



## **The Region of Sønderjylland-Schleswig**

### Organization

The Danish-German border region of Sønderjylland-Schleswig consists of the four municipalities Aabenraa, Sønderborg, Haderslev and Tønder as well as the Region of Southern Denmark on the Danish side and the Districts of Schleswig-Flensburg and Nordfriesland and the City of Flensburg on the German side. The objective of the cooperation, which was formalized in 1997, is to facilitate activities that help to promote the development of the region and at the same time make the border more open in respect of language, culture and industry.

The Regionskontor & Infocenter located in Padborg is the common administration and information office of the region. It supports the political decision-making bodies, i. e. the Board and the Cultural Committee of Sønderjylland-Schleswig as well as the various specialized groups and working groups. The office is also responsible for the ongoing administration of the organization and has provided special advisory services to cross-border commuters since 2004.

The Board is the supreme decision-making body of the Region of Sønderjylland-Schleswig and has representatives of the cooperating parties as its voting members. The Board appoints the Cultural Committee of Sønderjylland-Schleswig. The Committee has language and culture as well as youth work and association activities as its main fields of interest. It also comments on topics of cultural governance that have cross-border relevance.

Current specialized working groups cover the fields of culture, youth and school (contact group), language and intercultural understanding and sports (SpoReg). The group members exchange views from experience and opinions and develop ideas for projects. The specialized-group members are normally representatives from the partnering administrations. Besides the specialized groups, the Regionskontor & Infocenter office also coordinates a number of working and network groups, e. g. the German-Danish Library Forum and a working group dealing with matters of sickness benefit.

### Ongoing project work

Since the beginning of the cooperation programme, the administration and information office has carried out project-based activities and supported and supervised initiatives on their way to becoming real projects. The first Danish-German promotion pool for culture and networking was already funded with means from the regional partners as early as the end-nineties in order to promote cross-border projects in the fields of culture, youth, school and sports. Since 2004 the office has been able to allocate promotional funds from the Interreg A-Programme to the People to People, Cultural Bridge and CultureDialogue project as the most recent one. From 2010 to 2014 the Region has implemented the Pontifex Bridge Builder Interreg project to further support the successful advisory work and to reduce the mobility barriers on the labour market. The Cultural Agreement Sønderjylland-Schleswig can be mentioned as a current initiative. The agreement is envisaged for a 4-year period till the end of 2016 and has an independent secretarial service placed in Padborg under the regional umbrella. In addition to that, the Region of Sønderjylland-Schleswig participates in a number of other minor and major projects.