

TOWARDS A EURO-AFRICAN DIALOGUE ON CROSS-BORDER COOPERATION

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A study completed for the Secretariat of the
Sahel and West Africa Club

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A SERIES INITIATED BY ENDA/DIAPOL, THE SECRETARIAT OF THE SAHEL AND WEST AFRICA CLUB/OECD AND ANYONE ELSE WISHING TO JOIN THEM.

OPENING REMARKS

Over the past several months, the Secretariat of the Sahel and West Africa Club and ENDA-Diapol have been working together to promote an idea that is as yet somewhat unexplored in West Africa: that regional cooperation on the local level should be understood, listened to, and supported in order to facilitate the process of sub-regional integration. This idea rests upon the fact that local border actors, public and private, are the bearers of concrete proposals, cross-border zones are dynamic places, and national peripheries are at the center of regional construction.

African organizations for inter-governmental cooperation, particularly ECOWAS¹ and WAEMU², currently support this idea by seeking to expand the scope of regional governance for the implementation of NEPAD³ and the economic partnership agreements with the European Union that were laid out at Cotonou. The project, “cross-border areas⁴”, currently pursued by the Malian government and neighboring countries represents another example of such initiatives.

In this favorable context, our work consists of:

- Networking the institutions and individuals that share this outlook and who are thus likely to help move this project forward. The website ["www.afriquefrontieres.org"](http://www.afriquefrontieres.org) is an apt illustration of this effort.
- Undertaking work in the field. The primary field activities are located in the zones of **Sikasso – Korhogo – Bobo Dioulasso** (Mali, Côte d'Ivoire, Burkina), **Maradi – Katsina – Kano** (Niger, Nigeria), **Mopti – Ouahigouya** (Mali, Burkina), and **Southern Senegambia** (Senegal, Gambia, Guinea Bissau). Our goal is, on the one hand, to document, with the help of local actors, the realities of cross-border areas and thus their potentials and limitations; and, on the other, to promote concrete cross-border projects.
- To initiate a more political process that we hope will result in the “local” being integrated within regional policy agendas.

To accomplish this last objective, in particular, an analysis of the lessons that can be drawn from the history of European integration seems indispensable. We ignored, even up until a few months ago, the importance of the role of cross-border cooperation in the European integration process, a role illuminated by the **European Charter on Border and Cross-Border Regions** and its guide, which retraces the history, methods, and best practices of this integration process. Jens Gabbe⁵, fervent defender of and actor in “cross-border collaboration”, has granted us access to these documents and has shared with us his own analysis in the context of an interview. We thank him for this and hope that he will continue to contribute his experience to the cause of developing a Euro-African dialogue on cross-border cooperation.

Laurent Bossard

Director of the Unit for Local Development and the Regional Integration Process
Secretariat of the Sahel and West Africa Club - OECD

¹ Economic Community of West African States.

² West African Economic and Monetary Union.

³ New Partnership for Africa's Development.

⁴ “A geographical area that overlaps two or more neighbouring states, and whose populations are linked by socio-economic and cultural bonds”, as defined by the former Malian president Alpha Oumar Konaré.

⁵ Secretary General of the **Association of European Border Regions**.

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SUMMARY

Cross-border cooperation is rooted in a history of European integration that has from its very beginnings aimed at moving beyond national sovereignties. Despite periodic crises, the integration dynamic has progressed regularly enough so that it constitutes a unique example of shared sovereignty: first, for its sharing of sectoral competences, and then, for its definition and implementation of common policies. This European reality, however, is as much the by-product of contingent factors as it is of deliberate efforts.

Such is the case with the emergence of regional poles in the Community territory, which owes much of its existence to its gradual extension towards the “poorer” countries and thus to the need for a regionally-oriented “catch-up” policy. At first, this policy was carried out by the states through Community instruments. Then, the regions, under the influence of decentralization policies, went from being the object of regional policy to being the actor pushing it forward.

As for the appearance of the cross-border domain in the portfolio of Community initiatives, it emerged out of the precocious intuitions of politicians and other officials in border regions (in the 1950s); but it would not have been possible without the formation of the Single Market. The creation in the 1970s of the Association of European Border Regions⁶ and the decisions of Spain, Portugal, and Greece to join it, culminating in the establishment of the Single Market, contributed both to a wider opening of borders, and to drawing attention to the persistence of territorial divisions. A specific policy in favor of border regions was thereby put into place. Some special assistance was granted through the framework of the INTERREG program, currently the Union initiative with the largest budget allocation.

General Characteristics of European Cross-Border Cooperation

European cross-border integration resulted from specific activities, initiatives of individuals, and the creation of networks. On this point, there is scarcely any difference between Europe and Africa. Experience reveals that the need for a strategic structure comes only later, as a means for organizing “horizontal partnerships” between public and private actors across borders. Finally, the coordination of different levels of intervention calls for vertical partnerships (between local and central authorities), in accordance with the subsidiarity principle.

While the diversity of administrative systems and jurisdictions in Europe could have posed formidable obstacles, these potential problems were overcome by the development of varied and flexible cross-border cooperation dynamics, from *ad hoc* collaborations, to the establishment of permanent structures and associations created on both sides of the borders, to private law cross-border agreements.

States continue to put up substantial resistance to the establishment of a uniform framework enabling universal cross-border cooperation between local/regional authorities. However, multilateral agreements between certain countries are currently in place which stipulate that the conditions of cooperation between local authorities across national borders should be comparable to those governing cooperation between municipalities of the same country. These multilateral treaties, nonetheless, remain insufficient, obstructed by differences in level of centralization, administrative organization, and legal systems. This weakness demonstrates the need for complementary treaties between states to enable local collectivities to engage directly in cross-border cooperation.

⁶ AEBR.

Types of Cross-Border Structures

The expression “cross-border structure” does not always signify that a distinct legal entity has been established. Although, whatever the case might be, a structure is never created *ex nihilo*; it is rather the culmination of a process of adaptation and practical problem-solving. The first steps generally take the form of unrestricted agreements between local/regional collectivities or authorities on both sides of the border. The establishment of an autonomous structure can subsequently occur for the purpose of deepening and expanding cross-border collaboration. However, the implementation of a specific project within a limited timeframe does not necessarily require the creation of an autonomous structure.

There are two types of permanent or so-called “strategic” structures of cross-border cooperation. Working communities (of an unrestricted nature) most commonly bring together regional authorities. These are found along the borders between France and Switzerland, France and Spain, Spain and Portugal, and, under other names, along the borders of Ireland and the United Kingdom, and along the border between Austria and Hungary. The most effective cooperation structures are the Euroregions, which have their own identity, possess their own resources, and make their own decisions. Historically, they first developed around Germany, which allowed its Länder to conclude international agreements with foreign governments.

The Domains of Intervention: Which Resonances for West Africa?

Since it is a way of achieving the horizontal and vertical integration of sectors and levels of intervention on both sides of borders, land planning policy expresses a symbiosis between the objectives of cross-border cooperation and the European ambition to create “an ever closer union between the peoples of Europe.” The cross-border level contributes to the development of the “missing links” in this macro-regional union. West Africa is traversed by numerous flows of goods and people, as well as other recent and long-term dynamics. Religious pilgrimages establish chains of cultural and social solidarity, while the relative poverty of isolated Sahelian regions causes massive migrations from the north to the south, as well as from the interior to the coasts. As important as the imbalances and interdependences caused by these far-reaching phenomena is the scarcity on the West African continent of cooperation instruments—especially those dealing with land planning—capable of understanding them.

It is in the field of **economic development** that the border-effect produced by national borders is most apparent. In Europe as in Africa, border regions generally suffer from the distortions that affect the commercial environment, the weakness of their physical and economic infrastructures, as well as the slow development of their partnerships and networks. In West Africa, these difficulties are particularly great for handicraft businesses and farmers located in border regions. The European experience also indicates that the cross-border region can be characterized by the existence of a single pole of urban development or by situations of competition between two equivalent poles. Such circumstances of complementarity or of potential rivalry between border regions are numerous in West Africa. It is important to consider them before engaging in cross-border cooperation.

Based on the European experience, it appears that **tourism** can represent a strategic approach. In a number of cases, border regions, in Europe as well as Africa, share the same natural, cultural, and historical heritage, the valorization of which should be jointly undertaken (for example, with a homogeneous yet diversified range of products that can lead to the creation of a cross-border label). Under these conditions, tourism can favor the transformation of certain rural areas, spurring the creation of jobs, the development of infrastructures (roads, transportation, lodging), and an increase in investments. Moreover, such a cross-border approach enables the affirmation, by indirect means, of a cross-border region’s cultural identity.

In the area of **transportation**, the European border movement highlights the need, in Central and Northern Europe, not only for completing the well-developed North-South links, but also for developing the great East-West transportation corridors; a first step in this project could consist in improving existing border entry points. The situation of the secondary cities in the Sudano-Sahelian belt is not much different. Improving transportation infrastructures represents a first step towards expanding domains of cooperation between border regions. It is true, however, that the cost of these infrastructures is generally high, a circumstance that illustrates the importance of having access to tools for planning (and cost-balancing) that are capable of operating on the sub-regional level.

Towards a Euro-African Dialogue on Cross-Border Cooperation?

The founding fathers of Europe did not imagine the role that cross-border cooperation would play in European integration. Time, however, has allowed to prepare the accession of new members through a policy of active support for cross-border cooperation on all of the eastern borders of the EU. Why not use this experience to guide the transitions of regional blocs throughout the world? Such an approach could also be part of the implementation of the Cotonou agreements, which lay down the groundwork for the creation of system of free trade between Europe and West Africa.

The countries of West Africa have recently achieved some meaningful progress: a common exterior tariff through WAEMU, trade liberalization of local production through ECOWAS, a closer relationship between ECOWAS and WAEMU originating in the Cotonou agreements, etc. However, national economies remain quite closed, the circulation of people and goods is still obstructed, and roads are dilapidated at best. The progress of inter-governmental cooperation has not yet translated into an overall improvement in everyday living conditions.

Such tensions between the political process of regional integration and the forms of resistance constituted by national borders have characterized European integration. Expressing the will to form a closer union between peoples is not enough to bring it into existence. In particular, the articulation of sub-continental, national, and local/regional levels represents a formidable challenge. Dealing with this challenge is precisely the kind of added value cross-border cooperation can contribute. One of the major lessons of the European cross-border experience is, in effect, its capacity to integrate these different levels and sectors of intervention.

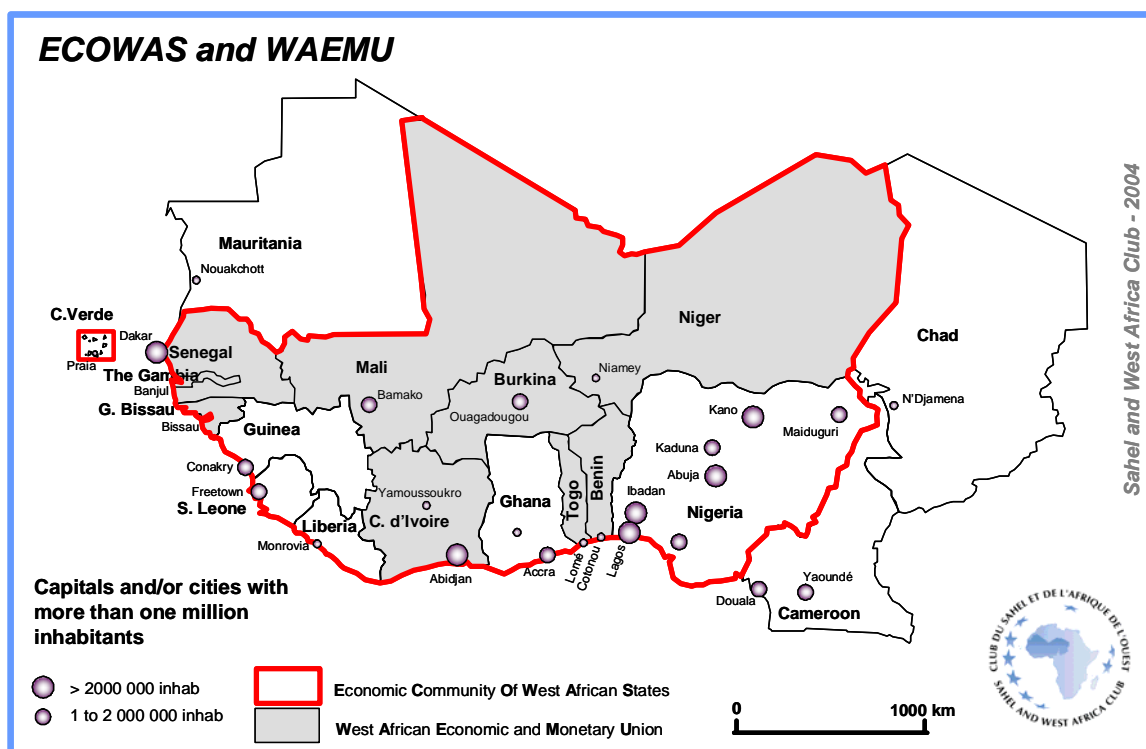
If European cross-border cooperation has managed to bring about the regional integration of the most tenuous parts of the sub-continent, why not use its example in the context of another regional bloc that is engaged in reducing its own social, economic, and territorial fractures? This would be all the more justified since the re-establishment, or indeed the creation of a continuous link between the peoples and economies of West Africa seems to be a prerequisite for integrating the sub-region into the global economy. Under these conditions, the idea of a Euro-African dialogue on cross-border cooperation and regional integration will work to deepen the hypothesis upon which the Cotonou partnership was based.

INTRODUCTION: REGIONAL INTEGRATION BETWEEN THE LOCAL AND THE GLOBAL

When examining the potential contribution of the European experience to an understanding of the relationship between regional integration and cross-border dynamics in West Africa, certain precautions must be taken. To begin with, one must realize that the role of cross-border cooperation in European integration has thus far only been grasped by an informed public. Furthermore, it is far from self-evident that the European case will bring much clarity to the process of West African integration. That said, our work in West African border regions has increasingly convinced us that these issues merit further discussion.

Cross-Border Dynamics and Regional Integration in West Africa

Whereas legal harmonization has made some important progress over the course of the past few years (free flow of local products, common exterior tariff, etc.), the actual effects of regional integration on West African populations have lagged behind such advances. This contradiction led us to analyze integration dynamics at the “local” level within certain sub-areas. Several field studies have thus enabled us to understand the role played by local actors (and local spaces) in integrating West African economies, societies, and territories.



Aware of the role of “spontaneous” trends in structuring long-term dynamics, we first focused on the links developed not only by “ethnic” networks, but above all by migratory, trade, cultural, and religious ones. This revealed the existence of strong and long-standing international solidarities in a variety of areas:

- Brotherhoods, as exemplified by the relationship between Kano (north of Nigeria) and Kaolack (Senegal), through the Niassene branch of the Tijaniyya;

- Trade relations between the interior and the coast, the Sahel and the forests, rural areas and urban poles;
- Settlement dynamics;
- Norms regulating the relationship between land owners and farmers.

Paradoxically, using a sectoral approach, we began to better understand the subtle articulations between these larger movements — both geographical and historical — and more narrowly delimited territories. In the triangular area formed by the cities of Sikasso, Korhogo and Bobo Dioulasso (SKBo), the main resource is cotton, whose export constitutes a substantial source of foreign exchange. However, the need on the part of the states involved in this trade to generate foreign exchange reserves does not justify the artificial division of the cotton production basin into national sub-sectors. This, at least, was our impression of an initial analysis of the complementarities and the effects of divisions in this zone. At the time, we were not speaking in terms of cross-border cooperation, but rather of local areas, “cross-border areas”, and solidarity zones. In any case, we rapidly discovered, that despite the border-effect certain cross-border dynamics could occur and even be sustained within the regional perimeters.

SKBO constitutes a communication node at the juncture of three national capitals (Bamako, Ouagadougou and Abidjan), but long-distance trade is organized around the *Dioulas* who are native to this area. Although, the disparities in production systems link SKBO to areas further away; there are several complementarities *internal* to the zone. In particular they arise from:

- Geo-climatic conditions, such as the direction of the transhumance flows from the grazing plains of the north to the pastures of the south;
- Socio-economic transformations, such as the creation of Ivorian packing houses that could be capable of exporting mangoes from Mali and Burkina Faso.

No doubt very few institutional efforts were made to manage these complementarities. They nonetheless existed, as did certain cross-border operators who specialized in their implementation. This constituted the initial step from a “cross-border area” to cross-border cooperation.

The next stages confirmed that integration dynamics between areas within different jurisdictions evince complex relations that involve regional and national levels, as well as local and global ones. An analysis of integration through exchanges in southern Senegambia⁷ provided additional evidence of this.

Undertaken in collaboration with local governments and national administrations, as well as with a variety of social actors, this study demonstrated the potential for a better articulation between public policies and socio-economic adjustments in cross-border regions. Certain forms of cooperation were already being informally implemented by regional authorities on both sides of the borders. The governor of Bafata, in Guinea Bissau, collaborated with the president of the rural community of Medina El Hadj, in Senegal, within the framework of a cross-border group created in order to prevent the theft of cattle and to deal with other security issues. In Pata, a town located on the northern border between Casamance and Gambia, managers of a health dispensary would treat Gambian and Senegalese patients, indiscriminately. Above all, the involvement of the Senegalese Directorate for Land Planning, in the context of the reorientation of its guidelines towards the development of “real countries”, has demonstrated the potential for harmonizing national policies and for adjusting intervention levels. Land planning is obviously capable of playing a structuring role in the integrated development of cross-border areas.

⁷ This area is composed of Gambia, Casamance (Senegalese region located south of Gambia), and Guinea Bissau. For further information, see Annex 1.

We were not fully aware, at the time, of the existence of well-established, European cross-border cooperation, nor of the charter⁸ and the Association of European Border Regions (AEBR). Our hypotheses were not yet sufficiently developed to grasp the fact that regional integration did not only result from intergovernmental initiatives and legal harmonization. Indeed, alongside the supra-national level, the sub-national level revealed countless processes of sovereignty sharing. Not only were they impossible to ignore, but it also proved necessary to identify them in order to better understand the integration process beyond just the coordination of national policies.

Towards an Analysis of the European Experience in Cross-Border Cooperation

Our analysis was sufficiently developed to allow us to perceive the diversity of actors involved, as well as the paths to expanding the limits of sovereignty and to adapting solidarity to freedom, within both wider and more integrated groupings. It was easier, at that point, to guess at the crucial role played by the local level and by local actors in what is, to this day, the most developed regional integration process: the European Union. We already knew of the successes of European integration, but we had limited ourselves to the top of the institutional pyramid.

At the community and intergovernmental levels, processes carried out within the framework of the West African Economic and Monetary Union (WAEMU) and the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) hardly bear comparison with Europe. But these substantial differences are largely due to the following factors:

- The history of West African States, whose sovereignties are relatively younger than those of European countries;
- West Africa never experienced a trauma comparable to that of World War II, which served as a strong foil to and a powerful driver of European integration.

Moreover, alongside state efforts, other initiatives probably contributed to reinforcing the integration of European societies. As in West Africa, an abundance of economic, social, and cultural links at the local level were developed beyond the constraints of national borders.

Thus, we formed the idea of an analysis rather than a comparison, informed by both the European and West African experiences. The discovery of the *Practical Guide to Cross-Border Cooperation* provided us with the means to achieve such an objective. By identifying the initiatives and concepts that contributed to reinforcing European integration and by adapting them to border regions—small and very sensitive areas—we may be able to launch a Euro-African dialogue on this theme.

⁸ The text of the charter is provided in Annex 3.

1. EUROPEAN INTEGRATION AND CROSS-BORDER COOPERATION

Cross-border cooperation has its roots in the history of European integration, which, from the outset, aimed at developing relations beyond national sovereignties, first through sharing competencies concerning certain sectoral policies, then through defining and implementing common policies.

The emergence of regional actors with some autonomy in the management of cross-border relations would not have been possible without limitations on sovereignty that were first implemented by states. These limitations enabled the progressive development of a certain “decoupling” of the solidarity principle and the nationality criterion. As European countries managed to define a list of shared interests, it became easier to represent Europe as a future community to be concretized. The implementation of structural policies was precisely aimed at achieving this goal. Out of the 85 billion euros spent by the EU in 2002, the amounts allocated to the common agricultural policy and “structural funds⁹” were 43.5 and 23.3 billion euros, respectively. The objective of these funds was to correct territorial, economic, and social imbalances through an essentially regional approach.



⁹ Structural funds or “realignment funds” are intended to reduce development inequalities within the EU, eligible regions are therefore those that have a GDP per capita of less than 75% of the EU average.

However, one cannot accurately present the history of European countries if one maintains the illusion that they developed out of a specific project, fixed from the outset. The truth is, rather, that their current forms resulted as much from contingent factors as deliberate efforts. For example, this was the case with the emergence of a regional pole in the Community structure. This circumstance does conform to the project of the “founding fathers”, yet it also owes a lot to the gradual expansion of the Union territory to include “poorer” countries, such as Ireland, Greece, Spain, Portugal, etc. The need to blur the economic demarcation lines marked by borders led to the development of a regionally-oriented “catch-up policy”.

The development of cross-border domains in the portfolio of Community initiatives¹⁰ is probably due to the intuitions of elected officials and civil servants in border regions, but it would not have been possible without the creation of the Single Market and an awareness of the advantages related to the decompartmentalization of border markets. Yet cross-border cooperation has become the community initiative with the biggest operating budget, so that it now constitutes one of the main drivers of the regional integration process.

1.1. State Acceptance of Limitations on Sovereignty

In the aftermath of the Second World War, the idea of European cooperation presented itself as an obvious necessity, built upon several hypotheses, without any *a priori* certainty that they would eventually be confirmed. The main hypothesis (and the boldest one to this day) was the gamble that the reinforcement of interdependency between states would go hand in hand with less conflict in the management of their disagreements. Indeed, protectionism and autarchic regulation of economic and social activities had been perceived as factors leading to the outbreak of the war. One tends to forget that the most seemingly technical tools of organization created by the European countries have a political and even strategic origin. It is not by chance that the European Community of Coal and Steel (ECCS)¹¹ organized a shared control of—and therefore created a sanctuary for—industries that lay at the foundations of the war effort. Several treaties, beginning with the Rome Treaty, have since developed areas of shared competencies without ever questioning the postulate upon which they were based.

From this perspective, the *raison d'être* of the European Community was similar to that of other institutions established in the aftermath of the war, whether those of Bretton Woods or the United Nations (UN). All are based on the conviction that decisions concerning war and peace, as well as economic and social relations, will be all the more consensual if they are previously discussed and jointly implemented. In this regard, the European Community did not differ from other modern institutions that aim to limit the absolute power of states even while conferring the power over this limitation to the states themselves.

Despite regular crises, which always demonstrated the difficulty of conciliating national legitimacies that are jealously protective of their privileges, the integration dynamic has steadily progressed to the point where it finally constitutes a unique example of shared sovereignty.

¹⁰ The latter should be distinguished from “structural policies” (CAP and cohesion funds) that are allocated to the states to correct economic and social imbalances. Community initiatives are by nature transversal and are meant to support the integrated development of the EU. They are used especially in the area of research, trans-European transportation and communication networks, etc.

¹¹ The European Community of Coal and Steel emerged out of the Schuman plan, of May 9, 1950, that created a Franco-German high authority in charge of managing French and German production of coal and steel, two sectors that played a central role in the wars waged by the two countries. The ECCS was created by the treaty of April 18, 1951, which was signed by Germany, Belgium, France, Italy, Luxembourg, and the Netherlands. Its first president was Jean Monnet. The treaty is generally considered to be the founding act of the European Community.

Logically, the EU's capacity to transcend national sovereignties should be more surprising than the latter's resistance to this process. This capacity needs to be considered from the perspective of the principle of nation-state sovereignty and of the related and even competing legitimacies to which it is confronted.

Why has the European Union succeeded where other management tools of international relations have faced substantial difficulties? Why has the EU systematically managed to surmount its recurrent crises, and subsequently, make regular progress in the integration of its policies? What is the reason for its significant advance over most other regional integration processes in the world? These questions need to be answered in order to understand the reasons that led an association of states to move progressively beyond the state framework to integrate people and territories. This essay attempts to answer these questions by examining the following hypothesis: European integration does not only proceed from inter-governmental cooperation but from multiple public and private dynamics that associate diverse actors at a variety of levels. Among the latter, this study focuses on the contribution of the regional level and, more specifically, of the cross-border level.

1.2. *The Emergence of the Regional Actor*

Originally, European integration dynamics relied on the states, which expanded the coverage of solidarity beyond its previous limits. Then, "structural policies" systematized this approach at the level of the entire Union territory. Thus, regions¹² were rapidly placed at the heart of European integration. Indeed, both equalization funds and the Common Agricultural Policy (CAP), which historically represent the vast majority of expenditures of the European Community, were designed to reduce inter-regional imbalances within the European Union.

The implementation of systematic or "structural" redistribution policies at the supra-national level is striking in its scope. It has no equivalent, either in efforts carried out to consolidate the political foundations of a country—like in post-war Germany or Japan, and possibly today in Iraq—or in the budgets allocated to Public Aid for Development (PAD). The European process goes way beyond the specific nature of the former and the weakness of the latter. However these policies rely on a similar logic to that which encourages the development of the welfare state. They establish the same form of vertical redistribution; and, they depend on the good will of states, even though they are executed by Community institutions. As a consequence, in spite of the organizational importance of regions, these institutions long remained the objects of European integration rather than the agents behind it.

This situation evolved as a result of multiple factors. First, the Community budget was considerably increased so that equalization measures became one of the central stakes in budget negotiations, as well as the hinge on which coalitions of member states form. Then, beginning in the 1980s, countries that are relatively poorer than the group of founding countries—such as Greece, Spain, and Portugal—joined the Community. With their membership, the nature of redistribution policies changed so that they not only served the objectives of land planning and rural development, but also fulfilled a duty of solidarity between Europeans who were more and less favored by history and economic transformations. The region thus became the privileged level of intervention for the realization of this political ambition; vast projects of rural, cultural, economic, and infrastructural development contributed to regional dynamism. In countries that were long dominated by centralized dictatorships, this dynamic modified the nature of the relationships between the state and infra-state territorial authorities. Finally, decentralization policies, implemented from the 1980s in old nation-states such as France, Spain, or the United Kingdom, enabled regional actors to take advantage of the new opportunities they were offered in order to become agents in their own development.

¹² Whether they are decentralized levels of the central administration or local governments.

Thus, the 1990s marked the beginning of a new role for regions as full-fledged actors of European integration. From this point on, regional policies were not only created by states concerned with concretizing the equality principle, either directly through transfers of national revenue to the decentralized levels of territorial administration, or indirectly through the allocation of Community funds to them. As elected councils are currently becoming standard for most infra-state governments, the latter will now be able to define for themselves the conditions of their evolution by negotiating not only with the central authorities of their countries, but also with European institutions, and even with other regions of Europe. This will substantially change the nature of regional policies which, instead of being limited to the functional aspects of economic development, will now include most dimensions of political action.

1.3. Consecration of Cross-Border Cooperation

Among the various relationships that European regions have the capacity to develop, the ones that link border regions deserve special attention. National peripheries play an important role in the history of the relationship between the central state and infra-state territorial entities, especially regions. Given the facts of regional tropism, cultural, social, linguistic, and religious specificities, and involvement in the structures of nation-building (school, army, justice, civil administration, etc.), these territories have ambiguous histories, combining allegiances as well as tensions ("external", with the central authorities, and internal to certain local communities). This determined the particular position of border regions in Europe: they were both potential drivers of and brakes on an integration process that claims to develop solidarity between peoples rather than a mere union of states.

Initiated by local officials in border regions, cross-border cooperation began in the 1950s. In order to bypass the border-effects, actors in the early experiments created associations regulated by domestic law on both sides of the borders, and then merged them within the frameworks of cross-border structures. While their activities expanded to multiple areas, certain solutions remained within the jurisdiction of national governments. The creation of the Association of European Border Regions then made it possible to develop close relationships with the Council of Europe, the European Parliament, the European Commission, and national governments. Starting in the 1980s, the entry into the Union of Spain, Portugal, and Greece, followed by the creation of the single market, further opened up borders and highlighted the persistence of territorial fractures. At that point, a specific policy favoring border regions appeared to be necessary. These regions received aid that was specifically granted on the basis of "cross-border development plans or strategies", within the framework of a new Community initiative called INTERREG. Over time, this initiative became increasingly important, so that it is now the Community initiative with the largest budget.

2. CROSS-BORDER COOPERATION: GENERAL CHARACTERISTICS, LEGAL CONSTRAINTS, AND VARIOUS FORMS AND STRUCTURES

Proceeding from complex histories and involving diverse actors, who lack homogeneous backgrounds, cross-border cooperation combines general tendencies with context-specific characteristics. In hindsight, common stages in the establishment and development of cross-border relations can be identified, as well as differences linked to the diversity of national legal systems. If the latter sometimes hinders cross-border cooperation, it does not present an insurmountable obstacle.

2.1. General Characteristics of Cross-Border Cooperation



The *Practical Guide to Cross-Border Cooperation* describes the main stages of this type of cooperation. Cooperation almost always originates in specific activities and the initiatives of individuals. Experience shows that the need to set up a strategic structure only arises afterwards, once numerous border actors are engaged in regular interactions that are likely to develop the endogenous potential of cross-border regions.

Cross-border information networks can promote such contacts. The development of cross-border strategies and concepts requires cooperation between partners on both sides of the border. The management and independent implementation of programs only take place at the end of this process and constitute the most advanced stage of cross-border cooperation.

Among the varied forms cross-border cooperation might take, an examination of the European experience reveals a distinction between specific activities, aiming at precise goals, and strategic cooperation, which strives to tap the endogenous potential for development. In fact, borders bring together elements of both rupture and continuity, which determine opportunities. They erect few barriers that completely prevent complementarities from being realized, whether

those between rural production zones and urban centers, sanitary needs and public health infrastructures, or job supply and demand. If the creation of a cross-border continuum indeed liberates these energies, the presence of a juridico-political division serves to constrain them. However, the latter rarely manages to annihilate them completely. For this reason, social or economic cross-border dynamics generally precede institutional cooperation. Organized around the seizing of opportunities, these dynamics already manifest the existence of comparative advantages related to the establishment of cross-border linkages, as well as to the mastery of transversal information flows. The development of these dynamics constitutes the primary justification for cross-border cooperation.

Thus, all types of cooperation begin with specific activities that produce networks and, in some cases, create structures with multiplier effects. On this point, there is little difference between Europe and Africa. If the existence of formal structures of cross-border cooperation—between local/regional governments on both sides of national borders—remains the prerogative of Europe, West Africa possesses many commercial, religious, economic, cultural and social cross-border networks. Indeed, socio-cultural or, even, religious affinities often determine access to strategic information and inform the capacity to economically polarize a cross-border territory. Such networks have a clear multiplier effect, which becomes evident in their ability to convert their social or religious influence into economic capital. Their spatial distribution also ensures that they master information flows normally interrupted by borders.

The fact remains that a lack of inter-institutional cooperation creates significant scale and norm constraints—infrastructural, financial, and those related to customs. Besides, public institutional involvement allows for a socialization of information on cross-border opportunities, and thereby reduces the risk of monopolies. Indeed, unequal distribution of information, which increases the possibility of the formation of captive markets, originates in the border- or “compartmentalization” effect of national borders. While this border-effect justifies the establishment of horizontal partnerships (between public and private actors) on each side of the border, the overlapping of intervention scales requires the participation of central, as well as local, and even supranational, organs.

Thus, even though cross-border cooperation generally begins with individual initiatives, only **institutional cooperation can enable a transnationalization of the full spectrum of public policies** — be it land planning, health, transportation or the environment. This is essential to the emergence of a transnational identity capable of supporting all aspects of the development of cross-border areas. Besides, alongside the need to establish horizontal partnerships (between public and private actors) at the local and regional levels, the need to coordinate scales of intervention calls for vertical partnerships (between local and central governments), on each side of the border, in accordance with the subsidiarity principle.

Therefore, cross-border cooperation may involve different kinds of organizations—public, private, non-profit (such as regional governments, chambers of commerce and industry, employer associations, trade unions, etc.) — and take place on an ad hoc basis, or according to agreements at the local, regional or national levels. The more diverse and numerous are the actors and the levels of competence involved, the greater the chances of success. Ideally, such collaborations should be ultimately sanctioned by the creation of a formal and genuinely cross-border structure. In Europe, however, the diversity of administrative systems and jurisdictions constitutes a significant impediment to this.

2.2. Difficulties Related to the Differences Between Administrative and Legal Systems

The *Practical Guide to Cross-Border Cooperation* recommends the creation of cross-border structures only to satisfy the needs of cooperation activities in their expansion and development phase. This warning is clearly justified considering the ability of individuals, notably inhabitants of

cross-border regions, to perceive and defend specific cross-border interests. A “top-down” structure for benefiting from European aid to cross-border development, for instance, is less likely to be able to manage or transcend local and national interests. There might yet be another reason, which does not explicitly figure in the *Guide*, at the risk of charging ahead too quickly, which is related to the diversity of European administrative and legal systems, structures, laws, and jurisdictions.

Cross-border structures do not intend to create new administrative levels but only interfaces between local/regional and/or national structures on either side of the border. The fact remains that constitutional, legal, and regulatory instruments can complicate the establishment of social and legal relations transcending national borders. All the more so when these relations infringe, more or less directly, on the domains of competence reserved to state actors. For this reason, cross-border cooperation structures can substantially vary as to general objective (*ad hoc* or longer-term collaboration) and degree of cooperation. If legal diversity has not prevented the creation of cross-border structures across the many borders of the EU, pragmatic considerations may suggest to start with informal collaborations, and then eliminating legal hurdles as they arise.

The promotion of practical goals, such as the development of an economic base, the creation of jobs, or the establishment of a transportation system, can break the political deadlock around public interventions that extend beyond the national framework. Specifically, as the *Guide to Cross-Border Cooperation* points out, “cross-border acceptance and authority can be achieved, above all, by successful political and practical activities.” In an explicit reference to the legitimacy issues that the creation of this kind of authority may trigger, the *Guide* adds that vertical (upwards and downwards) and horizontal (cross-border) partnership and subsidiarity illustrate that “Euroregions do not assume the powers of others nor act counter to the state; on the contrary, they respect partners on the other side of the border and their established social, cultural, historical and economic features and diversity.”

Despite legal constraints, the establishment of permanent cross-border structures, with their own personnel, represents an important goal. Such structures allow for the defence of cross-border interests, despite “obstacles arising from strong national interests and parochial thinking.” The *Guide* also specifies that the independence of the administrative and technical personnel employed in cross-border projects is the only guarantee of “a cross-border regional consensus which is internally acceptable and externally credible.”

If the development of genuinely cross-border structures takes time, some arrangements are easier to establish than others. While the cross-border management of programs under public law is the aim, management under private law is generally easier to implement. National legal associations can be created on both sides of the border. Based on public law, they can serve to conclude cross-border private law agreements. Above all, “legal structures must be adapted to the various regional/local and national requirements,” which is indeed feasible, as the agreements concluded along the interior and exterior borders of the EU over the past few years have demonstrated.

2.3. Variety of “Envisioned” Legal Forms of Cooperation

The forms and levels of development of cross-border cooperation vary considerably depending on the legal systems and administrative structures of partner states. These still strongly resist the establishment of a uniform framework enabling homogeneous cooperation between local/regional governments on both sides of the border. Thus, multilateral agreements, such as the Madrid Convention or the Nordic Accord (see below), do not constitute an autonomous contractual basis but only create frameworks that must then be transferred into national law. Cross-border cooperation between public entities on the basis of public law requires, at least

initially, bi- or tri-lateral treaties. At the same time, there are also numerous legal instruments that authorize cooperation on a private law basis. In addition, there are various agreements and working protocols that allow for cross-border collaboration within an informal framework.

In 1977, the Nordic Agreement on cross-border cooperation between municipalities—concluded between Finland, Sweden, Norway and Denmark—stipulated that inter-community cooperation across national borders should be allowed to develop under comparable conditions to those of cooperation between municipalities within a single country. Furthermore, each party was required to modify its national legislation so as to allow for such cooperation. The Council of Europe, for its part, created a general outline for cross-border cooperation between local governments and authorities in the Madrid Outline Convention of 1981. According to the terms of the Convention, the parties commit to a reduction of the administrative and technical impediments to cross-border cooperation, as well as to a consideration of the possibility of delegating special powers to local governments to enable their involvement in cross-border cooperation. An additional protocol to the Madrid Convention, which came into force in 1998, recommends the creation of permanent public or private law institutions for cross-border cooperation with legally binding decision-making power.

Multi-lateral treaties are nevertheless insufficient to establish cross-border cooperation between local/regional governments or authorities on the basis of public law. Variations in levels of centralization, and differences in administrative organization and legal systems, are reflected in the constitutional, legal and regulatory mechanisms of individual countries. Signing conventions and framework agreements does not wipe away these differences. These agreements must be transferred to the domestic legal order, after a ratification process that might well point out contradictions with legal or even constitutional frameworks. Indeed, the Madrid Convention commits the signatories to carrying out a number of tasks “within the limitations of their national legislation,” thereby considerably reducing its impact.

Many examples, drawn from various border regions, demonstrate the need for additional treaties between states to enable local authorities to engage directly in cross-border cooperation. In the 1990's, several such treaties were signed: the Benelux Convention; the German-Dutch Cross-Border Treaty; the Vienna Agreement between Italy and Austria; the Karlsruhe Accord on cross-border cooperation between France, Germany, Luxembourg and Switzerland; the Treaty of Bayonne between France and Spain.

While cross-border cooperation had been carried out through national associations or companies on the basis of private law, the agreement passed in 1991 between the Land of North Rhine Westphalia, the Land of Lower Saxony, Germany and the Netherlands constitutes the first treaty that authorized associations of localities under public law. It comprised the five German-Dutch cross-border regions, previously organized only on the basis of private law: the Ems-Dollart region, Euregio Rhein-Waal, Euregio Rhein-Maas-Nord, Euregio Rhein-Maas. The treaty presents three models for cross-border cooperation: a community association (only for deliberations), public law agreements (an organ can act on behalf of another organ), and an association of localities under public law. The Benelux Convention constitutes another example of a treaty authorizing direct cooperation between local authorities—especially municipal authorities—in Belgium, the Netherlands and Luxembourg on the basis of public law.

Many agreements and bilateral or trilateral protocols only govern cross-border cooperation between national governments. They are generally concluded in order to create special structures for inter-governmental cooperation, especially in matters of land planning. Some of the agreements also allow for the creation of organizations focusing on a specific domain of cooperation, for example for the creation and management of a nature preserve, mutual assistance in case of natural disaster, environmental protection, etc. Numerous inter-governmental commissions have been created on most Western, Central and Eastern European borders.

Under certain conditions, regional and local governments are allowed to conclude international agreements within their areas of competence. However, because of their exclusive competence in matters of foreign policy, national governments exert control and reserve the right of veto. The autonomy of local/regional governments varies to a considerable degree according to the legal-political traditions of individual states. In federal states, such as Germany, infra-national authorities (Länder) have the legal power to conclude international agreements with foreign governments or states. In unitary states, legal agreements involving local or regional governments must be approved at the national level. There are thus many bilateral agreements between authorities at various levels (for instance, the 1977 agreement between Baden-Württemberg and Switzerland on fishing in the lower part of the Rhine) and contracts concluded between European regions that do not involve national government participation (such as the agreement between North Rhine Westphalia, Rhineland Palatinate, the German Speaking Community, and the Region of Wallonia).

2.4. Variety of Structures Created

The experience of the Association of European Border Regions demonstrates that the shift from cooperation to cross-border structures entails a process of adjustment and discovery of practical solutions to multiple problems—of a legal, administrative and political nature—that inevitably arise. Besides, use of the expression “cross-border structure” does not always mean that a new structure—much less a distinct legal entity—has actually been created. The first stages of cooperation generally take the form of non-binding agreements between local/regional authorities or governments on both sides of the border. An autonomous structure can later be established in order to deepen and expand cross-border cooperation.

Among the many entities created, one must distinguish between permanent or strategic structures and those organizing collaboration around a specific project. The management of a cross-border project does not necessarily require the establishment of an autonomous structure. If the latter does prove necessary, however, only a few solutions exist for their creation with the appropriate legal status. The only available instrument at the international level is the “European Economic Interest Grouping” (EEIG), but it presents many drawbacks. While it is well suited to commercial operations, it has not proved very effective for cooperation between local governments. Above all, under EEIG, relations between third parties are governed by Community contract provisions and regulations, to the exclusion of national legislation. Obviously, such a legal structure does not easily lend itself to cooperation involving numerous entities of public law.

On the domestic level, French law has developed instruments to encourage the participation of infra-national local governments in cross-border cooperation. This is particularly the case for Mixed Economy Companies and Public Interest Groups. Nevertheless, the former are limited by strict public control over their financing and agreements with national organs. As for the latter, they seem mostly directed at the participation of foreign local bodies in French Mixed Economy Companies, and only with French majority participation.

Permanent or “strategic” structures of cross-border cooperation take the form of either Euroregions or (non-binding) Working Communities. The latter mostly bring together regional authorities. They are found along the Franco-Swiss border (Jura), the Franco-Spanish border (Pyrenees) and the Spanish-Portuguese border (Extremadura/Alentejo). There are other similar structures bearing different names, such as *clusters* along the border between Ireland and the United Kingdom, or the Austro-Hungarian *Regionalrat*. But Euroregions remain the most developed cross-border cooperation structures.

Euroregions (or Euregios) are not all identical but they are generally permanent, with an identity distinct from that of their members, having their own resources and making their own decisions. Before this next wave of enlargement triggered the creation of new structures along EU borders and new applicants, most Euroregions were located on the borders between Germany and the Netherlands, Belgium, Switzerland, Austria, Poland, the Czech Republic, France and Denmark. Euroregions also exist on the borders between Belgium and the Netherlands (Euregio Scheldemond), Italy and Austria (Euregio Tyrol), Greece and Bulgaria (Euroregion Nestos-Mesta), and France and Spain (Euroregion Midi-Pyrenees, Languedoc-Roussillon, Catalan).

Judging from the list of 'historical' Euroregions, it is clear that the factors contributing to their creation were, on the one hand, the legal-administrative structure of Germany, which enabled its Länder to conclude international agreements with foreign governments, and, on the other hand, a certain geographical and/or socio-cultural "homogeneity" or continuity (Flanders, Tyrol, Catalan, etc). In any case, the creation of numerous Euroregions demonstrates that the diverse constitutional traditions, even of the most unitary states, do not preclude the development of cross-border cooperation.

For lack of a harmonized, European-wide legal framework, cross-border cooperation continues to be governed by bilateral agreements between states, whose contents vary according to the political will of the signatories. Accordingly, the degree of centralization/decentralization in the management of programs varies substantially according to the countries involved. Besides, if agreements based on public law guarantee more democratic participation than programs based on private law, they remain strictly conditional on the good will of states.

3. THE DOMAINS OF INTERVENTION: WHICH RESONANCES FOR WEST AFRICA?

Cross-border cooperation is not only characterized by a diversity of legal forms and organizing structures, but it also leads to the implementation of numerous concrete actions. While these actions can vary greatly, they at least share the objective of aiming at regional development by valorizing the "endogenous potential" of cross-border areas. Thus, on the most basic level, cross-border cooperation involves realizing certain gains associated with a cross-border approach to the management of territorial borders. The aim, in other words, is the shared interest or "positive sum game" between cross-border partners. But this definition tells us very little about how such interests or gains are to be realized. How, in effect, can we "produce" a cross-border consensus? How can we bring together stakeholders, who, in theory, proceed from divergent economic, legal, and political trajectories?

Despite certain inconsistencies that characterize cross-border zones—like those involving the compartmentalization of labor markets, problems of access to basic services, or the division of infrastructures—the answers to such questions are not necessarily obvious. They are so elusive that it is difficult to know if cross-border cooperation prolongs, or, on the contrary, precedes the identification of specific problems. Despite what the proliferation of European experiences with cross-border cooperation might lead us to believe, these questions are by no means routine. In certain regions of the world, where relations between local governments in border areas are not very developed, cross-border cooperation constitutes a fundamental issue.

If the cross-border areas experience seems to support the conclusion that the best form of cooperation is generally the most unrestricted, the Practical Guide to Cross-Border Cooperation does not clearly resolve this dilemma. Its examples of "best practices", in particular, are established according to a sectoral classification scheme that does not permit the identification of the individual steps that led to the definition and implementation of cross-border projects. While it is true that the primacy accorded to the Euroregions expresses a certain preference for a general and permanent form of cooperation, there would be great interest in having access to

examples describing not only the content but also the process of cross-border cooperation, its thematic expansion, and its institutional development. From this perspective, monographic studies focusing on the process of the creation of Euroregions along the borders of different countries would prove very useful.

Certain difficulties arise, perhaps, from the fact that cross-border cooperation, as a “general” orientation, raises the stakes of relations between central state power and local/regional authorities. The legitimacy that the latter may acquire, through the project of reaffirming local/regional identities that are more or less “ancestral” or “immemorial”, can easily appear threatening in the eyes of the central state. Border regions are often associated with the specter of secession, or at the least, irredentism. Under these conditions, collaboration on functional aspects offers the advantage of lowering certain stakes of cross-border cooperation.

Rather than expressing the unrelenting will to revive identities that have long been fought against by the central states, especially those involving aspirations for unity, cross-border cooperation shares some similarities with public policies geared towards the search for prosperity, peace, and security. Moreover, border territories quite often express considerable functional complementarities that materialize as soon as cooperation diminishes the border-effect. How could this be otherwise? As the relative youth of European borders demonstrates, there has always been something arbitrary in demarcation lines that interrupt the continuity of social and economic processes, and sometimes even of geographical spaces.

If cross-border cooperation of a general and permanent nature represents a long-term objective, sectoral and thematic collaborations thus offer the advantage of improving the management of some activities and thereby developing awareness of shared interests. The scope of this form of collaboration is potentially unlimited, as it encompasses most spheres of local government competencies. Therefore, such collaborations involve the participation of organs at various levels which then become aware of its stakes. Without attempting to account for all of the activities that cross-border cooperation can embody for the betterment of its partners, it would be useful to present some of its thematic expressions in Europe and to examine how they may “make sense” for West Africa. Presenting a few sectors listed in the Guide for Cross-Border Cooperation as examples of “best practices” will make it possible to draw some parallels that may enrich the analysis, even if they have not yet been thoroughly studied.

3.1. *Land Planning*

Land planning represents a tool capable of accomplishing one of the objectives of cross-border cooperation (and of the regional development of the EU): the reinforcement of economic and social cohesion through the reduction of territorial fractures.

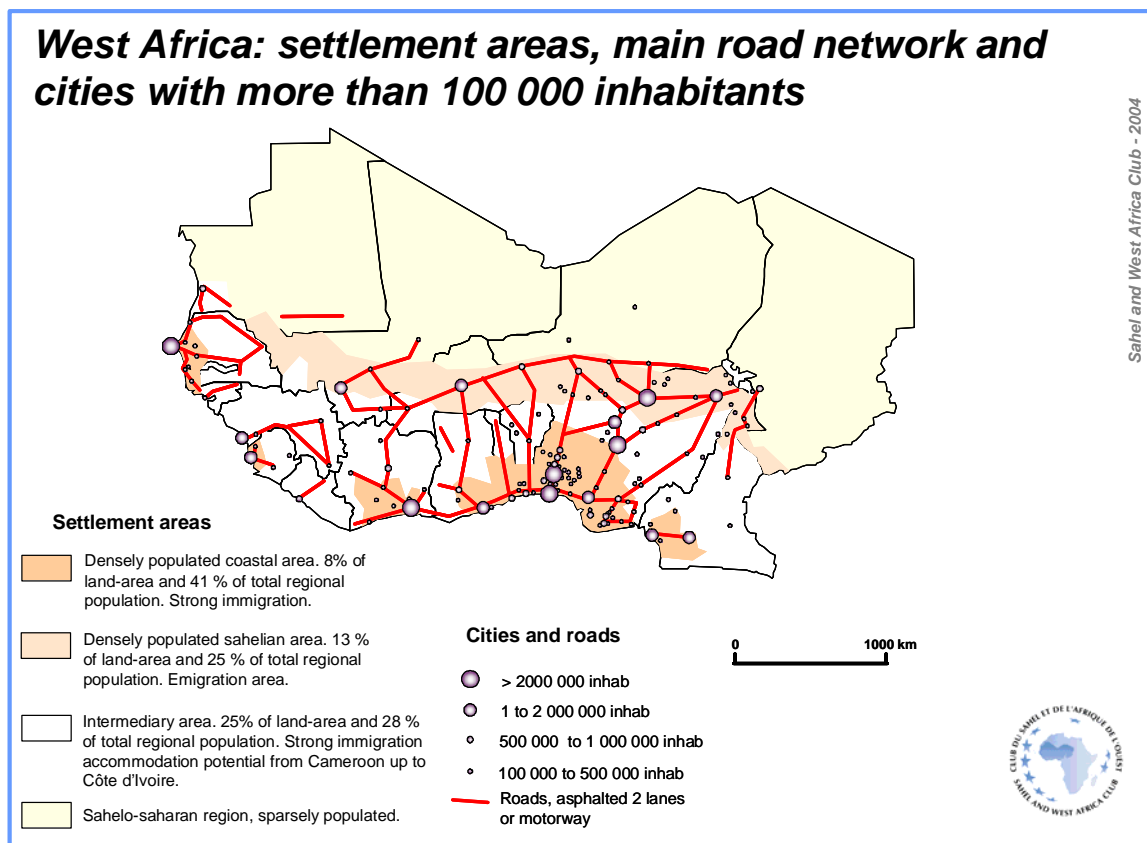
Better known as “spatial development” in Community parlance, land planning progressively integrates all of the decision-making levels of the EU. The past few years has witnessed the emergence of a European land planning policy, while cross-border cooperation in this area has been increasingly characterized by a close collaboration between national and regional authorities, as well as between local and regional institutions. While most inter-governmental commissions and other “Working Communities” in charge of land planning lack decision-making power, they nonetheless facilitate the development of synergies between national governments and local/regional authorities.

Land planning offers the advantage of constituting a “horizontal” framework that makes it possible to practice cross-border cooperation in a number of different sectors. Since the border-effect is more severe in situations of “missing links”, cross-border land planning policies should above all work to re-establish broken communication channels. As such, they are closely

associated with most cross-border cooperation activities and constitute the ideal tool for coordinating the different sectoral policies.

Meanwhile, at the Union level, European land planning policy is perceived as a policy aiming to perfect the Single Market, which should necessarily involve focusing on the barriers erected by borders. While borders have not totally compartmentalized European communication networks, they have mostly made it possible to connect the largest sub-continental metropolises while jeopardizing cross-border integration of networks of secondary cities and rural towns.

Conversely, integrated development of cross-border regions should facilitate the establishment throughout Europe of a territorial continuity between rural zones, secondary cities, and metropolitan networks.



Since it is a way of achieving the horizontal and vertical integration of sectors and levels of intervention on both sides of borders, land planning policy expresses a symbiosis between the objectives of cross-border cooperation and the European ambition to create “an ever closer union between the peoples of Europe.” European land planning ministers have thus defined a *European Spatial Development Perspective* (1999) that pursues the goal of reducing territorial divisions. Its objectives include the orientation of Community policies towards spatial aspects, equal access to infrastructures and information, polycentric territorial development, and the establishment of new relationships between cities and rural areas... The *Perspective* includes an analysis of cross-border cooperation written in collaboration with the AEBC.

Cross-border land planning constitutes one of the areas in which a Euro-African dialogue on cross-border cooperation could be particularly fruitful. West Africa is traversed by numerous flows of goods and people that are linked to both recent and long-term dynamics. Religious pilgrimages have established chains of cultural and social solidarity, as well as economic

networks that take advantage of disparities between production systems for commercial purposes. These trade exchanges have long linked the inside and the coast, as well as the north and the south of the sub-region. In addition, demographic growth and coastal urbanization have led to a boom in food demand that polarizes the agricultural production of the hinterland, which in turn causes a process of secondary urbanization along the Sudano-Sahelian belt. Moreover the relative poverty of isolated Sahelian regions causes massive migrations from the north to the south, as well as from the interior to the coasts.

While the imbalances and interdependencies caused by these massive phenomena are serious, few instruments of cooperation, especially in the field of land planning, are capable of grasping them. Road networks usually link mid-sized cities to the capital within the domestic territory. Using funds allocated by the European Fund for Regional Development (EFRD) in the area of infrastructures, WAEMU is currently implementing a land planning policy. However, this policy remains focused on metropolitan liaisons and does not solve the problems involving the links between isolated rural areas and national roads, nor of the missing links between secondary cities. Moreover, the impossibility of linking certain zones of agricultural production and border markets illustrates the necessity of cross-border cooperation “from the bottom up” in the area of land planning. In Pata, at the southern border of Senegal near Gambia, produce and cereal farmers are sometimes forced to bypass the Gambian territory, whereas a twenty-kilometer trail would enable them to reach the trans-Gambian territory.

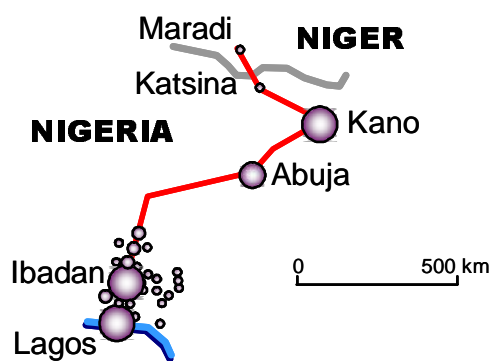
3.2. *Economic Development*

Economic development can play a crucial role in encouraging local governments to engage in cross-border cooperation on several levels. It is indeed the area where the border-effect is the most obvious. As soon as this effect is attenuated, which can occur simply through the meeting of border partners, business opportunities are likely to increase. Moreover, the Practical Guide to cross-border cooperation highlights the problems experienced by SMEs in border regions due to their peripheral position within national economies. They generally suffer from distortions in commercial structures, weak physical and economic infrastructures, and undeveloped cross-border partnerships, networks, and contacts.

Such difficulties are especially significant for border handicraft enterprises and farms in many West African countries. Their isolated location away from production outlets places them in a vulnerable position in price negotiations with traders. While the latter often have strategic information on prices and markets, producers are frequently forced to reduce their margins, and thus cannot optimize the value of their output. This, in turn, jeopardizes investment, which remains at levels far below what the opportunities offered by growing urban demand should yield.

The European experience also suggests that divergent internal characteristics of cross-border regions account for the existence of different conditions suited to the needs and potentialities required for the development of SMEs. Thus a cross-border region can be characterized by the presence of a single urban development pole—which can serve as a driver for the development of new companies and services—or by competition between two poles of equal size. These situations of complementarity or potential rivalry between border regions are frequent in West Africa. It may be useful to take them into account before engaging in cross-border cooperation.

A good example is Banjul, in Southern Senegambia, that evidently could polarize rural outputs of the hinterland in order to process and redirect them towards the international market. Such a trend would however turn the Gambian capital into the main outlet market for the agricultural productions of Gambia, Guinea Bissau, and the southern half of Senegal. This would require a broad consensus and close collaboration between the states.



Situations of potential competition between border towns of similar size are numerous in West Africa. This may, for example, be the case with Sikasso, Korhogo and Bobo-Dioulasso (SKBo), located respectively in Côte d'Ivoire, Mali and Burkina Faso, or with Maradi, Katsina and Kano (MKK) between Niger and Nigeria. In both areas, however, complementarities prevail over competition, due to, among other factors, the access to the sea which towns such as Korhogo, Katsina and Kano provide. Their strategic position makes them, in effect, play the role of "structuring links" in transportation

corridors. The incomplete character of the West African domestic market makes this factor over-determinant and enables certain countries or regions to extract commercial rents by benefiting from their location. In such cases, the border-effect is even more detrimental¹³.

In Europe as in Africa, "difficulties [of border regions] are worsened by the general deficiency of infrastructures supporting the development of small enterprises, notably through the lack of regional development agencies, scientific and technological parks, etc.". Conversely, access to certain public services can prove essential in the implementation of a regional comparative advantage, as exemplified in the development of the cotton-producing SKBo area thanks to the roads and training services established by trade offices. The general opinion, however, remains valid for most West African border regions, which usually have fewer infrastructures than urban centers, especially those on the coast. In this regard, the cotton-producing area constitutes an exception due to cotton's role in foreign exchange provision. It is notably because cotton represents a strategic interest for central governments that they are investing public funds in cotton-producing zones. These investments nonetheless remain subordinated to the development objectives of each state, and are therefore subject to strict nationality criteria determining the compartmentalization of national sub-sectors. Cross-border management of their development will undoubtedly increase the multiplier effect of these investments.

The development of SMEs in cross-border regions is primarily done through decompartmentalizing and developing the provision of services. The objective should be to eliminate the "semi-circle" in order to create a "full circle", in terms of relations between suppliers and producers¹⁴. The development of cross-border relations between suppliers and producers facilitates economies of scale by sharing costs and reducing per unit costs. Furthermore, shared commercialisation services can be offered to groups or networks of small enterprises. Such services would be especially useful to many West African border farmers, who often suffer from their isolated position with respect to the main markets for agricultural production.

The example of mangoes in the SKBo region illustrates both the potential complementarities between and the compartmentalization of border activities. Conditioning units in Côte d'Ivoire would be able to process regional production, but Malian and Burkinian authorities are opposed to the exportation of mangoes under an Ivorian label. Such problems could be avoided through cross-border management of this sub-sector.

¹³ This factor points to an important element: cross-border cooperation has thrived more easily and effectively as the Single Market has developed. The removal of trade barriers and the gradual elimination of internal borders generally go hand in hand. Both the Single Act and the Maastricht Treaty insist on this point. As long as customs barriers and enforcement pressures remain formidable, the progress of cross-border cooperation in West Africa will prove difficult. Conversely, cross-border cooperation efforts will be more likely to produce results if customs and other enforcement agents are closely associated with them.

¹⁴ The elimination of the border effect rests upon the creation of system of free competition between economic operators on both sides of borders.

3.3. Tourism

The European experience reveals that tourism can represent an important strategic activity in the development of border regions as well as cross-border cooperation. First, from a functional perspective, tourism constitutes an alternative in the face of a declining agricultural sector that continues to be the primary provider of employment in numerous border regions. Under these conditions, tourism can favor the reconversion of certain rural areas, spurring the creation of jobs, the development of infrastructures (roads, transportation, lodging), and an increase in investments. The objective is to avoid the negative fallout from tourism (on agriculture, the environment, and local communities) and to establish full strategic cooperation in projects and activities. The development potential of tourism will be even more significant if a cross-border region is capable of offering a range of products both homogenous and diversified—that could lead to the creation of a cross-border label.

There is, a second advantage of tourism, which holds the possibility of advancing the whole project of cross-border cooperation through the reinforcement of regional identities. This dimension is clearly explained in the *Guide to Cross-border Cooperation*, which states, “quite often, border regions share the same historical and cultural traditions, as well as appealing natural landscapes.” Such an idea highlights the cultural and potentially political possibilities of cross-border cooperation. Even if folkloric tropism is manifest, it nonetheless constitutes the expression of an identity altered by nation-building. Tourism contributes to cross-border cooperation in that it enables the expression, through indirect means, of an autonomous cultural identity, which often precedes and extends beyond that national identity.

With respect to West Africa, tourism also offers the advantage of being a labor-intensive industry, which corresponds well with the economic needs of the sub-region. It induces economic diversification and the creation of additional activities through the creation of outlets for local products, which could in turn encourage the development of a West African handicraft sector, lacking solvent markets. The growth of tourism, however, necessitates the creation of quality infrastructures, which would, in any case, have a significant multiplier effect by facilitating the dispensation of agricultural products.

The development of cross-border tourism can however be jeopardized by a lack of information relating to the cross-border region as a whole. This can be a serious handicap for cross-border areas that lie between WAEMU and ECOWAS countries. Marketing usually focuses on the clientele of old colonial motherlands and Francophone and Anglophone networks tend to be extremely compartmentalized, not only in terms of market outlets but also in terms of product offerings. Moreover, like most border regions, those of West Africa possess substantial shortcomings in transportation and economic infrastructures. These regions are costly to reach, since they lack points of correspondence and internal infrastructures.

In spite of the obstacles, many West African regions could draw benefits from the development of cross-border cooperation in the field of tourism. Southern Senegambia, in particular, has a substantial potential for tourism at its disposal. Gambia is a privileged destination for tour operators; as well as Casamance, to a more limited extent, but the presence of an armed rebel movement has for a long time limited its potential for development. That of Guinea is largely underexploited, although the Fouta Jalon and its massive forests offer significant possibilities for tourism. While these different sites are confined within an area of several hundred kilometers, existing tours continue to be compartmentalized within national borders. There are, however, numerous complementarities between the protected plateau and forest zones of Central and Upper Casamance, the beaches of Banjul and of Cap Skiring, the massive mountains of Guinea Conakry, the hunting zones, and the natural border parks. Gambia could therefore draw substantial benefits from the diversification—and from the improvement in quality—of its offerings, as other countries are likely to draw away some of its clientele, which, for now, is concentrated around its capital.

3.4. Transportation and Infrastructures

Since mobility represents one of the principal determinants of the localization of businesses, economic and social unity depends upon the development of an efficient transportation network throughout the entire territory of the European Union. However, if the national centers and the privileged European regions are easily accessible, the border regions find themselves at the national—and even the European—periphery, whereas they are subjected to increasing competition within the framework of the broader market. This is reason enough to justify the development of a cross-border transportation policy aimed at better integrating geographically isolated border areas. The European Commission thus assigns to its transportation policy the objectives of improving liaisons, developing regions on both sides of the border, and facilitating a sustainable form of cross-border cooperation.

In addition, the development of basic transportation infrastructures often constitutes a precondition for all other cross-border cooperation measures in many disadvantaged regions. Most border regions are even more handicapped by the prevalence of missing links in primary transportation and distribution networks. This is why the first European programs (INTERREG) in support of cross-border cooperation emphasized, on the one hand, the poorest regions of Europe—the so-called “number 1 objective”—and, on the other hand, the development of infrastructure. The main thrust of these programs, in the eyes of their promoters, was the creation of the physical conditions necessary for the development of sustainable forms of economic and socio-cultural cooperation. This should hold the attention of West African authorities wishing to engage in cross-border cooperation. The improvement of transportation infrastructures can represent a first step towards the expansion of the areas of cooperation. The cost of these infrastructures, however, is generally high, which demonstrates the importance of having access to tools for planning (and cost-balancing) capable of operating on the sub-regional level.

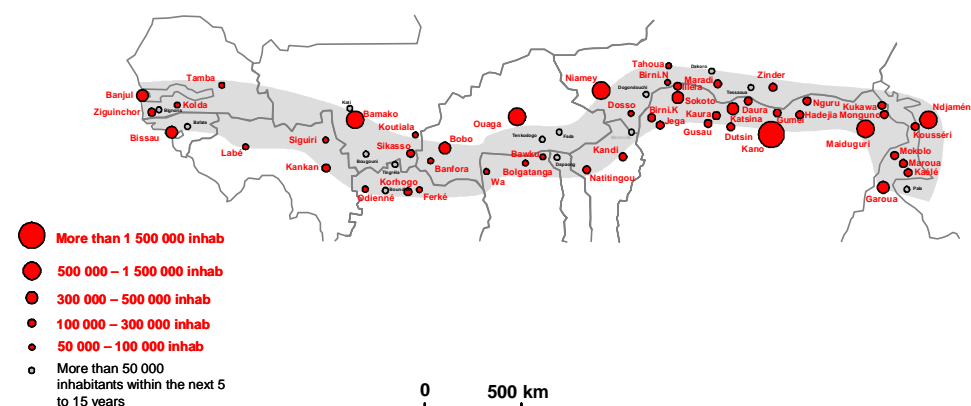
Moreover, the transportation sector seems to reflect certain similarities between Europe and West Africa regarding the orientation of networks. The *Practical Guide to Cross-Border Cooperation* indicates that in Central and Northern Europe, “...we have understood that, in addition to the need for completing the well-developed North-South liaisons, we must also develop the great East-West transportation corridors”: for example, by first improving existing border entry points, constructing new bridges and tunnels, developing cross-border information technologies, and, finally, by planning for new transportation corridors.

The situation of the secondary cities of the Sudano-Sahelian belt is somewhat comparable, from this perspective, to the regions of Northern Europe.

In West Africa, the most developed transportation networks are linked to urbanization and thus concentrated in the coastal regions of the Gulf of Guinea. Secondary transportation infrastructures connecting the interior to the coastal metropolises also exist, but they are, for the most part, compartmentalized by national borders. Nonetheless, the secondary cities of the interior, particularly those that are developing within the Sudano-Sahelian belt (and others, such as Birkama, Kolda, Bafata, Kankan, Odienné, Sikasso, Korhogo, Bobo Dioulasso, Tamale, Maradi, Katsina, Kano...), remain very poorly linked. It is even more unfortunate that this compartmentalization prevents the attainment of economies of scale that could lead, in a context of growth, to the reinforcement of links between suppliers and producers throughout the entire zone.

Urban cross-border network between sahelian and coastal countries

(cities with more than 50 000 inhabitants, except Nigeria where only cities with more than 100 000 inhab are shown)



Sahel and West Africa Club - 2004

Today, there are around 50 cities with more than 50 000 inhabitants within a 150 km radius of national borders. Would one have drawn the same map twenty years ago, around 20 cities would not have appeared. The same map in 1960 would only have shown fewer than 10 cities with more than 50 000 inhabitants. In twenty years, a further 15 cities will appear. The high urban density in the north of Nigeria and in the north of Cameroon, gives an idea of the things to come in southern Niger, northern Ghana, northern Côte d'Ivoire and south-western Senegal within one generation.

4. TOWARDS A EURO-AFRICAN DIALOGUE ON CROSS-BORDER COOPERATION?

Cross-border cooperation in Europe is the product of a complex history. If it owes a great deal to the meetings organized by certain pioneers in the 1950s, its continued expansion would not have been possible without the limitations on sovereignty that were instituted at the outset by the States. These measures lent a consistency to the idea that Europe constituted a “community of destiny”. Such is the purpose of structural policies, and, above all, regional policies, that aim at reducing economic, social, and territorial fractures. Moreover, cross-border cooperation has quickly proved to be the best tool for facilitating the economic development of border regions. Yet, the waves of successive adhesions and the creation of a common market have equally accelerated this process.

Even if its course was determined as much by contingent factors as by deliberate ones, cross-border cooperation nonetheless ended up becoming one of the pillars of the process of European integration—as evidenced in its top budgetary status among community initiatives. Paradoxically, it is still very far from holding the kind of importance that inter-governmental policies possess in the collective imagination. If this relative unimportance will not hinder the progress of cross-border cooperation within the overall Community project, it could on the other hand affect its capacity to set an example for other areas in dire need of regional integration. This is particularly the case in West Africa, which has rapidly followed a course of strong coordination between national policies, while dealing with a strong heritage of closed borders, the source of numerous territorial, administrative, and economic discontinuities

If cross-border cooperation is capable of making a decisive contribution to regional integration, as the European experience seems to indicate, it is regrettable that, in effect, it does not fully participate in the process of creating customs unions on the international level. At the moment of its signing, the Single European Act was blind to many of the forms of resistance that national

borders would continue to pose to it. **Time, however, has allowed to prepare the accession of new members through a policy of active support for cross-border cooperation** on all of the eastern borders of the EU. Why not use this experience to guide the transitions of regional blocs throughout the world?

In the case of West Africa, the idea of opening up a dialogue with the EU on the theme of cross-border cooperation would not only be desirable on a heuristic level, but it also presents an opportunity for developing an institutional framework for associating the two regional blocs. The Cotonou agreements seem to justify undertaking some efforts in this direction.

4.1. *The Cotonou Agreements and the Creation of Regional Economic Partnerships*

At the end of the 1980s, nearly twenty years after the signing of the first Lomé Conventions, the EU and the African, Caribbean, and Pacific States (ACP) were sufficiently concerned by the failure of commercial privileges to revise their partnership. While non-reciprocal commercial preferences—offering a franchise of customs rights to the ACP label in the European market—constituted the main instrument of the initiative, the continuous decrease of Africa's share of the global market was of great concern. Several of the hypotheses that lay at the foundations of the agreements were thus thought to be in need of revision.

First of all, non-reciprocity had not allowed Africa to better adapt itself to the globalization of trade. Whereas its market shares in world trade reached 3% in the 1970s, they represented only 1% by the end of the 1990s. In addition, commercial privileges were no more beneficial in consolidating the competitive position of African countries in the European market. Despite customs exemptions, the ACP label continuously lost ground to the competition—particularly that of Asia and Latin America. Following a long discussion whose principal elements were consigned in a Green Paper of the European Commission, the EU and the ACP countries met in Cotonou, the capital of Benin, to define new orientations and conclude new agreements.

The Cotonou agreements condemned the failure of the non-reciprocal preferences system and planned for its gradual replacement by a free trade system. While commercial privileges were accused of creating a dependency with regard to the European market and raw materials, and of delaying the adjustment and diversification of economies, reciprocity should, on the contrary, encourage adaptation to competition and integration within the world market. Indeed, the creation of a free trade system between Europe and the ACP countries constitutes the central innovation of the agreements.

The new partnership is distinguished, however, by a second cultural revolution: rather than associating Europe to the whole ACP group, it foresees the establishment of regional economic partnership agreements (REPA). More specifically, many agreements will be negotiated separately between Europe and regional blocs. This fundamental change owes a lot to the theory according to which regional trade agreements foster economies of scale and adaptation to international competition. It is not only a matter of negotiating a general free trade system, but also of facilitating regional integration as a means of preparing the way for integration within the global market. This is also one of the objectives explicitly pursued by the Cotonou agreements.

4.2. *Regional Integration and Cross-Border Cooperation: The Foundations of a Euro-African Dialogue*

The Cotonou agreements contain numerous references to regional integration. According to the agreements, regional integration is supposed to contribute to the progress of macro-economic reforms and structural adjustment (art. 22), constitute a global framework for development (art. 28), facilitate the integration of economies (art. 29) and inter-governmental cooperation

(art. 30)... In order for the new Euro-African partnership to be well-balanced, regional integration should therefore accompany the liberalization of trade policies. Its importance is justified by numerous reasons that are not only limited to the many inter-African conflicts. While these conflicts constitute an insurmountable obstacle to the development of certain regions, neither does the extraversion of African economies facilitate the growth of economic structures that have the necessary critical mass to compete on the international level. In West Africa, formal intra-regional trade represents only 8% of foreign exchanges. These exchanges remain still too polarized by the former colonial motherlands, so that intra-regional complementarities cannot develop for lack of sufficient national economic integration. With the exception of Nigeria, national economies are too limited to be able to count on the endogenous potential of the domestic market.

To promote their interests, West African countries have thus defined and implemented several instruments designed to foster regional integration. The last few years have witnessed the establishment of a common exterior tariff through WAEMU, trade liberalization of local production through ECOWAS and a closer relationship between ECOWAS and WAEMU thanks to the Cotonou agreements. Obviously, the harmonization of the legal framework and the coordination of national policies have made considerable progress. However, national economies remain quite closed, the circulation of people and goods is still obstructed by excessive controls, and roads are dilapidated at best. The progress of inter-governmental cooperation has not yet translated into an overall improvement in everyday living conditions.

Such tensions between the political process of regional integration and the forms of resistance constituted by national borders have characterized European integration. Expressing the will to form a closer union between peoples is not enough to bring it into existence. In particular, the articulation of sub-continental, national, and local/regional levels represents a formidable and complex challenge for this project. Dealing with this challenge is precisely the kind of added value cross-border cooperation can offer. One of the major lessons of the European cross-border experience is, in effect, its capacity to integrate these different levels and sectors of intervention. In the very places where borders had created a complex set of both real and symbolic ruptures, cross-border cooperation is attempting to tie links and reestablish territorial, economic, social, cultural, linguistic, religious, etc continuities.

Since the EU now has in its possession a wealth of knowledge capital on cross-border cooperation, why not share it with West Africa? If European cross-border cooperation has managed to bring about the regional integration of the most tenuous parts of the sub-continent, why not use its example in the context of another regional bloc that is engaged in reducing its own social, economic, and territorial fractures? This would be all the more justified since the re-establishment, or indeed the creation of a continuous link between the peoples and economies of West Africa seems to be a prerequisite for integrating the sub-region into the global economy. Under these conditions, the idea of a Euro-African dialogue on cross-border cooperation and regional integration will work to deepen the hypothesis upon which the Cotonou partnership was based.

La **Sénégalie méridionale** couvre du nord au sud, la République de Gambie, la région naturelle de Casamance et la République de Guinée Bissau. Egalement appelée « **pays des rivières du sud** », expression qui souligne une certaine continuité paysagique créée par les divers cours d'eau qui parcourent la zone, elle a vu se succéder des constructions socio-politiques très diverses renvoyant à des logiques de territorialisation concurrentes. Parallèlement, ses systèmes productifs et commerciaux se sont régulièrement recomposés.

1.1. *Continuité géographico-sociale et émiettement politique*

Le réseau hydrographique de la Sénégalie méridionale se conjugue avec un zonage latitudinal, un climat pluvieux – de type soudano-guinéen – et des conditions pédologiques favorables (zone de sédimentation) pour former un ensemble régional doté d'importantes potentialités agricoles et de nombreuses ressources forestières et halieutiques. Au sein de tout l'espace régional, les paysages sont voisins d'Est en Ouest avec des variantes mineures liées essentiellement aux amplitudes de la pluviométrie.

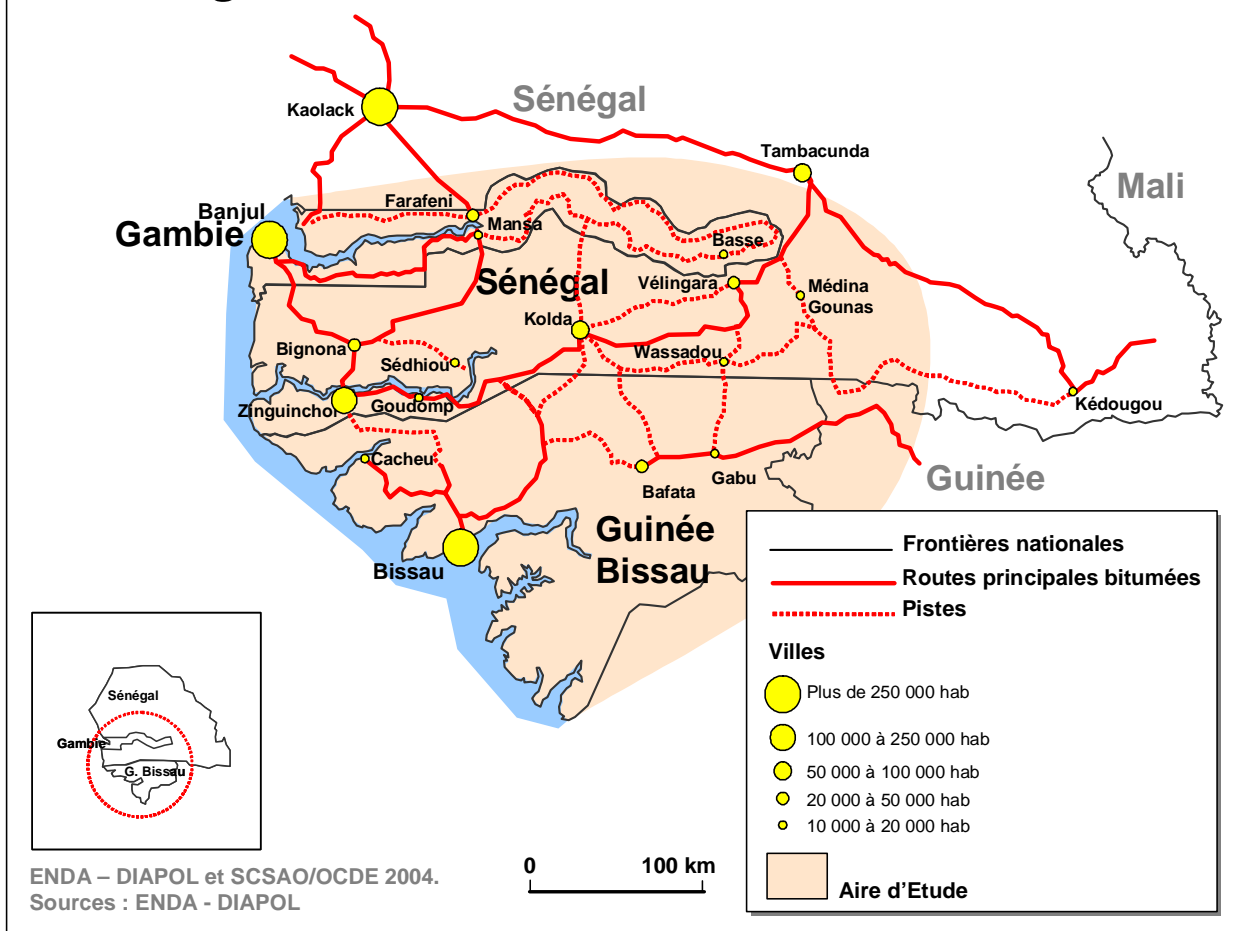
Cependant, malgré les complémentarités de leurs systèmes de production, la continuité des ressources naturelles à préserver (forêts et parcs nationaux, ressources halieutiques) et les gisements de ressources chevauchantes (le pétrole entre le Sénégal et la Guinée Bissau), les économies gambienne, sénégalaise et bissau-guinéenne demeurent insuffisamment intégrées.

Si l'intégration du territoire se mesure au degré d'articulation entre les lieux, les hommes et les activités, à la qualité de leurs relations et à son impact sur l'efficacité sociale, économique et politique, force est de constater que la Sénégalie méridionale dispose d'un potentiel d'intégration encore sous-exploité.

La Sénégalie méridionale se caractérise par une grande mobilité des populations qui la constituent et a toujours été fortement disputée par plusieurs ethnies organisées en systèmes politiques spécifiques, eux-mêmes intégrés à des formations plus larges. L'implantation des Baïnouks, Diolas, Mandingues, Peuls, Toucouleurs, Balantes, Mandjacks, Mancagnes, Pepels, a parfois pris la forme d'un *continuum* de peuplement ou de foyers séparés, en fonction de migrations anciennes et récentes, liées à des événements particuliers (guerre de Moussa Molo dans le Fouladou, lutte de libération nationale en Guinée Bissau, séparatisme casamançais) ou à des processus de longue durée.

L'empire du Gabou – qui s'étendait, entre le 13^{ème} et le 19^{ème} siècle, sur les territoires des trois États actuels – et celui du Fouladou – qui a structuré les migrations de peuplement en Moyenne et Haute Casamance – sont les deux principales formations politiques antérieures à la colonisation de la région. Mais les relations entre les différentes ethnies, faites de métissage et de conflits, de rejets et d'échanges, se sont également traduites par la formation de sous-territoires comme le Balantacounda, le Cabada, le Blouf, le Fogny, le Kombo, etc. De cette période précoloniale, les différentes ethnies ont souvent hérité des croyances religieuses communes, des traditions culturelles et des techniques de mise en valeur similaires. Les périodes coloniale et post-coloniale se sont quant à elles traduites par le rattachement de la Casamance au Sénégal, ainsi que par la mise en place des États bissau-guinéen et gambien.

Sénégal méridional : carte de situation



Cette nouvelle configuration politico-territoriale a induit l'usage de « haut langages » différents et la coexistence de plusieurs systèmes d'administration. Mais la colonisation a également légué à cette région certaines ambiguïtés qui nourrissent les interdépendances entre ses parties. La Casamance était portugaise jusqu'en 1886, avant d'être rattachée à la colonie du Sénégal, tandis que le séparatisme casamançais actuel se nourrit pour partie d'une situation d'enclavement.

1.2. Les dynamiques commerciales en Sénégalambie

Les activités à vocation purement nationale sont rares en Sénégalambie méridionale et les spéculations agricoles de la zone débordent toutes, peu ou prou, les cadres étroits circonscrits par les frontières. Entre intégration et extraversion, la Sénégalambie méridionale semble bien jouer une part de son avenir sur ses activités commerciales.

Complémentarités entre systèmes de production, centres urbains et espaces ruraux...

Les complémentarités entre systèmes de production, résultant des différentiels climatiques et physiques, déterminent une circulation historique des flux de produits selon deux axes Nord-Sud et de l'intérieur vers les côtes.

Ces complémentarités « réelles » – ou avantages comparatifs – entre systèmes productifs de la Sénégalie se doublent aujourd'hui de nouvelles opportunités d'intégration issues de la dynamique d'urbanisation dans laquelle est engagée la région. Les trois grandes villes de la zone – Banjul, Ziguinchor, Bissau – concentrent à peu près un million d'habitants, soit le quart environ de la population totale. Il y a là de quoi nuancer l'opinion courante selon laquelle la région des rivières du Sud circonscrirait un périmètre quasi exclusivement rural. L'urbanisation s'y développe assez rapidement non seulement sur les côtes, mais également dans l'intérieur comme l'indique la croissance de l'agglomération koldoise.

Flux monétaires et différentiel de change

Les variations de change ont longtemps surdéterminé l'amplitude des transactions commerciales au sein d'une zone caractérisée par une forte disparité monétaire. Le Sénégal, la Gambie et la Guinée Bissau étaient en effet dotés de trois monnaies différentes. Le contexte est cependant différent depuis que la Guinée Bissau a rejoint le Sénégal au sein de l'UEMOA, adoptant ce faisant le Franc CFA. Ainsi le nombre de salariés agricoles venus de Guinée Bissau pour travailler au Sénégal a-t-il diminué à partir de cette époque. Il semble également que la disparition du risque de change ait relancé la commercialisation de plusieurs produits agricoles entre les deux pays.

Presque tous les États qui échangent avec la Gambie – ou auxquels elle destine son commerce de réexportation – appartiennent désormais à la zone CFA. L'îlot monétaire qu'elle constitue représente un sérieux frein aux échanges, même si certaines stimulations conjoncturelles des exportations gambiennes de produits agricoles – comme l'arachide actuellement – ou manufacturés peuvent en résulter.

Des marchés ruraux aux centres urbains : un continuum d'acteurs et de pratiques

Le commerce régional est très largement structuré autour des entrepreneurs de « l'informel », y compris lorsqu'il porte sur de grosses quantités ou des produits manufacturés. L'organisation en réseau prévaut sur les formes entrepreneuriales basées sur le contrat ou régies par les normes et institutions marchandes. « L'informalité » des réseaux – notamment perceptible au niveau des modalités de gestion – ne fait pas obstacle à une prise en charge durable et efficace des échanges.

Cette organisation s'illustre par la multiplication des *loumos*, marchés hebdomadaires situés en dehors des centres urbains et souvent aux frontières des États. Loin d'avoir résulté de politiques d'aménagement, ils se sont développés de manière spontanée, à partir des années quatre vingt, dans un contexte de libéralisation déterminé par les programmes d'ajustement structurel (PAS). Soutenant des échanges importants et réguliers fondés sur l'avantage comparatif, les *loumos* sont en passe de devenir incontournables pour l'approvisionnement des populations aussi bien urbaines que rurales. Ils constituent des points de rupture de charge pour des réseaux de commerce qui enjambent les frontières et polarisent le territoire sous-régional.

Les complémentarités sur lesquelles repose le dynamisme de ces marchés sont multiples. La plus importante se rapporte à la relation ville-campagne. L'urbanisation de la région des rivières du Sud détermine en effet l'accroissement du commerce de produits agricoles. Un processus de polarisation des espaces ruraux par les villes secondaires et les métropoles côtières est ainsi à l'œuvre, en Sénégalie méridionale comme dans le reste de l'Afrique de l'Ouest.

Les différentiels de prix et les complémentarités productives influencent assez largement les stratégies commerciales développées sur les marchés frontaliers et expliquent la localisation de nombreux *loumos* le long des frontières entre États.

Leurs principales contraintes tiennent aux difficultés d'accès aux crédits et aux problèmes de communication, très importants dans la région. Ces limites n'empêchent toutefois pas les hommes de s'approprier l'espace et de maîtriser les flux qui le parcourent parfois sur de larges étendues.

1.3. Des filières de production au potentiel d'intégration variable

La Sénégalie méridionale demeure principalement agricole et forestière. L'agriculture emploie près de 80 % de la main d'œuvre gambienne et bissau-guinéenne, soit un pourcentage de la population active sensiblement plus élevé qu'au Sénégal – 60 % – mais néanmoins comparable à celui de la Casamance. Historiquement partagée entre une zone de mangroves sur la bande côtière et un *hinterland* à dominante pastorale, la région des rivières du Sud disposait d'une économie de subsistance principalement adossée aux activités halieutiques et à l'élevage. Elle s'est progressivement dégagée de ce modèle pour se connecter aux marchés extérieurs. L'extraversion accusée de sa production primaire, résultant de l'introduction des cultures de rente et de l'exportation croissante des ressources halieutiques, a modifié ses structures socio-économiques. L'apparition et le développement de la sédentarisation et de nouvelles pratiques culturelles, telle la culture attelée, ont contribué pour leur part à remodeler les activités agricoles. L'urbanisation, de son côté, a favorisé la mutation de l'agriculture régionale vers des productions plus diversifiées comprenant non seulement des cultures de rente, mais aussi des spéculations vivrières et maraîchères. Les filières de production se sont ainsi développées en jouant constamment sur les opportunités et les complémentarités extra-régionales, intra-régionales et inter-régionales en vue de répondre, soit à la demande externe, soit à celle des pôles urbains et des zones déficitaires.

Si elles ont généralement fait preuve de capacités d'adaptation assez remarquables, les filières de production régionales présentent néanmoins des caractéristiques différentes quant à leur potentiel d'intégration régionale. Les cultures de rente, en particulier, sont caractérisées par une extraversion importante. Cette dernière se traduit notamment par la spécialisation régionale dans la production primaire, tandis que les segments conditionnement, transformation et commercialisation demeurent l'apanage du marché international. Ces filières se caractérisent également par un cloisonnement des réseaux de commerce régionaux et internationaux. Tel est notamment le cas de l'arachide ou du coton ainsi que, dans une moindre mesure, de la pêche. Longtemps appuyé sur le marché interne et la dynamique d'urbanisation, le développement de ce secteur a surtout résulté, depuis une vingtaine d'années, de la croissance de la demande externe. Ses caractéristiques ont du même coup évolué jusqu'à présenter d'importantes similitudes avec celles des filières de rente. Cette évolution suscite des interrogations sur le différentiel de revenus entre la région et le reste du monde. De nouvelles spéculations destinées à l'exportation, comme l'anacarde ou le sésame, ont par ailleurs été développées. Si, comme la pêche, elles sont nettement moins encadrées que les productions de l'agriculture de rente, elles ne font pas l'objet, pour autant, d'une plus importante valorisation régionale. Elles traduisent également un important cloisonnement des réseaux de commerce régionaux et internationaux. Les filières de la grande distribution (produits de base, matériaux de construction, etc.) expriment de leur côté la relation entre États et commerçants nationaux ou étrangers. Plus ou moins libéralisées selon les produits et les pays, elles reflètent la concurrence des politiques douanières, fiscales et industrielles, en même temps que la concurrence entre groupes rivaux. Les spéculations vivrières ont su davantage tirer parti des différentiels physique, infrastructurel, de prix et d'offre de produit afin d'intégrer les divers maillons de l'espace régional et des filières de production. Elles acquièrent progressivement une position dominante et dépassent souvent les volumes de production des cultures de rente. Certaines spéculations sont parvenues à se développer en s'appuyant sur d'anciens réseaux de commercialisation.

1.4. Pression sur les ressources naturelles et conflits sociaux

S'il a généralement bénéficié à la région, le développement d'une agriculture vivrière *de rapport* a cependant accru la pression sur les ressources naturelles et fini par menacer certains équilibres socio-écologiques. La plupart des activités primaires, en Ségambie méridionale, suscitent en effet des conflits liés non seulement à l'instabilité politique, mais aux difficultés d'accès à la terre et aux ressources. D'importants problèmes fonciers y touchent tous les types d'espace, hypothéquant d'autant plus l'intensification des systèmes de production et d'échange. Dans les vallées, les terres font l'objet d'une appropriation lignagère, mais la responsabilité des femmes dans la riziculture de *faaro* favorise les compromis. L'acuité des enjeux fonciers s'est en revanche accrue sur les terres de plateaux, parallèlement à la pression migratoire, à l'intensification des échanges monétaires et aux conflits entre pasteurs et agriculteurs. Si la répartition des cultures a longtemps obéi aux logiques de l'élevage, l'afflux croissant de nouveaux migrants détermine une nouvelle donne qui bouleverse les répartitions traditionnelles entre les activités et les hommes sur le territoire.

De fait, les stratégies et pratiques des populations sont désormais transfrontalières. Les plateaux sous-peuplés et peu encadrés de Haute Casamance sont devenus des zones pionnières tant pour les populations Saloum-Saloum et Baol-Baol du centre du Sénégal que pour les agriculteurs gambiens en mal de terres. Dans un contexte de dégradation des ressources naturelles – Pata, forêt classée de Haute Casamance, a été défrichée à plus de 50 % – les conflits entre agriculteurs et éleveurs se surajoutent donc aux problèmes politiques pour perpétuer la relative instabilité régionale. La dilatation des territoires de pêche suscite également des tensions qui empoisonnent régulièrement les relations entre États. Dans les régions côtières, qui accueillent de plus en plus de migrants de l'intérieur, le recul et l'assèchement des mangroves sont susceptibles de bouleverser les rapports sociaux.

1.5. Aménagement, politiques publiques et intégration régionale

Même si des relations d'échange d'information et de collaboration ponctuelle entre services forestiers nationaux existent entre le Sénégal, la Gambie et la Guinée Bissau, la maîtrise de l'exploitation des ressources naturelles demeure un exercice difficile eu égard au cloisonnement des initiatives nationales en la matière. Certaines démarches conjointes ont néanmoins été entreprises, en matière d'harmonisation des mécanismes de contrôle et de régulation des flux transfrontaliers de produits forestiers. Elles méritent d'être approfondies, en associant les populations grâce à la coopération décentralisée transfrontalière, dans le cadre du programme d'Appui à la Gestion Intégrée des Ressources naturelles des bassins du Niger et de la Gambie (AGIR) qui regroupe la Gambie, la Guinée, la Guinée Bissau, le Mali et le Sénégal.

Par ailleurs, les flux commerciaux font l'objet de multiples prélèvements de la part des corps de contrôle. Ces barrières non légales n'ont souvent pour objet que de leur procurer des rétributions complémentaires et constituent un manque à gagner pour les États, qui perdent ainsi des ressources normalement associées aux dédouanements légaux. Dans le sud du Sénégal, la contribution au trésor des eaux et forêts est supérieure à celle des douanes, ce qui ne laisse de surprendre eu égard à la quantité de flux qui parcourent cette région. Cette situation suscite des tensions entre les échelons centraux et déconcentrés des corps de contrôle. La forte fiscalité indirecte ne semble pas en mesure d'augmenter suffisamment les ressources publiques, car elle favorise l'enrichissement illicite de membres des corps de contrôle. Dès lors, l'instauration d'une TVA assez élevée sur les produits du cru ne représente-t-elle pas une protection déguisée alors que leur circulation fait l'objet d'une tarification harmonisée ? En tout état de cause, la simplification des procédures de contrôle et la limitation de leur nombre seraient souhaitables.

Face à de tels problèmes, l'augmentation du trafic maritime pourrait représenter une solution. Peu de navires de marchandises couvrent en effet les flux côtiers. Depuis l'interruption du trafic du *Joola*, nombre de commerçants ont cessé leur activité, surtout les semi grossistes de marchandises alimentaires dont les faibles marges ne résistent pas aux prélèvements plus ou moins légaux.

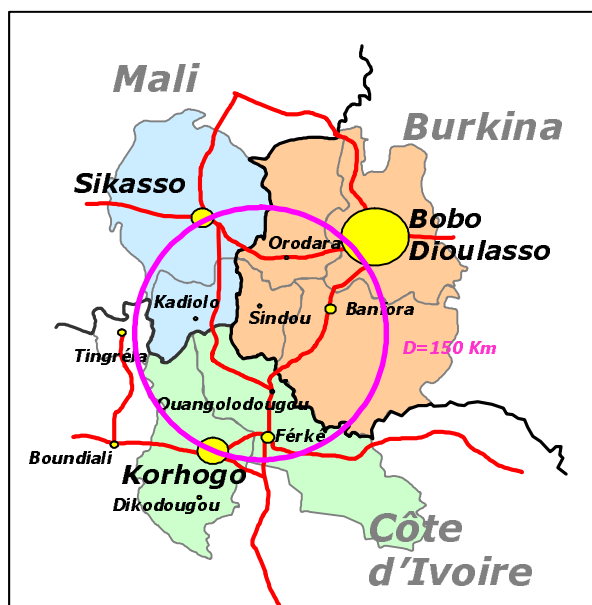
La plus value liée au développement des infrastructures de communication dans cet espace serait immense, compte tenu de la densité des flux et du maillage des marchés intérieurs et littoraux. Les échanges croîtraient sans doute considérablement s'ils ne butaient constamment sur de lourdes contraintes infrastructurelles. Elles affectent notamment les routes reliant les *loumos*, dont l'état de dégradation pose un grand nombre de problèmes : les coûts des produits sont accrus par la lenteur des déplacements entre les centres de production, les *loumos* et les marchés urbains.

Une politique d'aménagement des marchés, en infrastructures de stockage et de conditionnement, faciliterait les transactions tout en permettant aux opérateurs d'exercer un contrôle stratégique sur les prix. D'autre part, dès lors que la plupart des échanges sur les marchés urbains, voire à l'exportation, portent sur des produits bruts, il s'agit de favoriser l'essor de micro-entreprises rurales susceptibles de les transformer.

Une politique de crédit demeure enfin indispensable dans une zone où la richesse des réseaux hydrologiques offre d'énormes potentialités agricoles. L'ensemble des producteurs sont confrontés à une pénurie du crédit agricole. Les crédits sont non seulement importants pour augmenter les volumes de production et les rendements, mais également pour financer la commercialisation. Les producteurs sont généralement défavorisés par rapport aux commerçants. Les politiques de crédit devraient cependant s'étendre aux catégories de commerçants frappés par la pénurie de crédit.

ANNEX 2: CROSS BORDER ISSUES IN THE SKBo ZONE

(L. Bossard), Secretariat of the Sahel and West Africa Club



Sikasso, Korhogo, and Bobo Dioulasso form a triangular intersection inscribed within a circle of 150 km in diameter. Each of these three cities is at least 400 to 500 km away from the next largest urban centres (Bamako, Ouagadougou, Bouaké). Together, they constitute the architecture of a zone capable of developing its own dynamics. This area encompasses eight administrative jurisdictions, including two Malian circles (Sikasso and Kadiolo), four Burkinabe provinces (Kénédougou, Houët, Léraba, and Comoé), and two Ivorian departments (Korhogo and Ferkessédougou).

This zone covers an area of 150,000 km² (larger than that of Benin) and holds a population that was estimated at 4 million in 2000 (11% of the total population of Mali, Côte d'Ivoire, and

Burkina Faso). The number of its inhabitants residing in an urban environment is 900,000, about one third of the total population. Bobo Dioulasso largely dominates this urban network, followed by Korhogo and Sikasso. Aside from these three poles, only Ferkessédougou and Banfora can claim to possess their own economic sphere of influence.

The gross local product of the zone was estimated in 2000 at 1,000 billion CFA francs (10% of the GDP of the three countries combined), or 272,000 CFA per capita. The principal economic activities are food crop production (228 billion), trade (180 billion), husbandry (150 billion), manufacturing (122 billion), and cash crop farming (70 billion).

2.1. What the three zones have in common

- Membership in the WAEMU, and the fact that a great many of the exchanges of people and goods between these countries pass through the three cities, which thus serve as “meters”.
- Location within the Sudanese-Sahelian climatic zone, which offers significant agricultural prospects that could be easily realised as a result of the strong growth in urban demand within the zone and in West Africa.
- Serious land instability: competition between agricultural and animal production, migratory pressures, and uncertainties linked to new land reforms.
- Cotton as the dominant export crop. Since land planning is based on industrial agriculture, regional exchanges should be analysed by first considering the organisation of this entire sub-sector.
- Their role as markets to collect agricultural production and to gather redistribution for manufactured goods.
- An inland geographic situation and the resulting influence of lower Côte d'Ivoire over them. Cotton is exported through Abidjan. Some of the cotton produced in Mali and Burkina Faso is processed in Côte d'Ivoire. Conversely, the coast dominates the interior in the redistribution of imports in Africa. But since the start of the crisis in Côte d'Ivoire, both Sahelian capitals have attempted to diversify their connections with the international market: Dakar, Conakry and Nouakchott for Bamako; Accra, Lomé and Cotonou for Ouagadougou.

- The distinct cultural unity of the voltaic region: Sénoufo and Bobo farmers, with the traditional presence of a sizeable Dioula minority (Mandingue group) in trade and governance. This unity derives from a common history (Kéné Dougou kingdom, Samory conquests...) before colonisation set the current borders and divided this vast and relatively homogeneous area into three different countries.

2.2. Potentials to be developed

The crisis in Côte d'Ivoire should not obscure the fact that the three countries need to work together to develop the SKBo region, both for the benefit of the Sahelian countries and southern Côte d'Ivoire. Developing the SKBo area will mean developing the shared capacity of the three countries to respond to a growing regional market by effectively competing against products from the global market or from Southern Africa. This will also affect the economic future of southern Côte d'Ivoire, which functions as an interface between the global market and the savannah market. You will find below some examples drawn from contacts with local operators who perceive the border as a constraint to the development of economic synergies.

Cotton. Since WAEMU countries are in agreement on the promotion of a market economy and the complete elimination of tariffs, it seems anachronistic that the liberalization and/or privatization of the cotton sub-sector in Burkina Faso, Côte d'Ivoire and Mali continues to ignore the cross-border aspects of the SKBo region, where most of the production is concentrated. Would it not be logical and even necessary to work with all of the actors involved to organize operational synergies for supplying fertilizers (the needs for the SKBo zone itself are probably 100,000 tons a year) and pesticides (several million litres a year), as well as for the processes of collection, transport, shelling. Would not the implementation of these synergies also provide an opportunity to reach the critical mass and the organizational level necessary to succeed where national strategies have failed: in the integration of cotton/husbandry (cakes), local manufacturing of fertilizers, etc.?

Cereals. Over the last decade, the entire SKBo zone has witnessed a rapid agricultural evolution linked to cotton that has also led to a very strong advance in maize production. This maize has mostly supplied the urban markets, some nearby and others more distant (as far as Niger). Trader associations hope to develop a common strategy for prospecting and selling, a negotiated response to services, training and market information (supply and demand) needs, and a system for defining product specifications (quality control, labels).

Mango. With almost 10,000 tons per year, Côte d'Ivoire is the second provider to the European market after Brazil. Korhogo is the largest export region in Côte d'Ivoire. In reality, though, a substantial quantity of Korhogo mangoes actually comes from the Bobo Dioulasso and Sikasso regions. The "SKBo mango sub-sector" is mainly informal due to constraints linked to the crossing of borders and to the difficulties of economic cooperation between the three countries. Most of the conditioning and packaging capacities are located in the Ivorian side of the SKBo region, but cooperation between Ivorian entrepreneurs and Burkinabe or Malian traders remains very difficult. Moreover, Ivorian operators export their products by boat via Abidjan (700 km away) or by plane via Yamoussoukro (400 km away), whereas the Bobo Dioulasso airport is only 150 km away.

Meat. The Sikasso and Bobo Dioulasso regions are now the major cattle grouping markets of their respective countries for distribution to the coast. The department of Korhogo is the principal cattle grouping and trade market in Côte d'Ivoire. Added to this potential is the availability of agricultural by-products for animal feed (cotton, corn, sorghum, etc.). Many elements theoretically work together to make the SKBo zone, a centre for meat production and trade, competitive with subsidized European imports or products from Southern Africa.

I. Preamble

Borders are "scars of history". Cross-border co-operation helps to reduce the disadvantages of these borders, overcome the outlying national location and improve living conditions for the population. It should include all areas of life (cultural, social, economic, infrastructural). Knowledge of and understanding towards one's neighbour are as important as the development of trust.

The many and diverse problems and opportunities on both sides of European borders demand cross-border co-operation. It helps to put into practice the guidelines of international law for a cross-border and regionally manageable area. The co-operation between authorities below governmental level and various sections of the population on both sides of the border promotes peace, freedom, safety and the safeguard of human rights as well as the protection of ethnic and national minorities. Border and cross-border regions are therefore components and bridges in the European unification process, for the coexistence of the European populations and minorities.

Subsidiarity and partnership between European, national, regional and local levels are also indispensable in cross-border co-operation. The positive experiences gained through practical cross-border co-operation reflecting the public's interests, within the European Union and the European Council must be used again for the increasing co-operation with Central and Eastern Europe and non-European countries bordering to the south.

II. Historical and Political background

1. Historical Aspects

Present-day Europe has been formed by its common culture and history. In particular, by the 17th century, a "patchwork of historical provinces" had come into being. The 18th century, with its dynamic developments in industry and politics, gave rise to the concepts of constitutionality, human rights, fundamental rights and a free trade economy. As a counter-pole to the region, which was moulded by a municipality of different common bonds, the nation state rose to predominance in the 19th and 20th centuries. Such nation-states often partitioned the historical European provinces with their regions and ethnic groups; these did not, however, cease to exist.

2. Political Aspects

The traditional concept of a national border was developed from a defensive function. From a legal viewpoint, borders form demarcation lines at which the sovereignty of a state ends.

In the age of national states and their belligerent confrontations, the fear of military incursions led to the establishment of border zones of varying depth, whose peripheral positions became apparent in many spheres. Moving outward from the centre of the states to the borders, the economy, transportation and culture became steadily weaker and the population sparser. With a few exceptions, border provinces became inadequately structured areas, with only sparse or unsatisfactory means of road or rail access.

The growth of communications - modes of transportation, printed matter and later telephones and radio -, inevitably favoured and led to a concentration of interest on national centres of population. This development was particularly apparent in Europe's border regions and led in the population there to a loss of identity in areas where for centuries, despite new national borders, common cultural, linguistic, regional, historical and family ties have continued to exist.

From Southern, Central and Eastern Europe to Scandinavia and Ireland, a great many typical border regions are to be found, most of them areas with identical basic problems: in neighbouring countries and regions across the border similar difficulties are usually found.

After World War II the European countries, regions and local authorities set about solving such historically ensuing yet culturally unfounded problems (e.g. the problems of minorities). The Council of Europe and the European Union became platforms for the readiness to come to an understanding. The countries and regions of Eastern Europe have remained isolated from such political developments until the late eighties. Until then, many borders with the states of Central and Eastern Europe showed a manifest warning, with virtually impenetrable barriers (Iron Curtain), such as can arise for political reasons.

Since the end of the eighties, three apparently different, but in their content closely connected, political and economic processes occurred:

- The abolition of the internal borders within the European Union. This led to the shifting of their previous function to the external borders of the EU with third countries. Since the beginning of 1995, this development has increased due to the expansion of the EU.
- The efforts to establish, beyond these external borders, intellectual, political, cultural and economic contacts with these third countries.
- The process of democratization in the Central and Eastern European states and their admission to the Council of Europe.

The European border and cross-border regions are directly affected by all these developments.

Borders no longer function as national barriers but there are still clear differences between the borders within the European Union, the external borders of the European Union with Central and Eastern Europe and the borders within Eastern Europe as well as in the Mediterranean area.

The empty spaces caused by borders still exist in many border and cross-border regions. They are often an obstacle between the national areas of a coalescing Europe. One has to consider that various European border regions are not only divided by national borders but also by fundamental geographical conditions (rivers, lakes, oceans, mountains) and confronted with special problems.

Only the removal of economic, social, cultural, traffic and legal barriers and with the integration of Europe into a unity in diversity can the previous peripheral situation of many border regions be transformed into a favourable central position within the states of Europe. Border regions at the external borders of the EU can be released from their isolation through improved connections. Border and cross-border regions will thereby function as bridges and form touchstones of such European unity.

III. Objectives of cross-border co-operation in Europe

1. *New quality of borders: Spaces of encounter*

Nowhere is there a more acute general awareness of the need to improve irksome national regulations than in neighbouring border regions. For the "inland" population the idea of Europe is often just an abstraction; but it is a real, everyday experience for those in a border region. They suffer from the consequences of the border, and would like the root cause of their problems eliminated. The willingness of citizens and municipal and regional authorities to co-operate in finding cross-border solutions does not imply any intention to abolish the sovereignty of the state. All that is desired is to heal the scars inflicted by history, give the inhabitants on both sides of the border the opportunity for better co-operation and create a Europe for all its citizens.

The aim of activities in border regions and cross-border co-operation is therefore to remove the obstacles and divisive factors found in these regions, and ultimately to transcend the border or reduce its importance to that of a mere administrative demarcation. In the course of progressive European integration and increasing economic co-operation the inhabitants of border regions must also be able to demand comparable conditions for existence in a new Europe. Where determination to co-operate is put into practice, because its vital importance is recognised, European policy can best show its humane side: in the border regions. This is where the barriers must continue to fall, so that the "back-to-back" existence can be transformed into co-existence.

2. *Strengthening of economic and socio-cultural conditions in border regions*

Progress for the border regions has been achieved gradually. Economic centres in border regions are often divided from a share of their natural hinterland on the opposite side of the border which leads to distortion in possible trading and service structures. In the infrastructure for transportation, border regions suffered for decades in the absence of large-scale links. Large infrastructures in border regions have mostly been introduced decades later than in comparable regions of the national "inland". Where infrastructures are still unavailable, the physical prerequisites for inter-regional and cross-border development orientated on the future are often absent.

Therefore, the border and cross-border regions often have to fight a lack of alternative and high-quality jobs, national and cross-border institutions for vocational training, overcome disadvantages in finding work in the neighbouring country, and fight a non-transparent job market.

Companies in border areas often lack sufficient knowledge about market, export and marketing opportunities on the other side of the border. They suffer from restrictions in using research and development opportunities on the other side of the border and, due to better preconditions in competition on the other side of the border, the possibility of being driven out of the market. Moreover, often they cannot compete for public contracts or participate in scientific or development programmes on the other side of the border. Furthermore, one must take into consideration that these problems are different in the individual border regions and some border regions, with varying success, try to solve and address some of these problems.

The inhabitants expect the border regions to solve these problems because they are not responsible for their causes. These problems, still current in Europe, are concentrated at borders as if under a magnifying glass. The differences can be seen particularly clearly in the following fields:

- Structures and competences of administrative levels;
- Tax and social laws;
- Regional planning and planning laws;
- Environmental and waste disposal laws;
- Transport policies and systems;
- General border problems and absurdities;
- Unresolved economic and currency differences;
- Inappropriate investment in public and social services because of legal and financial barriers.

There is therefore a need for cross-border networks on regional and local level which not only include economic and infrastructural co-operation but also the removal of barriers, for instance, within the social sector, education, language training, solving of everyday border problems, promotion of cultural understanding, development of trust etc.

Cross-border co-operation in all parts of Europe is therefore an important future task, beyond 2000, which has to be addressed carefully but also energetically.

3. *Regions as driving force for cross-border co-operation*

3.1 Partnership and subsidiarity

Europe is particularly characterised by its regional diversity which should be regarded as an advantage. When building the joint European structure, which leads to an increased co-operation in all fields, these regionally grown structures and characteristics must be taken into consideration, conserved and further developed. A lasting solidarity with the border and cross-border regions in Europe, which are at a particular disadvantage, is therefore indispensable.

The comprehensive and consistent introduction to the ideas of regionalisation in the constitutions of the European states also directly serves the regional cross-border co-operation. It corresponds with the aims of the Council of Europe and the European Union and the partnership agreements of the EU with Central and Eastern Europe and the Mediterranean area.

Cross-border co-operation takes place in various levels, through governmental commissions, regional development commissions, cross-border Euroregions or between municipalities. They work with or without contractual foundation. The cross-border structures can be national, regional or local.

Better alignment and intensive co-operation between the European, national, regional and local decision makers are necessary to solve the problems of border and cross-border regions. It is therefore of vital importance that:

- Decisions made at European level, particularly by national parliaments and authorities, are implemented in practical policy measures;
- All European and national authorities responsible contribute more to the solution of the problems of border regions through appropriate decisions;
- The ideas developed at local and regional level are actively promoted at national and European level;
- The justified interests of the border and cross-border regions find, within the framework of the Council of Europe and the European Union, appropriate representation;

- Between the states and particularly within the European Union the necessary contractual regulations for cross-border co-operation on regional/local level under public law are agreed.

3.2 Border and cross-border regions as bridges to neighbours

Regional identity within the national states and Europe can also be found in the regions and is a component of the European Union. At the European borders, the border and cross-border regions fulfil an important bridging function and offer good opportunities for further development. They should therefore be supported and given more assistance, particularly from national and European institutions and political powers.

The border and cross-border regions can supplement municipal and regional planning and action and the ideas of European development and be the driving force for regional cross-border development.

4. *Ironing out the seams for a European regional development*

Regional development today is considered synonymous with deliberately shaping the relationship between man and his environment. Regional development in border and cross-border regions incorporates, in the national states and regions on both sides of the border, the central idea to persistently develop and plan the region and the means to carry it through. Real cross-border regional development hardly exists until now but the aims and approaches are in place:

- In all border and cross-border regions structural development must create the conditions necessary for a comparable rather than uniform standard of living;
- Regional structures must be developed according to the natural features, the demands of environmental protection and also infrastructural, economic, social and cultural requirements in such a way as to best serve the free development of individuality within the community;
- The regional structures envisaged by individual parts of the country must be integrated into the master-plans, set up by higher authorities, by national governments and by European institutions;
- The regional development policy of the member states of the Council of Europe and the EU must give cross-border co-operation a high standing in European and national development (European Regional Planning Charter, "Europe 2000+", European Regional Development Conception).

5. *Removal of economic and infrastructural obstacles and imbalances*

The situation of border and cross-border regions in Europe is characterized by various economic obstacles and imbalances at the internal and external borders of the European Union and in Eastern Europe itself. These great disparities in economic development between Western, Central, Eastern and Southern Europe clash directly in the border regions.

Within the framework of these all-European disparities, regionally manageable cross-border co-operation contributes, in partnership with the national states and European institutions, to the gradual removal of the economic imbalances and obstacles between the neighbouring border regions. Despite the various differences in the economic problems of European border regions, numerous common features for political objectives exist. The consequence of the peripheral location of border regions often reveals all over Europe the imbalance of economic

concentrations between central and border regions. Sometimes, these imbalances (very different economic structures and incomes) are distinctive, for instance, in Southern, Central and Eastern Europe, and sometimes they can only be recognised after detailed analysis, for instance, in Western European border regions, which have to struggle with the consequences of old, unbalanced, structural industrial development. The growing cumulative effects of work, services and capital in industrial European centres must be opposed by a harmonised European and national regional development and regional policies.

It is therefore important to:

- Improve nationally and across borders inadequate infrastructures of border regions (particularly in Southern, Central and Eastern Europe) without abusing for national measures the special support programmes meant for cross-border cooperation;
- Remedy the deficiency and obstacles in cross-border passenger and goods transport;
- Increase the gross national product and level of purchasing power which are often below the national average;
- Implement a really functioning cross-border labour market (also in Central and Eastern Europe);
- Stop and reduce at the external EU borders as well as in Central and Eastern Europe the threatening increase in currency and wage disparities to create the necessary preconditions for active cross-border co-operation. This applies particularly to the poorest border regions within the EU and in Central and Eastern Europe.

In the increasingly large exchange of goods and the free movement of people, work, services and capital between European countries, the special problems of European border and cross-border regions must be taken into account too:

- The everyday border problems;
- The daily traffic of cross-border commuters;
- The necessary extension of small and large infrastructures;
- The removal of administrative and legal trade obstacles;
- The often one-sided and insufficient economic development due to the peripheral location;
- Environmental protection;
- The cultural and linguistic barriers etc.

IV. *Implementing measures*

1. *Intensification of a persistent regional cross-border development and regional policy*

For the intensification of regional cross-border development and regional policy, the following measures should be implemented:

- Constant monitoring of cross-border planning through social-economic analysis;
- Regular cross-border coordination of all regional projects;
- Development and updating of a continuous summary of problems for border regions;
- Development of regional cross-border development models and plans and their integration into national regional development and expert planning;
- Development of common cross-border regional plans with direct commitments as the widest form of regional cross-border planning;

- Local cross-border planning. In the first instance all plans should be aligned;
- Cross-border alignment and participation in important measures and facilities regarding regional planning and regional policy;
- Gradual alignment of the regional and political promotional instruments in border regions.
- Mutual involvement of citizens, municipalities and border regions in all planning and measures relevant to the space.

To ensure better enforcement, these regional development and regional political measures should be incorporated into "regional cross-border development conceptions" and "operational programmes" (for instance, as in INTERREG, PHARE).

2. *Infrastructure and economy*

2.1 Strengthening the border regions in the European competition for economic locations

Regional policies for economic affairs and the infrastructure in border and cross-border regions should strive for mutual coordination and, ultimately, a harmonisation of infrastructural, economic and sociopolitical measures and norms as well as for the reduction of border regional differences in levels of development. To that end it is necessary to integrate the basic aims of national and European policies (e.g. agricultural, structural, economic, regional planning, regional and social policies). "Regional cross-border development conceptions" and "operational programmes" are to be set up and continued by the border and cross-border regions as the basis for their common development.

2.2 Improvement in the traffic infrastructure

Traffic links and energy supply are now increasingly of international importance. They are therefore among the most important measures and instruments of regional development policy in cross-border regions.

The expansion of roads, railways, airports, navigable waterways and harbours is of major importance for border regions, which still suffer today from their peripheral location. Only in this way the necessary preconditions for cross-border co-operation are created.

International connections through border and cross-border regions must link them with centres. Only the specific regional connection and utilisation of large infrastructures removes border-related "bottle-necks", makes border regions into bridges between national states and contributes simultaneously to the internal development of the cross-border areas.

International connections should not turn the border and cross-border regions into mere transit areas. The expansion of traffic infrastructure has to take into consideration the interest of the population in the affected region as well as the requirements of environment and nature protection. Projects relating to traffic infrastructure can be realized only with equal participation of the border and cross-border regions concerned.

The following measures could contribute to the development of border and cross-border regions:

- Alignment of the transport policy aims to the common space and regional policy as well as to European strategies and not only on the current volume of traffic or existing traffic flows;
- Extension of large infrastructural connections in certain border regions to eradicate their peripheral location (Southern Europe, Pyrenees, Alps, Central and Eastern Europe) and a combination of traffic communications adapted to the spatial conditions;

- Closing the gap between regional, national and Trans-European traffic axes (missing links) and networks;
- Joint, not competing planning of new and development of existing airports;
- Development of cross-border networks in public transport systems as well as the removal of border-related barriers in utilisation and tariff systems;
- Development or extension of border-crossing points at all external EU borders and also in Central and Eastern Europe to shorten waiting periods and to accelerate the transport;
- Development or extension of aligned cross-border combination terminals and goods traffic centres;
- Extension of the border crossing energy networks;
- Coordination of promotional and financing instruments at both sides of the border which often creates the preconditions for the transport politically desired moving of transport to rail and waterways,
- Utilization of EU support programmes in favour of border regions for direct cross-border projects.

2.3 *Improvement of telematics and communication*

For the future development of border and cross-border regions, telematics and communication offer, particularly at the external borders of the EU and in Central and Eastern Europe, forward-looking possibilities to remove them from their national and sometimes European peripheral location and to abolish their traditional disadvantageous locations.

The European Union and all national governments are therefore urgently approached to implement, at least simultaneously with such investments in national conurbations, the necessary investments for telematics and communications in border and cross-border regions. During the development of modern communication networks, recent mistakes, as in investments into the infrastructure (transport), must not be repeated. Only in this way can the advantages of modern telematics and communications be used for previously disadvantaged areas.

The following measures for telematics and communications contribute decisively to the development of border and cross-border regions and the removal of peripheral locations:

- ISDN-related development of telematics and communication networks within border regions;
- Cross-border development of electronic highways, vital for the future, with national range;
- Removal of border-related administrative, economic and technological obstacles when using telematics and communications;
- Development of border tariff systems (for instance, for telephone, mailbox and screen data systems);
- Promotion of communication houses usable on both sides of the border as centres for telematics and communications in sparsely populated border regions;
- Development of cross-border transfer centres between universities, colleges and educational establishments;
- Cross-border data exchange between universities, research establishments, institutes etc. for the transfer of innovations, scientific discoveries and research findings and on international market developments, how to reach customers etc.

2.4 *Improvement in the economic situation*

Whilst the improvement of a border crossing infrastructure often only creates the precondition for an economic co-operation, an aligned economic and labour market policy must directly improve regional and economic cross-border development. Despite the obvious economic differences between Southern, Western, Central and Eastern Europe, numerous common problems exist in European border regions which are obstacles for new industrial settlement and those of the service industry or for the restructuring of existing industries as well as for the removal of imbalances in poorly structured border areas.

In partnership with regional, national and European levels, the following measures should be introduced immediately:

- Improvement of the cross-border co-operation between small and medium-sized companies;
- Development of new cross-border relationships between producers and suppliers (the old industrial structures have broken down and new ones have not been developed as yet);
- Creation of replacement jobs for border-related work and activities which have been abolished after the creation of the Common Market (for instance, customs and haulage) or which will be abolished through the increasing integration of Central and Eastern Europe;
- Solution to the structural problems of a border crossing job market;
- Cross-border co-operation in the fight against illegal employment agencies and activities on the job market;
- Removal of border-related disadvantages in competition (public and private tender procedures, administrative barriers, social dumping, postal delays etc);
- Solution of such social problems arising from the increase in cross-border commuters;
- Creation of preconditions (institutions, teachers, teaching plans) for learning the language of the neighbouring country in all school forms;
- Promotion of vocational cross-border training and the acknowledgement of respective national qualifications;
- Development of networks for a cross-border labour market by co-operation between employers, trade unions and job centres;
- Development of legal and tax preconditions for the operation and planning of cross-border commercial areas;
- Exploitation of the comparative advantages in costs in the border regions as compensation and addition but not as ruthless competition;
- Development of cross-border conceptions for the strengthening of tourism as local economic factor;
- Alignment of the promotional regional and economic political instruments on both sides of the border;
- Development and updating of common statistics.

2.5 Improvement in supply and waste disposal facilities

Supply and waste disposal facilities in border regions could in many cases be more rationally planned and better financed if the cross-border demand were established and the "restricted thinking" overcome. This particularly concerns the health service (hospitals, rehabilitation centres, homes for the elderly), schools (kindergartens, bilingual schools, universities, colleges, vocational training institutions) and public services (ambulances, regional sports facilities, police, residential areas).

The measures for cross-border developments of supply and waste disposal facilities could include the:

- Determination of the cross-border demand as a basis for common planning and development of cross-border supply and waste disposal facilities;
- Creation of cross-border associations;
- Removal of legal and financial barriers;
- Promotion of educational cross-border facilities and vocational training systems;
- Planning and operation of cross-border waste disposal and recycling plants;
- Reciprocal settlement of the costs for cross-border facilities for supply and waste disposal facilities (for instance the introduction of a compensation fund etc).
- Creation of cross-border social facilities;
- Development of legally protected cross-border plans for emergency services, rescue systems etc.

3. *Improvement in cross-border environmental protection and nature conservation*

Air, water and natural development do not stop at borders. Effective cross-border environmental and nature protection is therefore needed which should be integrated in a regional cross-border development model. Active landscaping in border and cross-border regions demands joint action. Cross-border problems of air and water pollution, waste avoidance, recycling, waste disposal and noise abatement also need to be addressed. In this context, the considerable differences in environment and nature protection and the resulting priorities in the individual border and cross-border regions have to be taken into account.

For effective actions aligned to regional development in border and cross-border regions the following measures can be taken:

- Cross-border application of the principle that the person/company responsible for damage must bear the costs;
- Development of cross-border programmes on regional, national and European levels;
- Creation of cross-border recreation areas, biotopes, natural and landscaped areas or nature reserves and a cross-border linkage of biotopes;
- Investigations on both sides of the border within the framework of environmental digestibility checks regarding possible pollution (for instance if an industrial settlement is planned, if ground water is to be exploited or if environment polluting plants are planned);
- Establishment of cross-border data bases and ecological early warning systems;
- Striving for the correspondingly higher standard on the other side of the border;

- Comprehensive informing of the population and, if possible, equal hearings on both sides of the border for those concerned;
- Cross-border information and education systems as instruments of preventive environmental measures.

4. *Solution of the problems of cross-border commuters*

The number of European employees living on one side of the border but working on the other, is considerable and depends on the rhythm of economic changes in the national areas in question. The number of commuters crossing the borders for shopping, holiday or private reasons, is increasing constantly. Cross-border commuters must therefore be regarded in a coalescing Europe as an ordinary phenomenon. It is obvious that the problems of cross-border commuters are very different between the internal borders within the European Union and the external borders of the European Union with Central and Eastern Europe and in Central and Eastern Europe itself. Moreover, one must differentiate between legal and illegal cross-border commuters.

To solve the problems of cross-border commuters the following measures can be taken:

- Implementation of the European Social Charter in all countries and border regions;
- Introduction of the "White Paper of the European Commission on European Social Policy" to the national legislations;
- Development of regional cross-border summaries with rights and obligations of cross-border commuters;
- Further development of treaties of friendship and association agreements of Central and Eastern European countries and in the Mediterranean area with their immediate neighbours and the EU to solve specific cross-border commuter problems at the external borders of the EU and in Central and Eastern Europe itself;
- Improvement of the co-operation between police, customs and border protection authorities in the cross-border fight against crime with the support of authorities of Euroregions;
- Introduction and improvement of 'small' border traffic for border regions and their inhabitants (constant opening of small border-crossings, night crossings of closed border-crossings, opening of the border crossing points at "illegal crossing points" etc.);
- Simplified border controls for commuters needing to cross the border several times daily;
- Compensation payments for border-related income fluctuations and changes in the exchange rate;
- Improved protection of cross-border commuters to safeguard jobs;
- Removal of discrepancies in the field of social security, tax etc.;
- Improvement in cross-border consumer protection.

5. *Promotion of cross-border co-operation in cultural matters*

Reduction of distrust and the development of mutual trust and policies for the people are important elements of all cross-border co-operation. Cross-border co-operation in cultural matters is an important prerequisite for any measures designed to establish a relationship of trust for all further trust building measures. A wide knowledge of cross-border regions, their geographical, structural, economic, socio-cultural and historical conditions is a prerequisite for

active participation of the citizens and all other partners. It is closely related to the socio-cultural meeting beyond the border.

Border and cross-border regions want to and can, by maintaining a rich cultural diversity, contribute to the widest possible and intensive meeting and merging in the sense of European integration. Cross-border co-operation in cultural matters also promotes the understanding of national minorities and the need to find solutions for their problems. Thus an important contribution is made to tolerance and international understanding. Those politically and administratively responsible as well as the press, radio and television must create the preconditions for good, neighbourly relations and the removal of prejudices.

Cultural cross-border co-operation becomes a component of regional development through the:

- Participation of the citizens, authorities, political and social groupings from both sides of the border;
- Continuous and repeated distribution of knowledge about the geographical, structural, economic, socio-cultural and historical conditions within the cross-border regions;
- Overall display of cross-border regions in cartographic displays, publications and teaching material;
- Development of a circle of committed experts (multiplying factors);
- Inclusion of the churches, schools, institutions for adult education, preservation of historic monuments, cultural associations, libraries, museums etc. as active partners for a peaceful development of human coexistence in border regions;
- Promotion of partnerships, youth movements, family meetings, sport events, exchange of officials, seminars, study conventions, ecumenical meetings, specialist events etc on regional cross-border themes;
- Respect and support of minorities, for instance through reciprocal, legally binding statements and guarantees of the governments for the conservation of the respective culture and corresponding facilities (schools, libraries etc.) as well as the ratification of the conventions of the Council of Europe on protection of minorities and on protection of regional or minority languages;
- Incorporation of the language of the neighbouring country in the teaching plans for all school forms;
- Equal opportunity and the widest possible knowledge about the language of the neighbouring country or the dialects as part of the regional cross-border development and a precondition for communication;
- Promotion of linguistic education and meetings to align the population to the conditions of a European service and leisure society;
- Co-operation of the media through common and repeated press releases and information as well as regional cross-border radio and TV programmes;
- Extension and common promotion of existing facilities as cross-border institutions for a joint and regional display and utilisation (theatre ensembles, orchestras, promotion of cultural heritage).

6. *Organisational and legal measures*

The economy has long been organised and developed in a cross-border manner, often promoted by European or governmental aid.

It would therefore be desirable if cross-border organisations under public law could be developed with the participation of regional and local authorities which would control and lead these economic cross-border developments democratically. All developed commissions and cross-border institutions to be established in future must - by taking into consideration the public's interest - ensure that the regional-communal authorities participate in defining an agreement. For reasons of the advanced development and in a coalescing internal market, the European Union and their member states have to fulfill a special obligation in this field.

The following legal instruments are available:

- The "Madrid Outline Agreement" of the Council of Europe (1981) and its additional protocol on the improvement of cross-border co-operation between local and regional authorities and the corresponding supplementary protocol. The terms of this convention lay down a minimum set of conditions to solve the current problems with the aid of supplementary bilateral and multilateral governmental agreements,
- Further development of bilateral or multilateral agreements for the cross-border co-operations of local and regional bodies (exemplary agreements: BENELUX Agreement, Germany/the Netherlands, Italy/France, Italy/Austria France/Spain, France/Germany; planned, Spain/Portugal),
- European Economic Interest Association (EEIA) as cross-border legal instrument which permits the partners to link their economic activities in some areas,
- Exploitation of the OSCE as a new platform for a political and practical co-operation with border and cross-border regions.

On the basis of obligations of governments under international law these legal instruments can cover the wide spectrum of economic, communal and regional activities and provisions under public law.

As organisational instruments, and through the self-initiative of the border regions, the following approaches are available:

- Development of cross-border organisations with own secretariats and own funds by the border regions themselves as precondition for external assistance;
- Development of "cross-border development concepts" for Euroregions, incorporating all spheres of human co-existence. They serve as foundations for operational programmes, measures and projects and include their cross-border implementation;
- Taking into consideration the subsidiarity principle also for cross-border co-operation on regional and local level which should, within the framework of governmental regulations, receive its own 'leeway';
- Development of a cross-border organisation by the border regions with their own funds;
- Self-initiative and individual means as precondition for external assistance;
- Participation in hearings by taking into account the general public's interests, advice for cross-border commuters and the development of joint plans, texts, statistics etc.;
- Development of a legally accepted receiver for services and working contractual partner as precondition for receiving and administering financial means (it is a question of legally binding utilisation, proof of utilisation etc.).

V. *Preview on the 21st century*

This Charter on Border and Cross-Border Regions has been drawn up in the awareness of the historical backgrounds and the responsibility for the future of a uniting Europe in which border and cross-border regions play a decisive role. They will be the touchstones for:

- A peaceful human coexistence by respecting the diversity and the minorities;
- The respect of the principles of partnership and subsidiarity;
- Active participation of citizens, politicians, authorities and social groups in cross-border co-operation;
- Reconciliation, tolerance and equality despite different partners;
- Social, cultural and economic co-operation and linkage up to cross-border integration by maintaining the sovereignty of the countries;
- A Europe of the regions.

To enter the 21st century on this path with a "Europe without borders", a joint course of action by the European Union, the Council of Europe, OSCE, national governments, regions and local levels is as indispensable as the solidarity among border and cross-border regions. This charter addresses all those partners who want to participate in the design of this future process and therefore particularly the border and cross-border regions as driving force of this development.

adopted :

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