

Grand Est

ALSACE CHAMPAGNE-ARDENNE LORRAINE

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STRATEGIC CROSS-BORDER ORIENTATIONS FOR THE GRAND EST REGION

TOWARD A SINGLE EUROPEAN DEVELOPMENT AREA



DECEMBER 2018

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The Grand Est Region: cross-border by nature

With over 750 kilometres of borders running from Belgium to Switzerland via Luxembourg and Germany, and a long history of a wealth of close relations with these four countries, the Grand Est Region is geographically, historically, economically and strategically a naturally cross-border gateway to Europe, a situation that it is proud to assert and accepts as **one of its major challenges**.

The Number 1 border region in France, the Grand Est's heart beats in the centre of Europe. Not only is Strasbourg, the regional capital, one of the 3 capitals of Europe, but the Grand Est is also at the crossroads of some of the most dynamic areas in Europe – from Benelux to Germany, not to mention Switzerland and beyond to Central and Eastern Europe.

Regional schemes with a cross-border aspect – lasting partnerships

The Grand Est's exceptional wealth, along with the central authority exercised by the regional government in terms of economics, innovation and research, jobs and vocational training, mobility and transportation, not to mention the comprehensive development of the territory, are all essential levers working in favour of joint cross-border development.

They are included in the various schemes that the Region has set up after wide-ranging discussions with its partners:

- SRDEII¹ in the area of economic development;
- The Schéma Régional de Développement Touristique (Regional Tourism Development Scheme) and CPRDFOP² in the field of Training and Vocational Orientation
- and, lastly in the field of sustainable development and planning, with the SRADET³.

Schemes that fully integrate the region's cross-border dimension.

Its responsibilities in implementing European funds in the regional territory and the partnerships it has with the neighbouring countries give our Region a strategic vision as well as the capacity for powerful actions. The Grand Est Region also enjoys a privileged role alongside the State in conducting cross-border relations.

A community driving force

The Grand Est Region has all the qualities to be a driving force throughout its territory, with responsibility for working with its partners to develop comprehensive, well-balanced cross-border policies covering all the issues facing all areas of cooperation.

The objective is to draw up a **cross-border policy for development** that benefits from the necessary domestic and European legislative changes to open up new fields of experimentation and provide for the use of new tools and levers for cooperation.

With this in mind, it facilitates projects developed by our close neighbours, considering that, more than ever, this new cross-border unit represents **"a single European development area"**.

Considering action along the border as a major economic asset, the Region has strengthened its strategy, notably by including the question of transportation, making it part of an overall discussion on networks and communication.

A space for exchanges and encounters, a place for unique experimentation, the cross-border area is an integral part of life in the Grand Est. Thus, **regional actions must first and foremost be thought out in view of improving the everyday life of our citizens based on the reality of our territory**.

¹ Regional Scheme for Economic Development, Innovation and Internationalisation

² Regional Planning Contract for the Development of Training and Vocational Orientation

³ Regional Scheme for Planning, Sustainable Development and Territorial Equality

Rethinking relations with our partners

Cross-border actions therefore need rethinking in an on-going quest for consistency and savings in the Grand Est's areas of cooperation with the Swiss Confederation, the Federal Republic of Germany, the Grand Duchy of Luxembourg and the Kingdom of Belgium.

Consequently, it must respond to the challenges of co-development for the Grand Est and its four border countries:

- 1 Rebalancing the Franco-Luxembourg couple** from now on by emphasising shared development that is decided upon jointly on both sides of the border. While the Grand Duchy of Luxembourg's economic growth is an obvious opportunity, it is also a source of constraints, both for the territories of the Grand Est and for Luxembourg. These constraints can only be dealt with through **a joint, solidarity-based approach**.
- 2 Making the Grand Est Region the foundation of Franco-German relations.** While the neighbouring Länder understand this, Paris, Berlin and Brussels need to be encouraged to get behind this positioning and this desire. This is an **on-going political and strategic action** that requires us to increase our presence in those places where decisions are made.
- 3 Relaunching cross-border cooperation in the Ardennes/Wallonia area,** and more widely throughout Belgium, notably in the context of the Ardennes' progressive integration into the political cooperation of the Grande Région. This will notably include intensifying certain lines of cooperation and expanding the scope of user information services in this area (including cross-border workers and consumers).
- 4 Reinforcing cooperation with the Swiss border cantons** that are partners with the Grand Est, notably by emphasising questions related to mobility and thematic exchanges between local authorities. Special attention is given to the challenges of transportation, access to shared airport facilities (EuroAirport Basel Mulhouse Freiburg), access to cross-border healthcare, cultural exchanges and university cooperation (EUCOR).

THREE CHALLENGES, ONE METHOD

The region's ambition should be organised around 3 major challenges.

Toward comprehensive strategic thinking for better local action

This European interregional cooperation must find its place within a policy that is open to Europe and the world.

As part of one of the most dynamic cross-border areas in the European Union, the Grand Est is a privileged gateway to Europe. That is why the regional authority has a major role to play, notably in terms of international relations. It is increasingly active and must make a name for itself, weighing in on the project of the future.

The result of a strong, coordinated action, the regional strategy must be thought of on the scale of **a new macro-regional area**, along the lines of other European spaces such as the Baltic, Danube, Alpine and Atlantic spaces. It thus appears wise to detect points of convergence and synergy between cooperation areas, as is the case in managing European funds for which coordination with neighbouring regions could be envisaged.

Given the current challenges and transnational perspectives, the Grand Est Region and its border areas have full legitimacy to position itself as the **territorial link to the other Euroregions** on the Rhine and Meuse rivers.

The cross-border area is a collective gamble for the territories and their stakeholders that must be taken up in agreement by all, the Départements, Metropoles, medium-sized towns, as well as important villages and rural areas, but also by socioeconomic stakeholders such as the chambers of commerce and universities. This collective gamble is also a movement guided by the desire to strengthen our assets, boost our economic expansion and improve our attractiveness.

CHALLENGE 1

Meeting the challenges of mobility

- ▶ **Improving the everyday life of border residents** through a cross-border mobility policy aimed at:
 - Reinforcing and developing cross-border connections
 - Organising new, intelligent intermodality by developing interactive traffic information on the cross-border level
 - Developing inter-territorial and cross-border intermodal ticketing supports
 - Implementing a real cross-border policy for new carbon-free mobility



- ▶ **Positioning the Grand Est Region in the Eurocorridors** in order to take advantage of the large traffic flows that cross it:
 - By developing multimodal logistics platforms
 - By encouraging a new form of governance for hub ports
 - By promoting projects for developing major waterway capacities
 - By supporting the development of the rail network
 - By imagining interconnections between the main airport and rail hubs
 - By supporting the development of road infrastructures





► **Support for developing language teaching** to remove linguistic obstacles:

- By improving learning of the neighbouring country's language starting at an early age and throughout people's lives, by emphasising self-learning with a dedicated digital application
- By optimising knowledge of the English language for a greater opening to Europe and the world
- By facilitating coordinated actions in language learning by all stakeholders, whether in a formal setting (national education system, higher education, vocational training, etc.) or in a non-formal setting (outdoor activity centres, day-care centres, associations, etc.)
- By providing support to project promoters in gaining access to dedicated European financing and, where applicable, promoting regional initiatives such as grouped ERASMUS projects
- By setting up a partnership agreement in each volunteer territory between the National Education System, the Region, the Départements and EPCs (inter-municipal cooperation authorities) to develop bilingual programmes starting in primary school

The Region also plans to reinforce a “cross-border culture in Europe and abroad” for its elected officials and agents.

► **Better information on the job market for the general public:**

- By developing information and support for economic and sociocultural stakeholders for better mutual understanding
- By intensifying support for information structures designed for citizens, users, consumers and the working population
- By creating and operating a network of cross-border information structures for users throughout the Grand Est and all its border areas
- By pooling together tools for information and advice on jobs, services, tax questions, cultural attractions and consumption in neighbouring countries
- By ensuring total coverage for these information services throughout all the Grand Est border areas



CHALLENGE 2

Facilitating collaborative approaches and collective intelligence in all sectors



► **Improving how the cross-border job market works and encouraging diploma courses and vocational training programmes, as well as cross-border apprenticeships.** The Grand Est Region, notably through the CPRDFOP, is ramping up its pursuit of several operations:

- By developing comparisons between training systems with European partners to make mobility easier and to achieve the goal of double degrees (bilateral diploma recognition)
- By supporting all initiatives aimed at understanding and providing information on the job market and recruitment needs
- By encouraging the development of optimal initial and continuing training offers
- By increasing the visibility of cross-border vocational training offers for the general public
- By developing more balanced job perspectives and providing support for the creation of “cross-border third locations” for exercising professional activities, special economic zones (telecommuting, multi-site businesses on either side of the border, events to help businesses to grow in border areas, etc.) using the Be EST Export system





► **Strengthening economic and tourism flows** thanks to the SRDEII, with a view to developing a shared strategy with neighbouring regions based on the essential development assets in the Grand Est. This entails:

- Setting up a real economic marketing and lobbying approach based on core regional sectors, the fields of innovation in smart specialisation strategies (S 3) and innovative ecosystems (cross-border clusters), in cooperation with professional organisations and chambers of commerce
- Reinforcing efficiency, responsibility, proximity in public actions with the Region's creation of a monitoring and decision support tool – Big Data
- Opening up sector coordination to cross-border territories and creating synergy between businesses
- Developing a financial instrument for small and medium-sized companies seeking to invest in neighbouring markets
- Undertaking actions aimed at bringing entrepreneurs and investors together
- Providing support for an entrepreneurial dynamic
- Backing the implementation of pooled cross-border zones and special economic zones with adapted tax structures for cross-border perimeters such as the one located near the site of the Fessenheim nuclear power plant
- Encouraging the growth of cross-border cultural spaces through support for cultural cooperation, exchanges and cross-border mobility
- Encouraging the creation of new tourism offers with a cross-border dimension and linking pre-existing tourism offers on each side of the border, in compliance with the Regional Tourism Development Scheme adopted by the Region on 29 March 2018

► **Make the Grand Est a cross-border incubator for excellence in innovation, research and digitisation:**

- By amplifying support for cross-border mobility for students and researchers with support for cross-border study programmes, notably using European Commission labels for current initiatives as European universities
- By coordinating economic sectors that bring innovation and development and amplify border synergies between stakeholders in the industries of the future, bioeconomics and carbon-free energy
- By facilitating the diffusion of research projects through the creation of an operational fund using the lessons of "offensive sciences" actions
- By creating networks of regional digital agencies in the border areas and making the Salon de l'Industrie 4.0 in Mulhouse the digital reference in the emergence of collaborative projects
- By increasing our understanding of cross-border data by organising cross-border Big Data



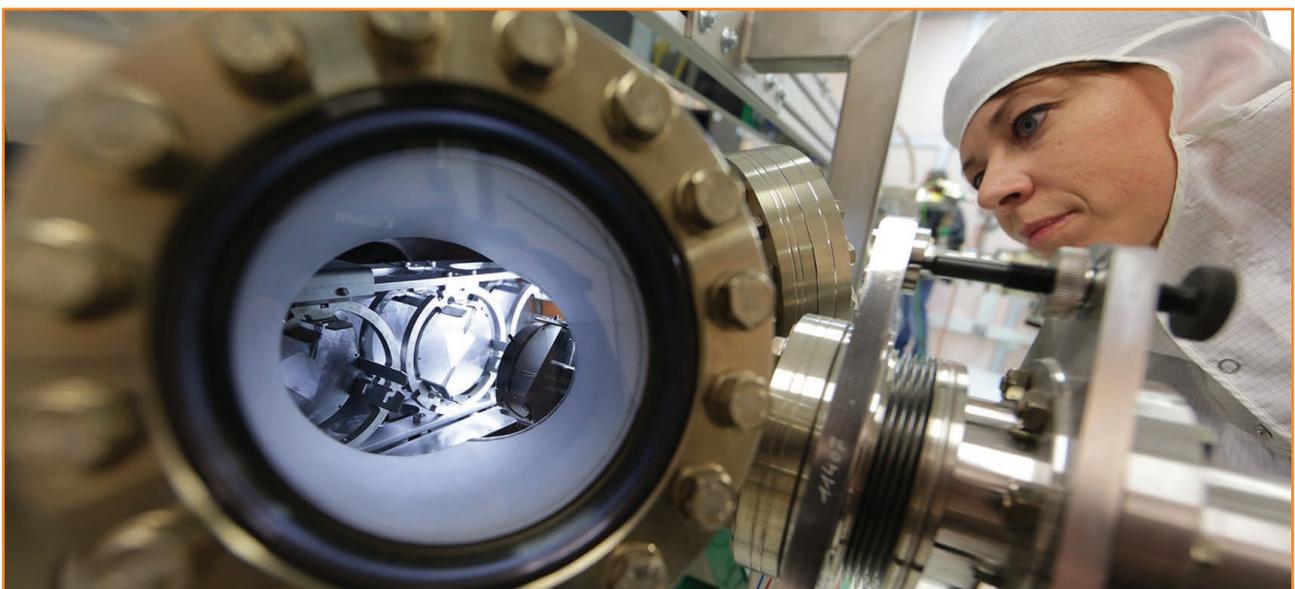
► **Encouraging experimentation in sustainable development and the energy transition with:**

- Better understanding of our shared heritage and the exchanges between stakeholders in the fields of the environment, biodiversity and the conservation of resources
- Encouragement for reciprocal understanding of agricultural and forestry challenges and a multiplication of cooperation projects for developing the wood industry
- Support for the energy transition and adapting to climate change
- Reinforced cooperation on the level of the river basins around cross-border waterways
- Support for border towns faced with the need to maintain or create new services to deal with the growth in cross-border work

► **Improving the everyday life of citizens and contributing the feeling of being European amongst the population.** This entails:

- Involvement in all initiatives aimed at improving wellbeing and access to healthcare for Grand Est citizens in border areas and notably encouraging cooperation in the healthcare field through the development of ZOAST (Zones Organisées d'Accès aux Soins Transfrontaliers – Organised Cross-border Healthcare Access Zones)

- Working with the competent authorities to support greater synergy and adaptability for security and emergency preparedness missions
- Developing cross-border cultural attractions by providing support for the cross-border diffusion and opening of cultural events to audiences from neighbouring countries
- Reinforcing awareness of the mobility support systems overseen by the Region and making the European and international mobility possibilities for young people more accessible
- Creating a cross-border “Young Talents” Prize focusing on citizen initiatives by young people in the cooperation areas
- Working toward constituting cross-border micro-project funds for small organisations, notably amongst associations, the sport community, the cultural world and the Social Economy, while creating the conditions for cross-border coordination and oversight of projects where the Maisons de la Région could play a role
- Encouraging exchanges between citizens in all fields, notably through policies in favour of sport, by identifying participants in sport networks within each border area, as part of formalised twin city and commune agreements, or by any action that encourages citizen involvement
- Focusing on Europe Month by multiplying cross-border events or by systematising citizen dialogues for Europe in a cross-border framework



CHALLENGE 3

Bringing people together for a shared cross-border ambition

► **Encouraging the development of networks for cross-border structures throughout the Grand Est.**

The purpose is to extend their services to all border areas in order to ensure territorial continuity



► **Providing support for optimisation, structuration and complete territorial coverage for all bodies focused on discussions and the emergence of local projects on the border.**

This entails defining a reinforced partnership with the existing Eurodistricts, making the Grand Est Region a preferred partner and, where necessary, providing support for coverage of all cross-border areas through Eurodistricts or similar structures

► **Intervening in the relevant bodies and on the relevant levels to remove obstacles and stumbling blocks to cross-border cooperation.**

The Grand Est Region plans to be involved through:

- A stronger presence at policy bodies in the Grand Est border areas
- More pronounced coordination in the work carried out by the Regional Offices in Brussels for collective interventions in the European decision-making process and bringing about European regulations that are better suited to removing cross-border obstacles

► **Setting up coordinating bodies regionally for convergence in cross-border strategies.**

Notably in connection with the regional schemes that have a cross-border component, this concerted comprehensive governance approach should also deal with coordination

of the actions carried out by one party or another to reinforce the voice, weight and credibility of the Grand Est territory amongst our cross-border partners by:

- Scheduling a CTAP (Conférence Territoriale de l'Action Publique – Territorial Public Action Conference) in cooperation with the State and dedicated to border actions aimed at bringing together all the territorial stakeholders in the Grand Est Region
- Organising Assises du Transfrontalier (Cross-Border Forum), open to cross-border partners. The main aim is to consolidate the Region's strategic cross-border orientations with those of the regional partners as well as with those of the cross-border partners
- Participating in the drawing up and constant adjustment of the new Élysée Treaty through a powerful presence in future Franco-German cooperation bodies, and notably the cross-border cooperation committee



- **Reinforcing the Grand Est Region in its actions for mobilising European financing.** The new post-2020 challenges open up new financing perspectives for border actions. For this, the Grand Est Region plans to step up its efforts to mobilise European sector-based programmes to provide support for financing projects with a cross-border dimension or bringing together cross-border partners

In this context, strong support from the Region's operational services must be ramped up to provide information and help in setting up European projects.

ONE METHOD

Because cross-border cooperation is the expression of a political ambition concerned with organising real projects for the life of the citizenry, because it proposes to work together to build a “community of shared fate” and because it unfailingly aims at the constant improvement in the quality of life, this cooperation must be based on a common cause.

Thus, as they are not limited to the “frontiers of the Grand Est”, these strategic cross-border orientations are the starting point for discussions leading to reflections and work with all partners. They are part of the projects, territories and major economic perspectives and provide a response to a vision shared by all the stakeholders in the border areas of the Grand Est.



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