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WHAT IS THE CONTEXT OF THE PROJECT?

The Euregio Meuse-Rhine programme is one of the longest-running forms of cross-border cooperation in Europe.

Set up in 1976, it brings together the Province of Limburg, the Province of Liège and the German-Speaking Community in Belgium, the southern part of the Province of Limburg in the Netherlands and the Regio Aachen in Germany, an association composed of the local governments in the Aachen conurbation.

Benefiting from significant multi-thematic institutional cooperation, this region of medium-sized, densely populated towns in the middle of Western Europe is also rich in informal cooperation initiatives which are more sector-specific.

TTR-ELAt (Top Technology Region/Eindhoven-Leuven-Aachen Triangle), which covers a different geographical area from the Euregio programme, was created in 2009 out of the merger of the TTR and ELAt projects, both with an economic dimension, in a region regarded by the OECD an “innovation leader” (the headquarters of Philips is in Eindhoven) and which benefits from a dense network of SMEs, innovative start-ups and university R&D centres.

The first initiative corresponded to the strategic realisation by the Dutch government of the predominant role and potential of the Province of Limburg in the area of innovation and new technologies in the national economy.

The second dates back to a project in 2004 by the municipalities of Eindhoven, Leuven and Aachen aimed at reinforcing economic cooperation and cross-border innovation projects between the three cities, an initiative which increasingly benefited from the support of local and regional actors, in particular universities. TTR-ELAt therefore made it possible to concretely develop regional complementarities in the main areas of common expertise: chemistry, innovative materials, high-tech systems and the life sciences.¹⁴⁶

¹⁴⁶ Source: OECD study of regional innovation