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Summary of the Master Thesis

## **Radioeurodistrict**

### **History of the First French-German Internet radio**

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# 1 INTRODUCTION

France and Germany have a turbulent and complex past, however, today they are considered as a couple within the European Union. Robert Schuman (1950), a former French Foreign Minister, stated that the construction of a united Europe could not be achieved without the peace of these two countries. Today, France and Germany are important partners in different fields such as the economy, investments, education, science... culture is also a symbol of great cooperation between these two nations (France Diplomatie n.d). This network is described as dense and multifaceted by the official website of the Ministry for Europe and Foreign Affairs (France Diplomatie n.d).

1963 is a key date in French-German history. The Elysée Treaty was signed that year by the heads of state: Konrad Adenauer and Jacques Chirac. Since then, the anniversary of this Treaty has been celebrated in both countries. The 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary is particularly significant, as I will explain later, it symbolises the creation of the Eurodistrict Strasbourg – Ortenau.

If the French-German relationship appears firstly as strong, I decided to focus on a French-German cultural project, which ended some years ago: Radioeurodistrict. Indeed, ARTE seems to be almost the only famous cross-border media. It seems relevant and interesting to work on this subject. Radioeurodistrict does indeed figure in the book *Lexikon der deutsch-französischen Kulturbeziehungen nach 1945* (Colin & all 2015). I assumed that it was an important media.

The aim of this research is to find out more about Radioeurodistrict, as the available literature on the subject is very limited. I wanted to understand why a project that seemed so important and had great potential ended. Therefore, the research question is: What could be the causes of failure of a major Franco-German project such as Radioeurodistrict?

I conducted five interviews with former volunteers and trainees of Radioeurodistrict, as well as with a partner radio station and the President of the Eurodistrict Citizen Forum.

This research is divided into several parts. Firstly, I will explore the available literature, starting with a research on the Eurodistrict Strasbourg – Ortenau, then I will look at Radioeurodistrict. Secondly, the methodology of this research will be presented. Finally, I will present the results and a discussion, which will allow me to compare the literature and the results obtained.

## **2 LITERATURE REVIEW**

### **2.1 The concept of Eurodistrict**

#### **2.1.1 Euroregion**

Eurodistrict is not an easy word to define. When looking for a definition, the first difficulty arises. Indeed, it seems to be a confusion between the following words: Eurodistrict, Eurocity, and Euroregion, yet they have a different meaning.

The number of available literature differs greatly from one subject to another. The notion of Euroregion dates back to 1958 with the creation of the first Euroregion (Wassenberg 2010), whereas the term Eurodistrict is much more recent. It was first used in 2003 with the creation of the first Eurodistrict.

The first Euroregion created in 1958, better known as Euregio, is located at the border between Germany and the Netherlands (Sanguin 2013). This cooperation was primarily aimed at helping cross-border workers (Wassenberg & Reitel 2015). Afterwards, several Euroregions were created, including a large increase in the 1990s (Wassenberg 2010). The first Euroregion was created to help ex-communist countries join the European Union (Wassenberg & Reitel 2015). Today, they are helping each other to solve their common problems (Vovenda & Plotnikov 2011). These regions are recognised by the European Union and are European Grouping for Territorial Cooperation. However, there is currently no official definition of Euroregion.

Since then, other types of territorial cooperation have been developed however, they will not be studied in this research. This amount of different cooperation can lead to confusions and misunderstandings (Sanguin 2013).

#### **2.1.2 The first Eurodistrict**

To understand the notion of Eurodistrict, it is important to go back to the creation of the first one, which is the Eurodistrict Strasbourg – Ortenau (ESO).

The idea of creating a Eurodistrict came from the 1980s (Mission Opérationnelle Transfrontalière (n.d) but it was officially created in 2003 on the occasion of the 40th anniversary of the Elysée Treaty (Wassenberg & Reitel 2015). Jacques Chirac and Gerhard

Schröder, the heads of State of France and Germany, wanted to increase the cooperation between their countries (MOT n.d) and remove obstacles to joint projects (Peyrony 2020). In the joint declaration (p.7), they expressed their support for the creation of a Eurodistrict between Strasbourg and Kehl.

Nevertheless, they did not go into detail, e.g., the missions and the legal form of the Eurodistrict were not mentioned (MOT n.d). The official agreement for the creation of the Eurodistrict Strasbourg – Ortenau was signed in 2005 (Eurodistrict Strasbourg Ortenau, n.d). No information on the reasons for choosing Ortenau instead of Kehl was found.

The creation and development of Eurodistrict required a lot of preparatory work. A first research was published in 2001 and a white paper was published in 2003. The researches were partly financed by Interreg. Three main objectives were developed around three themes: a common identity to solve common issues – a common vision for the development and spatial planning of the cross-border region and finally the strengthening of Strasbourg as a European and international metropolis. In 2008, there was another important step: the Lahr declaration took place, which further defined the missions and definition of the ESO (Neuss 2018). In 2010, the ESO became a European Grouping for Territorial Cooperation.

### **2.1.3 The missions of the Eurodistricts**

It seems that there is no official definition of Eurodistrict however, the Eurodistrict of Bâle describes them as a border area whose aim is to organise and institutionalise cross-boder cooperation (n.d).

There are five Eurodistrict at the French-German border, each of them has specific missions according to the needs of their territory. The ESO defines itself as a “small Europe” with two types of aims: the commercial ones and the others focusing more on the inhabitants. They are trying to develop new cooperation and make life easier for citizens (Eurodistrict n.d). However, some researchers pointed out that Eurodistricts have mainly a symbolic meaning (Eurodistrict Bâle n.d). It may change with the Aachen Treaty, which aims at developing further French-German cooperation and give more power to territorial cooperation (Aachen Treaty 2019, p.9).

## **2.1.4 The potential of Strasbourg and Ortenau**

The first Euroregions were created on the French-German border, Vovenda et Plotnikov (2011) explained that this territory is the cradle of Western European civilisation. Many European institutions and other international cooperation agencies such as ARTE are located in Strasbourg (Koenig & all 2004). This city also attracts a lot of tourists and academicians (Koenig & all 2004). However, in the white paper (2004), the authors underlined the fact that the accessibility of Strasbourg is not as well developed as other international cities.

The other part of the Eurodistrict is the Ortenaukreis, which consists of five important cities: Offenburg, Lahr, Kehl, Achern and Oberkirch. In the white paper (2004), this territory was less described and explained than Strasbourg.

The ESO could contribute to the improvement of living and working conditions in this region as well as stop, or at least, reduce the rural exodus (Koenig & all 2004).

In the territory of the ESO, a great number of citizens cross the border each day. These points could have made ESO attractive to the population of this territory, but as I will explain later, with Radioeurodistrict, this was not really the case.

## **2.2 The funding and projects of Radioeurodistrict**

### **2.2.1 The funding of the ESO**

As I suppose that Radioeurodistrict was a project of the ESO, it is necessary to understand how the ESO is funded and how it funds projects.

As mentioned earlier, the preliminary research on Radioeurodistrict was partly funding thanks to Interreg. It is a European funding for territorial cooperation, which therefore aims at the harmonious development of the European Union (Vie Publique 2021).

Nowadays, the ESO is financed by its own investments, contributions, structural funds, and other income (Eurodistrict 2020). Over the years, the funding seems to be quite stable, except for the structural funds (Eurodistrict 2019 and 2020). However, they do not mention which structural fund it is.

## **2.2.2 How is project financed in the ESO?**

This part of the research is really important if Radioeurodistrict was a project of the ESO and therefore funded by them.

On the Eurodistrict website, the list of criteria for obtaining funding is mentioned. However, the list may have changed since 2003. The most important criteria are: it should not be the end of the project, it should aim at developing the common identity and bilingualism, the project should also be innovative and must be designed for the long term (Eurodistrict n.d). In the regions, there are other funds supporting French-German projects.

Radioeurodistrict meets all criteria: developing the bilingualism and the common identity and as it was the first French-German radio, it was innovative. The radio was created in 2004 and at this time, the ESO was still developing. However, in the white paper, the idea of creating a radio was mentioned.

With the interviews, I will try to look deeper at the relationship between the ESO and the radio.

## **2.3 Radioeurodistrict**

I will now take a closer look at Radioeurodistrict. It is necessary to point out that on Internet only few information is available and the website does not exist anymore

### **2.3.1 The project**

This radio was created in 2004 by a team of journalists and radio hosts. Together, they formed an association: Association pour la Promotion des Echanges Européens (Association for the Promotion of European Exchanges) (MOT, n.d).

Shortly after the official creation of the Eurodistrict in 2005, the APEE association presented its project to create a bilingual radio station (20 Minutes 2005). The director Franck Sellier asserted to have already a large number of members and the support of Radio France Internationale (20 Minutes 2005). Their aims were to bring the Eurodistrict to life and explained to the inhabitants why it could be interesting for them (Journal des Entreprises 2010). They wanted to bring the citizens closer (Ayrat & Salambo 2011). As their motto shows it, they wanted to be a bridge between the two banks of the Rhine.



### **2.3.2 Getting a radio frequency, a first difficulty**

From the beginning, they seemed to have many ideas, however, they were not ready to face all the difficulties. In 2005, the team of Radioeurodistrict thought they would get a frequency without much difficulty (Wagner 2005). They thought they could have the frequency of Radio Bienvenue Strasbourg which was indebted (Wagner 2005). For Franck Sellier and his colleague Jean-Luc Billing, it was only a small formality (Wagner 2005). However, the judge's decision was not in their favour and they did not get an FM frequency and Radio Bienvenue Strasbourg had to chance to improve (Wagner 2005). Today, this radio still exists. This frequency was the only one available for the following years, which means that the team of Radioeurodistrict had to create an Internet radio instead of a radio station.

I believe that the fact that Radioeurodistrict was only an Internet radio is perhaps one of the reasons for their failure. Indeed, a study carried out by Mediametrie (2013), shows that multimedia media for listening to radio accounted for 10,6%, compared to 84,9% for a radio set.

### **2.3.3 The organisation of the radio**

Only few information about the organisation was found. Before they knew that they would not get any frequency, the team wanted to broadcast the latest news from the region during prime time (Wagner 2005). Besides, they also wanted to broadcast other programmes and music. However, the pace may have changed with the judge's decision.

According to some articles, there were only volunteers in this project however, in others such as in Journal des Entreprises (2010), they mentioned a paid employee. Another important fact is that on LinkedIn, I discovered that a lot of students did an internship for this radio. If the number of interns was so large, it could have affected the project, if the team had to explain every two months, the whole project to an intern, it is quite time-consuming.

### **2.3.4 The funding of Radioeurodistrict**

Radioeurodistrict and consequently APEE were governed by French law, which means that advertising revenue can only account for 20% of funding (Wagner 2005). Besides, an association can be financed by donations and membership fees (Association Gouv 2011).

In 2005, several local governments in Alsace and in the Ortenaukreis were willing to finance the radio (Wagner 2005). However, once again the situation may have changed as Radioeurodistrict did not get an FM frequency, it was the case of Südwestrundfunk.

The radio wanted to develop cooperation with a student radio station of the University of Kehl. Wagner (2005) explained that it was a cooperation in the field of digitalisation, no further information is available. The radio wanted to respond to an Interreg call for projects in order to obtain funding, but the University did not want to be a partner in this grant application.

In a report by the ESO (2013), it is written that the ESO finances all bilingual media. Nevertheless, in no literature is it mentioned that ESO has funded the radio.

### **2.3.5 The partners of Radioeurodistrict**

As explained above, the team wanted to develop a partnership with the Hochschule of Kehl, which could have been a great opportunity. Indeed, the radio seems to have a good audience.

If Radioeurodistrict had succeeded in creating partnerships, this could have been a good opportunity to counter their defeat to get a frequency. In 2006, they made broadcasts with the radio station “Hitradio Ohr” (Reck 2006). It is located in the Ortenaukreis and is the first radio in Baden (Baden Online 2007), which is an incredible opportunity for Radioeurodistrict. The broadcasts were on Wednesdays and aimed to promote the Eurodistrict and the events that were taking place in this area (Reck 2007). Radioeurodistrict also developed a partnership with a French newspaper in Germany “La Gazette de Berlin” (Colin & Aall and Da Costa 2010).

### **2.3.6 Radioeurodistrict a great opportunity for the ESO**

Radioeurodistrict and ESO seemed to have the same objectives, the radio could have helped the ESO to achieve its goals. Moreover, cross-border media contribute to developing a sense of belonging and identity (Ayrat et Salambo 2011). Thus, it is important to stress that the notion of Eurodistrict was too vague and abstract for the population (Reck 2006). As the radio is called Radioeurodistrict, I suppose they encountered the same difficulties. In 2014, the ESO inhabitants asked for a local TV channel or to create a radio for the ESO, yet in 2014, Radioeurodistrict has existed for 10 years (Eurodistrict 2014).

### **2.3.7 The ESO Citizens Forum: a parallel of Radioeurodistrict?**

During my readings, I discovered “Le Forum Citoyen Eurodistrict”, which is a Forum for the citizens of the Eurodistrict. More literature was available on this topic and I started to think that these two organisations had faced the same difficulties.

This Forum was created in 2003 to promote the Eurodistrict, they signed a cooperation contract (Sala 2005). The president of this forum, Kai Littmann, stated that he wanted to be a link between the ESO and the citizens and to help French-German projects (Sala 2005). The creation of a radio station for the ESO was mentioned during the creation of this Forum (Reck 2004). However, the Forum was confronted with multiple difficulties: as Radioeurodistrict they were only volunteers – the population was interested in this project but not the local authorities (Reck 2004). The Forum was not funded by the ESO and they did not get any support from the ESO (Reizel 2006). These difficulties led to the resignation of the president. I assume that Radioeurodistrict had a similar history.

## **3 METHODS**

After collecting information about Radioeurodistrict on the Internet, it was time to conduct the interviews. During the literature review, I found some potential interviewees.

### **3.1 Interviews**

As I just said, I conducted 5 interviews: two interns, one volunteer, the director of Hitradio Ohr, and the president of the Forum. I also tried to contact the director and other founding members of Radioeurodistrict, however, I did not get any answer. I tried to find interns and volunteers who worked over different periods:

- AF was a volunteer from 2008 to 2018
- Rémi Boulle did an internship and then volunteered in 2009 and 2010
- JF did a 3-month internship in 2015

I did not find any volunteers or interns who worked before 2008. Some trainees explained to me that they were not the best person for my research and that I should contact the director, I had already sent him emails, he answered once asking for more details but then never replied again.

It seemed interesting to me, to speak with the president of the Forum as I think there are similarities between the Forum and Radioeurodistrict.

The project manager of ESO was also contacted, but she explained to me that Radioeurodistrict was not an initiative from them and that no partnership had taken place. This gives me a first indication of their relationship.

I also contacted other partners of Radioeurodistrict such as La Gazette de Berlin and the Hochschule of Kehl. I exchanged a few emails with a professor of the Hochschule, however, he told me that the cooperation did not take place. I did not get any answer from the la Gazette de Berlin. Most of our interviewees were contacted via LinkedIn.

We decided to conduct semi-directive interviews, it gives the interviewer the possibility to modify its interview guide during the interview if needed. Imbert (2010) described this type of interview as a conversation or dialogue between two persons. The interview guide was made in advance to have the possibility to test it on our families and friends. The interviews were conducted in French and German, according to their preference and mother tongue. They were conducted between the end of May and the end of June via Zoom. The interviews went smoothly without any particular problems and lasted between 25 minutes and 1 hour.

### **3.2 Data collecting**

Before the interviews, the participants were asked to sign a paper indicating their agreement to the recording of the interviews, they could choose to remain anonymous, to be named by their initials or by their full name. At the beginning of the meeting, I asked them once again for permission to record.

Right after the interviews, I always filled out a table called “field notes”, based on the research of Gibson & Hua (2016). I wrote down my first impressions and what seemed important to me and what surprised me. For each interview, I also did a content analysis, which makes it easier to compare all the interviews.

The final step of data collecting was the transcription of the interviews. The transcription was done according to GAT 2 transcription conventions on Folker software. I decided to adapt this convention to better match the French alphabet.

## **4 RESULT**

### **4.1 A more detail presentation of Radioeurodistrict**

The interviewees gave me more information about Radioeurodistrict. This project was born after a year and a half of preparation in 2004 by a group of six or seven people. An important element is that it was a professional team, all founding members had already worked for a radio station or for a newspaper. The president had more than 20 years of experience in this field. It seemed to be a well-prepared professional team. Lack of radio experience cannot, therefore, be a factor of failure, although it is very important to stress that these people had experience in radio and not in Internet radio experience as I will discuss later.

As I had guessed, interns played an important role in the radio, however, all interviewees seemed to agree that the frequent change of interns was not a problem for the radio. Even though it was their first experience for many of them, they did an excellent job. The interns and volunteers were responsible for the programmes, which were described as “podcasts” by most of them. They lasted between 2 and 6 minutes. An article was always published in addition to the podcast. They could choose the language they wanted. The topics were diverse, ranging from beer festivals to literature reviews.

The association APEE was created only for this project in order to be able to apply for grants. Most of the interviewees were not aware of this association and its role.

### **4.2 The evolution of Radioeurodistrict**

Through the interviews, it is possible to see the evolution of Radioeurodistrict. Even if their souvenirs were not always very clear, it gives a good idea of what this radio could look like over the years.

The first change that I notice is the number of programmes. During the interview with Kai Littmann, I learned that he was a former member of the radio, so he could tell me about the first years. He explained that the programmes could be on the front page for a couple of days in the beginning. However, it seems to change from 2009 onwards. The other volunteers and interns said that they broadcast programmes with some music all day long. Thanks to the archives given by the trainees, I saw that there was at least one new programme per week and a maximum of two or three new programmes per day. However, on the archives, the

pace starts to decrease from 2014/2015. It matches with the experience of JF, who said that when she arrived at her internship in 2015, they were already moving out. With AF's interview, I learned that the project lasted until 2018, however from 2015 to 2018 she was alone and made some literature review.

When looking at the number of interns and volunteers, the same evolution can be noticed. Between 2009 and 2014, there was quite a large number of members: approximately 13 trainees in 2009 and there was a paid employee as well. There were always some members who could help the trainees however from 2014, JF said that there were only three interns and the director.

According to Kai Littmann and JF, the audience was not good, they speak about 6 or 7 listeners. The other interns said that only the director could give this information.

### **4.3 The good potential of the radio**

All interviewees agreed that the concept of the radio was innovative and an attractive concept for the territory. For them, the concept of the radio was a real asset. They also mentioned bilingualism as an advantage.

For Kai Littmann, the radio met an emerging need: the need for cross-border media. As I explained earlier the citizens of the ESO had asked for this type of media. It is important to note that he owns a French-German newspaper. AF, who grew up in this region said that the ESO was too abstract for the population, so I can suppose that the radio was a concrete form of this ESO.

The experiences of the volunteers and interns can also help to analyse the good potential from the members' point of view. They all appreciated and enjoyed their experience in this radio and would have liked to be employed for this radio. They are all using a very positive vocabulary. AF said that after this experience she never found something similar and JF, who came at the end of the project, did not want the project to end. Furthermore, they all said that they were free in their work and that the founding members trusted them. They could choose any topics for the programmes, they were completely free. JF even explained that she never got any feedback from the director. The interviewees pointed out several times this enormous freedom they had.

#### 4.4 A complex reality

I already pointed out that the team had experience in radio station but not in Internet radio, they were facing another problem. Indeed, in the beginning, there was only one German and the French founding members did not understand German at all, it was a major problem, especially when it came to partnerships. Because of this lack of language skills, they gave up valuable opportunities, for example, the partnership with Hitradio Ohr and another with a radio station near Bonn. I had the chance to interview the director Hitradio Ohr, he explained to me that they offer a live-programme to Radioeurodistrict every week on their frequency to make a French-German programme. However, he told me that the team of Radioeurodistrict did nothing and only criticised the choice of music. Kai Littmann who worked at this time for Radioeurodistrict explained to me that it was entirely the fault of his colleagues who did not understand German and consequently were too suspicious of Hitradio. So, this cooperation did not take place because of language skills, such as other cooperation: with the Hochschule of Kehl and the radio of Bonn.

The freedom mentioned primarily as an asset by the interviewees was also a negative point. There was not much supervision and for the interns, it could be disconcerting. This is a fact that trainees underline when they compare their experience in Radioeurodistrict with their experiences in other radio stations. I also noticed with interviews that the radio did not own a lot of goods, however, I suppose it is because of their fundings.

Through the interviews, I found out that there was no connection at all between Radioeurodistrict and the ESO. According to JF, the general secretary of the ESO did not know about the radio, however, Kai Littmann thinks she said that because of their poor relationship.

Regarding funding, the interns and volunteers did not know anything about it. However, Kai Littmann said, that at the beginning they did not receive any funding and they had to pay with their own money. I suppose, that this must have put off many future volunteers. I exchanged some emails with the treasurers of Radioeurodistrict. He said the association was financed by legacies and membership fees. It seems that there was no funding by any local authorities however, as I said they managed to have paid employees which means at some point, they must have had more money.

## **5 DISCUSSION**

### **5.1 The potential of the radio**

The territory of the ESO had good potential for a French-German radio. There are plenty of exchanges and cross-border workers (ESO 2016). The ESO finances a lot of projects to stimulate these exchanges, such as the creation of tramways (ESO 2016). Moreover, in this region, bilingualism is promoted and this is also an objective of the ESO (ESO 2016). However, I did not find any data regarding the number of cross-border workers. Contrary to an article that I read, bilingualism does not seem to be an issue in this region. JF explained that in Alsace, many French do listen to German radio and in research conducted by the European Commission (2016), cross-border citizens claimed that they do not feel language barriers, so this argument can be removed from our hypothesis.

If Radioeurodistrict had pursued its collaboration with Hitradio Ohr, it could have increased its audience. Hitradio Ohr continues its French-German programmes once a week, and 15 years later it still exists. In addition, it could have been the opportunity for Radioeurodistrict to be broadcast on an FM frequency. In several radio websites, it is strongly recommended to make partnerships to increase the visibility of a radio. The partnership with the radio near Bonn could have helped them as well. Indeed, according to Kai Littmann, the owner of this radio was an expert in Internet radio, the team could have acquired new skills. In 2004, the maximum number of listeners for Internet radio was 2600, in comparison, Radioeurodistrict had only 7 or 8 listeners (Beuscart 2004).

### **5.2 The difficulty of being an Internet radio**

As I explained, the team of Radioeurodistrict was composed of radio professionals, however, it is important to stress that Internet radio and radio stations do not require the same competencies, skills and, work (Beuscart 2004). As said earlier, they prepared for a year and a half, but as they were sure to get an FM frequency (Wagner 2005), they prepared themselves for a radio station and not for Internet radio.

Kai Littmann reported that the same topics could be on the frontpage of the website for a couple of days, yet radio listeners are looking for music and the latest news (Mediametrie 2018). In addition, only 20% of listeners listen to local radio stations (Mediametrie 2018). Yet, Radioeurodistrict was a local Internet radio and could not broadcast music in the last



years as JF explained because they did not pay the fees. The fact that it was an Internet radio contributed a lot to the end of the project.

### **5.3 The complex relationship between with the ESO**

As explained, Radioeurodistrict did not receive any support from the Eurodistrict, neither financial nor material. However, Radioeurodistrict could have helped the ESO to be more concrete, as the ESO was still a mystery to the population two years after its creation (Reck 2006). AF, as a citizen of the ESO, had also pointed this out. 15 years later the situation does not seem to have changed.

Kai Littmann gave his opinion on the ESO, which is not really good. He explained that the ESO does not encourage citizen participation. However, Ayrat and Salambo (2011) argue that civil society plays a significant role in cross-border cooperation. He also says that they are very suspicious of citizens' associations and that the people who judge the projects are not qualified to do this work.

As mentioned earlier, the ESO had benefited from the Interreg programme, but as they never worked with Radioeurodistrict, the radio did not benefit from it. Radioeurodistrict does not seem to have benefited from Interreg at all. For Kai Littmann, for an association, it is very difficult, if not impossible, to obtain Interreg funding. He believes that this funding is made for and by administrations. Ayrat and Salambo (2011) seem to support this idea, for them the procedure to obtain funding is very long and very complex for civil society actors.

As for the parallel between the Eurodistrict Citizen Forum and Radioeurodistrict, it also seems to be true. Indeed, as assumed, these two intuitions, both based on the ESO territory, have encountered the same problem: a lack of recognition from the local authorities and the ESO, and consequently difficulties in funding.

However, it is necessary to stress that qualitative research is based on personal experiences, which means that it is subjective. When looking at the ESO website, we can see that they are saying the complete opposite. Indeed, Cordula Riedel, a former secretary for the ESO, that they try to involve citizens as much as possible in their cooperation, their aim being to facilitate their daily life (Reck 2016). Kai Littmann also pointed out that the ESO was facing difficulties, as Kieffer (2008) analysed they must comply with German and French laws.

Even if they managed at some point to get a permanent radio host, funding was a big problem for Radioeurodistrict. Kai Littmann underlines this difficulty by saying that members had to

pay for advertisements from their own pockets. While there are some French-German associations and other funds such as the FSER to help radios in difficulties, Radioeurodistrict does not seem to have benefited from any of these funds. If the volunteers had to finance the radio with their own money, this might have scared off potential volunteers. On the other hand, Rémi Boule underlines that the radio relied heavily on the will of volunteers.

## **5.4 Cross-border media**

As mentioned, cross-border media play an important role in identifying and bringing the population together (MOT n.d). Ayrat & Salambo (2011) explained that they are even more important if a region wants to increase citizen participation. Cross-border media are also necessary to increase the attractiveness of the neighbouring country (Jakol, Friesecke & Kottmann 2004). Kai Littmann pointed out it is necessary to avoid disasters. Indeed, if the Rhine region does not achieve cross-border labour market integration, the Upper Rhine could lose 50,000 jobs by 2050 (Lehmann 2015).

However, while these media are highly important and the citizens of the ESO were in favour of them, the development of Radioeurodistrict and other cross-border media is complicated. In the early 2000s, in this region, no cross-border media was successful except ARTE (IKRB 2003). The DNA, a French-German daily newspaper, stopped writing articles in German from 2012 (Newsroom 2012). It was the last German-language newspaper in Alsace and according to Björn Akstinat, director of Internationale Medienhilfe (IMH), it is a cultural tragedy (Jourden 2014). IMH stated that it is very difficult for a German newspaper to publish in another country, especially in France as they have not ratified the European Charter of Regional or Minority Languages of 1999 (Jourden 2014). The French State has therefore not committed itself to support the formation of media using minority or regional languages (Jourden 2014). These arguments explained one of the difficulties that may have encountered Radioeurodistrict.

## CONCLUSION

Radioeurodistrict is mentioned in the book *Lexikon der deutsch-französischen Kulturbeziehungen nach 1945* (Colin & all 2015), however, this does not mean that it was a well-known and supported radio.

As explained earlier, Radioeurodistrict was a French-German radio, located in the territory of the Eurodistrict Strasbourg – Ortenau, run by a team of radio experts and journalists. This small group of friends launched this radio in 2003. Over the years, the radio has grown thanks to trainees and volunteers. The years 2009 – 2014 seem to be the golden age of Radioeurodistrict. It is possible to identify two end dates of this project: 2015 which is the end of Radioeurodistrict has a group team and 2018 which corresponds to the date of the last publication. Between 2015 and 2018, only one person was involved in this project and she wrote some literature columns.

There are several reasons why the project ended. First of all, there was no funding, or very little. This lack of financial and material support reflects the difficult relationship that Radioeurodistrict had with the Eurodistrict Strasbourg – Ortenau. As explained previously, Radioeurodistrict did not get any radio frequency, which means it was an Internet radio. Nevertheless, the concept of podcasts and Internet radio was not widely known and used in the early 2000s. While the team of Radioeurodistrict had enough trainees and volunteers and a sense of trust within the team, the number of French and German members was a difficulty. At the beginning of the project, there was only one German, too few to ensure, exchange, and find support in both countries. The lack of linguistic skills, as well as the lack of intercultural competence, were a major issue in this project, especially for partnerships. Indeed, when the French members could not understand a conversation, they became very suspicious of the partnership. Because of this mistrust, they gave up several projects and partnerships, which would probably have allowed them to develop the radio further, to make themselves better known, and therefore to gain a wider audience. All these difficulties ended up discouraging and exhausting its members, despite their unfailing commitment, which led to the end of the Radioeurodistrict project.

In my opinion, if the team of Radioeurodistrict had succeeded to get a radio frequency or if the project had taken place some years later, Radioeurodistrict could have been more successful. Financial and material support from the Eurodistrict Strasbourg – Ortenau and from local authorities would have contributed to the good development of this project.

This research also raises another problem, that I had not identified, which is the lack of cross-border media in this region. It has been discussed in the context of Radioeurodistrict, however, it would require further study and analysis.

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