

VIEWPOINT

Dominique Anne Falys

Architect and urban planner with IDETA, member of the "Emulation" project working group

What do you consider was the added value of the cross-border cooperation in this project on the development of business parks?

First of all, the sharing of experience spread awareness of other development philosophies and other practices. In addition, the light thrown on our own tools and instruments by comparison with those of our partners is very useful for reassessing the pertinence of our customary procedures. This influx of new blood certainly stimulated everyone's creativity!

This project provides the confirmation that quality is a process for which it is important to identify the assessment parameters and to ensure a balance between objectives that may, in many respects, be either contradictory or competing.

It is also the confirmation that quality must be targeted simultaneously on many fronts, and in a measured manner, in order to guarantee the consistency and the credibility of "quality" projects.

What has struck you most in the approaches to quality of French and Flemish business parks?

On the French side, an obvious asset, obtained through their planning tools, is the management of mixed urban development. The aim is not to reproduce the urban mixing of the old city, but rather to reconstruct "spaces for living", where the individual can flourish in all dimensions of life, and escape the fragmentation too often suffered in the contemporary city. Quality at the service of the well-being of individuals is certainly an essential collateral benefit of economic growth!

On the Flemish side, I quite appreciate the ideas of "subsidiarity", rather well mastered through the design, implementation and management tools, together with the management concept. This after-sales support service, which obviously contributes to the brand image of business parks, is above all a guarantee of sustainable development, which is, in the end, the most significant quality objective for ensuring the quality of life of future generations!

France - Belgium

"Emulation" project

Within the framework of the COPIT-GPCI (Cross-border standing conference of inter-municipal organizations), Lille Metropolitan Urban Community and four Flemish and Walloon inter-municipal organizations (IDETA, IEG, LEIEDAL and WVI) have conducted the "Emulation" project, launched in March 2003, with the aim of sharing good practices regarding the quality of industrial and business parks, comparing them and setting up a network of contacts in this field.

For three years, French and Belgian business park development experts, brought together in a working group, have shared their experiences regarding the improvement of the quality of such parks. After many discussions on the procedures for establishing and developing business parks in France, Flanders and Wallonia, and visits to benchmark sites in the French-Belgian metropolitan area, the working group was able to identify common quality objectives, and then analyze and compare the best tools for quality implementation.

The results of the project have been compiled in Cahier no.15 of the Cross-Border Workshop, published by COPIT-GPCI* and presented on 23 January at a concluding seminar. This seminar was an opportunity to bring together 120 project participants from the French-Belgian metropolitan area concerned by the subject, to circulate the conclusions widely and to raise awareness on quality issues.

The quality of business parks was thus reaffirmed as a fruitful topic of cross-border cooperation in the French-Belgian metropolitan area. The importance of exploiting the complementarities between the two countries in this domain, in particular to improve the attractiveness of the whole cross-border region, was emphasized. Ideas for future cooperation were put forward, including the drafting of a cross-border quality charter and

The Aquitaine-Euskadi Logistics Platform (PLAE)

In Europe, the logistics context depends increasingly on economic globalization, and imposes on economic and social agents a new organizational structure in which the use of transport intermodality becomes necessary at all levels.

Between France and Spain, the Euskadi and Aquitaine regions are traversed by a trans-European route that is strategic for the entire continent. However, this asset is called into question by the road transport situation, with forecasts showing roads in the Basque country and Aquitaine approaching saturation by 2010.

Confronted with this problem, in October 1989 Aquitaine and Euskadi signed a cooperation protocol showing a strong political will to adopt a cross-border approach to these questions. The President of the Aquitaine region, Alain Rousset, and the Lehendakari of the Basque government, Juan José Ibarretxe, thus undertook, in October 1989, the project to set up the PLAE.



Central avenue - "Qualitis" business park in Enghien

the exchange of trainees between developers.

Much know-how and many complementarities have been identified by this work:

- In Wallonia, for example, the cultural aspects of site urbanisation are highlighted, illustrated by the association of artists and philosophers in the design of new IDETA projects.
- In Lille, issues related to mixed urban development and mobility (site access, public transport, etc.) are emphasized.
- In Flanders, the control and management of business parks to maintain their quality throughout their lifetimes were identified.

Given these examples, it is possible to understand the value that the drafting of a common cross-border quality charter for business parks would have, enabling these competencies to be brought together and shared more productively.

* Available on the COPIT-GPCI web site:
<http://www.copit-gpci.org> (Economy section)

The task of this cooperation is to deal with the problems of transport between the two regions, French and Spanish, at a cross-border level, and to define the logistic role to be assumed by each of the regional administrations. The platform has the following objectives:

- strengthen the strategic position of Aquitaine and Euskadi in Europe and in other international markets,
- promote intermodality within the existing transport infrastructure,
- give the two regions a joint identification as a "Transport Logistics Community".

In 2004, the PLAE established itself as a European Economic Interest Grouping, thus providing balanced and joint representation of Euskadi and Aquitaine for this region, which declares itself to be "Europe's Atlantic Gateway".

Further information:

<http://www.plataformalogisticaaquitania-euskadi.com/>

Seminar on cross-border public passenger transport

On 27 January 2006, in Lille, a seminar on cross-border passenger public transport was organized by the MOT, the Lille metropolitan urban community and the Directorate-General for the sea and transports of the Ministry for Infrastructure. It brought together in the same room all the entities involved in cross-border passenger transport. Some one hundred participants, from a wide range of geographical locations and organizations, took part in the discussions: the European Commission, the French

Walloon ministries of transport, the organizing authorities (regional and departmental councils, inter-municipal bodies from all the border areas), SNCF, RFF, senior management of major transport groups, local carriers, etc. This seminar followed a study commissioned by the Ministry of Infrastructure and conducted by the MOT in 2005.

Playing a core role in the daily reality of cross-border population areas, transport systems are a key element of mobility within these spaces and are thus a particularly structuring factor in their development. They nevertheless face major technical, organizational and legal difficulties, together with growing saturation of road infrastructure at the borders. The use of private cars predominates, and can be explained in part by the often inadequate provision of cross-border public transport.

In order to respond to these issues, the study conducted by the MOT in 2005 provided an overview of:

- the upgrading of road and rail transport systems,
- the trends in general cross-border mobility,
- the legal arrangements and the new position of transport in cross-border area projects,
- the positions of the various protagonists involved in these issues.

Over and above the presentation of this inventory, the seminar was an opportunity to communicate different local experiences, concerning Lille, Geneva, Longwy, and the PACA region with Piedmont and Liguria.

A round table between the ministry of transport, the European Commission, the SNCF and local politicians was organized on the following questions:

- How can practical and statistical knowledge of cross-border journeys and of flows within cross-border areas be improved?
- What are the main obstacles that need to be overcome in the development of public transport in a cross-border conurbation project?
- How can system interconnection, intermodality and cross-border fare integration be promoted? How can the various levels of authorities with responsibilities for public transport be enabled to work together to a greater extent to promote cross-border intermodality?
- What are the legal options for structures for coordination of the different authorities organizing transport within a given cross-border area?
- European regulations do not take the urban and suburban scale into account in the organization of public transport bus services. How can the European texts on the organization of such services be amended so that the specific nature of cross-border transport appears at these different scales?

On the last point, Rémi MAYET, representative of the Transport DG of the European Commission, declared that he expected concrete proposals from the MOT that would enable progress to be made on eliminating sticking points, including legal ones. The seminar also showed the importance and the great necessity of bringing all entities involved in cross-border transport together within a sustainable network in order to benefit from an overall view, but also, and above all, to relay local needs to national and European authorities.

Note: The proceedings of the seminar will be published soon, and a thematic MOT Guide on the subject will be produced in 2006.

■ The MOT and the FPNRF (French regional natural parks federation) have signed a partnership agreement

On 8 February 2006, Jean-Louis Joseph, chairman of the FPNRF, and Pierre Mauroy, chairman of the MOT, signed a partnership framework agreement, the objective of which is to develop synergy between the competencies and the complementarities of the two bodies, in particular to strengthen the border and cross-border growth of the parks and meet their demands for technical and legal assistance.

■ Call for projects - Decentralized European cooperation

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs is launching a call for support projects for decentralized European cooperation (submission of applications before 30 March). It is intended for French local authorities within the framework of a cooperation partnership with foreign authorities and their groupings in new members of the European Union and candidate countries for membership.

Further information:
www.espaces-transfrontaliers.org

■ "Upper Rhine regional profile"

This November 2005 publication by the Oberrhein - Upper Rhine cross-border EURES gives an overview of the Euroregion in the areas of the economy, the employment market, demography and infrastructure.

To consult the document:
www.eures-t-oberrhein.com

Press review

- Brussels, haven for refugees from the wealth tax - Tax in Europe, *Le Monde*, 21 January
- Lille Metropolis launches a survey of cross-border journeys, *Les Échos*, 23 January
"The Lille urban community is launching a large-scale survey of the journeys made by the population. The survey, which will take several months up to 20 May, will be the first in France to be cross-border, declared the vice-chairman, Paul Astier..."
- Cross-border planning - Towards a French-German conurbation, *Le Moniteur*, 20 January
"With a population of a million living in 77 municipalities on either side of the border, the future Saar-East Moselle Eurodistrict is a mosaic of urban, natural, industrial and rural areas united by a common steelmaking and mining past..."
- The Golden Rectangle has a problem, *Le Dauphiné libéré*, 20 January
"...Expected to announce that it was joining the local cross-border cooperation grouping (LCCG) responsible for setting up the Rectangle d'or, the municipality of Ferney has decided to back off..."
- At Le Perthus, a school bearing the "cross-border" label, *La Gazette des Communes*, 23 January
"The Le Perthus municipal school accepts French and Spanish children. It has been named a "cross-border school" to help improve provision for teaching in two languages..."
- Basque Eurocity, citizenship under construction, *Le Journal du Pays Basque*, 31 January
"The projected metropolitan area extending from Bayonne to San Sebastian is approved on both sides of the Bidassoa, according to a study conducted by the Diputacion de Gipuzkoa and the faculty of human sciences of the University of Deusto..."
- Launch of the Adriatic Euroregion, *AFCCRE newsletter*, <http://www.afccre.org>
"The Adriatic Euroregion [is] launched officially on 6 February in Venice, during an international conference organized with the support of the Veneto region (Italy). The signature of the statutes of the Adriatic Euroregion will define the general objectives..."

