

Cooperation between chambers of commerce across the French-Belgian border goes back a long way.

- ✎ In 1991, EURO 3, a **European Economic Interest Group (EEIG)**, was created by the Greater Lille CCI, VOKA and the CCI Wallonie-Picarde, three chambers of commerce which are very active in the area of cross-border cooperation along the Franco-Belgian border. This provides a forum for discussion, position-taking and the development of concrete proposals with regard to the economic issues faced in the cross-border area. EURO 3 intends to create a cross-border investment fund.

In terms of employment:

- ✎ **The EuresChannel network**,¹⁸ founded in 1993 by the three public employment agencies concerned (Le Forem – for Wallonia, VDAB – for Flanders, and Pôle Emploi – for France) and the social partners (businesses and employees), aims at facilitating labour mobility across the border.

The configurations of partnership between players concerned with cross-border economic development on either side of the border are not entirely symmetrical. For example, in West Flanders, there is a circuit between representatives of businesses, such as VOKA and UNIZO, and the Province, either directly or through POM and OCK. There is no equivalent link between consular chambers and territorial authorities concerning cross-border issues on the French side of the border, for example, between the Greater Lille CCI and the Nord-Pas de Calais Region. The situation is similar in the area of innovation: while, on the French side, Nord France Innovation Développement, the Region's operator, does not communicate with the consular chambers, on the Flemish side, the business-research connection is pursued by OCK, which works to bring together businesses, via VOKA and the Greater Lille CCI, and technology centres, in the framework of the TANDEM project.

As regards the two EGCTs, the Lille-Kortrijk-Tournai Eurometropolis and West-Vlaanderen/Flanders–Dunkerque–Côte d'Opale, which are tasked with creating links and coordination, the partners regularly make choices as to which initiatives should be carried out jointly by the cross-border body, and which should be implemented directly by their own departments.

In terms of funding frameworks, the France-Wallonia-Flanders and 2 Seas programmes have supported numerous projects in the field of economic development. The FWVL programme for 2014-2020 proposes the development of project portfolios by theme or territory. In this vein, several of the players mentioned above plan to develop portfolios of projects in the economic field.



Alzette-Belval, new town site at the Franco-Luxembourg border

¹⁸ For more information: <http://pro.guidesocial.be/sat/redirect.php?s=256>