many of the branch offices in different regions of the Slovak Republic have participated in PHARE projects that relate to adult education and human resources development. AV obtained support for 17 projects within the scheme for human resources development of the PHARE programme announced by the NÚP (National Labour Office). In 2003, 15 such projects were carried out and AV is currently involved in many foreign projects as well. The tradition of language teaching in AV goes back to the year 1990, when the Academy of Education launched its language teaching programme. Since then the teaching of foreign languages has become the most important and essential part of lifelong education for adults. It makes up 40% of all activities in the field of adult education and about 30,000 students attend language courses each year. In the Academy of Education, teaching is performed according to the uniform methodology developed by the Language Centre at the AV Bratislava head office. The Language Centre is also responsible for monitoring the teaching process in all 37 branch offices throughout Slovakia. To develop students' language skills, the teaching is carried out in accordance with the standard effective method commonly used in all European countries and based on the Common European Framework for Modern Languages established by the Association of Language Testers in Europe (ALTE) and used for a wide range of European languages.

Cross-border Relations

The Academy of Education is in contact with similar organisations in many European countries and is a member of the European Association for Education of Adult / EAEA. It has broad experience in international activities and projects. The objective in participating in cross-border cooperation is to make use of its great potential for cooperation activities in the border regions. As Slovakia is a relatively small country, over 50% of AV branch offices operate in cross-border regions, as does the headquarters of the AV in Bratislava. There are also historical reasons for such cooperation, rooted in the period of the Austro-Hungarian empire, when Slovakia was a part of the empire and Bratislava, the capital city, was an area with three official languages (German, Hungarian and Slovak). The need to understand each other is even more important in the cross-border region due to the everyday contacts between citizens from both sides of the border. Adult education is an opportunity to strengthen and improve this communication.

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Berufsförderungsinstitut Burgenland (bfi) / Vocational Training Institute Burgenland

General Information on Type of Institution

There are vocational training institutes in all nine of Austria's federal provinces. They comprise the largest education and training institution serving working people in Austria. They are run by the Chambers of Labour (Kammern für Arbeiter und Angestellte) and the Austrian Trade Union Federation (Österreichischer Gewerkschaftsbund). The Vocational Training Institute Burgenland (Berufsförderungsinstitut Burgenland / bfi Burgenland) was founded in February 1991 as an independent provincial association in the province of Burgenland and is a non-profit organisation. The headquarters are located in the southern Burgenland city of Oberwart. The bfi Burgenland has branches in each of the seven administrative districts of Burgenland and oversees more than 20 training institutions. The focus of its work lies with vocational training and continuing education for working people and also with educational and employment measures for the unemployed and those at risk of unemployment.

In 2003, the vocational training institutes in Austria served a total of 160,917 course participants, 14,858 courses were taught and c. 1.5 million teaching units were offered; c. 890 courses with 9,270 participants and c. 82,350 course units were undertaken.

Aims, Objectives, Programmes, Target Groups

The aims and visions of the vocational training institutes are based on the principle that every person has a right to education. Thus the bfi's activities aim primarily to offer such people the best possible opportunities for vocational and continuing education in an accessible location. The bfi aims to respond to the needs of working people and naturally also to respond to economic conditions. Programmes with a particular emphasis on work-oriented training aim to offer all people the opportunity to improve their chances of integration or advancement in working life. Person-centred training that takes account of the social situation of participants means that an individual training programme can be offered to each person.

The bfi Burgenland is tasked with developing education programmes that take account of regional conditions and requirements. In Burgenland, there is a particular need for skilled and specialised workers in order to encourage companies to establish a presence in the province. In addition, tailored programmes are offered to meet the requirements of businesses and organisational development. The bfi Burgenland offers courses, seminars and workshops in the following areas: office management and languages; business skills and data

management; metal and electricity industry; transport and technical services; health and wellness; tourism; leisure; social and vocational pedagogy.

The following methods are used in teaching: learning by doing, intensive work with small groups and high trainer : student ratio, continual feedback in individual consultation, individual supervision for specific target groups, continual assessment of learning progress, analysis of seminar feedback and improvement options, alteration and flexible adaptation of course contents in response to actual conditions.

Cooperation with the Austrian Employment Service (Arbeitsmarktservice / AMS) enables numerous intensive training courses to be offered in a wide range of specialist areas. These are all-day courses which may last several semesters and are entirely financed by the AMS. Participants are always referred to the programme by regional branches of the AMS.

Cross-border Relations

The bfi Burgenland has been active for several years in the area of cross-border cooperation on education. Pilot projects include the transnational training association for skilled metalworkers, and the cooperative education project "Hospitality Service Assistants in Health Tourism" (see chapter 4). In 2002, a subsidiary of the bfi Burgenland was founded in Szombathely, Hungary.

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Burgenländische Forschungsgesellschaft (BFG) / Research Society Burgenland

General Information on Type of Institution

The Research Society Burgenland (Burgenländische Forschungsgesellschaft / BFG) was founded in 1987 as an NGO and non-profit organisation. It has the legal status of an Verein and is located in Eisenstadt, the capital of the Austrian federal province of Burgenland. It is run by an honorary board and a board of management and has four permanent members of staff. The BFG is an interface between science and research on the one hand and adult education on the other. The focus of its work lies with questions of the historical, political, social and cultural development of Burgenland and its translation into regional education activities. In the course of its work, the BFG participates as coordinator or partner in a range of regional and transnational projects, organises conferences, lectures and workshops, and publishes project reports and other publications, as well as functioning as a regional service and contact point for students, academics, teachers and those working in adult education. The BFG has from its inception been a regular member of the Burgenland Association of Adult Education Institutions (Burgenländischen Konferenz der Erwachsenenbildung / BuKEB).

Aims, Objectives, Programmes, Target Groups

Since Austria joined the EU in 1996, the *BFG* has taken part in various EU programmes and thereby made a significant contribution to strengthening the European dimension of adult education in Burgenland. The *BFG* was the first and remains the only adult education institution in Burgenland to have coordinated a transnational cooperation project in the framework of the SOCRATES / GRUNDTVIG 1. The *BFG* was also the first such organisation in Burgenland to participate with a project in the GRUNDTVIG 2 (Learningpartnerships) programme. Since then, the BFG has participated either as a coordinating or partner body in all four of the GRUNDTVIG programmes. An important factor here was the cooperation between the *Burgenländische Forschungsgesellschaft* and the *Burgenländischen Konferenz der Erwachsenenbildung (BuKEB)*. This is certainly one reason for the subsequent participation by other member organisations of *BuKEB* in the GRUNDTVIG programme, which has led to ever greater involvement of the European dimension in adult education in Burgenland. The *BFG* is the regional promoter for the SOCRATES / GRUNDTVIG programme in Austria.

Cross-border Relations

Burgenland is one of the nine federal provinces of Austria situated in the east of the country and with borders to Slovakia, Hungary and Slovenia. Since the fall of the Iron Curtain, and more recently since the accession of Hungary and Slovakia to the European Union, special attention has been paid to cross-border cooperation in the Austria-Hungary-Slovakian border region. In the context of the question of the role border regions may play in the process of European integration, the focus lies with developing common structures and networks in non-school based education and in the area of lifelong learning. The aim is to accelerate the process of cross-border cooperation in the Burgenland-Hungary-Slovakian border region and to build up information and communications networks. This can be achieved through the organisation of contact meetings, study trips, workshops, seminars and conferences. This is intended to create a basis upon which to plan the implementation of transnational projects in the future.

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Burgenländische Konferenz der Erwachsenenbildung (BuKEB) / Association of Adult Education Institutions in Burgenland

General Information on Type of Institution

The Association of Adult Education Institutions in Burgenland (Burgenländische Konferenz der Erwachsenenbildung / BuKEB) is an independent forum for exchange and cooperation among adult education organisations in Burgenland. BuKEB is an informal working committee comprising eleven adult education institutions. The chairmanship of BuKEB rotates among the members and is held for two-year periods.

Around 160 members of staff work in the eleven member organisations of BuKEB, while c.1,500 staff members work part-time and c. 500 persons work on voluntary basis. The courses and seminars offered by these institutions amount to c.3,400 per year with c. 40,000 participants in total. In addition, c. 1,200 events annually are organised, with c. 47,000 participants (excluding the Catholic Education Service and libraries).

BuKEB is represented through two members in the CBCnet project: the bfi Burgenland (see partner profile) and the provincial association of adult education colleges (VHS) in Burgenland (see partner profile). The coordinator of the CBCnet project, the Research Society Burgenland (Burgenländische Forschungsgesellschaft, see partner profile) is also a regular member of BuKEB.

Aims, Objectives, Programmes, Target Groups

BuKEB, while ensuring the independence of the individual member institutions, deals with common concerns and develops cooperative projects as well as representing the common interests of the organisations to the outer world. Aims and responsibilities are:

- Creation of a climate in cultural and educational policy that is supportive of adult education aims and the development of an independent and liberal adult education system.
- Common representation and PR work concerning important shared interests and concerns of institutions, to underline the importance of adult education for the cultural and educational life of the Burgenland province.
- Support for the member organisations through unified training and continuing education of members of staff.
- Promotion of cooperation between adult education and other educational institutions.

- Initiation and management of cooperative projects.
- Planning and implementation of events on themes of common interest.
- Cooperation between the participating institutions through mutual exchange of experience and information.
- Building contacts with adult education institutions in Austria and abroad.
- Advising the provincial government of Burgenland and other public authorities in areas that impact upon adult education as a whole.
- Maintaining communication with relevant authorities at national and provincial level.

Cross-border Relations

Cross-border cooperation on education is a relevant issue in Burgenland given the province's geographic location as a border province. Transnational education and related forms of cooperation are necessary above all in the context of EU expansion. First steps in this direction require the willingness to learn from one another and to gain some insight into educational activities on both sides of the border. A second phase in such cooperation comes with the development of workable cooperation structures, based on processes of mutual give and take and enabling sustainable cross-border cooperation.

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Centrum vzdelávania neziskových organizácií (CVNO) / Education Centre for Non-Profit Organisations

General Information on Type of Institution

The Education Centre for Non-Profit Organisations (CVNO) is a non-governmental and non-profit organisation registered as a civic association. The Education Centre for Non-Profit Organisations was established in September 1998 in the Slovakian city of Banská Bystrica. It offers an education programme aimed at making NGOs more professional. CVNO has a staff of four employees.

Aims, Objectives, Programmes, Target Groups

The Education Centre for Non-Profit Organisations cooperates with specialists of the third sector, business sector, public sector and education who guarantee the quality of CVNO educational programmes. The aim of the CVNO is to offer new, so far lacking forms of education for managers from various sectors. The mission statement defines the following aims: searching for new project solutions, transferring knowledge to the project managers from various sectors working in projects dealing with regional development and effectively adapting best practice experience from abroad to local conditions.

Target groups are NGOs, SMEs, self-governing bodies and public institutions, government offices and unemployed people. Examples of educational projects with a nationwide character carried out previously are the three-term course “Economy and Management of NGOs”, the “EU Project School”, training courses focused on economic aspects of managing NGOs. Current projects and activities are open public courses or tailored courses in “Project Cycle Management”, “Monitoring and Evaluation”, “Public Procurement” and research and analysis of educational needs. CVNO is coordinator of a national project, “Projects for Regions”, dealing with the education of 350 managers from different municipalities. Another activity involves a consulting role in the process of strategic planning in municipalities and regions, designing plans of social and economic development.

Cross-border Relations

The main objective for CVNO in participate in cross-border cooperation was to support educational organisations in border areas of Slovakia by bringing experience from abroad and strengthening their capacity to carry out cross-border cooperation. CVNO has a broad experience in international projects and activities, including: preparation of study materials for new forms of study and creating an international textbook concerning organisations of

the third sector in Europe, international network of organisations working in the field of adult education, LEONARDO DA VINCI pilot projects, participation as a training organisation in international training programmes.

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Volkshochschule Hoyerswerda – Kommunaler Eigenbetrieb Kultur und Bildung (EKuB) / Adult Education Centre Hoyerswerda – Municipal Organisation for Culture and Education

General Information on Type of Institution

The Adult Education Centre Hoyerswerda (Volkshochschule Hoyerswerda / VHS Hoyerswerda) is a public institution run by the Municipality of Hoyerswerda and is a sub-organisation of the Municipal Organisation for Culture and Education (EKuB). It sees itself as a centre for political, cultural, health, vocational and leisure continuing education for all citizens of the city and the surrounding area. Furthermore, the Centre is a social and communications centre with a customer-oriented and cost-conscious approach. It offers more than 360 courses per year; it is the largest provider for adult education in the city of Hoyerswerda. It has nine full-time employees, 250 part-time lecturers and about 2,500 learners per year.

Aims, Objectives, Programmes, Target Groups

As an adult education centre, the institute builds on an liberal-humanist educational approach and the 100-year-old tradition of adult education centres in Germany. It is obliged to observe political and ideological neutrality, tolerance, integration and openness and is not allied to any religious denomination. The Centre sees its continuing education programme as a factor enabling the unrestricted development of the individual. Gender equality is observed by the Adult Education Centre Hoyerswerda in line with EU policy. The Centre is accessible to all sectors of the population with an interest in continuing education, regardless of their motivation for participation in continuing education.

Education programmes are offered for adult participants of all ages and social groups and also for disadvantaged target groups. Institutions such as public offices, companies, social welfare institutions and contract awarding bodies of the European Union requiring tailored education and training events, are among the customers of the Education Centre. The Centre offers a cultural and educational programme in areas such as politics and society, culture, languages, computing and vocational training, education advisory service as well as certificated qualifications to improve employability. The Centre has connection to regional and Europe-wide educational and cultural networks. It offers modern teaching environment and specialist training workshops in the main building and local branches.

The Adult Education Centre has a special department for European projects. This department works with the SOCRATES and LEONARDO DA VINCI programmes and with the European Social Fund (ESF).

Cross-border Relations

EKuB is situated in the eastern part of Germany, 50 km away from the Polish border and 70 km from the Czech border. Following their accession to the EU, these countries are not only interested in cooperation from an economic perspective but also in working together in the field of education to build up a regional network of educational institutions.

EKuB is a partner in this network that will function mainly for the purpose of teaching and learning the languages of the neighbouring countries in order to support people living and working in the border region.

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Kemi-Tornion Ammattiopisto / **Kemi-Tornio Vocational College**

General Information on Type of Institution

Kemi-Tornio Vocational College (*Kemi-Tornion Ammattiopisto*) was established in August 2000 and is situated in Kemi, Finland, near to the Swedish border. The College belongs to the formal Finnish school system and is on the same educational level as upper secondary schools. The school has also a Department for Adult Education. The college mainly operates in the town of Kemi, having one department in Tornio and one in Kolari, 26 km and 213 km respectively north of Kemi. The basic vocational studies aim at providing students with the appropriate knowledge and skills for vocational expertise. Besides developing vocational skills, the aim is to support students in becoming balanced and mature individuals and to prepare them for further studies. Initial vocational education in Finland is arranged by the municipalities, joint municipal boards and private organisations, and is free of charge to students. Studies take 2-3 years depending on previous studies and work experience. Teaching is mainly organised at college premises, but includes supervised on-the-job training. 1,400 students follow the programmes that are provided by 130 employees. The Kemi-Tornio Vocational College as well as the Kemi-Tornio Polytechnic (*Kemi-Tornion Ammattikorkeakoulu*) belong to the Municipal-Federation of Kemi-Tornio Polytechnic.

Aims, Objectives, Programmes, Target Groups

Kemi-Tornio Vocational College offers 15 basic vocational study programmes with 21 occupational titles. The fields of study are business and administration, health care and social services, tourism, catering and technology. The students can participate in developing their curricula and they are also allowed to choose studies in other departments of the college and upper secondary schools as well as in polytechnics and universities. Modern workstations with access to the Internet, email and online libraries are freely available for all students. The college provides students with learning centres as well as career and recruitment services both in Kemi and Tornio.

Kemi-Tornio Vocational College also offers adult education in evening and weekend classes to meet the needs of individuals and working communities. The programmes are focused on a variety of professions: vocational qualifications, specialist vocational qualifications, competence-based qualifications for adults, vocational additional and supplementary education, apprenticeship training, adult employment education, personnel training and recruitment services.

Cross-border Relations

The Kemi-Tornio Polytechnic has an international department. The role of the international department is to create and develop the organisation's internationalisation strategy. The main function of the department is to work with EU projects. The department undertakes consultation, creates and carries out projects. It is responsible for linking international operations to the organisation's studies and research. The operations of the international department are targeted at certain areas. Such areas include northern Scandinavia and European countries. Resources for cooperation with China as well as Russia and especially with the Barents region are also being made available. A starting point of the projects involves integrating them within the organisation's own research. Project leaders and staff are recruited from the organisation's own personnel so that experience gained from project work can be put to use in teaching. Through working in the projects, teachers are able to develop their own vocational skills. There are also opportunities for the students, who may complete their training period inside the organisation. The international department administers LEONARDO DA VINCI and SOCRATES programmes and develops cooperation between the organisation and the working world in the region. An essential aspect of project work is that international cooperation is undertaken in partnership with local industry. The purpose of this is to encourage company and public sector activity in the region, to create jobs and work opportunities and to build connections with international corporations and other cooperation partners. Finland has a tradition of hosting foreign students and aims to increase the number of foreign graduates. Behind this stands the idea that they will stay in Finland, but of course a lot of them go back to their home countries. In 2005, more than 140 foreign students, coming from the USA, Canada, Asia, China and Africa are studying at Kemi-Tornion Ammattikorkeakoulu (Kemi-Tornio Polytechnic). But there is also a further aim to bring an international, globalised way of thinking and working into the Finnish education and commercial system. In former years, Finland was a very closed society, but nowadays people realise that they have to open up both society and the education system to the international world.

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Landesverband Burgenländischer Volkshochschulen / Association of Adult Education Centres in Burgenland

General Information on Type of Institution

The Association of Adult Education Centres in Burgenland (Landesverband Burgenländischer Volkshochschulen) has its headquarters in Eisenstadt. Eisenstadt is the capital of the Austrian federal province of Burgenland. Regional branches of the provincial association can be found in the towns of Oberwart, Jennersdorf and Halbturn. Further adult education centres (Volkshochschulen) are active in the larger communities of the province. The adult education centres are non-profit educational institutions, working in Burgenland since 1969. The Association of Adult Education Centres in Burgenland is an association of all adult education centres in Burgenland. The main tasks of the association is, apart from its coordinating character as an umbrella institution, the independent management of the specialist areas of political education, second-chance education, guidance and counseling service, languages, key qualifications, computing and regional project work.

At present, 14 members of staff are employed in the provincial association, the regional branches and in project work. A total of c. 350 teaching staff are engaged on a freelance basis. Each year, c. 800 courses (165.000 course units) are offered, with 8,700 participants, and 145 events with 9,600 participants. The Burgenland adult education centres are financed by core funding from the Department for Adult Education of the Federal Ministry for Education, Science and Culture and the Federal Province of Burgenland, by course fees and by various, mainly EU project-related funds, which source forms a steadily increasing proportion of the total funding.

Aims, Objectives, Programmes, Target Groups

The Burgenland adult education centres stand for a comprehensive concept of education bringing together general, political, cultural and vocational continuing education. They aim for the creation of a comprehensive and continuous programme of education in the different regions of Burgenland. Themes addressed include dealing with current issues at provincial, regional and community level, educational activities and awareness-building concerning social exclusion trends, and promoting creativity and physical and psychological health.

Core competencies of the VHS in Burgenland are: guidance and counseling service, second-chance qualifications (at general secondary level, advanced secondary level, higher studies access examinations), development of special programme design measures to appeal to disadvantaged target groups, seminar programme for general and vocational

continuing education, a wide range of language-learning programmes, development and implementation of new forms of learning and teaching methods with the support of ICT, design of projects for testing and implementation of innovations in education.

The most important form of learning activity is coursework. This is also partly organised and implemented by local adult education associations – generally on an unpaid basis.

The seminar and workshop programme in the area of key qualifications for political, vocational and personal continuing education constitutes a further focus. Alongside this, project work in the area of political and intercultural education forms the second pillar of the association's activities in Burgenland. This project work enables current themes and teaching content to be taken up, innovative programme forms to be developed and thereby new target groups to be addressed. Educational consultancy and educational information are seen as of particular value. Currently, advisory activities are focused upon second-chance education, but they are also continually expanded to include all other relevant areas. New and innovative forms of learning, such as self-regulated and autonomous learning (e-learning, open-distance-learning), which respond to individual, social and economic requirements are also promoted.

Cross-border Relations

Since 1996, the adult education centres have gained experience in international cooperation in the framework of the ESF, SOCRATES / GRUNDTVIG 2 and EQUAL programmes. Cross-border cooperation with Hungary, Slovakia and Slovenia has been an important issue since 1989. The aims of such activities are to learn more about the education systems in other countries and to develop opportunities for innovative projects and forms of cooperation.

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Nyugat-dunántúli Regionális Fejlesztési Ügynökség Kht. / West Transdanubian Regional Development Agency

General Information on Type of Institution

The West Transdanubian Regional Development Agency was founded by the West Transdanubian Regional Development Council in 1999, an official body of the three west-Hungarian counties Győr-Moson-Sopron, Vas and Zala. The most important function of the agency is to promote the work of the council and to fulfil the objectives of the West Transdanubian Regional Development Program (NDP). Additionally, the agency plays an important part in the formulation of the regional vision for the future and it aims to involve more and more participants in strategic and working partnership. The agency has 65 employees in five offices in the region. The headquarters are in the city of Sopron in western Hungary.

Aims, Objectives, Programmes, Target Groups

The West Transdanubian Regional Development Agency plays an active part in facilitating professional connections within and across the regions, in developing the economy and encouraging local initiatives. The agency assists regional initiatives and cooperates with the participants to foster balanced development of the region. The agency assists the work of the development councils of the west-Hungarian counties by coordinating their objectives and activities. It coordinates tasks related to the regional development programme, and supports and monitors the process of both preparation and implementation of these programmes. Also, the agency contributes to the financing of these programmes, helps to attract domestic and international resources to the area and enhances the regional efficiency of investments. It aims also to promote cooperation among those involved in regional development and to explore common interests and activities. Furthermore, it provides assistance in the establishment and development of background institutions and in the harmonisation of these organisations.

The agency has different units: Strategic Planning of regional programmes assisted by EU support funds and domestic funds as well as the National Development Plan; the Project Development Unit, responsible for assisting further research and planning in the region, promotes optimal partnership cooperation, harmonises project initiatives within the region and coordinates and supports project initiatives related to regional needs; the Regional Structural Coordination Unit whose core activity is maintaining contact with partnerships in small settlements, local governments and councils for regional development or their secretariats as well as with the government; the International Relations Unit, the

remit of which includes the operation of the Presidency, the Council and the task forces of the Euregio West / Nyugat-Pannonia; the Pannon Business Initiative, which liaises with regional networks, clusters, organisations dealing with economic development and new initiatives and industrial parks, and prepares the economic actors of the region for the restructuring of the economy; the Programme Management Unit, which manages the tenders invited by the Council. Currently, it deals with the management of the following programmes: ORPHEUS, Information Technology in Primary Schools and Combating Exclusion from the World of Work and, finally, the Pannon Automotive Cluster, which supports suppliers, (especially Hungarian small- and medium-sized enterprises), maps out contacts between suppliers, creates the team of experts, gathers innovative project ideas, coordinates their implementation and mediates between prospective project partners.

Cross-border Relations

Among the most important PHARE CBC project types run by the agency are the innovation-based economic development projects and the Small Project Fund. The Hungarian-Austrian border region can only become a competitive region at European level through cooperation. Hungary, and the agency, has been entitled to participate in the INTERREG programme since May 2004. As a border-regional institution, cooperation with partners on the other sides of the four national borders is seen as vital.

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Højskolen Østersøen / **The Baltic Sea Folk High School**

General Information on Type of Institution

The Danish folk high school Højskolen Østersøen was founded in 1993 in Aabenraa in the Danish province Sønderjylland (Sønderjyllands Amt), bordering on the German county Schleswig-Holstein. The school is an independent free school, meaning a self-governing non-governmental organisation with a so-called School Association as its supreme governing body. The School Association includes local citizens as well as former students. The folk high school offers non-formal education within a boarding-school setting to adult students (over 18) with very diverse social backgrounds and nationalities, though primarily Danes and Germans. The teaching staff of Højskolen Østersøen are half German and half Danish citizens (eight teachers in total).

Aims, Objectives, Programmes, Target Groups

Højskolen Østersøen is a Danish folk high school and as such independent from the formal Danish educational system. Folk high schools in Denmark choose independently what they teach (there is no curriculum) and how they teach (pedagogical methods). Højskolen Østersøen provides no formal and certified qualifications, issues no final grades and does not carry out examinations.

Danish folk high schools receive subsidies from the Danish state and must therefore abide by certain regulations of the Danish Folk High School Law (in so far as it wishes its activities to be subsidised under the law) such as having a minimum of 50% Danish participants in its courses, but the state does not otherwise influence the curriculum or teaching methods. As is the case with every Danish folk high school, Højskolen Østersøen is a value-based educational institution. That means the overall objective of Højskolen Østersøen is to enhance Danish and non-Danish adult students' ability to fully cope with life in all its aspects, including the ability to exercise active citizenship, and employability (lifelong and "lifewide" learning). The specific aim is to provide education and training in German language and culture for Danes and Danish language and culture for non-Danes, primarily Germans, in order to enhance cross-border mobility. In that sense, though Højskolen Østersøen as a folk high school does not provide formal and certified qualifications, it does however provide useful qualifications and real competence.

It is formulated in the statutes of Højskolen Østersøen that it should contribute to the increase of mobility, exchange and trade between Denmark and Germany; this by providing

Germans and Danes with the necessary language and cultural skills. Although it is not an aim in itself to become a Danish-German educational institution, since it is a Danish folk high school grounded in the Danish folk high school tradition, it has been of great value to have a mixed teaching staff. Also for the staff, the school in this way becomes an intercultural learning space, where teachers are learning practically about cultural differences in terms of social conventions, forms of cooperation, values, etc.

The dominant language at the school in terms of social interaction is Danish, and staff are conscious that there is an unused learning potential which could be used by exploiting the German language more in the social life of the school, which is after all a significant dimension of a boarding school. Although both Danish and German teachers must adapt to each other's cultures, it is clearly the German teachers who must adapt the most (also conditioned by outside factors in the local community and society at large).

Cross-border Relations

Højskolen Østersøen is founded on the belief, which is explicitly formulated in its statutes and values, that Danish-German cooperation should be promoted not least in the field of cross-border employment and trade, especially in the Danish-German border region, a region historically the centre and cause of many conflicts and wars between Denmark and Germany. In line with the belief in cross-border cooperation and contact, Højskolen Østersøen has continuously developed a broader European dimension within its work and aims. Since 1997, over 600 young Europeans active in NGOs and representing approximately 50 different European nationalities, cultures and language-groups have taken part in European courses at Højskolen Østersøen dealing with issues on the current European agenda, and have thus experienced Europe's cultural diversity within the special environment of the Danish folk high school setting.

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Regionaal Opleidingen Centrum (ROC) Rijn IJssel / Regional Education Centre Rijn IJssel

General Information on Type of Institution

The Regional Education Centre Rijn IJssel (Regionaal Opleidingen Centrum Rijn IJssel / ROC Rijn IJssel) is a formal regional education centre in the Netherlands located in Arnhem (Gelderland region). It provides training and courses in vocational and adult education. ROC Rijn IJssel is one of more than 40 ROCs in the Netherlands. ROCs were founded at the end of the 1990s. The aim was to decentralise and to integrate general and vocational education by establishing regional education centres. All training programmes and courses are directed towards the gaining of qualifications which suit the labour market or which fulfil prerequisite conditions for further education. ROCs therefore make an important contribution to the social and economic development of the region. ROC Rijn IJssel has many contacts with companies, institutions and local government bodies. This enables it to monitor the demands of the labour market and the options in further education closely.

ROC Rijn IJssel has a staff of about 1,000. About 3,500 students are registered in adult education and 11,500 in vocational training programmes. Students are aged between 17 and 80 years, with a majority aged 18–25 years.

Aims, Objectives, Programmes, Target Groups

ROC Rijn IJssel is organised in five sectors, focussed on the following branches: economics, engineering, catering, tourism and leisure, health, sports, wellbeing and adult education. ROC Rijn IJssel has also broad experience in international projects. The international orientation of students is one of the priorities as is the international orientation of teachers. All students bring their own questions, potential and expectations to the programme. Some come for a complete training course while others come to study a few subjects or to take a short course. There are special options for people with handicaps but also for people with exceptional backgrounds or for top sports people who want to combine their sport with a vocational training programme. More and more people, seeking further education, are already in work. They may want to further their general development or update their knowledge, discuss current themes or improve their expertise. Depending on their circumstances, it is possible to study either within or outside the college. Thanks to the large range of education programmes on offer, it is easy to move from one programme to another or, for example, to continue to a follow-up programme at a higher level.

Cross-border Relations

ROC Rijn IJssel is situated about 30 kilometres from the border with Germany. As part of everyday life, citizens from both sides of the border travel frequently for shopping and tourism to the neighbouring country. However, where the purpose of travel is study and work, people still meet many hindrances when working towards cross-border cooperation. Barriers occur for example in language, differences in culture, differences in school systems and in legislation. Because it is in the interest of students to explore the labour market opportunities in the Euregio, ROC Rijn IJssel gives high priority to efforts to establish cooperation in the field of adult education in the Euregio.

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Volkshochschule Stadtverband Saarbrücken / Adult Education Centre of the Cities Association Saarbrücken

General Information on Type of Institution

The Adult Education Centre of the Cities Association Saarbrücken (vhs Stadtverband Saarbrücken) is the largest of a total of 16 adult education colleges in Saarland, Germany. It is recognised under Saarland law as a general continuing education institution and a constituent organisation of the Eigenbetriebe Kultur- und Bildungswerk. The vhs Stadtverband Saarbrücken has around 40,000 persons participating annually in c. 3,000 courses and educational events and it carries out over 70,000 course hours per year. It is a full-time institution with c. 35 regular employees (including fixed-term contracts for projects) in the teaching and administration areas and c. 800 part-time lecturers. The VHS is certified according to the LQW 2 (Lernerorientierte Qualitätstestierung in der Weiterbildung – learning-oriented quality testing in continuing education). The administrative headquarters are located in the Alten Rathaus on Schlossplatz in Saarbrücken.

Aims, Objectives, Programmes, Target Groups

The vhs Stadtverband Saarbrücken emerged when the City Education Centre Saarbrücken and the District Education Centre Saarbrücken were merged and has been run since 1984 by the Cities Association of Saarbrücken (Stadtverband Saarbrücken). The Cities Association of Saarbrücken is an association of neighbouring towns and local authorities in the greater Saarbrücken area. The association aims to find solutions to problems which require a common approach. The city districts of Altenkessel, Klarenthal, Halberg and Dudweiler together with the municipal local authorities of Friedrichsthal, Großrosseln, Heusweiler, Kleinblittersdorf, Püttlingen, Riegelsberg and Quierschied all have local VHS directors who work on a voluntary basis. The programme of the vhs Stadtverband Saarbrücken includes educational programmes in the areas of people and society, culture, art and health, languages, vocational continuing education, German, study tours and trips, study examination and qualification. Alongside this, the Education Centre offers courses for specific target groups: women, older citizens (Academy for older citizens), children and young people, literacy courses for illiterate customers, migrants and ethnic German immigrants, courses in detention institutions, courses for attaining general secondary school qualifications (Hauptschulabschluss), training and qualification measures to support job seekers in cooperation with local branches of the employment service, courses for

companies in the areas of computing / information technology, presentation techniques and languages.

The Cities Association Saarbrücken guarantees the Adult Education Centre financial support, in addition to which the centre receives funding from the Saarland Ministry of Education, Culture and Science in accordance with the law on continuing education in Saarland. A third pillar of funding is constituted by payments from the course participants

Cross-border Relations

The vhs Stadtverband Saarbrücken has undertaken cross-border cooperation over many years on continuing education projects with the neighbouring province of Lorraine in France and also with Luxembourg.

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Stiftelsen Utbildning Nordkalotten / Arctic Vocational Foundation

General Information on Type of Institution

The Arctic Vocational Foundation was founded in 1970 as a Swedish state-controlled authority to train unemployed people for the labour market in the northern parts of Finland, Norway and Sweden. Since 1991, the foundation has been organised as a non-profit making institute for vocational training with the headquarter in Övertorneå, Sweden, close to the Finnish border. The governments of Finland, Norway and Sweden have joint responsibility for the foundation. Activities are regulated by the statutes of the foundation and by a cooperation agreement between the three countries. This agreement is re-negotiated every fourth year. The chair of the foundation rotates between Finland, Norway and Sweden and the office is held for a period of two years. The board of directors consists of two persons from each country. A managing director from Finland, Norway or Sweden manages the organisation. Every fourth (or sixth) year a new managing director is appointed. The foundation has about 60 employees, c. 40 of whom are trainers. Annual turnover is c. 7 million Euro.

Aims, Objectives, Programmes, Target Groups

The organisation's main products are vocational training for the Nordic labour market in four areas: craft, information technology, service / tourism and engineering / industry. Each section has a section head. The managing director and the section heads work as a steering group for the foundation with meetings once a week. The foundation has a capacity for c. 350 trainees and students. The trainees are in the age-range of 16-60 and they come from Finland, Norway and Sweden. There are 70 trainees from Finland, 85 from Norway and 195 from Sweden, including 50 vocational upper secondary school students. The number of trainees and students is negotiated within the above-mentioned agreement for some years.

Normally, trainees stay at the centre for about one year. They are taught in their own language and course literature is available in Finnish, Norwegian and Swedish. Sometimes the literature is offered in English (especially in the IT sector). The trainers are skilled in their own fields, and use a teaching approach that encourages self-reliance and commitment among trainees. All trainees take an active part in planning their own training, and target-fulfilment is closely monitored. The pedagogical profile is characterised by a continuous intake of trainees. They are at different levels and the curriculum is adapted to each individual.

The foundation can provide accommodation such as student rooms for single persons and flats for families. Accommodation is provided at lodgings in the villages of Hedenäset and

Övertorneå (Sweden) and Aavasaks (Finland), about three kilometres from the school, or in rented flats in Övertorneå-Hedenäset. Leisure activities for the trainees are arranged on weekdays and also at weekends. The foundation has a cooperation programme with the local vocational upper secondary school in several educational areas and with a local hotel for vocational training courses in the hotel and restaurant sector. Since August 2000 the foundation has been certified to ISO 9001 and since June 2003 to ISO 9001:2000. Among others it is also recognised as a Norwegian and a Swedish test centre for ECDL (European Computer Driving Licence).

Cross-border Relations

From the beginning onwards, the Arctic Vocational Foundation was conceived as a project to train unemployed people for the labour market in the northern parts of Finland, Norway and Sweden. There was a need for vocational training that took special account of the situation in these northern regions with a high rate of unemployment and an undeveloped labour market. Nowadays, the foundation aims to contribute to increased mobility on the Nordic labour market. The foundation is working for validation of the vocational training courses in the three Nordic countries mentioned. The foundation participates in 30 international projects part-funded by the EU, such as LEONARDO DA VINCI mobility, SOCRATES / GRUNDTVIG and INTERREG IIIb / Northern Periphery.

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Volkshochschule der Ostkantone / **Adult Education Centre of Eastern Belgium**

General Information on Type of Institution

The Adult Education Centre of Eastern Belgium (Volkshochschule der Ostkantone) has been, since its founding in 1966, the educational department of the Christian Labour Movement (MOC). MOC is the coordinating organisation of the Christian Labour Union, Christian Health Care and the youth movement organisations, etc. Originally, the Adult Education Centre educated the members of the MOC, i.e. helped labourers to emancipate and to take part actively in society. Gradually, the Adult Education Centre entered into the field of more general adult education, never, however, forgetting its roots in civic education. The Volkshochschule der Ostkantone is also officially recognised and financed as an adult educational organisation of the German-speaking Community of Belgium and is located in the city of Eupen.

Aims, Objectives, Programmes, Target Groups

The Volkshochschule der Ostkantone mainly aims at empowering students, i.e. educating its students and thereby increasing their motivation and ability to exercise active citizenship. Gender equality, sustainability and promoting peace are the underlying principles of the centres educational projects. Many former students have become leading trade union members, local politicians or active members of social welfare organisations. The Education centre organises a 3.5-year course in social and labour sciences, resulting in a Bachelor degree (certificate signed by the University of Namur). The target group has been women only, for the last twelve years. An educational background or degree is not needed to participate in this course. The trainers base their approach on the experience of the women students and aim to deepen their theoretical knowledge in social sciences. At the end of the final year, the students have to defend their final (academic) paper, which is to be rooted in personal experience and social engagement. Many of these papers have been the origin of political decisions within the government of the German-speaking Community. The Education Centre offers senior citizens the opportunity to avoid isolation because of lack of general knowledge or knowledge about recent socio-political trends and events. Every two weeks, the Senior Citizen's Academy offers lectures, excursion and seminars on a wide range of interests such as politics, religion, art, history or health. The last traditional project comprises a socio-historical workshop on regional everyday, oral and border history. Originally, this project built up a social archive for the Christian Labour Movement. It has developed since then into a partner for workshops, excursions, seminars,

etc. on regional history, the border region and its different cultures, and on anti-racism. On a vocational level, the Education Centre has gathered experience in attracting low-skilled workers to courses with the help of trade union representatives (GRUNDTVIG 2 project ENHANCE). Moreover, in its “Social Company” B.I.S.A., the Volkshochschule der Ostkantone employs socially and economically disadvantaged workers in order to reintegrate them into the regular labour market. Furthermore, the Centre has gathered experience through its EQUAL project “Midlife Challenge” concerning the generation approach, i.e. the in-house transfer of skills and competences from the older towards the younger generation through active tutoring and guidance of younger by older colleagues.

Cross-border Relations

The Volkshochschule der Ostkantone has been active across the borders of the German-speaking Community. For more than 12 years now, the Centre has cooperated with similar institutions on the German and Dutch sides of the border. This resulted in the “Working Group Without Borders” (Arbeitskreis GrenzenLos) and in the Euregional Academy (for both see chapter 2 and 4). At European level, the Volkshochschule der Ostkantone has participated in or coordinated SOCRATES, ESF and INTERREG projects. The goal for each of these active cross-border cooperations is to create a win-win situation between the Education Centre and its partners: sharing experience and learning from other organisations, be it about the specific project subject or about the general approach of the partners.

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Members of the CBCnet project in front of the Schengen Memorial at the Mosel riverside in Schengen (Luxembourg): Tomáš Findra (Slovakia), Wilfried Schmidt (Germany), Anne Arrelo (Sweden), Ulf Olovzon (Sweden), Sirpa Hyttinen (Finland), Danica Hullová (Slovakia), Nicole Ehlers (Germany), Filip Dedeurwaerder-Haas (Belgium), Marianna Hadvigerová (Slovakia), Renáta Kopaničáková (Slovakia), Ute Grun (Germany), Christine Teuschler (Austria), Elisabeth Deinhofer (Austria), Lenny van Kempen (Netherlands), Kornélia Csontos (Hungary)

Memorial inscription:

On board of the ship "Princess Marie-Astrid" which lies at anchor on this wharf, the representatives of the states of the BENELUX economic area, the Federal Republic of Germany and France signed on 14. June 1985 and on 19. June 1990 the Schengen Agreement on the gradual abolition of checks at their common borders and the corresponding Convention Implementing the Schengen Agreement.

