

The construction of the “Metropolis of the 2 banks”: cross-border cooperation and urban planning on the Franco-german border in Strasbourg-Ortenau

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What can better symbolizes the process of integration in a large urbanized area than a pedestrian and cycling bridge linking two green areas located on two banks of a river? Moreover, this object embodies also the proximity between two cities thanks to the cross---border cooperation. The bridge and the garden of the two banks are now the core of the European ‘Metropolis of the 2 Banks’, the official name given to the urban space built on both sides of the border in the Franco---german urban area of Strasbourg---Kehl.

The aim of this paper is to understand how cross---border cooperation in urban planning, especially Interreg programmes, 25 years after their launching, contributes to build an integrated urban area on one of the most conflicted border from the first part of the 20th Century. How did both cities coordinate their plans and did they elaborate common plans? Does the emerging urban space reveal a special identity? What can we learn from this case study on cross---border urban planning in Europe in general?

Our research will focuses on Strasbourg, a French city located on the Franco---german border, and its neighbourhood city in Germany, Kehl. Symbol of the Franco---german reconciliation, Strasbourg is also the seat of different European institutions (Council of Europe, European Parliament, etc.). The border is considered as a line separating sovereign territories and political systems that are producing national planning systems built on different concepts and ideas. Cross---border cooperation in spatial planning means first according different planning cultures. Our analysis is based on the official plans produced in the national systems, on

the strategic planning literature and on the Interreg cross---border projects the cities elaborated.

Cross---border cooperation started in the beginning of 1990 in the European integration's perspective, because both cities were confronted to the same issue: building new urban spaces by reorganizing wastelands in industrial and harbour areas. We will first present the main difficulties faced by urban planning in cross--- border urban area in the 1990s in the EU and the particularities of our case study in this general framework. We will then describe the main steps of the history of cross--- border urban planning in Strasbourg and Kehl by analysing the programmes and the plans used to achieve integration. An analysis grid listing the main means (density, centrality, functions, etc.) and the spatial elements (places, networks, territory) of integration will be elaborated. In the third part, this analysis grid will be used to determine the main features of the production of the 'metropolis of the 2 Banks'.

References:

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