



Initiativkreis Metropolitane
Grenzregionen

The “Cross-Border Metropolitan Regions” Initiative

// Positioning



Imprint

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Interdisziplinäre Metropolitane
Grenzregionen

November 2012 (Cover picture: fotolia)

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The partnership was assisted in the years 2008 to 2011 by the Demonstration Project of Spatial Planning (MORO) “Supraregional partnerships in cross-border functional regions“. This will be followed by a second funding period as a MORO “Initiative Group of German Regions in Cross-Border Functional Regions“ (2011 to 2013). MORO is a research programme of the Federal Ministry of Transport, Building and Urban Development (BMVBS), supervised by the Federal Institute for Research on Building, Urban Affairs and Spatial Development (BBSR) within the Federal Office for Building and Regional Planning (BBR).

The IMeG-members are up to now the federal state of Saarland as part of the Greater Region¹, the Regio Aachen e.V. as part of the Euregio Maas-Rhein and the Regionalverbände Mittlerer Oberrhein, Südlicher Oberrhein, Hochrhein-Bodensee and Bodensee-Oberschwaben from the Trinational Metropolitan Region Upper Rhine and the Lake Constance region. Associated partner is the Federal State of Rhineland-Palatinate. The IMeG-partnership aims to represent its interests on a national and European level. The network's efforts are dedicated to highlighting the specific potentials of these border regions. At the same time the initiative aims to provide stimuli for the promotion of cross-border regional development in a manner that benefits territorial cohesion.

1 / Greater Region Saarland – Lorraine – Luxembourg – Rhineland Palatinate – Wallonia – French- and German-speaking community of Belgium

1. Foundations in spatial planning policy

In a Europe that is growing ever closer together, the regions have a special role to play in all their varied manifestations. The Territorial Agenda of the European Union 2020 (TAEU 2020) foregrounds

**polycentric spatial
development in the EU
and an innovative
networking of urban
regions and cities**

as a primary territorial priority of its cohesion policy. It demands that the development strategies of cities and regions be aligned with the objectives of the EU's 2020 strategy for Europe. TAEU 2020 considers the promotion of territorial cohesion and utilisation of territorial potentials as essential for sustainable economic growth and social cohesion. This objective corresponds to the German federal spatial development concept of "growth and innovation", which also underscores intraregional cooperation

and shared responsibility within regions in a cross-border context.

As Europe's "laboratories", the cross-border polycentric metropolitan regions (CBPMR) pursue these objectives to a particular extent by making a

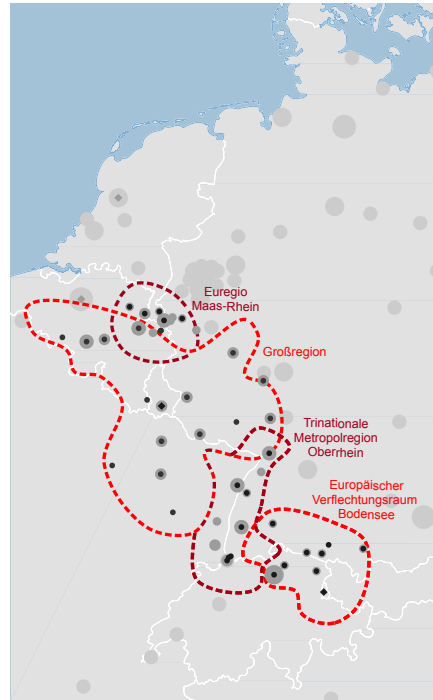
**contribution to
territorial cohesion
and cooperation,**

and by serving as growth engines to advance the economic, societal and social development in European border regions. They support Europe's competitiveness and sustainable development to the same extent as the metropolitan regions contained within national boundaries, but augmented by special competences in the economic and social cohesion within border regions.

The 38th ministerial conference for spatial planning has decided to refine and supplement the previous area categories and illustrating maps, amongst others by the four cross-border metropolitan functional zones Euregio Maas-Rhein, Greater Region, Trinational Metropolitan Region Upper Rhine and Lake Constance region. The 2011 Spatial Planning Report makes special mention of the

**cross-border
functional regions
with metropolitan functions**

because the economic dynamics in these zones also support the objectives of the Europe 2020 strategy (intelligent, sustainable and integrative growth).



cartography: agl based on geodata of BBSR and the regions

2. Objectives of the IMeG

As an association of metropolitan border regions, the “Cross-Border Metropolitan Regions” Initiative (IMeG) can draw on long-standing and immediate knowledge of cross-border cooperation. It is aimed at highlighting the functions and effects of cross-border polycentric metropolitan regions as important building blocks of European spatial development, and at claiming the corresponding attention on both a federal national and a European level. The IMeG shares the aim of the metropolitan regions in Germany to serve as a

strategic platform for Europe’s competitiveness, sustainability and cohesion, and furthermore sees itself as a promoter of integrated strategies in cross-border regional development.

This involves the identification of strategic and operative fields of action designed to

- develop the functionality of these regions,
- reveal and reduce border-specific obstacles, and
- strengthen potentials and complementary metropolitan qualities in particular consideration of the border location.

In doing so, the initiative understands itself as a mediator for presenting and communicating the specific interests of cross-border metropolitan regions vis-à-vis the European territorial cohesion policy, in supplementation and further development of the tasks and objectives of

Germany's internal metropolitan regions. One of the objectives resides in providing cross-border polycentric metropolitan regions with an

**adequate appreciation
in the EU's territorial
strategies**

in future because of their central role in promoting European cohesion. The IMeG pursues a clear territorial perspective and claims a level of attention, also in the respective national sectoral and funding policies, that is commensurate with the importance of cross-border metropolitan regions. It emphatically demands that these regions be included in the federal concepts.

The IMeG is no substitute for existing institutions, but rather aimed at an effective and synergetic collaboration with existing cooperation structures and networks on a national and European level.

The IMeG's tasks derive from the strategic and operative fields of action elaborated in the MORO-project "Supra-regional partnerships in cross-border functional regions". The higher-level strategic fields of action provide a framework for cross-border cooperation, which is then filled in by the concrete operative fields of action in the respective regions.

The strategy development prioritises the **promotion of border region awareness and a shared approach to the space.**

This also includes lending visibility to the strengths and development potentials of the respective border region by way of its metropolitan functions and qualities. The definition of a joint objective and shared understanding of the issues within the metropolitan border region concerned is meanwhile essential for the conceptual side.

The further development of metropolitan locational factors and of the unique quality of life in a cross-border regional context

is hence foregrounded in the border regions' internal cooperation, with the aim of consolidating the functional integration of complementary metropolitan locational factors provided within them. As

drivers of societal, economic, social and cultural development, the metropolitan border regions are meanwhile tasked with structuring the implementation processes by means of regional development concepts, and with rendering them implementation-oriented.

As varied as the actual projects within the respective regions may be, joint task areas will still be provided, for example in the field of cooperation structures. The IMeG sets itself the task of pushing the internal integration of the regions, as well as pushing the development and expansion of governance structures to remove obstacles to cross-border cooperation, and of optimising them by the communication of concrete examples taken from the member regions.

The IMeG serves the exchange of information and know-how between the metropolitan border regions and provides a communication platform for discussing

comparable development perspectives and problem solving strategies. To do this it opens up to the outside, in order to learn from other metropolitan regions, including those contained within national borders. The

cooperation with existing networks

such as the Association of European Border Regions (AEBR), the Mission Opérationnelle Transfrontalière (MOT) and the Initiativkreis Europäische Metropolregionen in Deutschland (IKM) is an important process for enabling the utilisation of synergies with already existing scientific and practical achievements. In this sense the IMeG regards itself as a “learning network” that also draws its knowledge from the collaboration with other networks and other regions.

To ensure that the awareness for cross-border metropolitan regions is raised in national spatial planning policies, and that their needs be included in the states’

consultation contributions for European cohesion and funding policy, the IMeG identifies

good examples for the implementation of strategic and operative objectives in cross-border metropolitan cooperation.

These concrete measures are implemented in the partner regions by way of corresponding flagship projects.



Strength through partnership: Working together (fotolia)

3. Strategies of the metropolitan border regions

The existing results of the MORO-project “Supra-regional partnerships in cross-border functional regions” and the discussions within the initiative permit the development of a strategy for strengthening the identity of border regions that is to be defined by way of the following spheres of action:

- Development of shared perspectives on metropolitan qualities and task areas, of a shared understanding of the issues involved, and of images of cross-border regional development with respect to
 - ↳ Cross-border, metropolitan-minded spatial development projects and action programmes
 - ↳ Flagship projects promoting the image and identity
- Initiation of cross-border information management and regional monitoring
- Improvement and expansion of cross-border coordination processes and conflict solutions
- Development and optimisation of metropolitan governance structures
- Improving the perception on a national and European level

Strengthening the metropolitan character of the border regions takes centre stage in operative respects, in particular by the functional integration and concatenation of the metropolitan functional areas of politics, economy, science, transport and culture. The objective resides in:

- Promoting cross-border mobility concepts
- Networking infrastructures and pooling forces in border regions, amongst others
 - ↳ in terms of services for the public
 - ↳ in the locational development for industry and commerce, e.g. by way of cross-border cluster policies
 - ↳ in the networking of tourism, leisure and cultural activities
 - ↳ in the expansion of regenerative energies
- Developing environmental protection and cultural/cultivation landscapes across borders
- Strengthening metropolitan border regions as shared economic areas and lifeworlds
- Intensifying cross-border cooperation in science

Conclusion

The IMeG will actively support the implementation of the strategic and operative objectives for developing metropolitan border regions as a network, and analyse the progress of this development in terms of its success factors and obstacles. It provides options for exchange and for supporting metropolitan spatial development by, for example, communicating good examples. It offers support to comparable, nascent metropolitan border regions over and beyond the circle of its founding members, as well as involving other, already existing border regions in the work of the IMeG and drawing on their know-how. The initiative will formulate the requirements resulting from the particular border location of the metropolitan regions in terms of national and European spatial development and assistance policies, and transport them to the requisite political levels.

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