

Crossborder cooperation between the Netherlands, Germany and Belgium

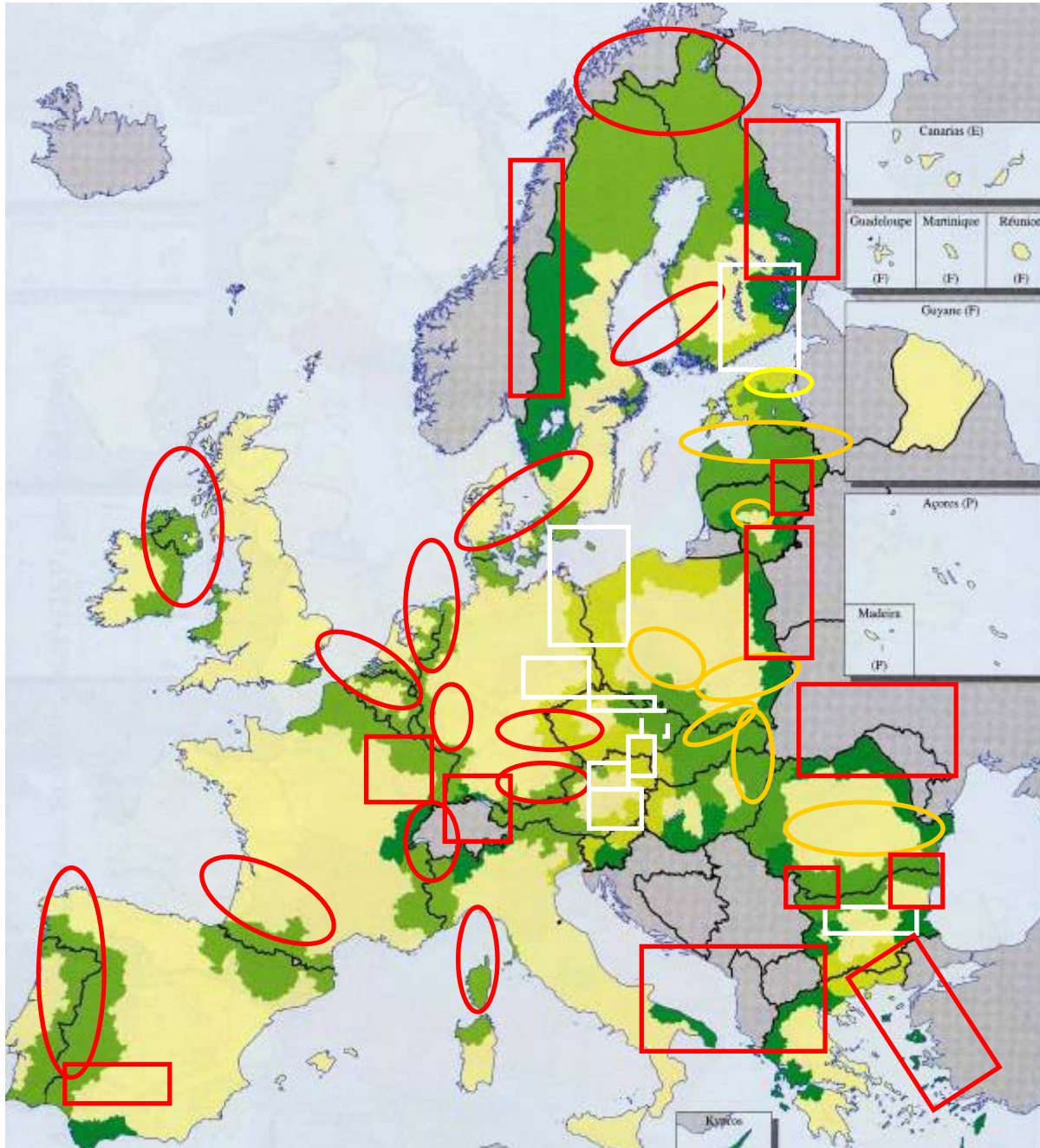
Stefan Kupers: province of Limburg/
Euregio Meuse-Rhine

Wouter Bringmann
Ministry of the Interior and Kingdom Relations

Border regions in Europe

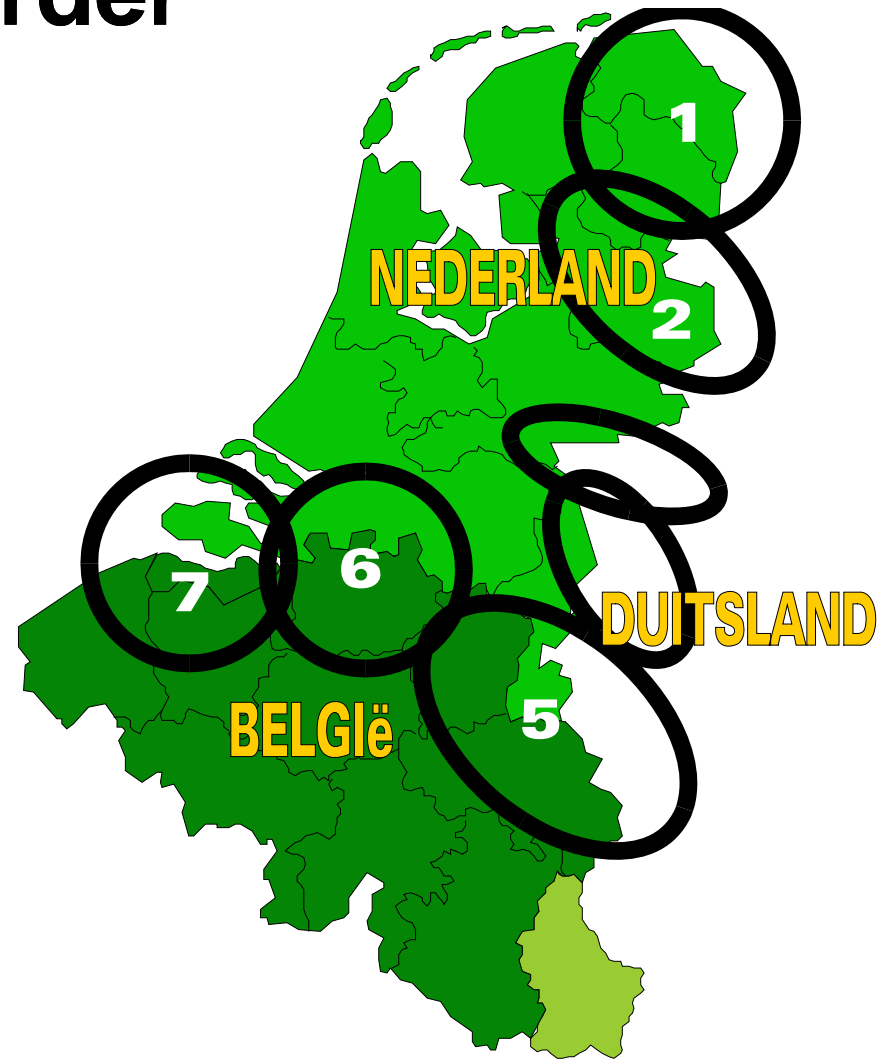
1. Internal borders
2. External borders
3. Temporarily external borders

Latvia
Lithuania
Estonia
Poland
Slovakia
Hungary
Slovenia
Greece



Euregios on the NL/G- and NL/B border

1. Eems Dollard Regio
2. Euregio Rijn Eems IJssel
3. Regio Rijn Waal
4. Grensregio Rijn Maas Noord
5. **Euregio Meuse-Rhine**
6. Euregio Benelux Middengebied
7. Euregio Scheldemond



Background

- Cabinet: more focus on crossborder cooperation
- Declaration signed (2008) with border regions
- A common agenda bottom-up from the border-regions
- Cabinet point of view on advice of the Council for Public Administration
- Parliament is interested: room for experiments

Aims, ambitions

- Improve the potential of crossborder regions (euregions)
- Crossborder mobility and cooperation without disproportionate costs or difficulties
- In 2009 a common agenda with Germany and Belgium

Approach

- Multi-level cooperation between national and regional levels in NL/B/G, notably:
- The regions: defining projects and specific hindrances,
- The national authorities: aiming for solutions

Working-method

- Coordinating role of the Ministry of the Interior and Kingdom Relations
- Task Force
- Agent on behalf of the Minister
- Working groups

Scope action program

- Bottlenecks that concern regions on both sides of the border and which cannot be tackled without the help of the central government (N) or regional and federal government (B/G)
- Beyond this scope:
Bottlenecks that concern countries
Bottlenecks that can be overcome on regional level

Scope action program: themes

- Transborder labour market
- Education
- Health care
- Safety: transb. disasters and fight against crime
- Environment
- Public Transport
- Planning: possibility of appeal for citizens

Challenges

- Bridging the “gap” between central governments and the border regions;
- Long terms solutions versus the need for visible results: political momentum
- Commitment from the other side of the border: cooperation between different levels of government

Where are we now

- Preparing proposals on the Dutch side: working groups, Task Force, broker
- Neighbours have been informed and are preparing their input for the common agenda:
 - expressing interest in common agenda so far
 - adding their own points
- Focus on solutions and results before the end of this year (fast track)

PROVINCE OF LIMBURG (NL)

- 1,2 mln inhabitants; 40 municipalities; capital of Limburg: Maastricht
- 350 km's of border with Belgium and Germany; 110 km's of border with other Dutch provinces
- Administration of the Province:
 - Provincial Council,
 - Provincial Executive,
 - Queen's Commissioner (Governor)
- European Treaty of Maastricht 1992 signed in the Governments' building





BELGISCH
LIMBURG



NEDERLANDS
LIMBURG



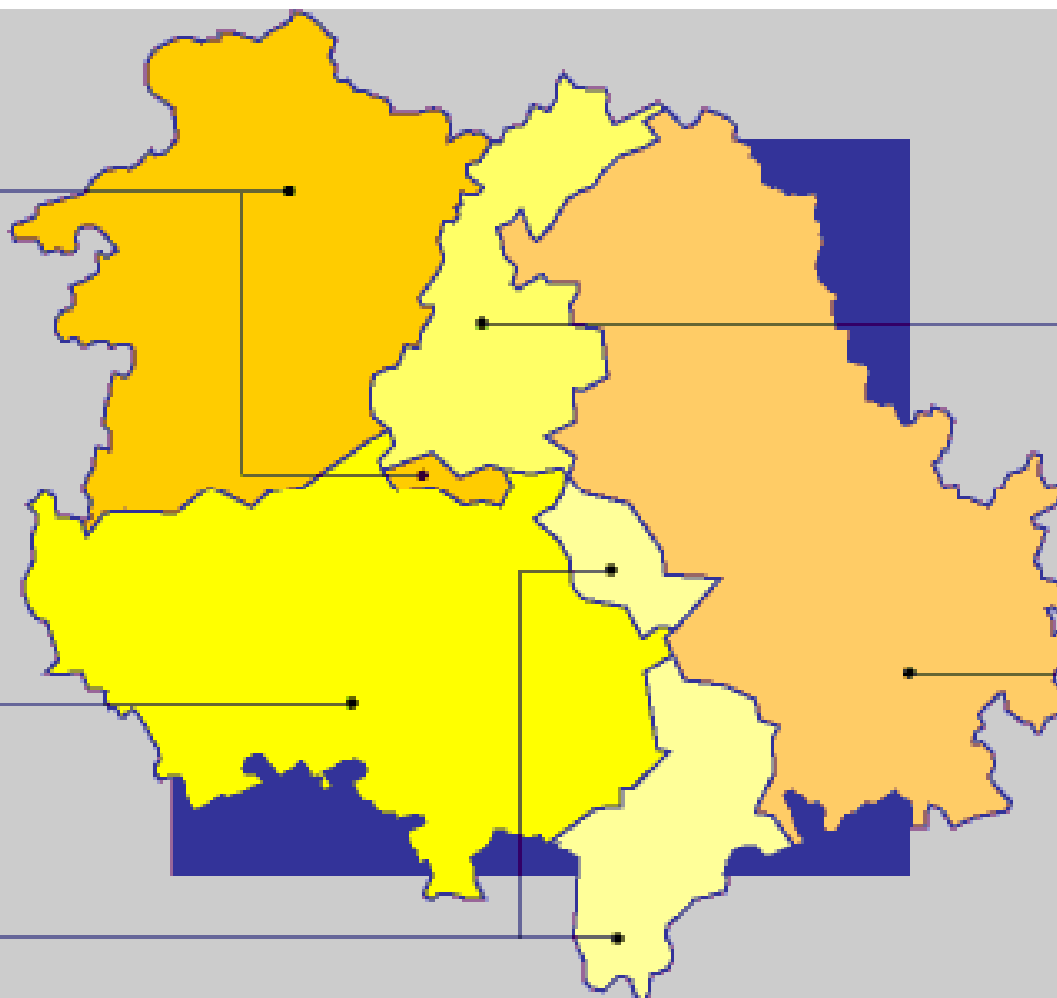
PROVINCIE LUIK



REGIO AKEN



DUITSTALIGE
GEMEENSCHAP



The euregions around Limburg

- Ministry of the Interior and the Province of Limburg share the same approach
- 2007: Advice of the Committee Hermans
- 2009: Parliament: has declared euregions around Limburg as experimental regions

Approach

Together with our euregions and the Ministry for the Interior

- Organising a process of (pilot-)projects
- Fits in common agenda of the Ministry
- Structural cooperation between euregions and national authorities NL/B/G
- Transformation EMR to EGTC?

The role of the European Union

- Existing instruments (Interreg, EGTC)
- Green paper on territorial cohesion; promote cross border cooperation
- Dissemination of best practices in solving problems caused by differences in regulations, competences, operating systems

Conclusions

- Close cooperation is needed on the various levels with and within adjoining countries: national, regional and local level
- Concrete projects as well as long-term structural cooperation are needed.
- Territorial cohesion: support of similar practices in EU is needed.

CONFERENCE

PRACTICAL APPROACHES TOWARDS EFFECTIVE EUROPEAN TRANSFRONTIER CO-OPERATION



6 – 7 July 2009
Maastricht
The Netherlands

Registration:
www.vngi-events.com