

Bihartean and Euro 3

	BIHARTEAN	EURO 3
BORDER	France-Spain	France-Belgium
TERRITORY	Aquitaine-Euskadi Euroregion	Lille-Kortrijk-Tournai Eurometropolis
DATE OF CREATION	2010	1991
PARTNERS	CCI Bayonne-Pays Basque, Cámara de Comercio de Gipuzkoa	CCI Grand Lille, VOKA West-Vlaanderen, CCI Wallonie Picarde, French-Belgian Chamber of Commerce of Northern France
OBJECTIVE	Promotion of cross-border economic activities	
MAIN ACTIVITY	Supporting businesses in their cross-border activities and contributing to cross-border integration of economic sectors	



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WHAT DO BIHARTEAN AND EURO 3 CONSIST OF?

EURO 3 and Bihartean are two EEIGs (European Economic Interest Groupings) created with the aim of promoting cross-border economic activities and the overall development of the cross-border territories.

The **EURO 3 EEIG** was created in 1991 by chambers of commerce in the French-Belgian cross-border region (Armentières-Hazebrouck, Kortrijk (Courtrai), Lille-Roubaix-Tourcoing, Mouscron, Ieper (Ypres) and Tournai) with the name EURO 6. As a result of the various mergers which took place between these chambers, the EEIG took the name of EURO 3 in 2007 and now includes the chambers of commerce of Greater Lille, West Flanders (VOKA), Wallonie Picarde, and the French-Belgian Chamber of Commerce of Northern France.

EURO 3 has the objective of providing a forum for the exchange of ideas, adopting common positions and the development of concrete proposals for cross-border economic issues concerning the development of businesses, and stands alongside the Lille-Kortrijk-Tournai Eurometropolis EGTC to provide services to SMEs.

A similar, but more recent structure, **Bihartean** has brought together the Bayonne-Pays Basque CCI (Chamber of Commerce and Industry) and the Cámara de Comercio de Gipuzkoa since 2010. Bihartean formalises the long-standing cooperation between the Basque chambers of commerce, which had to draw up agreements in order to carry out joint activities (trade fairs, economic promotion, etc.). **This EEIG aims at supporting businesses in their cross-border projects, developing joint economic activities and creating joint training provision.**



French-Belgian cross-border meeting, Euro 3 project

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WHAT ACTIVITIES DO THEY CARRY OUT?

The EURO 3 EEIG represents above all a forum for reflection for the chairmen of the French and Belgian CCIs to enable them to formulate joint positions concerning the development of the territory, businesses, jobs and training.

In addition, EURO 3 is a space in which to experiment and a body that maintains relations with the political world (the Lille-Kortrijk-Tournai Eurometropolis EGTC) regarding major projects. The Cross-Border Business Centre (Centre Transfrontalier des Entreprises, CTE GO-KMO) is EURO 3's operational tool, which specialises in giving concrete support, individually and collectively, to those companies wishing to develop on the other side of the border.

EURO 3 has worked on the transposition of the Flemish BRYO¹⁴⁴ project to the cross-border setting through the BRYO CROSS BORDER project. The objective of this project is to encourage collaboration between young entrepreneurs from Flanders, Wallonia and Northern France through the exchange of good practices, information and networks, as well as coaching from experts and business leaders. The working language is English. Eventually, the aim is to create partnership-based collaborations and even "cross-border businesses". The first group was launched in January 2014 with 19 young entrepreneurs and a second will be launched in January 2015.

EURO 3 also published "Key figures for the Eurometropolis" in October 2012, a document which sets out the main economic characteristics of the territory covered by the Eurometropolis, an up-to-date version of which was scheduled for January 2015.

Among the other projects which are underway are the creation of a cross-border investment fund, the launch of the "Third Industrial Revolution" project in the cross-border setting, the emergence of cross-border business parks at some former border crossing posts, the creation of a Eurometropolitan Mobility Agency (Agence Eurométropolitaine de la Mobilité), the promotion of a modal shift from roads to waterways for the transportation of goods, support for the Canal Seine Nord Europe project, the development of cross-border internship opportunities for young people, and the right to experiment with apprenticeships in the cross-border setting.

Furthermore, EURO 3 has positioned itself at a more strategic level as a constructive partner providing assistance to the territory, businesses, jobs and training, alongside the Lille-Kortrijk-Tournai Eurometropolis EGCT.

On the Basque side, Bihartean draws on diverse competencies, enabling a greater range of services to be offered to businesses in the cross-border region: those of the Bayonne-Pays Basque CCI (very much focused on the development and the acquisition of businesses, employee training, and analyses of the regional economy by sector or as a whole) and those of the Cámara de Comercio de Gipuzkoa (whose main activity is the provision of advice in the international setting).

Bihartean has notably organised meetings between entrepreneurs from the French and Spanish Basque Countries, put companies in contact with suppliers and service providers, and published a catalogue of industrial sub-contractors in the region as well as a study of cross-border purchasing behaviour.

The promotion and strengthening of common economic sectors on either side of the border (notably through interclustering) is also part of the remit of the EEIG, which has supported the creation of a cross-border liquid silicone cluster, bringing together five companies from the French Basque Country and Euskadi, representing the entire value chain for this material. The cross-border integration of this sector is intended to serve as a springboard for these companies to access external markets and to prospect for new clients in Europe.

¹⁴⁴ Also see the factsheet on cross-border project cafés.

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HOW DO THESE TWO EEIGS OPERATE?

Both Chambers of Commerce have hired a full-time member of staff, who is dividing his working time between the two entities. His post is financed equally by Bihartean and the Bayonne-Pays Basque CCI. In order to ensure equal treatment for businesses on both sides of the border – the Cámara de Comercio de Gipuzkoa, unlike the Bayonne-Pays Basque CCI, does not bear the costs of the advice and support services that it provides – Bihartean does not charge for any of its interventions.

EURO 3 does not have an integrated structure comparable to that of Bihartean. The technicians of the chambers of commerce which make up the EEIG work together on common projects. Its activities are funded by calls for contributions, made as the need arises.

TO WHAT EXTENT CAN THIS GOOD PRACTICE BE ADOPTED IN OTHER CROSS-BORDER TERRITORIES?

The creation of an EEIG is open to any legal entity, whether governed by public or private law, as well as to any natural person, which is engaged in economic activities in Member States of the European Union. It must be set up by at least two members belonging to two distinct countries of the European Union. Each of France's borders may therefore see the emergence of this type of structure, with the exception of the territories bordering Switzerland, Monaco and Andorra.

The EEIG, which is aimed at developing the economic activity of its members, also benefits, due to its limited scope of intervention, from relatively simple procedures for setting up and dissolution in comparison with other legal tools for cross-border cooperation (ECG, LGCC, EGTC, etc.), and allows for the involvement of a much broader and more diverse range of partners.

FOR MORE INFORMATION:

<http://www.bihartean.com/index.php?lang=fr>
<http://euro3-lille-kortrijk-tournai.webnode.com/>

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