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PAMINA: 2008 marks 20 years of cross-border cooperation

On 12 December 1988, the signature of the declaration of intent for a cross-border action programme, also known as the “Wissembourg Declaration”, was the founding act of the cross-border space and provided the impetus for the conception and development of various forms of cross-border cooperation.

The Wissembourg sous-préfet Rémy Sermier came up with a name for the space: PAMINA. This was inspired by the heroine of Mozart’s *Magic Flute* and refers to the three principal components of the French-German geographical space: PA (southern Palatinat), MI (Mittlerer Oberrhein), NA (northern Alsace).

This cross-border territory, encompassing about six thousand sq. km, 1.6 million inhabitants and nearly sixteen thousand border workers, has from the beginning been based on a real territory project. Territorial development issues have defined the scope of a project, of the territory and of the partnership. The REGIO PAMINA LCCG established in 2003 is the instrument used to implement this collective vision of the territory.

In twenty years of cooperation more than one hundred and fifty projects have been completed, a number of which have incorporated the PAMINA name, such as the PAMINA People’s University, the PAMINA Developers Club, the PAMINA Rhineland Park, PAMINA Women, the PAMINA secondary school in Herxheim and the PAMINA Youth Network. Many partnerships and networks have been able to put down



Wissembourg nursery – PAMINA cross-border nursery network (Interreg 3A project)

substantial roots.

Experiments such as the INFOBEST task force, the management of the Interreg 3A programme, the introduction of a contractualisation policy and of standing French-German teams have been scaled up to cover the Upper Rhine.

PAMINA has gone through a long phase of experimentation. The question now arises of the legitimacy of the action undertaken, perhaps through recognition of its know-how at national and European levels. The next development phase is already planned. PAMINA must define territorial governance at the level of a Eurodistrict and its linkage with the Upper Rhine trinational metropolitan region project, not forgetting the European level. To take this new step forward, PAMINA is planning to be named a Eurodistrict and to become a European grouping of territorial cooperation.

What are the cooperation issues in your territory?

On 2 April 2008 the presidency of the LCCG (local cross-border cooperation grouping) will be held for the first time by France. There are important upcoming issues: in June we want to establish the REGIO PAMINA Eurodistrict, the purpose being to raise the profile of the cross-border territory perceived by its inhabitants. On the legal front we are going to discuss the possibility of turning the LCCG into an European grouping of territorial cooperation (EGTC). There are several objectives: first of all, we want to avoid isolating ourselves, we want to be part of the ‘group’ of EGTCs which is forming informally, networking of which could be very beneficial for us, for example. The EGTC will also enable us to bring in the state as partner in some of our work, which is not possible with the LCCG.

Another issue of our territory is its governance and its linkage with the Upper Rhine trinational metropolitan region project, of whose area PAMINA makes up about one-third. The linkage of the levels, the territorial levels and the partners between the state, the Länder, the Region, the departments, the Kreise, etc., must be organised and the PAMINA territory must occupy its full place in that organisation.

The last major issue: Interreg 4. The 2007-2013 programming has merged the “Centre-South-Upper Rhine” and PAMINA programmes into a single programme. Nevertheless we would like to be able to manage the projects concerning the PAMINA territory separately: we know the territory, we have experience of the structural funds² and we are closer to the field than the regional level. This possibility is being examined by the Commission.

Can you give us some examples of current projects?

We are preparing several projects for Interreg 4. The most important one is the establishment of a French-German youth hostel, which will be located right on the border, in Scheibhardt. We also have a project to provide training and information on renewable energies, with the opening of ten or so French-German information offices for the inhabitants. We can also mention an intermunicipal cooperation project aiming to pool administrative services to the citizens of a small territory with 15,000 inhabitants around Wissembourg and Bad-Bergzabern.

¹ Local Cross-border Cooperation Grouping

² The LCCG was the managing authority of the PAMINA programme for the 2000-2006 period.

Cross-border agreement between Kiev and Warsaw

Following the enlargement of the Schengen space in December 2007 and the free movement of persons between Germany and Poland, the latter has reinforced its eastern borders and tightened up its delivery of visas for Ukrainians.

Visas delivered by Poland, which used to be free of charge and easy for Ukrainians to obtain, have become inaccessible to them. Border Ukrainians were accustomed to crossing the border every day for business or work. With this tightening up border-crossings have decreased, with consequences including, for example, increasing layoffs in Polish businesses which supplied the Ukrainian market.

In this context, and faced with growing tensions and demonstrations, Warsaw and Kiev signed an agreement in March to simplify the movement rules for the whole Ukrainian-Polish border.

Initiated by the Polish and Ukrainian ministers of foreign affairs, this agreement must be approved by Brussels before being ratified by the two countries. It will allow Ukrainians residing in an area up to fifty kilometres from the border to enter Poland without visas, with the introduction of a smart card permitting a stay of up to sixty days, on condition that the person obtains health insurance.

The agreement concerns 1.5 million Ukrainians. The Polish minister declared at a press conference that it should be possible to apply the agreement from summer 2008.

The 535-kilometre border between the two countries has only twelve border posts. In view of the 2012 European football championships to be organised by the two countries, they plan to open six to eight new border posts, while reinforcing joint border checks.



Interreg project "Environmental protection and water drainage infrastructure" between the Netherlands and Belgium.

Adoption of cross-border operational programmes

A total of fifty-two cross-border cooperation programmes (under the territorial cooperation Objective 3) are going to receive funding from the European regional development fund (ERDF) for the 2007-2013 programming period. They account for a total amount of 5.4 billion euros. The eligible regions located along land or maritime borders are separated by a maximum distance of 150 kilometres. The spaces that have received the go-ahead from the Commission have already begun their implementation and the first calls for projects have been issued.

The first four operational programmes (OP) were adopted in September 2007: Italy/Austria (IT/AT, € 80 million), Ireland-Wales (UK/IE, € 53 million), Austria/Bavaria (AT/DE, € 54 million) et Euregio Maas Rhein (NL/BE/DE, € 72 million).

Until the end of November, the adopted Ops were: Bodensee Hochrhein (AT/DE/LI/CH, € 24 million), Oberrhein (FR/DE/CH, € 67 million), Spain/Portugal (ES/PO, € 267 million), Ireland/Northern Ireland/Scotland (UK/IE, € 192 million), Sweden/Norway (SE/NO, € 37 million), France/Wallonia/Vlaanderen (BE/FR, € 138 million), Grensregio Vlaanderen/Nederland (BE/NL, € 95 million), Italy/France maritime (IT/FR, € 121 million), Bothnia-Atlantica (SE/FI/NO, € 30 million), ALCOTRA (IT/FR, € 150 million).

In December twenty-eight OPs were adopted*. At the end of March 2008 seven new OPs were validated by the Commission: Oresund/Kattegat/Skagerrak (SE/DK/NO, € 112 million), Mecklenburg-Vor/Zachodniopomorskie (DE/PL, € 133 million), Lubuskie-Brandenburg (PL/DE, € 125 million), Greece/Bulgaria (GR/BG, € 111 million), Greece/Cyprus (GR/CY, € 42 million), Greece/Italy (GR/IT, € 89 million) et Amazon (FR/BR/SU, € 13 million), Carribean (€ 48 million).

Three programmes remain to be adopted for cross-border cooperation: Manche (FR/UK, € 173 million), Manche-North Sea (FR/NL/BE/UK, € 167 million) et Italy/Malta, € 30 million). The first two have been received and are in the process of validation by the Commission.

Out of a total of eighty OPs concerning territorial cooperation, seventy-five were adopted as of the end of March 2008. On the equivalent date only one out of eighty programmes had been adopted during the preceding 2000-2006 programming period.

The OPs: Germany/Netherlands (DE/NL, € 139 million), Czech Republic/Poland (CZ/PL, € 219 million), Grande Région (BE/DE/FR/LU, € 106 million), North (SE/FI/NO, € 34 million), Latvia/Lithuania (LV/LT, € 64 million), Romania/Bulgaria (RO/BG, € 218 million), Spain/France (ES/FR, € 169 million), Lithuania/Poland (LT/PL, € 72 million), South Baltic (PL/SE/DK/LT/DE, € 61 million), Syddanmark-Schleswig-K.E.R.N. (DK/DE, € 44 million), Saxony/Czech Republic (DE/CZ, € 207 million), Bavaria/Czech Republic (DE/CZ, € 116 million), Poland/Slovakia (PL/SK, € 157 million), Hungary/Slovakia (HU/SK, € 176 million), Italy/Slovenia (IT/SI, € 116 million), Slovenia/Hungary (SI/HU, € 29 million), Austria/Hungary (AT/HU, € 82 million), Austria/Slovakia (AT/SK, € 60 million), Austria/Czech Republic (AT/CZ, € 107 million), Italy/Switzerland (IT/CH, € 69 million), France/Switzerland (FR/CH, € 55 million), Central Baltic (FI/SE/EE/LA, € 102 million), Estonia/Latvia (EE/LV, € 38 million), Sjælland-Ostholstein-Lübeck-Plön (DK/DE, € 23 million), Sachsen/Dolnoslaskie (DE/PL, € 105 million), Slovakia/Czech Republic (SK/CZ, € 93 million), Hungary/Romania (HU/RO, € 224 million), Slovenia/Austria (SI/AT, € 67 millions).

■ EUROMOT

The first policy committee meeting of EUROMOT, the European network of cross-border local authorities, was held on 11 April 2008 in Lille, attended by its chairman Pierre Mauroy, vice-chairman Luis Felipe Menezes, secretary Alain Lamassoure and a representative of the City Twins network. Further information: www.espaces-transfrontaliers.eu

■ European Parliament adopts two reports on cohesion policy

Under the Lisbon Treaty, the European Parliament is now involved in the definition of the European cohesion policy through the codecision procedure.

On 28 February 2008 it adopted two reports: one on economic and social cohesion since the enlargements of 2004 and 2007 and the second on the follow-up of the territorial agenda and the Leipzig Charter "on the sustainable European city" with a view to establishing a European action plan to encourage spatial development and territorial cohesion.

The first report underlines the major role of the cohesion policy in the reduction of regional disparities, while emphasising that the cohesion policy cannot be limited to the attainment of the Lisbon strategy aims.

In the second report the MEPs ask the Council and the Member States to fully involve all the stakeholders (local, regional and cross-border bodies, social and economic partners, non-governmental organisations and private-sector operators) in the action programmes implementing the Territorial Agenda and the Leipzig Charter.

Press review

■ **Association TREND established by France 3 Nord and four Belgian local television channels**, *La Correspondance de la Presse*, 8 February "France 3 Nord Pas-de-Calais Picardie has joined Belgian local television channels Télé Bruxelles, No Télé, Télé Mons Borinage and Antwerpse Televisie to establish TREND (north-west Europe regional digital television), a non-profit association governed by Belgian law. This association 'gives concrete form to the result of 10 years of cross-border collaboration between five regional television channels,' declared the regional station of France 3..."

■ **The dream of a real cross-border enterprise**, *Le Républicain lorrain*, 6 February "The enterprise and the cross-border situation. That is the novel topic of a study submitted yesterday to the economic and social council which highlights the lack of companies in the discussion of cross-border issues, when they are the real economic drivers of the Grande Région..."

■ **Geneva area cross-border space – Publication of an atlas: more than 650,000 inhabitants at the heart of Europe**, *Vox Rhône Alpes*, 25 February "This atlas presents a cross-border view of the Geneva area at an unusual scale, at the heart of a space extending from Piedmont and Lombardy to the German and Austrian upper Rhine regions, Franche-Comté and Burgundy, the Massif central and towards the Rhone valley..."

■ **France-Vaud-Geneva RER – Transferis is the name of the consultancy and marketing company established**, *Tribune de Genève*, 9 February "... jointly by CFF and SNCF in Annemasse. It is intended to 'clear the way together for the France-Vaud-Geneva regional express railway network'..."

■ **Hendaye and Irun to treat their water without borders**, *Les Échos*, 30 January "Optimising their facilities, the Spanish and French municipalities on both sides of the Bidassoa have defined a joint and economical solution for their waste water..."

■ **The statistical atlas of the Pyrenees can now be browsed on-line**, *L'Indépendant*, 22 February "Within the framework of the CTP (Pyrenees working community), currently chaired by Georges Frêche, the statistics institutes of the border regions (Aragon, Catalonia, Euskadi, Navarre, Aquitaine, Languedoc-Roussillon, Midi-Pyrénées and the Principality of Andorra) have decided to collaborate on the production of a statistical atlas pooling harmonised statistics for the entire range..."