

Land use planning evolution in the Euregio Meuse Rhin (EMR) cross border region

Jacques Teller, Lepur, Université de Liège

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Euregio Meuse Rhin

Baseline facts (2006)

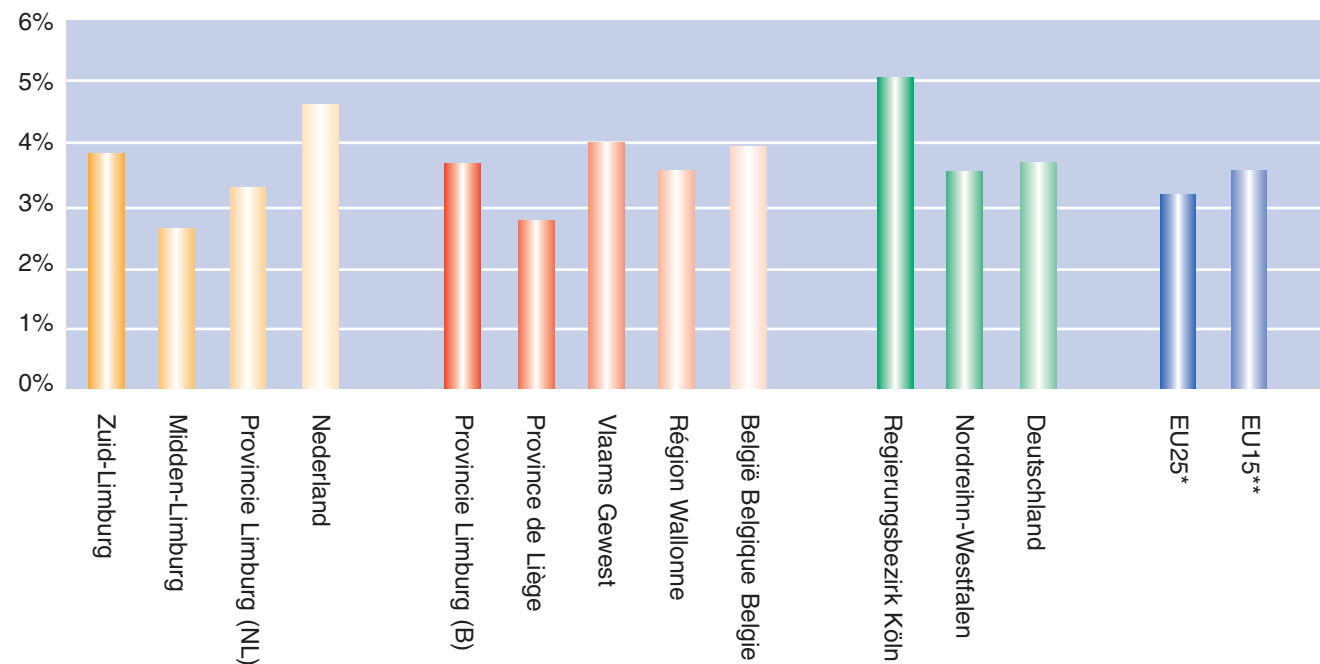
- ▶ Five city regions : Maastricht, Heerlen, Aachen, Liège and Hasselt-Genk.
- ▶ Favourable position regarding important North-West European markets as well as the excellent accessibility to these markets through various means of transport (by road, rail, river or air).
- ▶ Significant weight when considered together: 3.88 million inhabitants, 1.70 million jobs.
- ▶ Knowledge centers : 6 universities and 53 higher schools
- ▶ Large infrastructures : 2 HST railway stations (Liege & Aachen), freight and passenger airport.



Euregio Meuse Rhin

Baseline facts (2006)

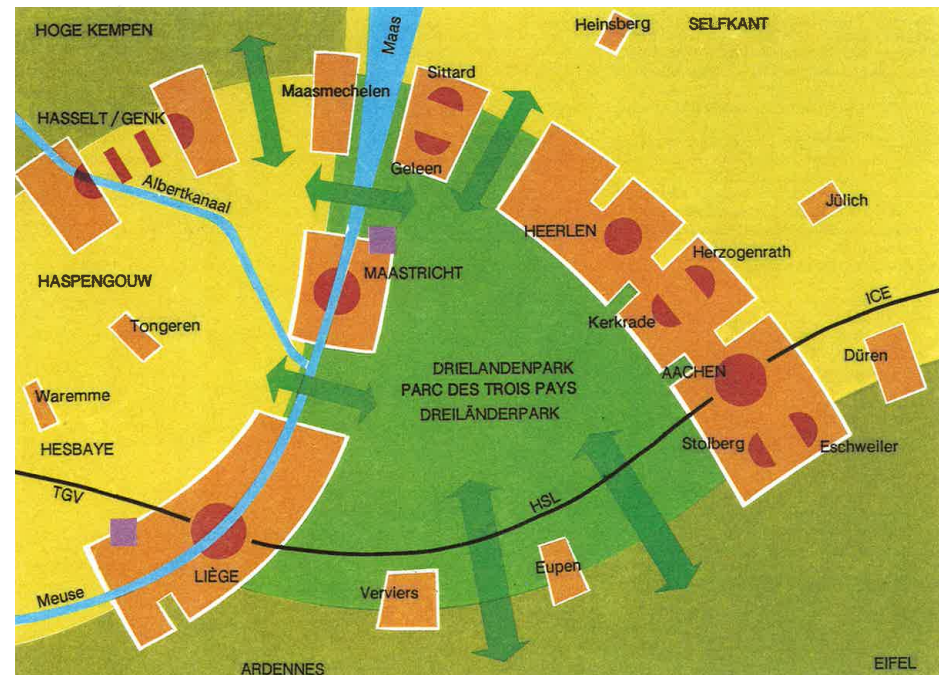
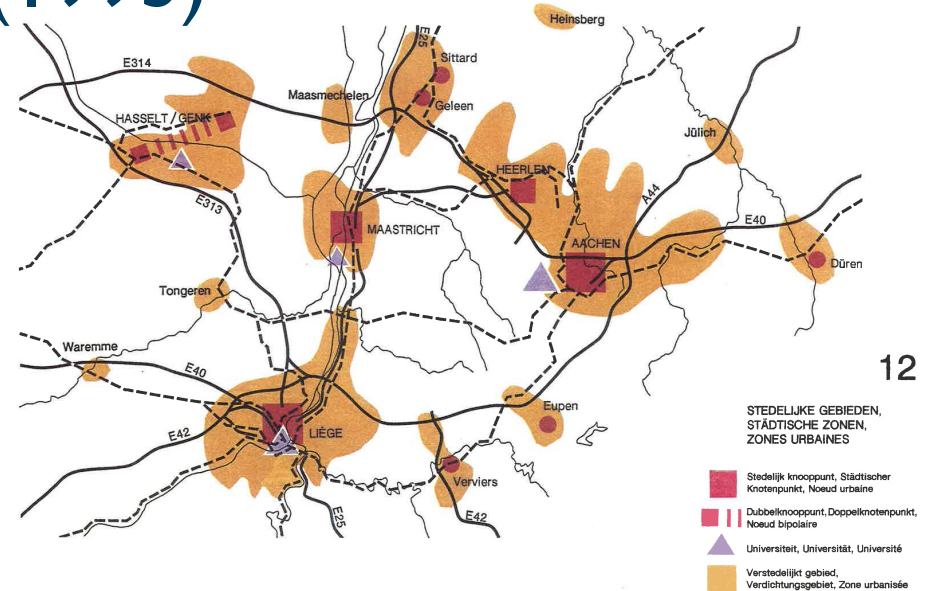
- ▶ Four cultures and three languages (French, Dutch and German), with (still) important border effects in terms of employment catchment areas.
- ▶ Large economic disparities : unemployment, net creation of companies, etc.
- ▶ Not amongst the most performant areas in terms of services and innovation sector, especially when compared to their national or regional contexts.



MHAL spatial perspective (1993)

Cross-border initiative between cities «in the periphery».

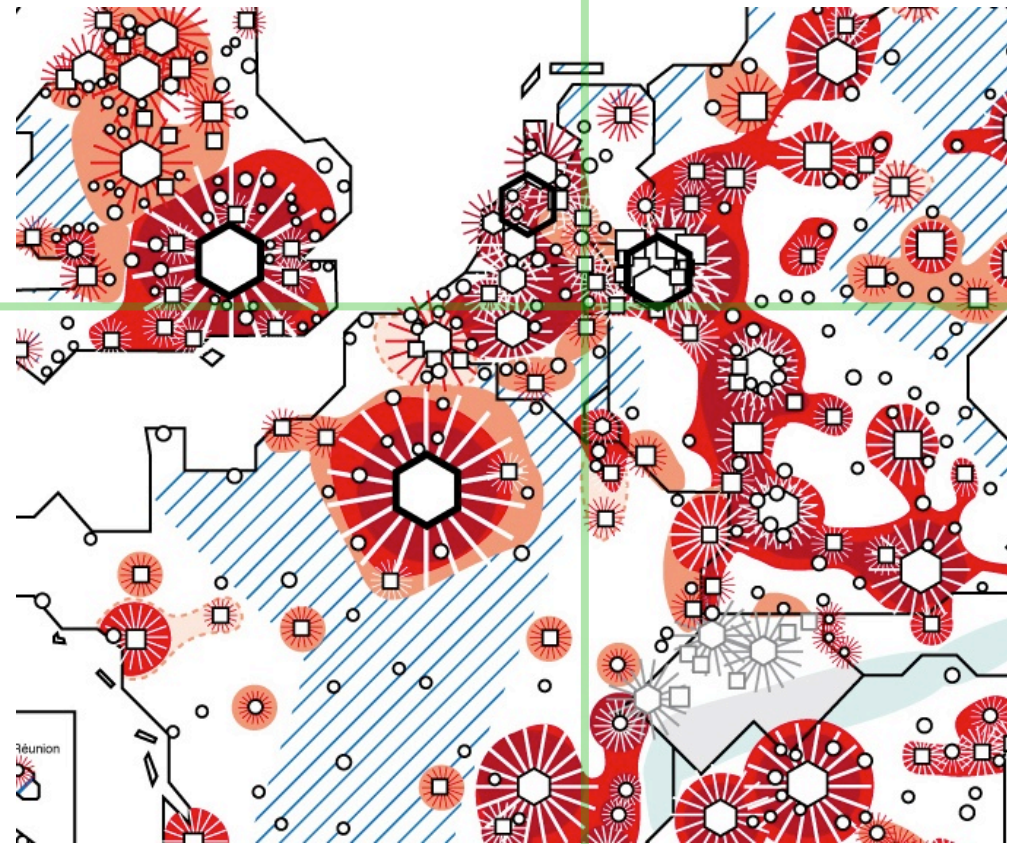
- ▶ In 1989, Walloon, Flemish and Dutch ministers of regional development decided to carry out together a spatial development perspective for the MHAL region.
- ▶ In 1990, North Rhineland Westphalia joined this initiative.
- ▶ This development initiative has finally been adopted in 1993.
- ▶ Private and education sectors not directly involved.
- ▶ Policy guide-lines in the field of regional economy, transport of passengers and goods, industrial and commercial zones, urban development, rural area, tourism, leisure and environment.



MHAL spatial perspective (1993)

A very favourable location, with significant pressure on land and ecosystems

- ▶ An urban network-in-formation (Vonk, 2000)
- ▶ At the cross road between Brussels-Ghent-Antwerp, Randstadt and Ruhr urban network.
- ▶ An inverted city composed by ring of cities located around a green open space : the "Three Countries Park"
- ▶ Linear transport infrastructures (HSL, motorways, Albert Canal) structuring the territory and fueling sprawl.



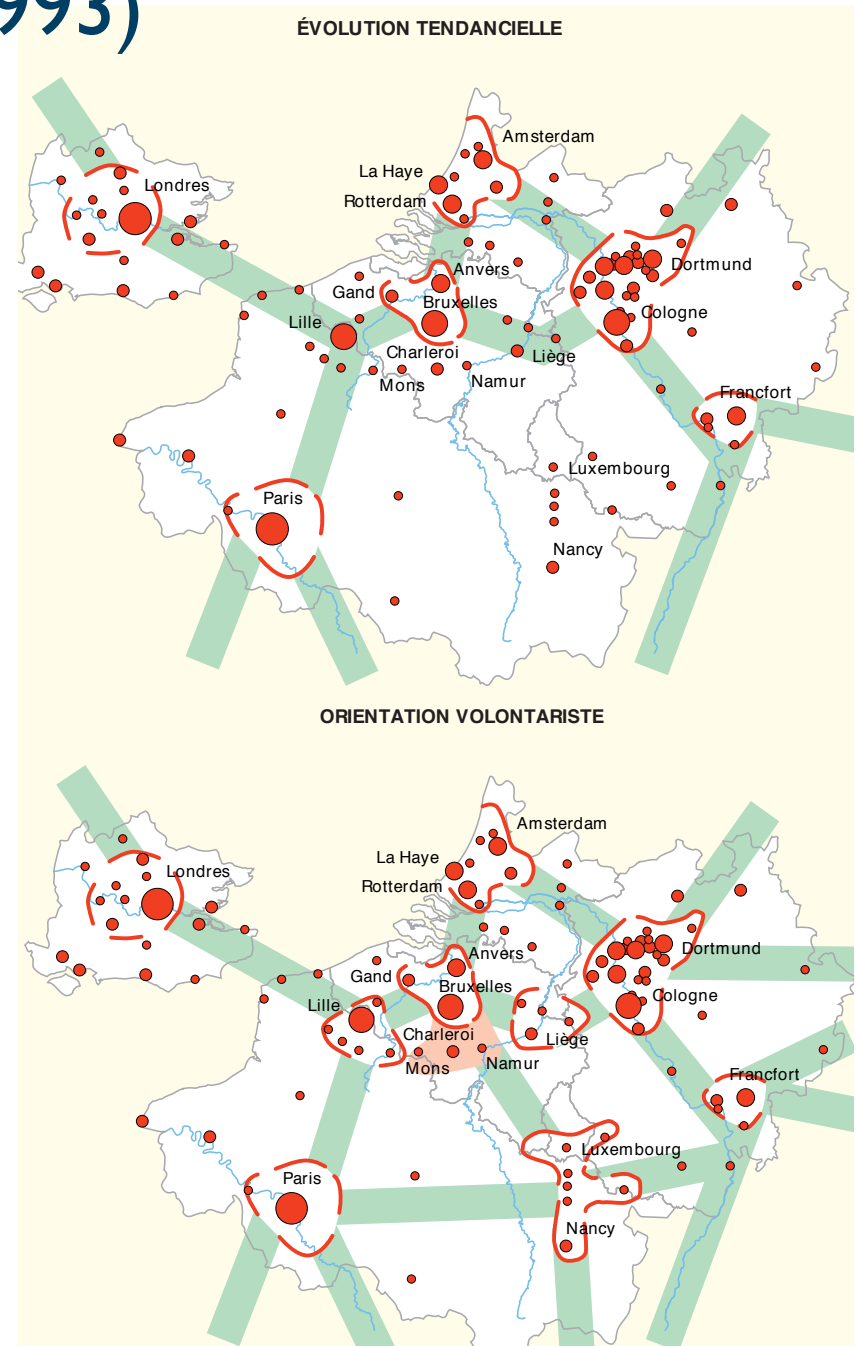


MHAL spatial perspective (1993)

Three main interdependent issues :

1. Strengthening the region's external position, including TGV and airport connections, but also cultural networking and knowledge/innovation economy ;
2. Improvement of the internal structure, especially through improvement of urban nodes and light rail connections ;
3. Conservation and enhancement of open space and landscape qualities.

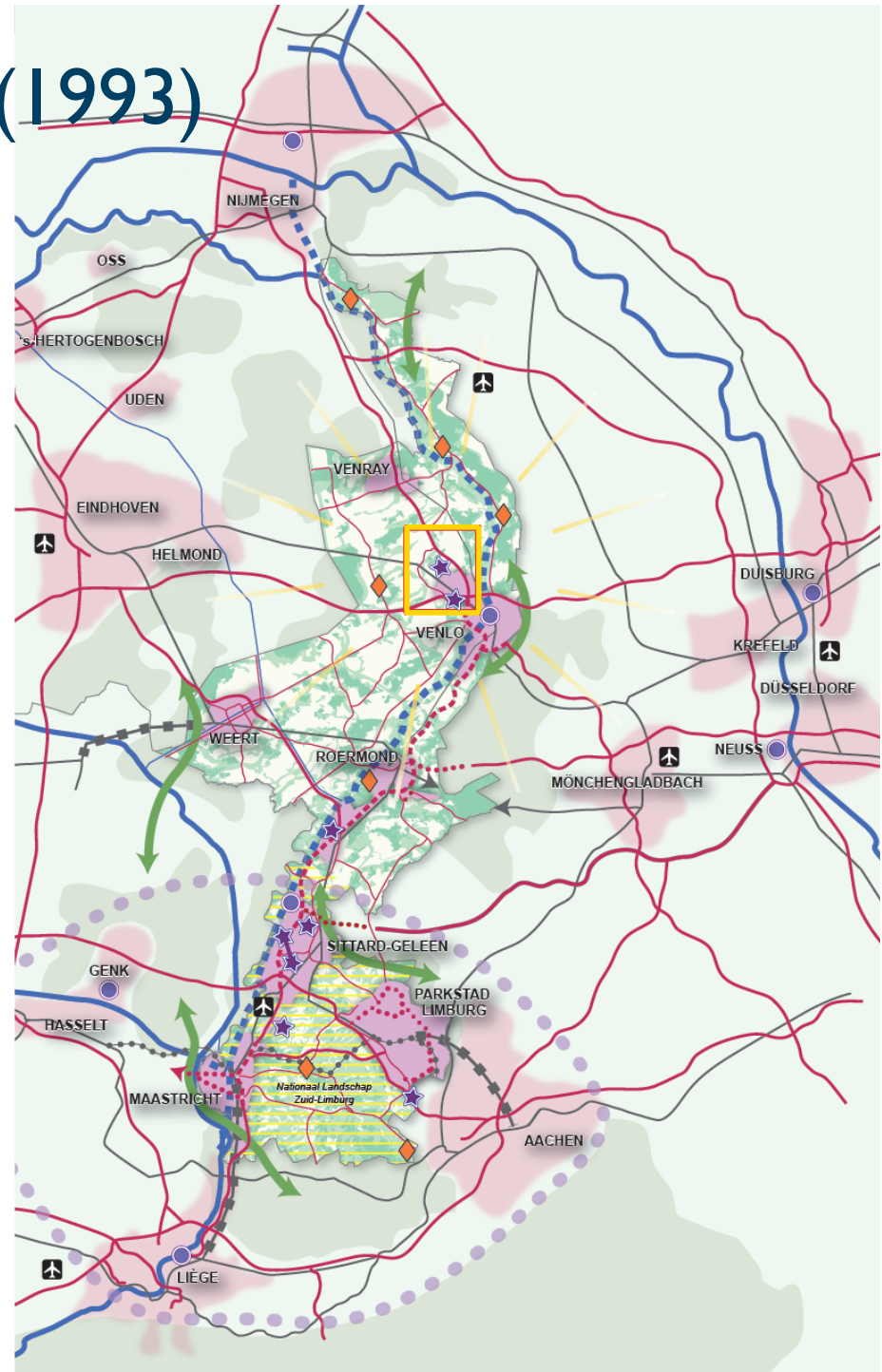
To constitute an effective network of cities, forming a cross border «urban focal point», beneficial both for the city regions and their rural hinterland.



MHAL spatial perspective (1993)

Implementation phase

- ▶ A series of implementation measures identified in the MHAL Perspective (follow-up by EMR authorities)
- ▶ Acknowledgement of cross-border dynamics by national/regional authorities (1994).
- ▶ The international working group is not maintained.
- ▶ Integration in national/regional policy frameworks: SDEL (1999), 5th Nota Ruimte (2006), Provinciaal Omgevingsplan Limburg (2006), ...



Spatial Perspective for Tri-Country Park (2003)

LP3 a the main follow-up of the MAHL initiative

1. Supervision and restoration of water systems in a cross-national perspective (flood supervision, drought and pollution).
2. Conservation of the area's main ecological structure and links to major external units.
3. Conservation and development of cultural-historical landscapes.
4. Balanced development of urban areas (periurbanisation) and tourism/leisure facilities with environmental conservation.
5. A perspective on environmentally conscious agriculture, its contribution to environmental management.

While the MAHL perspective places emphasis on urban development, the LP3LP focuses on the rural/natural environment

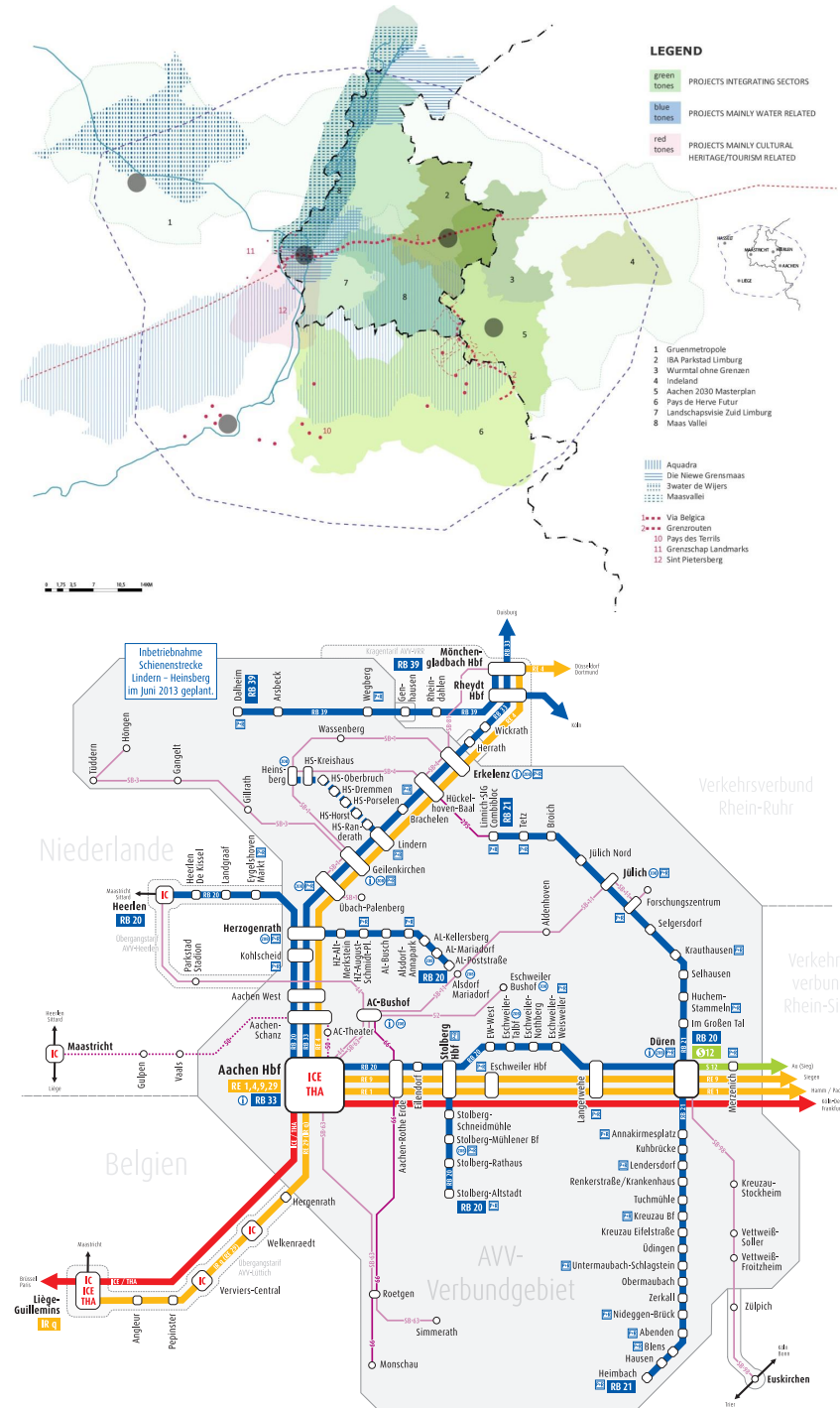


Present situation

A series of projects developed around EMR

- ▶ Series of cross-border initiative either led by city regions or funded by Interreg Projects.
- ▶ Project-based development : coordinated action in order to integrate the different initiatives ?
- ▶ Cross-border economic area (AVANTIS) between Heerlen and Aachen.
- ▶ Lack of action at the city scale and especially in existing urban neighborhoods and periurban areas.
- ▶ Intraregional links : mainly Grensbus lines (8 lines) + Sneltram Hasselt-Maastricht (2017) + IC Eindhoven-Heerlen to Aachen

Lack of coordinated vision and operational instruments for developing an effective transport/land use cross-border policy.



Land-use planning in the EMR

Pioneering role in the progressive elaboration of a cross-border vision, from the MAHL perspective to the LP3 policy.

▶ Main evolutions over time :

- ▶ From urban development to resource conservation
- ▶ From planning-led to project-based
- ▶ From grey- to green- and soft-infrastructures

▶ Main difficulty :

- ▶ From a strategic vision to its operational implementation
- ▶ Especially in the domain of combined land-use and transport policy

Land-use planning in the EMR

Main challenges for the future

1. Overcoming **cultural** and **linguistic** barriers (time dimension).
2. Combining divergent national/regional **legal systems** (legal procedures, environmental assessment).
3. Developing an effective **interoperability** between national/regional technical operators (schedules, ICT services).
4. Extending **economic partnerships** beyond the present service and leisure economic basis (especially in the knowledge-based domain).
5. Involving the **general public** beyond a close circle of experts (public participation).