



The topics of the Region of Sønderjylland-Schleswig

In 1997, the foundations were laid for cross-border cooperation in the Danish-German land border region. The overall objective of the cooperation is to implement joint activities that help to promote the development of the Region and at the same time foster contacts between people, industry and associations from both sides of the border as well as intensify cross-border cooperation in general. In a European context, the Region is meant to act as one single entity.

In the agreement of Sep. 16, 1997 the Region of Sønderjylland-Schleswig has set certain priorities for the achievement of objectives, which can be summarized as follows:

- Economic development / labour market / vocational training / development of higher education
- Regional planning and coordination / rural areas / infrastructure / transportation
- Culture / gender mainstreaming / language
- Social affairs / health
- Environment / nature conservation
- Cooperation in Europe

The agreement provides for regular evaluations of the Region's activities, which may result in changes and modifications to the structures and focus areas. These focal points are mentioned in the current wording of the agreement as of Nov 03, 2011:

- a) Promoting cooperation on culture [...];
- b) Cooperation through contact and exchange between different population groups and protagonists, e. g. about culture, sports and youth, labour market and industry [...];
- c) Promoting language skills on each side of the border [...];
- d) Promoting cross-border cooperation on labour market policy, exchange of knowledge [...]. Joint activities to promote education and training as well as the creation of jobs [...]. Elimination of obstacles and barriers in cooperation, including problems for border commuters;
- e) Promoting the cooperation between authorities and municipalities;
- f) Politically lobbying decision makers in the pursuance of the aforementioned objectives;
- g) Promoting the idea of European cooperation and international understanding.

Practical execution

The practical pursuance of these objectives takes place at quite different levels (see the section on organization of the Region of Sønderjylland-Schleswig). The Board and the Cultural Committee as well as the various specialized, working and networking groups deal with the matters mentioned above and also initiate activities which in many instances are then coordinated by the administrative office (Regionskontor & Infocenter).



Culture & language

The first Danish-German culture and network pool was already funded by the regional partners at the end of the 1990s in order to promote cross-border culture, youth, school and sports projects. Since 2004, it has been possible to promote the People to People, CultureBridge and, most recently, CulturDialogue projects with funds from the Interreg A program and under the management of the Regionskontor & Infocenter. KursKultur, a follow-up project, has been recently approved by the Interreg Board and has the further promotion of cross-border cooperation on culture, language, children, adolescents and leisure activities as its objective.

Another activity worth mentioning is the Cultural Agreement Sønderjylland-Schleswig, a four-year agreement scheduled till the end of 2016, located in Padborg under the regional umbrella and with its own independent secretariat.

Since 2004 the administrative office (Regionskontor) has coordinated the so-called language campaign in the Region of Sønderjylland-Schleswig and has implemented a number of activities in cooperation with various borderland educational institutions. One result of these efforts is the Professor Dr ABC project, an initiative that introduces kindergarten and school kids to the language of the neighbouring country in a light-hearted and playful way.

Labour market

Since 2004, the Regionskontor & Infocenter has offered consultancy services to border commuters. These were initially provided under an Interreg project between 2004 and 2007, but are now a permanent feature of cross-border cooperation, open to employees, employers and institutions. From 2010 to 2014, the region implemented Pontifex Bridge Builders as an Interreg project to support the successful consulting services and reduce mobility barriers on the labour market.

In October 2014, a preparatory project that was initiated by the partners of the "Baltic Sea Labour Forum" association as part of the Baltic Sea Cooperation and deals with internet-based labour market information systems was approved. The Region participates in this project.

European cooperation

Since 2006, the Region of Sønderjylland-Schleswig has been a board member of the Association of European Border Regions (AEBR). In 2014, the Region and the AEBR set up the Culture Task Force, a European culture conference, and in 2015 the Region hosted the board meeting.

Besides the above-mentioned projects, the Region of Sønderjylland-Schleswig also participates in numerous smaller and larger projects and initiatives.