

SMALL PROJECTS  
**BIG EFFECTS**  
THE EUREGIOS ARE BUILDING ON EUROPE



## FIGURES & STATISTICS

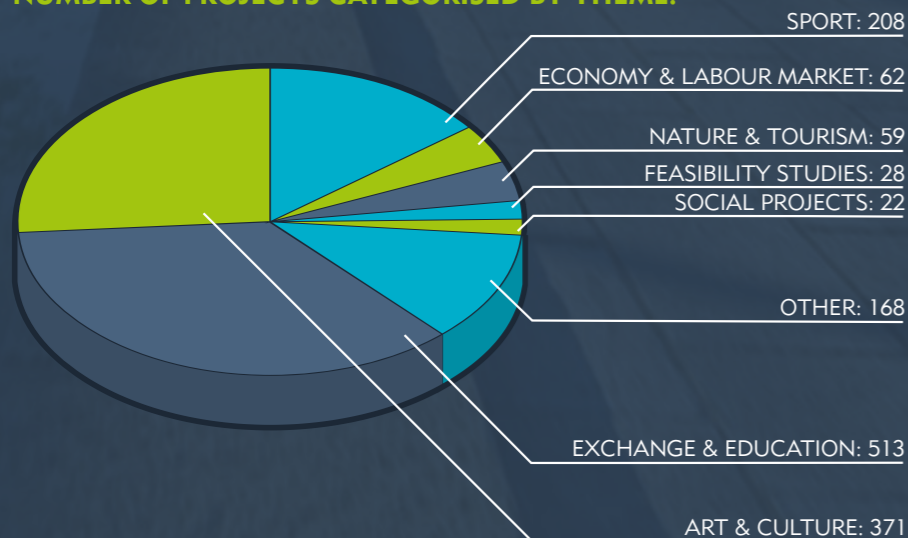
- + The costs of the projects shown are between €100 and €50,000
- + Until now, **1,431 projects** have been completed (2014-2019)
- + **665 schools** are active participants
- + **27,300 students** have taken part in Dutch-German exchange programmes thanks to support from the INTERREG programme
- + **350 sports associations** are in contact with partner associations from neighbouring countries thanks to support from INTERREG
- + **2,566 businesses** have benefitted from the People-to-People scheme

Thanks to small-scale projects and mini-projects in the INTERREG programme, tens of thousands of people on the Dutch-German border have experienced the meaning of 'Europe is around the corner'.

All the projects detailed in this brochure are covered by the four framework projects People-to-People or *Netwerk Plus* in the four Euregios. These projects have been supported by funding of **€11.2 million** granted by the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) in the framework of the INTERREG V A subsidy programme Germany-Netherlands. In addition, co-funding of **approx. €2.7 million** has been contributed by the INTERREG partners (provinces of Fryslân, Groningen, Drenthe, Overijssel, Flevoland, Gelderland, Noord-Brabant and Limburg and the German ministries MB Niedersachsen and MWIDE Nordrhein-Westfalen).

In this way, around 5% of the total INTERREG funding programme is used for these projects.

### NUMBER OF PROJECTS CATEGORISED BY THEME:



## FOREWORD

# SIMPLY TOGETHER WITHOUT BORDERS

**How can we create a safe and united Europe?  
How does living together as a multi-cultural  
society with different backgrounds work?  
What does my life look like when I see it from the  
perspective of a stranger? Why is nationalism  
on the rise again in many countries?**

These are compelling questions, which cannot be answered easily. What we can do, however, is take the first step by simply starting to experience and try out European cooperation. And what better place to do so than in a border region which, in the 75 years after the end of the Second World War, has slowly but surely evolved into the embodiment of a truly common region, a testing ground for cross-border cultural and economic activity.

This brochure on the People-to-People framework projects gives an impression of the enthusiasm and energy devoted to eliminating the intangible and tangible barriers that stand between the Dutch and German communities in the border regions. A process that involves the input of many different individuals and organisations. And that generates a great deal of pleasure!

All the highlighted projects are part of the INTERREG programme Germany-Netherlands and have been granted funding by the European Union. This financial

support varies from €100 to €25,000 per project. The projects are supervised by the four Dutch-German Euregios. The bilingual staff at the project offices look, for example, for suitable partners across the border or help with application submissions and processing of the projects.

The INTERREG programme for the period 2014-2020 is nearing completion. The Euregios and their members have committed to ensuring that small projects can continue to receive financial support in the future. Because true cooperation never really ends. The corona crisis has brought to the fore just how vulnerable our cross-border structures still are. And once again confirmed the importance of mutual knowledge and respect.

Page 2 shows some interim results and statistics on the subsidised projects. We believe that the intentions of the examples of projects from the individual regions and with different themes speak for themselves. And maybe the texts will inspire future forms of collaboration and partnerships!

*Karel Groen  
Christoph Almering  
Sjaak Kamps  
Maike Hajjoubi  
the managers of the four Euregios*

## THE NORTHERNMOST EUROPEAN BORDER REGION ALONG THE DUTCH-GERMAN BORDER

**In 1977, the Ems Dollart Region (EDR) was established as the northernmost European border region along the Dutch-German border. In addition, based on the provisions of the Anholt Convention, it has been a public body since 1997. The EDR has its office in Bad Nieuweschans in the Netherlands. Since its foundation, the EDR has evolved into a Dutch-German meeting centre where cross-border conventions and activities are organised, and numerous cross-border projects are launched.**

Based on the Anholt Convention, the EDR has been a public body, cross-border organisation since 20 October 1997. The EDR numbers around 100 members: public institutions from the Dutch provinces of Groningen, Drenthe and Fryslân, and from the German regions East Frisia, Emsland, the Cloppenburg region and neighbouring areas.



Over time, countless contacts and networks between people, companies and organisations have emerged on both sides of this internal European border. As these contacts have resulted in ever closer interaction, it has become evident that there are still significant obstacles to be overcome. The major impediment to cross-border cooperation is the divergent legal systems and regulations, but the different cultures with customs individual to each nation can also complicate cooperative efforts in the context of Dutch-German initiatives.

The EDR fulfils its role as the first point of contact in the north for all questions concerning transnational cooperation. Looking forward, identifying and leveraging the benefits of a Europe that is growing ever-closer together will remain its task. Personal contact is vital in this respect, as embodied by the EDR in the framework project *Net(z)werk+*.

This project targets personal interaction between people, groups and school classes. The prime focus points are knowledge transfer, exchange of experiences and transnational meetings.



### Discover the hidden gardens - More than 130 gardeners welcome you to their hidden gardens!

In 1984, privately-owned gardens were opened to the public on the Dutch side of the EDR region for the first time. This cooperation took root and spread to garden owners across the border in northern Germany. It resulted in a German-Dutch foundation set up in 1992: *In Nachbars Garten/Stichting Het tuinpad op*. From then on, a joint garden guide was published. The guide lists approximately 130 private gardens, with addresses and opening times, located on both sides of the border. Gardening fans can visit these otherwise hidden gems for ideas and inspiration.

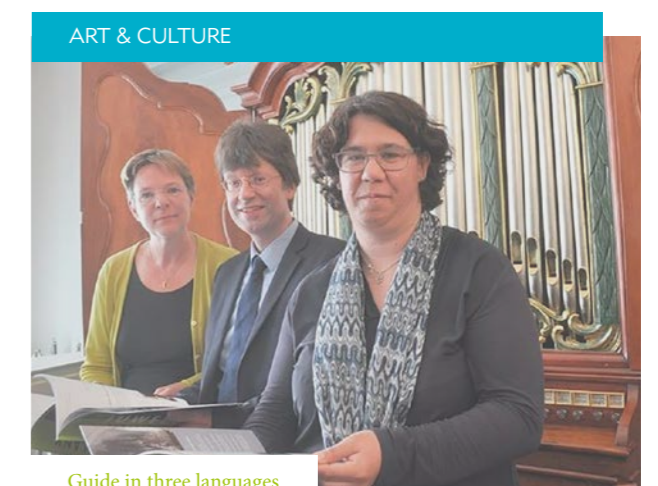
The collaboration is highly successful and unites increasing numbers of garden lovers each season. Every year, the contact day offers garden owners an opportunity to meet at the start of the garden season. Garden-themed meetings are organised, and the members go on excursions to admire each other's work. This project is of great value as it brings together the entire EDR region.



Visiting gardens for ideas and inspiration

### Organ magazine - in the footsteps of Schnitger

In 2019, the eyes of the world turned their gaze on the organs of Groningen and northern Germany to commemorate the death of famous organ builder Arp Schnitger 300 years previously. Organs are unknown territory for many people. However, many beautiful, monumental organs can be found in towns and villages in Groningen and north-west Germany. Not only organs built by the respected Schnitger, but also numerous other exceptional organs. An informative and attractive guide has been produced to introduce culture lovers, tourists and residents to this wonderful organ heritage. The guide is rich in illustrations, images and information about organs that is easy for the uninitiated to understand. Since the sixteenth century, many great organ builders have worked in this region and built beautiful organs commissioned by city and church councils and wealthy families. The best known is Arp Schnitger, who is considered to be the most important organ builder of the Baroque period. In around 1700 he was active in the region between Hamburg and Groningen.



Guide in three languages

This guide invites visitors to follow in the footsteps of Schnitger and other organ builders and admire their legacy at first hand. The guide is available in Dutch, German and English.

**Future-oriented ideas for transnational community development as a mission**

The *Gemeinschaft im Dialog, Dörfer aktiv für die Zukunft* project acts as a platform for various initiatives between the Emsland and Drenthe regions, such as facilitating a cross-border exchange of information.

“In the framework of this project, any recommendations and initiatives resulting from this platform will be summarised as ‘village development tools’ and can act as a template for other interested villages and towns”, emphasises Klaus Ludden from pro-t-in GmbH in Lingen, the agency responsible for supervising the project.

The specifics of the concept were agreed in advance by the Lead Partner of the *Landkreis Emsland* district and

the rural development network BOKD (*Brede Overleggroep Kleine Dorpen Drenthe*). The stakeholders recognised that exceptional villages should be brought together to discuss concrete plans aimed at boosting life in hamlets and small villages. Emsland was represented by five villages, while five so-called Five Star Villages, or places with exceptional community centres, participated on the Dutch side of the border. The meeting prompted an extremely interesting cross-border dialogue at a high level.

The municipalities of Dohren and Langen from the Emsland region also participated in the workshop. In this way, ideas for locally led initiatives were generated on the spot. On the Dutch side, Exloo and Oranjedorp are also involved in the project. In addition to a local village dialogue, these four villages will share and exchange their experiences with counterparts on the other side of the frontier. The initiators of the project clearly chose their plan well, because after the first workshop, firm ideas for separate Dutch-German village partnerships were formulated by the participants.



COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

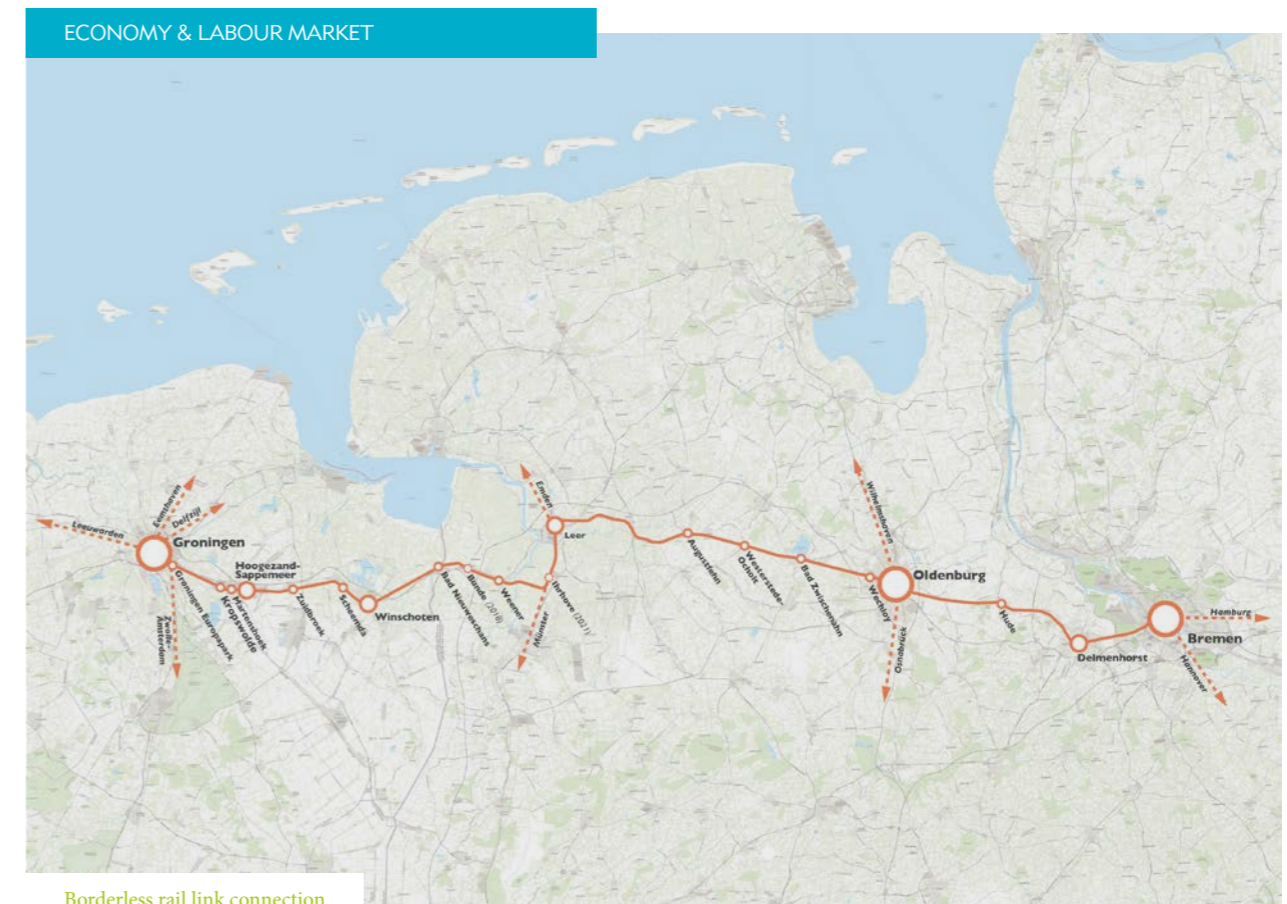
Village development tools

Sustainable communication strategies are considered to be an important keystone of thriving and viable rural communities by both Emsland and the province of Drenthe. “I am thrilled that the cross-border networks have been such a success. *Landkreis Emsland* supports and encourages strengthening of village communities”, says Michael Steffens, who is responsible for regional development. As a result, various tools for future-oriented rural community development are being developed and applied.

**Wunderline chain mobility**

Travel without borders: Wunderline provides a borderless rail link connection between Groningen and Bremen and better accessibility to the countryside by public transport.

The province of Groningen, the federal state of Lower Saxony and the Free Hanseatic city of Bremen are cooperating on establishing a rapid rail link between the cities to stimulate economic development and enhance the quality of life in the north of the Netherlands. Wunderline will allow cross-border commuters,



Borderless rail link connection

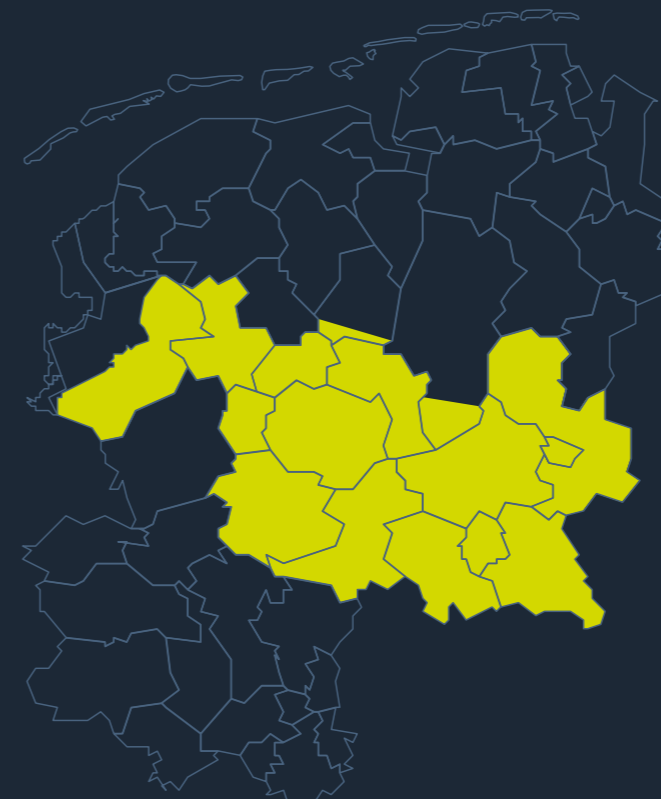
## EUREGIO'S VISION IS A BORDERLESS SOCIETY IN THIS REGION

**The EUREGIO organisation, a name that stands for European Region, with its secretariat close to the Gronau-Enschede border, is a cross-border cooperation of 129 Dutch and German municipalities, administrative districts and water authorities. The operating range of EUREGIO spans an area of approximately 13,000 km<sup>2</sup>, with some 3.4 million inhabitants. On the Dutch side of the border, the area includes the regions of Twente and the Achterhoek, and parts of north east Overijssel and south east Drenthe. On the German side, EUREGIO includes Münsterland, Grafschaft Bentheim, the city and region of Osnabrück, as well as the southern parts of Emsland.**

EUREGIO's vision is a borderless society in this region. Obstacles and barriers between the

Netherlands and Germany should be removed so that residents, municipalities and the business community can benefit to the full from the boundless opportunities offered by both nations. EUREGIO forms a platform and functions as a link that supports its members in implementing a huge range of cross-border activities. It acts as an ambassador in promoting the special interests of the border region by communicating with the authorities in Düsseldorf, Hanover, Berlin and The Hague. EUREGIO sees its task as promoting social-cultural cooperation and boosting the labour market as well as the economic and sustainable spatial development of the border region.

EUREGIO was founded in 1958 as the first cross-border organisation operating at regional level. The EUREGIO council was established in 1978. This council is the political body within EUREGIO. Since 2016, EUREGIO, which until then was a registered association under German law, has been a joint Dutch-German common scheme.

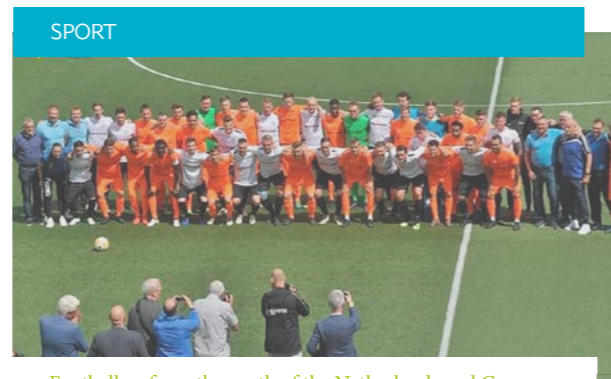


students and tourists an environmentally-friendly, quick and easy way to cross the border. The Wunderline rail connection will be constructed in phases and is scheduled for completion in 2024.

The partners have initiated a *Netwerk Plus* project that integrates part of this process. In the context of the project, eight network meetings on chain mobility will be held. The topics are station development and the train-bus service connection. These meetings will serve as an incubator to create a joint knowledge network that will spark new initiatives around Wunderline. The meetings will also safeguard a robust and efficient infrastructure around the Wunderline link, so that passengers are encouraged to use the train more frequently, instead of travelling individually by car.

### **Semi-international friendlies Netherlands-Germany**

On 15 June 2019, the Oude Meerdijk stadium hosted the so-called international friendly between the northern Netherlands and northern Germany. This match was already played 28 times by the two nations between 1913 and 1960. On the initiative of several Dutch and German football fans, the match was reinstated and is now played annually.



Footballers from the north of the Netherlands and Germany

The best amateur footballers from the north of the Netherlands and Germany have participated in the competition. Ron Jans, former trainer of FC Groningen, among other clubs, took on the role of national manager and coach. After an exciting match, the final score on the board was a 3-3 draw. Many spectators cheered on their respective teams.

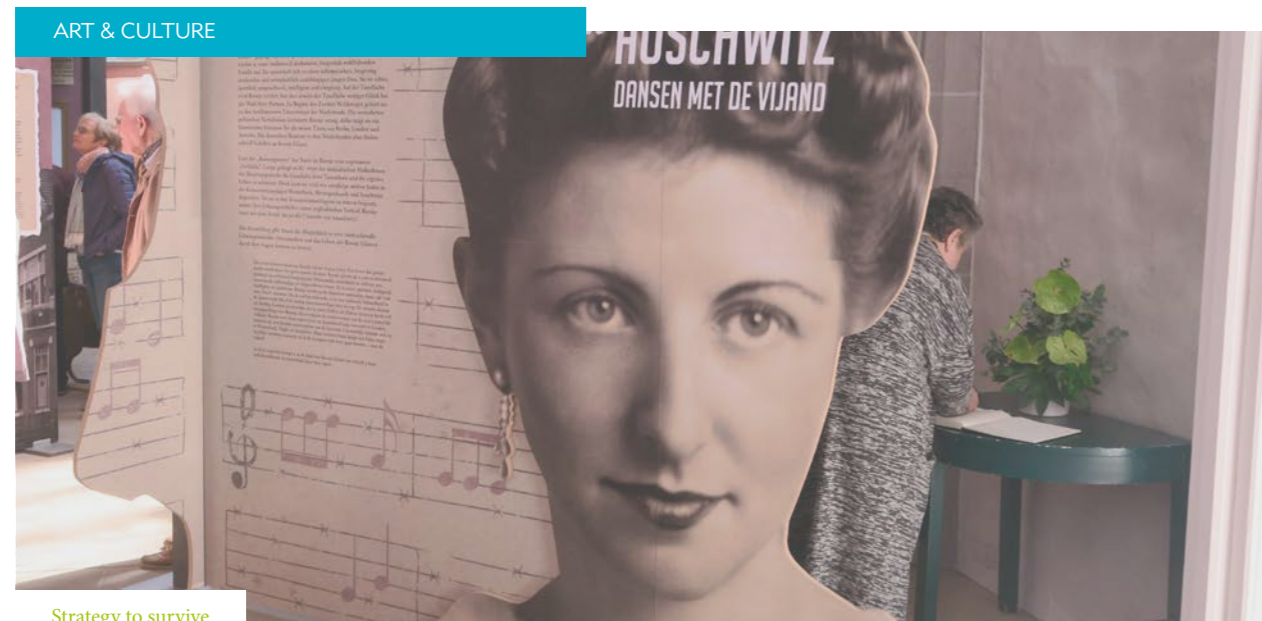
And football wasn't the only sport on the agenda that day; in the morning Dutch and German school-children had the chance to take part in an Olympic sports day. This was a resounding success.

**Dancing with the Enemy: exhibition about the history of a defiant woman**

Roozje Glaser, a Jewish dance instructor who grew up in Germany, had her own dance school in the Netherlands when the Germans occupied the Netherlands. Because, as a Jew, she was no longer allowed to run a dance school, she illegally continued to teach dance in an attic. After being betrayed by her ex-husband, she was sent to a Dutch concentration camp and was eventually deported to the concentration camp in Auschwitz. During the evenings in the barracks she wrote poems and songs. When she heard about the relaxation evenings organised for the SS, she offered to dance for them and even gave them dance lessons. This determination helped her survive the deprivations of the concentration camp.

The bilingual travelling exhibition “Dancing with the Enemy” uses authentic historical documents, such as

photographs, film clips, music and letters, to recount the story of the extraordinary life of the “defiant” Jewish woman in a country occupied by the Nazis and her struggle and strategy to survive in Auschwitz. It also narrates her post-war existence in Sweden and how she dealt with the incredible story of her life. The exhibition was festively opened on 23 May 2019 in the St. Katharinenkirche in Osnabrück and remained open until 25 August 2019. The exhibition included a detailed programme compiled with and for various social groups. “The purpose of this exhibition and the accompanying programme was to make people ask themselves what course of action they would take as a ‘second witness’ if expressions of anti-Semitism and nationalism in our society once again took on alarming proportions,” says Pastor Otto Weymann of the St. Katharinenkirche in Osnabrück. The exhibition then travelled through the wider EUREGIO area.



Strategy to survive

**‘Van poal tot poal’**

**Border experiences Enschede - Ahaus - Gronau**

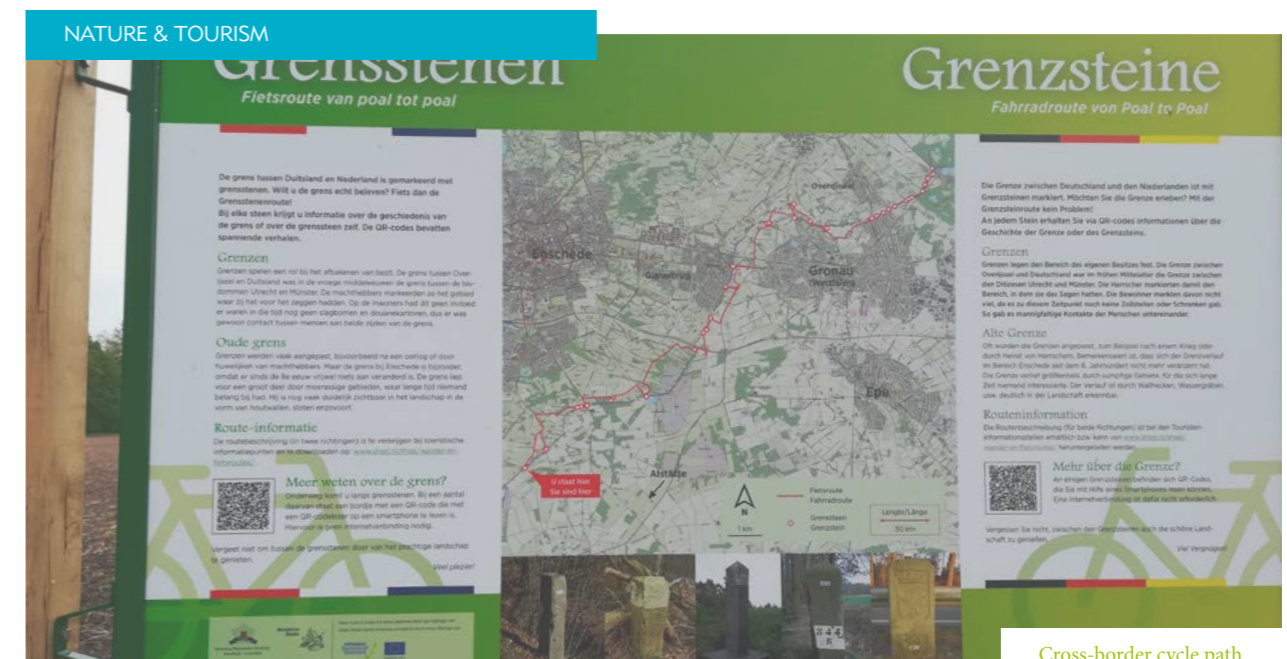
Although the region can now be experienced without borders, various types of stone boundary markers still plot the route of the German-Dutch border today. The cross-border cycle path Poal tot Poal, which was brought back to life as a joint effort of Stichting Historische Sociëteit Enschede-Lonneker and the local history association in Alstätte, takes cyclists from the Werthepaal in the south of the municipality of Enschede on the border with Alstätte to the Driland marker in the north of Gronau on the border with Losser and vice versa. The route, which is almost 30 kilometres in total, passes numerous boundary markers that inform cyclists about the history of the border or the boundary marker itself.

The information is contained in a QR code, which can be read using a QR code scanner - an Internet

connection is not necessary. Reading the information brings stories about the border and the landmarks to life.

The beautiful scenic route not only literally transverses the physical border, it also crosses the language border: all information, in the cycling guide, the QR codes and on the information boards is available in German and Dutch.

The mayor of Ahaus, Karola Voß, and Jeroen Diepenmaat, councillor of the city of Enschede, jointly opened the cycling route on 26 April 2019. “They have created a delightful route. And a great way to discover more about our history. It’s a winning combination,” are the words of praise from Jeroen Diepenmaat for the volunteers who made the project a success.



Cross-border cycle path

### A transnational university for children and young adults

“JUNGE UNI is a learning platform that combines independence, motivation and curiosity in the extracurricular sector with participation on a voluntary basis. It’s a place where children and young adults aged between six and 18 can explore their strengths and talents, and experiment and study freely, without having to worry about academic performance”, said Isabel Testroet, head of JUNGE UNI in Bocholt. The objective of this cross-border university project for children and young adults is to create an innovative educational curriculum that complements the academic landscape in the border region by offering informal opportunities to learn. It also aims to enhance the region’s appeal as a place to learn and work for young people by binding the target group to the region at an early stage. The young students at JUNGE UNI can take advantage of the multiple forms of discovering, studying and experimenting to deepen their knowledge of existing subjects, or to try out new experiences and topics to develop their interest in studying and their future vocational direction.

The location in Bocholt and the innovation centre in Ulft offer various activities designed to encourage the (undiscovered) talents of the young participants. As well as activities in the scope of STEM subjects - themes relevant to daily life that resonate with the living environment, and cross-border issues - a service point and a cross-border group of experts have also been established.

The formats on offer comprise scientific subjects and research as a close-up learning experience (a very hands on, experimental character, practical workshops, and lectures and exercises, depending on the theme and age of the participants). Under the motto ‘Experience, Experiment, Enjoy’ children and young



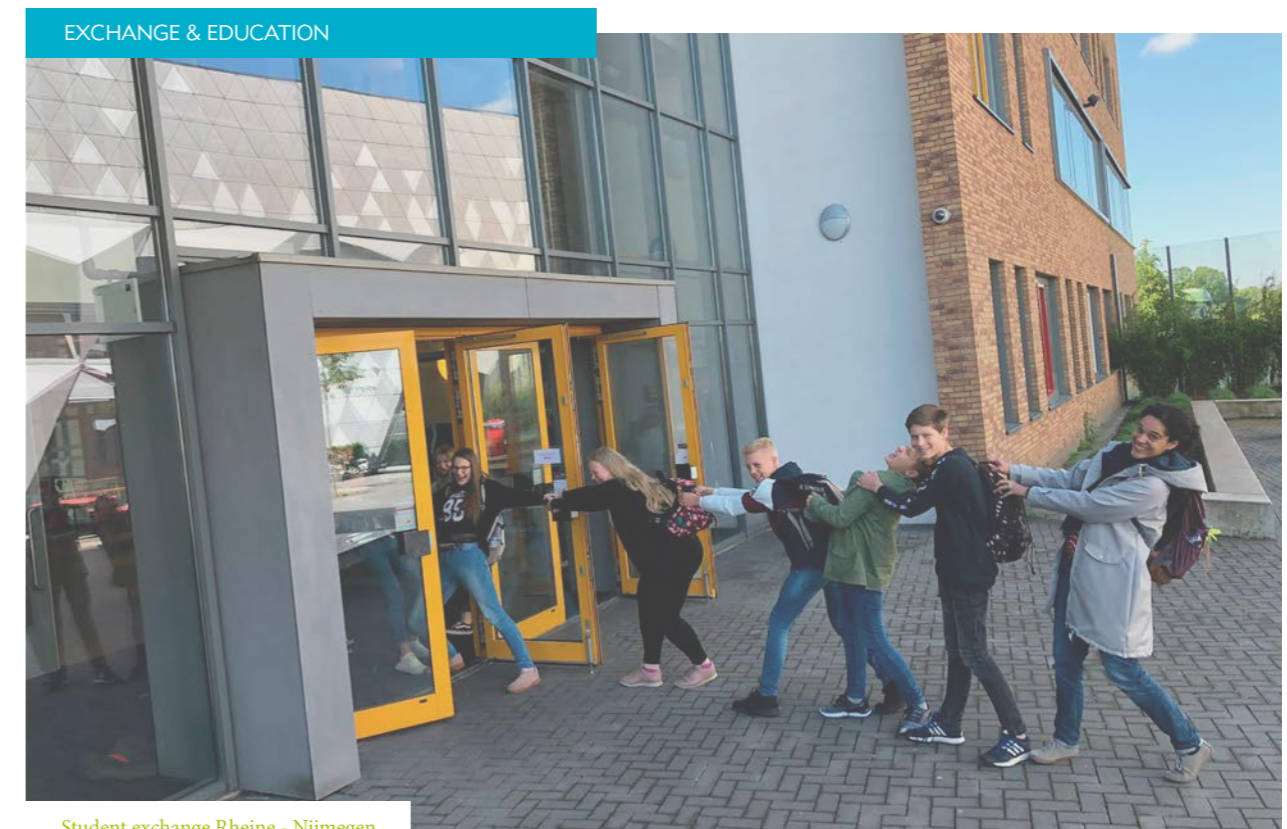
The JUNGE UNI

people aged six to 18 from both sides of the border have been able to learn together free from the pressure to perform and compete. This initiative has also intensified interaction between educational organisations and institutions, promoted intercultural competences and language, and forged new networks. The regular exchanges between the partners involved have created a firm foundation from which to continue offering an educational programme at the end of the project. Diversity in the range of subjects and opportunities is continuing to increase, as more and more educational institutions and companies have started joining the project.

### Student exchange programme Rheine-Nijmegen

In 2019, pupils at a high school in Hassenbrock in Rheine and Citadelle high school in Nijmegen exchanged classrooms for the first time. The German pupils in year eight and nine of the Dutch language course arrived in the Netherlands for three days in May, where they were warmly welcomed by their Dutch host families. The pupils quickly got to know each other better by cooking, playing and taking part in sports activities together. These included mixed German-Dutch ice hockey and football teams competing against each other. A joint visit to the National Freedom Museum and a school visit

completed the exchange programme in Nijmegen. A week later the pupils were reunited in Germany. For three days, the Dutch pupils were guests at Alexander von Humboldt school in Rheine. The programme included insights into education and the German school system and a digital urban rally in Münster, followed by a barbecue and a visit to the Ibbenbüren climbing attraction park. The pupils parted again with a warm farewell “Tot ziens! - Bis bald!”. And as proof of the strength of the friendships and contacts made during the exchange, some pupils even have plans to meet again during the next holiday.



Student exchange Rheine - Nijmegen

## AS A UNITED FORCE DUTCH AND GERMANS ARE ABLE TO ACCOMPLISH MORE!

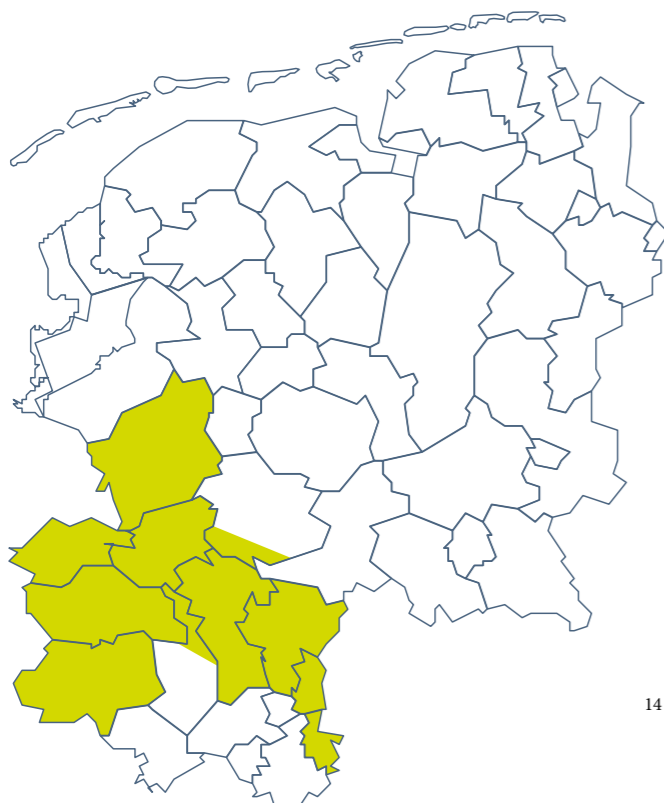
**We are convinced that as a united force Dutch and Germans are able to accomplish more! That is why we support a huge variety of cross-border activities in the Dutch-German border region.**

Euregio Rijn-Waal is a Dutch-German public body alliance in which around 55 municipalities and regional authorities participate. On the Dutch side, the operating scope of Euregio Rijn-Waal includes a large part of the province of Gelderland, parts of north east Brabant and the northern part of the province of Limburg. On the German side, the scope extends to the districts of Kleve and Wesel and the cities of Duisburg and Düsseldorf. Euregio Rijn-Waal is home to approximately 4.2 million people and has 300,000 established businesses that together provide

employment to 2.2 million people. More than 175,000 students study at the 14 universities, universities of applied science and colleges in the region.

For 50 years, Euregio Rijn-Waal has been committed to representing the interests of its associate members and inhabitants with Dutch, German and EU institutions and to preserving and enhancing the quality of life in the border region.

The Border Information Point Rijn-Waal offers employees and employers free information and advice on living, working or studying across the border or recruiting employees from the neighbouring country. And of course, we support project partners in preparing applications for INTERREG subsidies.



### Cross-border cooperation agreement for fire services

The fire services of Millingen aan de Rijn and Rindern spent two years working on a cooperative agreement. On 5 July 2018, their joint efforts culminated in Mayor of Nijmegen Hubert Bruls, who is also chairman of Safety Region South Gelderland and his German colleague Mayor Sonja Northing of Kleve signing the agreement between the two fire services in the Euregio Forum.

Signing this cooperation agreement represents the crowning glory of the Safety without Frontiers project. In the context of this project, the two fire services are joining forces to professionalise and formalise their cooperation, which has a history dating back more than 46 years but until now was mainly characterised by mutual assistance and camaraderie, or as project coordinator Stefan Welberts says: "It took us 766 days to establish and harmonise this agreement, but what are 766 days compared with the 17232 days that the friendship between our services has already existed?"

The result of the two-year project is a cooperation agreement governed by public law based on the 1991 Anholt Convention. This formalisation of this agreement means that both services can officially provide mutual assistance in the event of emergency situations. Important aspects such as insurance and liability are also covered by the cooperation agreement. This agreement is unique for the border region. The agreement was drafted and established in close coordination and consultation with the Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Safety Region South Gelderland and the city of Kleve. Thanks to this intensive groundwork, the agreement has been formulated in such a way that it can also be used as a template by other fire services in the border region.

The project also included a number of days spent training and various drills and exercises, including on the site of the shipyard in Millingen and at Training Base Weeze. These drills and further training have familiarised both fire services with each other's methods and prepared them for the eventuality of joint action in an emergency.

#### COOPERATION



Assistance in the event of emergency situations



### Passionate about vegetables: a green partnership

Growers C. Neijenhuis, Aleven Groente (both from Huissen), Bioland-Gärtnerei Brands from Till-Moyland, Demeterhof Büsch from Weeze and People's Farm from Maasbree and Bluehub from Venlo have spent two years exploring the market potential for small-scale vegetable growers in the Euregio Rijn-Waal.

Pim Deuling, director of Bluehub and responsible for conducting the survey, explains the reasons behind the market research: "These growers are passionate about their produce and want to share that passion with consumers; the question is how." The growers, who farm an average of just 1.5 hectares of land, are being increasingly confronted with global market trends such as upscaling, fiercer competition and pressure on margins and prices. They choose not to follow the trends but instead to reach out to local markets and consumers. The study results offer them interesting tools to put into practice.

For both Dutch and German consumers, the factors that determine their purchasing behaviour for fruit and vegetables are flavour, quality and price. In addition, important arguments for Dutch consumers include convenience (pre-cut, small portions) and shelf life. German shoppers, in turn, place more value on local, sustainably grown and organic vegetables. The average consumer still mainly buys vegetables in the supermarket (79%), on the market (6%) or from a speciality greengrocer (5%).

The recommendations for small-scale growers are largely in line with consumer wishes. Revenue models that offer small-scale growers robust opportunities to add distinctive added value compared with major supermarket chains and create a loyal, enduring customer base include shortening the supply chain (farm to fork), quality instead of quantity, local production and sales (local-for-local, farm gate sales) and focusing on heritage, or new, vegetable varieties and organic growing methods. The five growers are now eager to put that advice into practice.

### 75 years of freedom in Euregio Rijn-Waal

For many, 2019 and 2020 represent 75 years of peace and freedom in Europe. In Euregio Rijn-Waal, 36 mini-projects received additional support for their projects around the theme of 75 years of freedom.

For example, *HVV Donsbrüggen 1969 e.V.*, an organisation that promotes cultural activities and events and *Stichting Groesbeek Airborne Vrienden* shared the organisation of two impressive commemorative events. In Groesbeek, a memorial service was held in the Dutch Reformed church on 9 February 2020, followed a week later by a commemoration at the Cemetery of Honour in Donsbrüggen. For Manfred de Haan, chairman of the *Heimatverein*

### SOCIAL PROJECTS



Freedom commemoration

*Donsbrüggen* and Marco Cillessen of *Stichting Airborne Vrienden Foundation*, this form of cooperation seems very natural: "Civilians suffered severely during the final offensives of the war on both sides of the border. Now that we have lived peacefully as good neighbours for 75 years, it is logical to reflect together on the suffering caused by conflict and the intrinsic value of peace, freedom and security," confirm both men.

But at some distance from border, other cities are also looking for ways to honour the significance of 75 years of freedom, such as Apeldoorn and Düsseldorf. Simon Boon of Gelre Association International explains how this joint project came about: "The liberation of Apeldoorn and Düsseldorf shows some

remarkable parallels. Both cities were liberated in the night of 16 April to 17 April because courageous citizens surrendered their cities to the advancing allied forces. This action was judged and responded to very differently in both cities at the time, but now, 75 years later, it forms a special connection between both cities. That is why we contacted the memorial centre *Mahn- und Gedenkstätte* in Düsseldorf and they were open to cooperation." In 2019, both organisations held two memorial meetings, a lecture, a cycle tour under the motto the Road to Freedom and arranged a student exchange programme between *Veluws College Apeldoorn* and *Friedrich-Rückert-Gymnasium Düsseldorf*. The many activities have formed a close bond between both cities.

### FEASIBILITY STUDIES



Reach out to local consumers

## WE MAKE EUROPE TOUCHABLE IN THE REGION

Since 1978, euregio rijn-maas-noord has been the contact point for residents, associations, companies, educational institutions and other organisations in the German-Dutch border region. The working area extends from the north of Limburg and the southern part of the district of Kleve to the municipality of Echt-Susteren in central Limburg and the municipality of Selfkant. Among the 31 members are the municipalities of Venray, Venlo, Nederweert and Roermond in the Netherlands and the Viersen district, the cities of Krefeld, Düsseldorf, Mönchengladbach and the Rhein-Kreis Neuss in Germany.

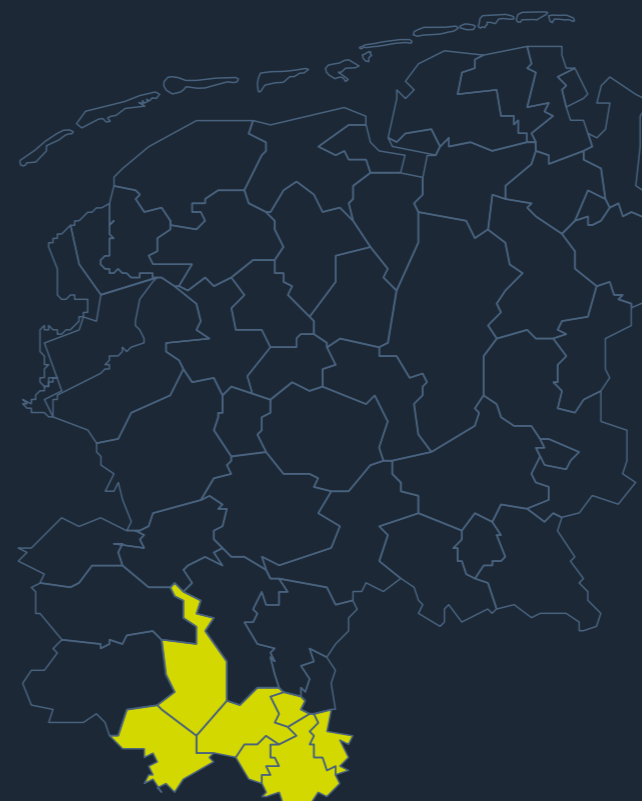
Euregio rijn-maas-noord represents all cross-border interests of its members to minimise the barrier effect of the border. Its activities include infrastructure development, exchange programmes between

educational institutions and businesses and the recognition of professional qualifications from both countries.

The *GrensInfoPunt* of euregio rijn-maas-noord acts as a source of information for residents with questions about living, working or studying abroad. The *Service Grensarbeid* was started in Venlo on 1 January 2020, to advise German or Dutch residents looking for work in the neighbouring country and for employers wanting to start operating on the other side of the border.

The euregio-Xperience initiative offers interns from Germany and the Netherlands a chance to test out the opportunities in the neighbouring labour market and make important contacts and gain experience through business visits, language courses, workshops and interview training.

The People-to-People projects initiated by euregio rijn-maas-noord, some of which are presented in this brochure, show how stimulating economic and social cohesion between residents, associations, companies and educational institutions helps the border region to flourish. This cooperation is facilitated by INTERREG funding granted by the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF). The residents of euregio rijn-maas-noord hope that this form of support and cross-border cooperation in their own region will continue in the years ahead.



### Stepping stones must save the scarce large blue

If you're very lucky, you might just catch a glimpse of the enigmatic large blue butterfly on nice sunny days. This is a rare butterfly species that is only found in habitats in the province of Limburg and the Heinsberg district in our region.

These areas are just 6.5 km apart. "That might not seem far to us, but for butterflies it is an unbridgeable gap," explains project coordinator Dr. Eva Remke from the B-WARE research centre in Nijmegen. She continues: "In order to extend the habitat of the large blue, in partnership with German and Dutch organisations, our idea was to use the People-to-People project *Netwerk Natuur* to establish stepping stones for the butterfly" Stepping stones are a series of small ecological areas on the route between the two habitats where butterflies can rest and eat.

This was no easy undertaking, because although you know all about the procedures and possibilities in your own country, the nature organisations now had to take into account how things are organised in the neighbouring country. That is why a large part of the project consisted of networking activities and workshops for the project partners B-WARE, *Vlinderstichting*, the province of Limburg, *Naturschutzstation Haus Wildenrath* and the Heinsberg district. Various other nature organisations and voluntary initiatives from the Netherlands and Germany joined the workshops, such as *Biologische Station Wesel* and the Wesel district. "Thanks to these instructive workshops, we could start creating a route connecting the two butterfly populations in the winter of 2018/2019," says Eva Remke. "One of the activities involved pruning some woodland on the main flight path of the butterfly. The strips of land set aside for extensive farming along the Roer river were also widened."

Finally, the project partners drafted a roadmap for the future, listing all possible measures aimed at improving and enlarging the biotope for the large blue. The project partners now see their next task as implementing these measures in practice, so that we can all enjoy this beautiful and rare visitor for years to come.



### Art Unites

How can people with a mental or physical disability from Germany and the Netherlands get to know each other better and develop their creative talents at the same time? Art provides the answer. Clients of Hephata in Mönchengladbach and *Pedagogisch Sociaal Werk* (PSW) in Tegelen organise transnational workshops.

Bart Schouenberg is responsible for inclusive development at Hephata, an organisation that offers housing and daily activities for about 3,000 clients throughout North Rhine-Westphalia. The Dutchman explains that for this special target group on both side of the border, creative activities are a more low threshold way of making new contacts and speaking a foreign language. “Cooperating on a creative project lowers the barriers, so that people can get to know and understand each other more easily. A shared interest in the universal language of art is an informal and natural way. We make utensils and household objects and decorate them with art. Things like a cup, a biscuit tin or a beeswax drinking cup. Its counterpart in the Netherlands, PSW, offers similar activities in Tegelen. We visited their facilities with a group of German clients. There was an instant chemistry between both groups, and the people were open-minded and interested in each other. We organise various cross-border workshops and take part in a cultural event in Mönchengladbach under the motto ‘Europe’. We want to use the Art Unites project as a way of overcoming language and cultural differences and fostering togetherness through art and creativity,” said Bart Schouenberg.



Art unites

### SOCIAL PROJECTS

### Strategic partnership Beesel-Brüggen

Cooperation between associations and schools in the municipalities of Brüggen and Beesel has a long history. The goal of this project is to optimise and intensify collaboration between the two municipalities. To symbolically reflect the concept of European unity, this strategic partnership was officially signed on 9 May 2019 on Europe Day. An information board featuring a joint logo was unveiled, followed by a festive celebration for the people in both communities.

Four working groups are involved in organising activities. The focus of these events is not limited to bringing the residents of the two municipalities closer together, but also reaches out to companies, employees and councillors. Many of the activities are also, of course, aimed at schools, cultural and sports associations.

Just before Christmas 2019, *Stichting Grenze(n)lo(o)s* was created to provide a practical framework for the

strategic partnership between Beesel and Brüggen. Chairman and former councillor Jan Smolenaars: “The foundation strives to promote and facilitate cross-border activities together with the residents, institutions, companies and associations in Beesel and Brüggen. The first meeting was held at the beginning of January 2020. All the associations from both municipalities were invited to attend.”

The calendar of events includes a Euregional, traditional shooting guild festival. The residents and associations from Brüggen and Beesel intend to hold the event at De Witte Stein - which marks the border crossing. Ten shooting guilds from the Netherlands and ten from Germany will take part.

*Photo: Paul Offermans, Manfred Klingen, Jan Peulen, Jac van Deuzen, Jan Smolenaars and Dominik Seifert, who is missing in the photo, are the driving force behind cross-border cooperation.*



Intensify collaboration

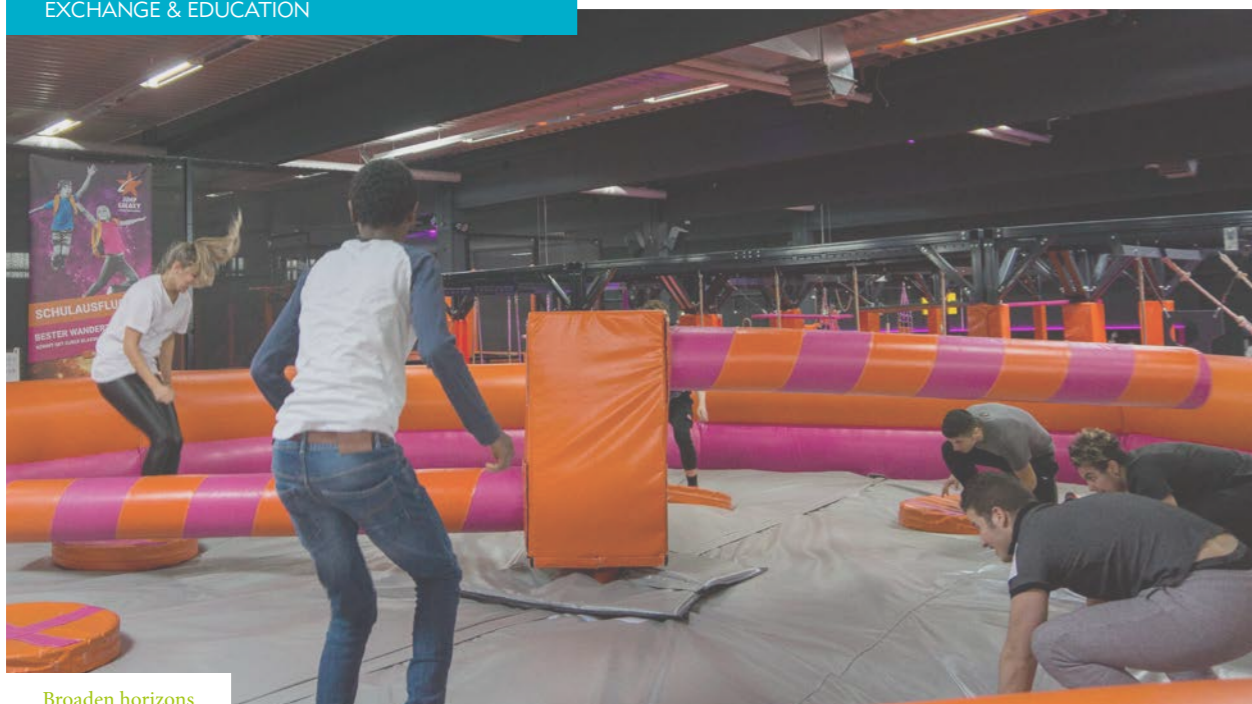
### Enterprising heroes

Educational institutions *Gilde Opleidingen* in Roermond and the *Rhein Maas Berufskolleg* in Viersen have launched an initiative to widen the opportunities on the labour market for young people with learning difficulties or who left secondary school without a certificate of education. Gaining experience in the neighbouring country helps these young people broaden their horizons and further their personal and professional development. It helps increase their motivation to study, graduate with a certificate and enter the labour market afterwards.

“In this project, participants visit schools in the neighbouring country to talk to students there and learn from each other’s experiences at school and

during their internships. Excursions to retail companies are also part of the programme, including a guided tour and the chance to ask employees questions. The students are prepared for the visit using teaching materials developed by the colleges. The content concentrates on language skills and the cultural background, so that students can speak a few sentences in the each other’s language on the other side of the border and are aware of any cultural differences. The teachers who participate in the project also share and exchange knowledge. This approach enables long-term collaboration between the two institutions to be established,” says Pauline van den Bosch, policy advisor for internationalisation at *Gilde Opleidingen*.

### EXCHANGE & EDUCATION



Broaden horizons

### FEASIBILITY STUDIES



Sustainable mobility

### Charge and share e-vehicles and e-bikes across the border

The research project SHAREuregio investigated the possibilities of setting up a border-spanning car sharing scheme in and around Venlo, Roermond, Viersen and Mönchengladbach. These localities are generally easily accessible by car. However, the local public transport services could be improved, especially in rural areas and across the borders.

These regions are home to many cross-border commuters and business travellers. They usually travel relatively short distances, so the limited range of pure-electric vehicles should therefore not put them off. However, an analysis of the vehicle charging infrastructure revealed an insufficient number of public charging facilities for electric vehicles, especially on the German side of the border. *Stichting Limburg Elektrisch* therefore submitted a request for the project together with a university of applied sciences in Aachen.

Companies and institutions were invited to present and discuss the possibilities of an electric CarSharing

scheme during two workshop sessions. Based on this, a sharing scheme for e-vehicles and e-bikes has been developed. This scheme offers several possible solutions for sustainable mobility in the euregio.

“The SHAREuregio research project has resulted in an INTERREG project in which the euregio rijn-maas-noord has been designated as a European pilot region for sharing electric cars and bikes. In the meantime, a European tender has been issued for forty cars and e-bikes for the sharing scheme. From 2020, companies, municipalities and organisations in need of cross-border transport services can use these vehicles and bikes for a monthly fee for a period of 30 months. The customer is offered full-service facilities, the cars are even periodically cleaned inside and outside. In addition, the cars can be used by residents and business people outside office hours,” says Rogier Huizinga, regional project leader SHAREuregio at the lead partner, the municipality of Venlo.

## ANY QUESTIONS?

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### Translation

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