

2.1 Germany

Germany is the most populous country in the EU with over 80 million inhabitants, but it is smaller in area than either France or Spain; its territory covers 357 340 km² from the North Sea and the Baltic Sea in the north to the Alps in the south. Among its natural frontiers, three great rivers that cross Germany are worthy of mention: the Danube, the Elbe and the Rhine, the last of which also forms a large part of Germany's border with France. The country has land borders with nine other countries. The longest (784 km) is with Austria in the south and the shortest (68 km) is with Denmark in the north. To the west, it shares a border first with the Netherlands (577 km), Belgium (167 km) and Luxembourg (138 km), and then with France (451 km) and Switzerland (334 km). To the east, it borders on two countries: Poland (456 km) and the Czech Republic (646 km). Geographically, Germany also features several enclaves, both in neighbouring countries and within its own territory. Five German enclaves are situated in Belgium, cut off by the Vennbahn railway, which is under Belgian sovereignty, and the German town of Büsingen, on the upper Rhine, is an enclave within Switzerland. The Austrian municipality of Jungholz forms a quasi-enclave within Germany since its only connection with Austria is over the summit of Sorgschrofen. Lastly, Germany shares maritime borders with five countries: in the North Sea with the United Kingdom (18 km) and the Netherlands (336 km), in the North Sea and the Baltic Sea with Denmark (706 km) and in the Baltic Sea alone with Sweden (55 km) and Poland (456 km).

The history of Germany's borders is complicated and varies largely with the historical period considered. The unification of Germany took place gradually over the 19th century from a large assemblage of German states. It began in the Year of Revolutions, 1848, when revolutionaries made the first attempt to establish a German Federation, with the convocation of a constituent assembly in Frankfurt. Unification was not actually accomplished until 1871, however, when Bismarck proclaimed the German Empire, then comprising 23 German states. After the Treaty of Westphalia in 1648 the border between France and Germany had remained constantly under dispute, with the Rhine little by little becoming the military and political frontier separating the two countries. The subsequent history

of Germany's borders is largely marked by the two world wars. After the First World War in 1919, defeated Germany considered the peace treaty to be a humiliation. The loss of territory to France and Belgium in the west (Alsace-Lorraine, Eupen, Malmedy), Denmark in the north (North Schleswig) and Poland in the east (Poznań (Posen) and Upper Silesia) was felt to be an injustice. As a consequence, Germany's new borders were challenged and German revisionism helped Hitler to come to power in 1933, after which he went on to seize back the lost territories and to occupy practically the whole of continental Europe during the war. After the Second World War, Germany was in a unique situation of its own. Firstly, in 1945 Germany was occupied by the four victorious Allied Powers (the United States, the United Kingdom, France and the USSR) and, in the absence of a peace treaty, its borders were not definitively settled. It is true that France recovered Alsace-Lorraine, Poland gained the territory of East Prussia to the east of the Oder-Neisse rivers, and the USSR gained the city of Königsberg (now Kaliningrad), but this state of affairs was only temporary, since the Allies had failed to agree on a definitive solution for the future of Germany. Secondly, two German states were established in 1949: the Federal Republic of Germany (FRG) in the west and the German Democratic Republic (GDR) in the east. They were separated by the Iron Curtain, part of which, the Berlin Wall, built in 1961, came to symbolise the division of the world into two opposing ideological blocs for over 40 years. Germany was not reunified until 1990, after the fall of the Berlin Wall, and its borders were definitively ratified by an international treaty, which in particular confirmed the Oder-Neisse line as the border with Poland.

Germany's anomalous situation has been reflected in the evolution of cross-border cooperation, the primary objective of which for the Germans was reconciliation with their neighbours to west and east. Two phases in this cross-border cooperation can be identified. The first began in the 1950s and involved the country's western neighbours; the second, which had to await the end of the Cold War in 1989, developed on its eastern borders after the reunification of Germany. Cooperation with Denmark and Austria could also

be included in this second phase, for different reasons, since it was driven by the European Commission's Interreg programme in the early 1990s on the one hand and by the accession of Austria to the EU in 1995 on the other.

Cross-border cooperation in Germany began in 1958 with the creation of the Euregio on the border with the Netherlands. This association brought together more than 100 border communes and included the district of Bentheim, the city and district of Osnabrück, the municipalities of Emsbüren, Salzbergen and Spelle, and the city and urban area of Münster on the German side; and the areas of the Achterhoek Regio and Twente Regio plus the municipalities of Hardenberg, Ommen and Coevorden on the Dutch side. The prime mover was Alfred Mozer, a member of the German Social Democratic Party (SPD), who was at the time Secretary to the Commissioner for Agriculture in the first European Commission. For him, the aim of cross-border cooperation was to reconcile the peoples of Europe: it was essential to 'transcend borders', which were the 'scars of history', as he said several times to the members of the Euregio. This cross-border reconciliation was all the more effective since it took place at the level nearest to the people, between local authorities. Other cross-border associations of this sort were subsequently created along the German-Dutch border, the first being the Rhine-Waal Euregio (1971), which linked 20 German and 31 Dutch municipalities. This was followed by the Rhine-Meuse-Nord Euregio (1978), which linked chambers of commerce on both sides of the border as well as a number of German and Dutch municipalities. At the regional level of cooperation, the Ems Dollart Region was founded in 1977, covering the north-western part of Lower Saxony in Germany and the provinces of Groningen, Drenthe and Friesland in the Netherlands. A first trilateral association was established in 1976, involving Belgian border authorities; this was the Meuse-Rhine Euregio, which included the region around Aachen in North Rhine-Westphalia, the southern part of the Dutch province of Limburg, the Belgian provinces of Limburg and Liège and the German-speaking Community of Belgium. In 1998, the list of German-Dutch cross-border associations was supplemented

by the creation of Eurode Kerkrade-Herzogenrath, which links the municipalities of Kerkrade and Herzogenrath (in the administrative region of Cologne). In the 2000s, cooperation on the border with the Netherlands and Belgium was strengthened by the creation of two cross-border nature parks. The first was the Drielandenpark, set up trilaterally in 2001 by the Dutch and Belgian provinces of Limburg; the Flemish and Walloon regions, Liège Province and German-speaking Community in Belgium; and the city of Aachen, the association of municipalities in the district of Aachen, the administrative district of Cologne and the federal state of North Rhine-Westphalia in Germany. The second was the Maas-Schwalm-Nette nature reserve, which is bilateral and unites the Schwalm-Nette nature reserve in Germany and the municipalities of Beesel, Echt-Susteren, Leudal, Roerdalen, Roermond and Venlo in the Netherlands.

The process of reconciliation was also begun along the Franco-German border, both along the upper Rhine in conjunction with Switzerland, and in the area between Saarland and Lorraine, together with Luxembourg. In the upper Rhine region, cross-border cooperation began in 1963 with the creation of a Swiss association (Verein), the Regio Basiliensis, whose geographical boundaries extended to the cities of Basel, Freiburg im Breisgau in Baden-Württemberg, and Colmar in the Department of Haut-Rhin. Although the initiative for this cooperation came from local stakeholders in Basel, the pioneers of this cross-border arrangement were acting in the context of Franco-German reconciliation, sealed by the Élysée Treaty signed by Konrad Adenauer and Charles de Gaulle on 23 January 1963. The Basel association was subsequently supplemented on the French side by the creation of the Upper Rhine Regio in Mulhouse (1965) and on the German side by the Freiburg Regio (1985). Ten years later, these local cooperation initiatives were merged into a single body known as the Regio TriRhena. In the area between Lorraine, Saarland, Luxembourg and the Palatinate, it was the German industrialist Hubertus Rolshoven, the President of the Steering Committee of the Saarland Mining Corporation, who was the initiator of the SaarLorLux cross-border cooperation project, as he called it from 1969 onwards. This initiative was needed

to respond to the crisis in the steel industry, which hit this mining region extremely hard and caused similar economic problems on the German, French and Luxembourg sides of the border (with unemployment, a need for retraining, etc.). The joint efforts of the region's industrialists led to the creation of two commissions in 1971, one at intergovernmental level and the other at regional level. They were both set up to deal with cross-border problems in the SaarLorLux area and the region of the western Palatinate in Germany.

Subsequently, a legal basis was established for cross-border cooperation in these two areas along the Franco-German border by means of international treaties. In the upper Rhine region, the intergovernmental agreement signed in Bonn in 1975 established an intergovernmental commission and two regional commissions. It set the geographical boundary for this cooperation arrangement to include the German federal states of Baden-Württemberg and Rhineland-Palatinate, the French region of Alsace and the two Basel cantons. In 1980, a second intergovernmental agreement was signed in Bonn, this time for the SaarLorLux area. The two cross-border regions subsequently underwent similar development. In the upper Rhine area, the Upper Rhine Conference was established in 1991 to manage cooperation at the level of the regional executives. It is based in Kehl in Germany. The Franco-German-Swiss Bonn agreement was amended in 2000 in Basel in order to extend the cooperation area to the five cantons in north-western Switzerland (the two half-cantons of Basel and the cantons of Aargau, Jura and Solothurn). As regards the SaarLorLux area, after a summit of regional executives was held in 1995 it was renamed the Grande Région (the Greater Region) in order to take account of its German partner, the federal state of Rhineland-Palatinate. Its geographical boundary was also extended with the inclusion of three Belgian federated entities in 2005, namely the Walloon Region, the French Community and the German-speaking Community. Finally, the first decade of this century was marked by a strengthening of cross-border cooperation in both areas. In 2010, the Trinational Metropolitan Region of the Upper Rhine was created to manage cooperation in four fields: the economy, politics, science and civil society. At the local level, four eurodistricts have also been set

up in the region. The first, the Strasbourg-Ortenau Eurodistrict (2005), was launched by Jacques Chirac and Gerhard Schröder during the 40th anniversary celebrations of the Élysée Treaty in Strasbourg and Kehl in 2003. The Regio Pamina, set up as a local territorial cooperation grouping (LTCG) in 2001, was also converted to a Eurodistrict at the same time. There then followed the Freiburg Region/Central and Southern Alsace Eurodistrict (2005) and the Basel Trinational Eurodistrict (2007). For its part, the Greater Region was converted into a European Grouping for Territorial Cooperation (EGTC) in 2010 in order to provide management for the Interreg operational programme of the same name. At the local level, the Saar-Moselle Eurodistrict was also established on the basis of an EGTC with the participation of Saarland, the Department of Moselle and the Lorraine Region.

The second phase of cross-border cooperation involved the borders to the south, north and east of the country. Cooperation in southern Germany had already begun with Austria, Switzerland and Liechtenstein, around the shared natural area of Lake Constance. In 1972, the lakeside authorities of the four countries (the federal state of Baden-Württemberg, the cantons of Schaffhausen, Appenzell, Thurgau, Saint Gallen and Zurich, the province of Vorarlberg and the Principality of Liechtenstein) set up an international conference so that they could jointly manage problems relating to the environmental management of the lake. This cooperation initiative was consolidated in 1997 with the creation of the Lake Constance Euregio, which on the German side also involved local partners (the towns of Konstanz, Lindau, Oberallgäu, Ravensburg, Sigmaringen, Kempten and the district of Lake Constance) in addition to the Federal State of Baden-Württemberg. Four other euroregions, whose principal feature is their informal or associative structure, have been established in the mountainous areas along the German-Austrian border. The Salzburg-Berchtesgadener Land-Traunstein Euregio was founded in 1995 by the German districts of Berchtesgadener Land, Traunstein and Altötting and the Austrian districts of Flachgau, Pinzgau, Pongau, Tennengau, Braunau and Kitzbühel and the city of Salzburg. In 1997, the Via Salina Euregio brought together the Allgäu Regio of Germany and the Kleinwalsertal



Bridge over the Rhine between Kehl and Strasbourg (Germany, France)

Regio and the Außerfern Regional Development in Austria. Finally, 1998 saw the creation of the Zugspitze Euregio linking the Werdenfels and Seefeldler Plateau Regios and the Außerfern Regional Development, and then of the Inntal Euregio by the Bavarian districts of Rosenheim and Traunstein and the Tyrolean districts of Kufstein and Kitzbühel.

To the north, cross-border cooperation with Denmark intensified from the mid-1990s thanks to the possibility of funding from the European Commission's Interreg programme. On the German-Danish border, attempts at reconciliation were still necessary, particularly in the region of Schleswig, where German and Danish minorities were still suffering from the border changes after the two world wars. The route of the border was moreover disputed by certain border communities. In order to remedy this situation and create a joint cross-border living space, the Sønderjylland-Schleswig Euroregion was established in 1997 by the city of Flensburg, the administrative districts of Schleswig-Flensburg and North Friesland on the German side, and the region of Southern Denmark and the municipalities of Åbenrå, Tønder, Haderslev and Sønderborg on the Danish side. In addition, the island municipalities of the Wadden region in the

North Sea created an association in 1999, enabling them to undertake a maritime version of cross-border cooperation: the Wadden Euregio links the islands of Lower Saxony in Germany, West Friesland in the Netherlands, and Rømø, Mandø and Fanø in Denmark. In the first decade of the present century, other cross-border communities have been established. The first of these was the Fehmarnbelt Region established in 2006, linking the region of Zealand (Storstrøm district) in Denmark with the administrative district of Ostholstein, the Hanseatic city of Lübeck and the administrative district of Plön in Germany. A project on a grand scale is currently under way in this cross-border area: the Fehmarnbelt tunnel will form a link under the Baltic Sea between the two territories. Construction is scheduled to begin in 2015. The second is represented by the cooperation initiative launched in 2007 by the Danish region of Fyn and the K.E.R.N. technological region (which groups the cities of Kiel and Neumünster and the districts of Rendsburg-Eckernförde and Plön), linking the main islands of Fyn, Langeland and Ærø on the Danish side and the K.E.R.N. technological region on the German side.

The 1980s were marked above all by the development of the first example of East-West cross-border cooperation, which became

possible after the fall of the Berlin Wall in 1989 and the reunification of Germany in 1990. The scars of history along the Polish and Czech borders are deep, since the reduction in Germany's territory and the westward shift of Poland after the Second World War caused significant population migrations. The inhabitants of the border areas do not have a historic link with a border that was kept sealed during the Cold War. Moreover, demands for compensation made by associations of displaced persons in Germany were never met. In a number of cases, the establishment of the border on the Oder-Neisse line after the Second World War had split some municipalities and towns into two parts, which now sought to set up cooperation arrangements. A process of reconciliation linked to economic cooperation was therefore necessary to prevent disparities becoming deeper and to promote European integration. Since 1991, the number of euroregions and eurocities that have emerged on the borders with Poland and Czechoslovakia has mushroomed. The first eurocity, Guben-Gubin, was established on the German-Polish border in 1991. This put the seal on cooperation between the twin towns of Guben and Gubin, situated on either side of the border. That same year, the first euroregion (Neisse-Nisa-Nysa) was established on the river Neisse border, linking three local associations on the German, Polish and Czech sides. The first cross-border cooperation initiative between Bavaria and Czechoslovakia was launched in 1991 when the Bavarian Forest National Park, created in 1982, was linked to the Czech forests in the Šumava National Park. Subsequently, three euroregions were created on the German-Czech border. The Elbe/Labe Euroregion (linking the cross-border local-authority associations of the Oberes Elbtal/Osterzgebirge Euroregion on the German side and the Labe Euroregion on the Czech side) and the Erzgebirge/Krušnohoří Euroregion (comprising the German districts of central Saxony and the Ore Mountains (Erzgebirge) and the municipalities

of the Czech districts of Louny, Most, Chomutov and Litoměřice) were both set up in 1992. In 1993, after the dissolution of Czechoslovakia, the Egrensis Euroregion was established. It brings together three cross-border working communities, two on the German side (Euroregion Egrensis of Bavaria and Euroregion Egrensis of Saxony-Thuringia) and one on the Czech side (the Bohemian Euroregion). In the same year the first euroregion linking Austria, Germany and the Czech Republic was created, namely the Bavarian Forest-Bohemian Forest-Lower Inn Euroregion. This trilateral cooperation arrangement was intensified in 2012, when the Danube-Vltava Euroregion was established by Upper Austria, the Mostviertel and Waldviertel regions of Lower Austria, Lower Bavaria (the administrative districts of Altötting and Upper Palatinate) and, on the Czech side, Southern Bohemia, Plzeň and Vysočina. On the Polish border, two more euroregions were created in 1993. One of them, the Spree-Neisse-Bober Euroregion, links two cross-border cooperation associations on the Polish and German sides; the other is the Pro Europa Viadrina Euroregion, linking the German federal state of Brandenburg and the voivodeship of Lubuskie. A third euroregion, which was formed in 1995 at an intermunicipal level in the region of Pomerania, was extended in 1998 to Sweden. The Pomerania Euroregion thus comprises two associations of municipalities in Poland and Germany and the Swedish association of local authorities of Scania. Two further eurocities have also been created on the Polish border: Frankfurt (Oder)/Ślubiice in the Lubuskie-Brandenburg region (in 1993) and Europastadt Görlitz-Zgorzelec (in 2007).

Today, then, Germany engages in cross-border cooperation on all its borders, and the processes of reconciliation to the west, north and east have fused together in a great variety of cross-border initiatives, helping to heal the scars of history and create joint cross-border living spaces.

