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**RadioEurodistrict (RED) – History of the First French-German online radio
(2004)**

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Statement

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1. Introduction

Research into the history of a bilingual radio station Radio Eurodistrict (RED radio) offers the opportunity to examine the motivations and functioning of a cross-border media project (French - German). But with evidence that this station no longer exists (RED radio Eurodistrict.com), and with no written or online literature available further research is impossible. It was hoped that answers would be provided during an interview with the general secretary of the Strasbourg-Ortenau Eurodistrict, but this proved to not be the case as there is no connection with the Eurodistrict. Since RED radio was located in Strasbourg, this paper concentrates on the Strasbourg-Ortenau Eurodistrict (SOE).

This leads to the question of what a Eurodistrict actually is. Cross-border cooperation (CBC) appears to be referred to with a variety of terminology such as Eurodistricts, Euroregions, Eurégios. Despite exploring the literature, a definitive definition does not appear to exist, although across the definitions they seem to concern urban and rural integration, administration, elimination of borders and the socioeconomic enhancement of a cross- border areas. The question is further complicated by the fact that Eurodistricts may differ in size and population and have different approaches to administration. A Euroregion may contain a Eurodistrict and there is often a lack of distinction between the two (Perkmann, 2003).

With an understanding of the definition of a Eurodistrict, this paper aims to discover how these vast areas of Europe are financed and governed. The involvement of the European Union (EU) and the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) is explored while looking at how this functions alongside funding of both large-scale and micro-projects by INTERREG, set up as a community initiative (europa, n.d). One method of social cohesion and administration is for the Eurodistrict to become a European Grouping of Territorial Cooperation (EGTC), which provides a legal framework for the Eurodistrict (Ineract ,2008). Its functioning, in relevance to the Strasbourg-Ortenau Eurodistrict is discussed. It is noted that not all Euroregions are in the European Union as in the case of Sweden, Norway and Iceland and that countries that share a border with a

European country may also benefit from CBC projects such as Greece- Albania (INTERREG Europe).

1.1. An importance of the history and geography of a Eurodistrict and Euroregion

Following numerous historical border conflicts in Europe, this paper shows that CBC is not a new phenomenon by considering the history of the Germany-Netherlands Eurégio of 1958 which originally aimed to strengthen a weak post-war economy (Vovenda and Plotnikov, 2011). Perkmann (2005) states that this Eurégio was a success and other CBC initiatives followed during the 1970s. 2008 saw a dramatic increase in the number of Euroregions following the fall in communism in 1989 (Vovenda and Plotnikov, 2011).

Although this paper is primarily concerned with the SOE, the Poland-Czech Republic Euroregions, which also faced a history of conflict, are also briefly researched as they had formed a programme of cooperation as far as 1958 (espaces-frontaliers,n.d.) and a comparison was desired. The six Euroregions had the motivation to improve their economy and social perspective in Europe but had the disadvantage of their geographical position in the east of Europe, a historical lack of infrastructure and a reluctance to seek employment elsewhere (Böhm and Opiola, 2019). This comparison facilitates the understanding of the complexity of cross-border cooperation when considering a smaller, less developed Euroregion of the east and the wealthier Eurodistricts of the Rhine.

1.2. Motivations

An important function of this paper is to understand the motivations to create a Eurodistrict, initially an experiment to improve the daily life of border inhabitants by increasing the socioeconomic situation of formerly industrial areas by CBC (Vovenda and Plotnikov, 2011). A number of themes were addressed including; economy, education and bilingualism, employment, health, transport and infrastructure, and social integration (Sanguin, 2013). Joint projects relating to these themes were funded across borders with the aim of improving the well-being of the citizens. By considering the reason for the

Schengen agreement and its aim to eliminate borders, (Schengen,n.d.) the immense task of improving cross-border transport links can be appreciated. Although many borders may be land borders, other countries are separated by physical barriers such as mountains, rivers or the sea as in the case of the Kent/Nord-pas-de-Calais/Belgium Euroregion.

By researching both past and present motivations and objectives it is possible to explore whether objectives change or remain static. It can be seen that they are constantly reviewed and prioritised to adapt to the needs of the Eurodistricts but also Europe. Today, the importance of improving daily life is still at the heart of the objectives but projects now address themes of sustainability, the environment and renewable energy (e.c.europa,n.d.). The Eurodistricts are looking to the future with long-term projects around these new themes, such as the continuing “deux rives” in the SOE, which is aiming to build 400-450 sustainable houses a year between 2017- 2026 (strasbourgdeux,n.d.).

1.3. The Strasbourg-Ortenau Eurodistrict

Since this paper is primarily concerned with the SOE, its history, geography and demography are considered as well as its functioning as an EGTC. Although motivations to create this Eurodistrict may overlap with other Eurodistricts and Euroregions, the way in which funds are used, and for what projects, is detailed. In order to have the most accurate information, the majority has been retrieved from the official website of the SOE (eurodistrict.eu) as well as from an interview with the general secretary of this Eurodistrict. (see annex for transcript).

It is demonstrated that the micro-projects of INTERREG are relevant to the inhabitants, being public-led by a bottoms-up approach where inhabitants devise a project (with French and German cooperation) and then apply for funding using the user-friendly information page of the official SOE website. Large-scale projects, such as the implementation of a bus line, serve a mobile workforce and it has been deemed to be a success, improving transport links, employment and therefore the economy. (eurodistrict,n.d.). A variety of projects are considered to see if they fulfil the motivation to create a Eurodistrict.

1.4. Possible reasons for failure of a Eurodistrict

Despite finding a list of successful projects on the websites of the Eurodistricts such as the introduction of a reusable coffee cup “coffee to go nochemol” in the SOE, it is difficult to discover specific failures as they are often abandoned at the planning phase. The RED radio is a failed project but by whom? Sanguin (2013) states that as projects have become larger, they have become more expensive and time consuming with complex administration but a lack of legal framework. The cost effectiveness of INTERREG has also been challenged by McMaster (2017), as formerly prosperous regions appear to become even wealthier, and as objectives change to ones based on sustainability, the environment and low emissions, so they become more long-term, complex and expensive. The different regulations of neighbouring countries are addressed (France and Germany), and the influence of historical conflicts considered on the success of cross-border cooperation (Poland-Czech Republic). Current criticism in the British press (the Sun, 2019) relates to the immense size of these Eurodistricts and certain high-profile figures in both France, (Marine le Pen, 2019 Jordan Bordell, 2019) have attacked the treaty of Aix-La-Chapelle between France and Germany which supports bilingualism and cooperation. Europe is not static, and the possible consequences Brexit will have on the future of the Eurodistricts and Euroregions are examined.

1.5. Objectives

- To understand the motivations to create a Eurodistrict
- To analyse functioning of the district
- To identify reasons of failure.

2. Literature Review

2.1. What is a Eurodistrict?

There appears to be a lack of consensus concerning the definition of a Eurodistrict. It has been described as a, “European administrative entity that contains urban agglomerations which lie across the border between two or more states. a program for cooperation and integrations of the towns or communes of which it is comprised;” (Duran, 2007 p.231). Although this definition mentions the cooperation and integration of European states it refers to a Eurodistrict as containing “urban agglomerations” without mentioning the rural nature of certain Eurodistricts such as the SOE where the German side of Ortenau extends from the Black Forest to the Rhine and is principally a low-density, rural population (Reitel and Moullé, 2015). The Eurodistrict of Basel provides its own definition, suggestion ;

des espaces frontaliers de coopération dont l’objectif est d’organiser et d’institutionnaliser la coopération entre les pays au niveau des zones frontalières.....les décisions sont prises dans les institutions et comites propres a chacun. La coopération transfrontalière vise à éliminer les barrières inhérentes aux frontières (eurodistictbasel.eu,n.d.p.p2).

This is the preferred definition because it is a working definition used by an active Eurodistrict and it refers to the fact that decisions are taken at a local level by all relevant groups. It speaks of the desire to eliminate borders between countries and refers to the (CBC). Giband (2009 p.p.15), states that a Eurodistrict is an,

“operational and political structure in favour of local cooperation”. This definition refers to the functioning of a Eurodistrict but speaks of local cooperation and not CBC.

Some of the difficulties in finding a definition of a Eurodistrict lie in the fact that the terminology can vary considerably when referring to cooperation and integration between bordering countries; Eurodistricts, Euroregions, Eurégio, CBC, territorial cooperation, Eurometropolis, micro (or macro) regions, European Grouping of Territorial Cooperation. It has been suggested that virtually all border areas are involved in CBC which in itself has been referred to a structure based on low - level politics aimed at practical problem solving (Peckmann, 2003). Duran (2007) suggests that in 2000, more

than 70 initiatives referred to themselves as structures connected with Euroregions. In 2003, however, Peckmann stated that there were 100 cross-border structures connected with Euroregions or Eurodistricts and this gives no clue as to their role or framework. Euroregions were in existence before Eurodistricts and may contain a Eurodistrict, having certain connections and overlaps with them including multiple common objectives (Duran, 2007)). Perkmann (2003) states that “Euroregion” is a term produced by the council of Europe and is not an official term of the EU and its purpose is to create a common space by means of rural and urban planning centred around the local economy, and environmental protection and preservation. A definition that appears to apply to both Eurodistrict and Euroregion is offered by Vovenda and Plotnikov (p.51,2011) ,“distribution of power between central government and the border communities given the authority to regulate their activities independently and conclude interregional transborder agreement in accordance with the state legislation”, stressing the equality of power between the concerned border countries and the fact that decisions are made locally but in accordance with the law.

Both Eurodistricts and Euroregions appear to have common features with differing territorial sizes and no upper or lower limit of population, although this generally ranges from 150,000 to 5 million inhabitants (e.c.europa. n.d). A Eurodistrict may associate European Union (EU) and non-EU members and they are more developed in central Europe whereas the Eurodistricts are principally in the west of Europe. Non-EU member states include Norway, Iceland and Switzerland and they are required to fund themselves (McMaster, 2017). There is also the presence of seven external border Euroregions (Belarus, Ukraine,) where one border only is required to be part of the EU (e.c.europa. n.d.).

There are four French -German Eurodistricts on the Rhine plus the French – German Eurodistrict of Saar-Moselle (rmtmo ,n.d.);

-Saar-Moselle	(1.600km ² – 200 communes - 700,000 population)
-PAMINA (Palatinat, <u>M</u> ittlerer Oberrhein, <u>N</u> ord de l’ <u>A</u> lsace)	(6.000km ² – 550 communes – 1.600,000 population)
-Strasbourg – Ortenau	(2.400km ² – 112 communes – 921,000 population)
-Freiburg/Centre et Sud Alsace	(5,000 km ² – 344 communes – 1.250,000 population)
-Trinational Bale	(2.000km ² – 250 communes – 900,000 population)

This paper is mainly concerned with the SOE but in order to discuss its functioning and motivations, references will be made to other Euroregions. The question of definition is further complicated by the fact that Strasbourg is part of a Eurodistrict but has been described as a “Eurométropole” on its own website (int.strasbourg, n.d.).

Finance is a major issue in CBC. Funding is provided by the EU via the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) which, in 1975, gave 5% of its budget to cross-border regions (Sanguin, 2013). Like the definitions, the financial structure may also vary; Eurodistricts may have their own funding, national sources such as the European fees paid by member states or inhabitant contributions (30cts in 2005) (Perkmann, 2005). Many projects are funded by the INTERREG programmes which were first developed in 1990 as a community initiative, giving one billion euros to cross- border cooperation of eleven member states, lying directly on the borders or adjacent to them. This was later extended to transnational and interregional cooperation (e.c.europa, n.d.). The current budget (phase 2014-2020) is currently 10.1 billion euros (including ERDF allocation) and covers 28 members and 100 projects. The ERDF contribution is 500 million euros (e.c.europa,n.d.). INTERREG is a programme of five phases to present (1990-1993, 1994-1999, 2000-1006, 2007-2013, 2014- 2020). It does not only concern projects from EU countries and Albania, for example has profited with the CB Rail project linking Greece and Albania (Interreg,n.d.). The current individual contribution in the SOE is one euro per inhabitant (eurodistrict,n.d.). At least 80% of the funds for each cooperation programme in developed regions must concentrate on at least two themed objectives, “thematic concentration,” prioritised out of 11; research-innovation, information and communication technologies, SMEs (small and medium-sized enterprises), low-carbon economy. This percentage is reduced to 60% in transition regions and 50% in less developed regions. 5% is set aside to reduce economic, environmental and social problems in urban areas while focusing on sustainable urban development. Further funding is provided by local business and public fund-raising for smaller projects. INTERREG is constantly reviewing its objectives and the 2021-2027 phase aims to have five investment priorities offering a more tailored approach, simplifying administration and regulations and being more cohesive (e,c,europa,n.d.). Perkmann (2003) stresses that INTERREG is only applicable on EU territory and in 2005 questioned if some

Euroregions place too much dependence on INTERREG instead of seeking their own funding.

Some Eurodistricts, including the SOE chose to become an EGTC (European Grouping of Territorial Cooperation) which was a regulation adopted in July 2006 and open to all EU states serving as a tool to further enhance economic cohesion, (Interact, 2002). Sanguin (2013) describes INTERREG and EGTC together as a means of empowering the Eurodistricts, complimented by a political instrument. Along with a legal framework the Eurodistricts have the authority to manage their own budgets and have the requirement of a committee and a president. This legal framework is not compulsory however and is determined by national state law (Interact, 2008). An EGTC can be a partner of a project with its own funds or a project promoter with EU funds (e.g.INTERREG) and be a provider of co-financing. With the INTERREG programme, the EGTC is able to implement INTERREG financial help for micro-projects such as administration support and associations (portal, n.d.). Eurodistricts vary in their composition as the ETB is an association (eurodistrictbasel,n.d.) and the Eurodistrict Freiburg/Centre/Sud-Alsace is in the process of becoming an EGTC (eurodistrict-Freiburg,n.d.) which again demonstrates an inequality and confusion of the Eurodistricts.

2.2. Is Cross-border cooperation a new phenomenon?

There have been constant border conflicts throughout history, and it has been suggested that between 1630-1945 (30- year war and World War II) inhabitants have only met each other with weapons (eurodistrictbasel, n.d.). After WW11 in 1949, the Council of Europe was the first organisation working for European integration and construction and France and Germany sought “European peace by open borders” (Sanguin, 2013). One of the oldest Eurégios (contraction of European and region) was founded in 1958 between Germany and the Netherlands and its founding aim was to strengthen a weak economy and infrastructure by increasing bilateral trade (Vovenda and Plotnikov, 2011). In 1978, the Eurégio council was formed and was the first cross-border regional parliamentary assembly in Europe (Perkmann, 2005). By 2018 this Eurégio covered 13,000km² and had a population of 3.4 million (Pallagst and Caesar, 2018). By pooling the political power of

both countries, it hoped to give stronger representation to higher government, and this achieved success with the diversion of the A1 motorway as well as the construction of another motorway (Perkmann, 2005). This successful management of cooperation necessitated cross-border reshuffles and several revaluations by the working group. In 1985 the separate secretariats merged into one, employing both Dutch and Germans. The two countries made long-term programmes relating to social-economic developments to improve the life of its citizens. The Eurégio is considered a success and an example to follow (Perkmann, 2005). Successful projects include the technological “Smart Inspectors” of 2012 for precision agriculture and the “mechatronics for SMEs”, a local economic, technological development programme of 2009-2015 (e.c.europa,n.d.). It has been suggested that one reason for this success is the positive and strong municipal autonomy and the fact that this cooperation between the two countries is not considered a threat to political authorities (Perkmann, 2005). One result of this Eurégio is that it has become more competitive compared to other regions but its negative aspect is that it is time-consuming due to two languages being required for every discussion, and documentation requiring personnel on both sides of the border (Pallagst and Caesar, 2018).

The first Euroregions were in the “Rhine state” and were formed in the mid-20th century, initially coming together to found the Economic European Council (E.E.C.) which later led to the EU. (Vovenda and Plotnikov, 2011). Initially these CBCs were small-scale informal associations as in a “twinning” of border towns. (Perkmann, 2003). The 1970s was an active period of regional cooperation; Norway, Sweden and Finland formed the Kvarken-Mittskandia; Austria, Germany and Switzerland organised the International Lake Constance Conference Euroregion in 1973; Belgium, Netherlands and Germany launched the Maas-Rhine Euroregion in 1976 (Vovenda and Plotnikov, 2011). One aspect that stands out is that these countries are in Northern Europe where there was already a history of industrial development and local self-governance. During the 1990s there were 72 Euroregions but this increased to 120 during the 2000s following the fall of communism in 1989 and the increased membership of countries to the EU. These Euroregions are not found equally in Europe however, and Vovenda and Plotnikov (2011) comment that in 2011 there were 16 Euroregions in Poland 14 in the Czech Republic but only two in Greece and five in Italy.

2.3. An example of a Central-Eastern Europe Euroregion: Poland – Czech Republic

In order to better understand the formation and functioning of the SOE, a brief comparison with a Euroregion in a different area of Europe, with a different economic and political history is considered.

The border region of Poland and the Czech Republic has undergone a turbulent history and the creation of this Euroregion was one of the results of World War I (espaces.transfrontaliers,n.d.). The position of this border (800kms) has not remained fixed. For example, in 1920 the Czechs received Polish land, coal mines and railways after the partition of Silesia. Between 1938 – 1945 the Czechoslovak region of Zaolzie was home to a Polish minority which led to conflict and tension and in 1939 this area became a part of Nazi Germany after the Polish invasion. Despite the restoration of the 1920 border in 1945 there was still no CBC until the signing of a treaty by both countries in Warsaw, 13/06/1958. Cooperation of the countries intensified after the collapse of the communist and totalitarian regimes in 1989 and in 1993 a CBC agreement was signed by both the Polish and Czech ministers of the economy (espaces-transfrontaliers,n.d.).

Since 1991 six Euroregions have been created along the Polish-Czech border (e.c.europa,n.d.). The aim of this collaboration was to facilitate the integration of this region to Europe from an economic and social perspective encouraging a free flow of people, eliminating administration, improving the infrastructure, education, training and employment, and attracting local and foreign investors (Dolzblasz, 2013). These programmes of integration require the support of the local inhabitants, and to raise awareness and integration friendship days and social events regularly take place in both countries resulting in a cultural exchange and promotion of the area, which in turn can increase tourism and boost the economy (espaces-transfrontaliers,n.d.).

Money is provided from the ERDF, up to 75% of expenses (between 2-20,000euros) with 25% from the state in the form of reimbursements and subsidies available from the state budget (Dolzblasz, 2013). Funding, provided by INTERREG V

(budget of 8.5 billion euros, for the fifth generation of programmes (2014 – 2020) concentrates on Poland and the Czech- Republic. In 2014 there were 50 EGTCs in Europe but only three in Poland, although two more were planned (Böhm and Opiola, 2019). These regions have had a history of high unemployment rates and the INTERREG programme concentrates on creating employment and the potential of tourism. Finance is provided to improve the skills of young people and to eliminate the administrative barriers to employment. The infrastructure of the regions is also addressed with money allocated for the upgrading of roads (e.c.europa,n.d). Between 2014-2017 there were numerous projects to improve transport links by modernising railways and roads and further transport improvements are proposed for the future (Interreg,n.d.) although Perkmann (2003) suggests that there is cooperation for only small-scale initiatives towards the east of Europe. The Euroregion, GLACENSIS is the oldest and largest of Poland – Czech Republic and was founded in 1996. The principal objectives have been the enhancement of tourism and culture, and money has come from European funds and small- project funds. The “local economic development” project has seen the installation of eight observation towers built in 2014 and connected by cycle paths. Since this project there has been an increase in tourism to the area (e.c.europa,n.d.).

The formation of a Euroregion is not just a question of geography but is also a question of management, administration and public participation. CBC is required at a national level and not simply at local and regional level; documents must be in both languages and collaboration is needed between two countries who may have completely different administration systems (espaces-transfrontaliers,n.d.). The language barrier of Silesia is not as important as other Eurodistricts due to the number of Polish living in this area after the border alteration of 1920 (Böhm and Opiola, 2019). Despite this fact, there is low-level border mobility. It does not appear to be a priority for the local citizens apart from the Polish working in the automotive and mining industries of the Czech- Republic. It has been said that there is a lack of interesting employment opportunities. Polish schools offering Czech language lessons and vice versa resulted in little interest and there are few school exchanges (Böhm and Opiola, 2019). The greatest success of the cross-border integration has been described as events organised between the two countries (Dolzblasz, 2013).

There is the possibility that the lack of cross-border mobility is cultural. Two former communist countries do not have a history of travelling abroad and may still be sceptical of neighbouring countries and cultures despite the European policy of open-borders (Böhm and Opiola, 2019). It has been said by Dolzblasz (2013) that the two countries have different expectations and that they have the greatest disparities of all internal borders. This may change as attitudes change and young people have more and more access to the world with Erasmus programmes, the internet and budget travel. This lack of interest may have historical foundations with a barrier of conflicts, language and cultures but it can be assumed that this same situation is seen in other border regions, including the Eurodistricts of the Rhine region. The geography of Poland and the Czech-Republic may influence cross-border mobility due to the proximity of Germany which offers greater employment opportunities, better salaries and better working conditions. The nearer the ex-socialist countries of Central Europe are to the West, the more they benefit economically (Vovenda and Plotnikov, 2011).

2.4. Motivations to create and develop a Eurodistrict

Today, approximately 37.5% of the EU population live in border areas (e.c.europa,n.d.). For many years these borders were hostile barriers between citizens, language and culture, and traditionally suffered from a lack of investment and high-tech industries, planning being dictated by military concerns (Sanguin, 2013). The first Euroregions and districts were started in the middle of the 20th century and these areas had a history of industry and were comprised of towns and cities which had become used to significant autonomy and self-governance which facilitated the introduction of CBC (Vovenda and Plotnikov, 2011).

The formation of Eurodistricts was initially a pilot or experimental project having the aim of improving the socioeconomic backwardness of the western European borders which were isolated from the centre (Vovenda and Plotnikov, 2011). Regions were to become more competitive and new communities built across borders. The cooperation increased dramatically after World War II and was focused around the needs of the population and not just local government and these regions were initially limited in size (Perkmann, 2003). The motivations to form a Eurodistrict are centred around themes

including, the economy, investment and employment, bilingualism and education, health, transport and infrastructure and social integration. These multiple motivations can be found across the majority of cross-border projects but despite a certain overlap are particular to each Eurodistrict (Sanguin, 2013). Inhabitants of border regions face daily difficulties in relation to the above themes and finding solutions to these problems is a major objective of cooperation. Administration needs to be simplified and accessible to inhabitants from both countries (espaces-frontalieres,n.d.). All the motivations have the joint objective of improving the daily lives of the inhabitants (eurodistrict,n.d.)

The frontier can offer the potential of employment and external income. Many Swiss or German companies have installed their headquarters in the East of France giving access to the French employment market while staying in the proximity of their own production (SRADDET, 2018). An example of this is in the Eurodistrict of PAMINA, one of the most economically prosperous regions in Europe. It is home to large companies such as Daimler, Michelin, Siemens and 50,000 small and medium- sized enterprises (SMES) (pamina,n.d.). The Eurodistrict of Freiburg has regular cross-border job forums and career advice sessions for schools to attract the future generation of employees (Freiburg-Alsace, n.d.). The investment of international companies in already prosperous regions may increase the wealth of the citizens of these Eurodistricts to the detriment of European citizens who live in less developed areas such as Poland and the Czech-Republic. Although it is possible to spend money to try and attract investors to these traditionally less developed regions, (INTERREG V) there is no guarantee that businesses are willing to locate there (Böhm and Opiola, 2019).

CBC also concerns the theme of healthcare and its accessibility. The Eurodistricts have the motivation to provide the best care possible to its citizens in all concerned languages to ensure good communication with experts from both or more countries, pooling resources to avoid duplication of health facilities thus offering a more efficient and cost - effective service. This efficiency demands the collaboration of both regional and national administration with documents being provided in all required languages. A large -scale health project in PAMINA aims to improve the administration and access to health by simplifying health insurance rights and improving communication (Pamina,n.d.). The Eurodistrict of Saar-Moselle (founded 2010) signed a joint health strategy in 2015 aiming

to improve social cohesion in the health sector. (portal,n.d.). France has installed hospitals and retirement homes in Belgium to be used by the two nationalities (SRADDET,2018).

All the Eurodistricts have the motivation of improving bilingualism and the quality of education and this is clearly documented on all five of their websites. Cross- border schools, higher education facilities and student exchanges, work placements and linguistics stays are common to all Eurodistricts. The Saar-Moselle Eurodistrict has a polytechnical institute for French and German studies and there is a five-year plan to develop bilingualism in early childhood, for example (SaarMoselle,n.d.). France has built universities in Belgium which are frequented by students of both countries (SRADDET, 2018). The importance of cooperation in the administration of such projects is vital and as with the healthcare, documentation needs to be clear in both languages with the policies and rules of the relevant country detailed and questions addressed such as the recognition of qualifications acknowledged (espaces-transfrontaliers,n.d). The acceptance of learning another language is not simple and has geographical implications as previously seen along the Poland-Czech Republic border. Switzerland, however, has the advantage of being situated in the heart of Europe. French, German and Italian are officially spoken and it is a federal country which does not belong to the EU. In fact, on the 6th December 1992, a Swiss referendum to join the European Economic Area was rejected by 50.3% of votes. Switzerland has a priority of trinational cooperation (Eurodistrict Trinational de Bale - ETB) and an exchange of knowledge and experience, offering jobs and exchange programmes as well as tourism (Pallagst and Caesar, 2018).

The Schengen Agreement was signed in Schengen, Luxemburg June 14, 1985 and it is a treaty resulting in the majority of European countries abolishing their national borders, building a border- free Europe. It is known as the Schengen area. It was originally signed by only five countries; France, Germany, Belgium, Luxemburg and Netherlands (Schengen,n.d.). One of the fundamental principles of the EU is the free movement of workers, goods, services and capita with no discrimination which is a vital motivation in the development of a Eurodistrict (Böhm and Opiola, 2019). By 2014 there were 1.9 million EU citizens working in a foreign country, although this tends to be in the more affluent countries of Switzerland and Luxemburg (Böhm and Opiola, 2019). The United Kingdom and the Republic of Ireland do not belong to the Schengen area although they are EU members whereas the states of Iceland, Liechtenstein, Norway and Switzerland

are non -EU members but are part of the Schengen area (Schengen,n.d.). This free movement improves the life of border citizens enabling, not only the opportunity to work in a different country, but also easier access to cross-border leisure activities, tourism and better shopping opportunities. Reitel (2015) states that the Schengen Agreement proposes governance systems which must not upset existing institutional frameworks, and that projects can be developed without state questioning or political structure. He suggests, however, that the border becomes devalued.

Infrastructure improvement is a big motivation in the creation of a Eurodistrict. Due to the nature of a border, access to a neighbouring country has traditionally hindered. CBC and integration and ease of access is vital if the daily life of citizens is to be improved. Borders may be a simple land border which is easy to cross such as in Portugal-Spain, a river as in the Eurodistricts of the Rhine, mountains such in Austria, Switzerland and even the sea as in the United Kingdom – France – Belgium. These projects of infrastructure improvement are high-level and expensive projects which require funding and cooperation from regional and national government or governments (espaces-frontaliers,n.d.). In 2013 national French railway (SNCF) launched an international connection between Paris and Freiburg (Freiburg-Alsace,n.d.). Due to the complexity and number of people and languages involved from two or three countries across the linguistic border, projects can be slow to implement and expensive to finance (Reitel, 2015). The most impressive International project of Europe must be the building of the Channel Tunnel which is situated in the Euroregion Kent/Nord-pas-de-Calais/Belgium (formed 1991) and links England, France and Belgium. There are three tunnels and work started in 1988 and was completed in 1993. It is 50.45kms long and required 13,000 workers from Europe and cost £4.65 billion (eurostar,n.d.), an extreme example of a European project.

There is the motivation to promote tourism by having publicity campaigns in both countries which can be advertised both locally and nationally. Joint events such as the “event of bridges” is organised jointly by the two tourist associations of Freiburg and Alsace (Freiburg-Alsace,n.d.). The east of France is now the second region of France for foreign tourists and French tourists in the Black Forest increased 168.2% between 2004-2016 (SRADDET, 2018). This not only boosts the economy but caters to the social needs and well-being of the citizens by offering job opportunities in tourism, the possibility to

visit and learn about other cultures and the possibility to participate in cross-border activities. Integration is encouraged with cross-border projects such as joint leisure facilities and activities. These include, swimming pools in Germany frequented by the French, and French culture such as operas and orchestras attended by the Germans, such as in Strasbourg and Kehl (SRADDET, 2018). All Eurodistricts offer a range of activities such as concerts, food events, exhibitions and excursions.

Motivations to create and develop a Eurodistrict are not static and need to be regularly reviewed to see if the needs of the people are still being met. The motivations must meet the changing requirements of the people, the Eurodistrict, Europe and the global population. Today there is an importance placed on sustainable, environmentally friendly projects based on renewable energy (e.c.europa,n.d.). These projects are often long term such as the improving of the railway infrastructure and protection of the environment in Switzerland planned for 2030-2035 and a renewable energy and sustainable environmental project to build housing and industry, “deux Rives” which is planned in the SOE by 2030 (Reitel, 2015). The original motivations speak about the improvement of education, but more recent motivations speak about the improvement of education and bilingualism demonstrating how motivations are being revisited and adapted to suit the needs and demands of all members and businesses of a Eurodistrict (e.c.europa,n.d.)

2.5. Strasbourg – Ortenau Eurodistrict – an introduction

The Strasbourg-Ortenau Eurodistrict project was launched at the 40th anniversary of the Elyses treaty in 2003. This treaty was signed in 1963 by General de Gaulle and Chancellor Konrad Adenauer and it promised irrevocable commitment of France and Germany to peace and friendship between the population and Europe (Reitel, 2015). In 2003 the SOE experimental project was signed by both President Jacques Chirac and Chancellor Gerhard Schroder, being formally set-up two years later in 2005 (SRADDET, 2018).

Initially the SOE concerned Strasbourg and Kehl, two cities situated opposite each other across the Rhine. It was 4kms long along the border and 400 meters wide at its

maximum. This area of cooperation was very asymmetrical however, with the city of Strasbourg being comprised of 28 communes and 450,000 inhabitants whereas the town of Kehl had approximately 30,000 inhabitants. In the 1990s the SOE expanded to include Kreis, extending from the Black Forest to the Rhine helping to give equal balance to the two countries (Reital and Moullé, 2015). The fact that the cities of Strasbourg and Kehl are close to the border is more likely to enhance integration and cooperation as they have easier access to their neighbours (eurodistrict,n.d.).

In January 2016 France reorganised its internal administration, reducing the number of regions from 22 to 13 and the region the Grand-Est now comprises Alsace-Champagne-Ardenne and Lorraine with Strasbourg being the capital (Grand-Est,n.d.). The SOE has retained its original components. The SOE regroups 112 communes, 61 French and 51 German which equates to a population of 958,421 and covers an area of 2,468km² (density 388 inhabitants per km²) (eurodistrict,n.d.). Although there is a similarity in number of inhabitants per country, there is a vast difference of population density as the German side is principally rural and the SOE incorporates five German towns (Offenburg, Lahr, Kehl, Achern, Oberkirch) whereas the population of France is concentrated in the urban city of Strasbourg (int.strasbourg,n.d.). There is a vast difference in urban population size; Strasbourg has 282,000 inhabitants as opposed to the next most populated city of Offenburg in Germany having only 58,736. The city of Kehl on the opposite side of the Rhine to Strasbourg is often considered as an extension of the former but its population is only 35,391 (eurodistrict,n.d.). The region of the SOE is the main industrial and commercial centre of the Upper Rhine with a concentration of economic wealth. Strasbourg is known for the presence of European institutions such as the European Council, European Parliament and the European Court of Human Rights (SRADDET, 2018).

Although the geographical situation of this Eurodistrict may seem ideal to promote CBC, the turbulent history of the region cannot be ignored. In 1870 Alsace was submitted to intense Germanification but in 1918 this was reversed to Francification and in 1940 Alsace was submitted to Nazification. The latter resulted in the expulsion of the Francophiles and there was a concentration camp in Struthof (Alsace,n.d.). This history of conflict makes the cooperation between the countries of the Eurodistrict more remarkable as 1940 is recent history and was only 80 years ago meaning that some people

may still be alive and they or their families may have suffered during the war. Cooperation and integration with a former enemy may not be their main priority. Until the 1950s Kehl was a town divided in two and the customs officers strictly controlled cars that crossed the Rhine. Wounds were too recent to contemplate CBC and there was little motivation to rebuild bridges across the Rhine that had been destroyed in 1944 (Saar-Moselle,n.d.).

The administrative organisation of the SOE has actually deepened since the becoming an EGTC and is comprised of a council, a committee and a president and vice-president who rotate every two years. There are 50 political representatives, 25 French and 25 German (as opposed to 14 in total before). The president is currently the mayor Strasbourg, Mr Roland Ries and the vice-president the “Landrat” of Ortenaukreis, Mr Frank Scherer. Public meetings are held twice a year in different locations and the committee of 14 members meet three or four times a year. All council meetings are open to the public. (dossier de presse, 2010). There is a common general secretary (in place of two) in Kehl; Anita Klaffke responsible for implementing political decisions. (portal,n.d.). The ETB of Basel also follows this system of equal administration with a committee being formed of nine Germans, nine French and nine Swiss, one president and two vice-presidents (basel,n.d.). This system of equal administration ensures that no country is seen to be favoured and more dominant.

Since 2010 the SOE has been an EGTC and controls its own budget and has its own legal and political structure. It is a non-profit making organisation and has seven full-time employees (portal,n.d.). The SOE is free to define its organisation, procedures, budget and competences and the administration functions from a “bottoms-up”, public-led approach which deals with local initiatives and so is a public entity where institutionalisation is very light and decisions are taken by joint agreement (urbact,n.d.). Since 2008 any agreement requires a majority in both countries. The inhabitants are encouraged to participate and create projects that will improve their quality of life by micro-projects such as sporting and cultural activities which are funded by the INTERREG programme (eurodistrict,n.d.).

2.6. Motivation to create and develop the Strasbourg-Ortenau Eurodistrict

The creation of the SOE was considered to be an ambitious project to enhance the benefits of a frontier situation and to improve the daily life of its inhabitants.” to bring down the administrative barriers between the French and German parts of the district and hence facilitate the daily life of its inhabitants,” (int.strasbourg.eu/en, n.d.p.p.1) . By reducing the administrative barriers between France and Germany, life could be improved in the areas of transport, environment, health, education, sport, economy, employment, tourism and culture (int.strasbourg,n.d.). A joint declaration was made by President Chirac and Chancellor Schroder wishing to promote CBC, “Nous soutenons la création d’un Eurodistrict Strasbourg-Kehl, bien desservie, ayant vocation à explorer de nouvelles formes de coopération et à accueillir des institutions Européenes », (dossier de presse, p.7 2010). The official website of the SOE refers to the Grand-Est as a “ région phare” and states that the rural areas with a low-density population must profit from the dynamic development of the large metropoles to include good transport systems, employment, education and healthcare and that the success of cooperation must concern all of the population by social interaction and exchanges (eurodistrict,n.d.). The SOE was to be a pilot region of cross-border cooperation by the implementation of French and German projects in the heart of the EU by the means of its own legal, political, operational structure and fiscal statute (an EGTC) (dossier de presse, 2010). In 2008 the mayor, Roland Ries expressed the desire for the SOE to become as strong a symbol for the French as Washington D.C. is for the Americans, moving from a position of cooperation to co-decision. This increased participation of the inhabitants was considered one of the main issues in the formation of the SOE (eurodistrict,n.d.).

Planning, transportation and the environment have been a core detail for the motivation of the SOE and other Eurodistricts from its beginnings. Although it may be complicated to have a joint planning team, the planning agency of Strasbourg has played an important role in project development (SRADDET, 2018). This suggests that the majority of contribution has come from France but the success to achieve motivations must use the best qualified of each country in different domains. The administrative areas of France do not hold legislative authority but have discretionary power over

infrastructure and operational spending in education, tourism, public transport, universities, research, employment and business assistance. (Grand-Est,n.d). Perkmann (2003) describes how the success of the SOE (and other Eurodistricts with Germany as a partner), may be due to the fact that Germany has a history of strong local government with CBC being recognised by the state and that his contrasts to France which has a more centralised government.

The motivation to create and develop a Eurodistrict can alter to accommodate new attitudes of the population and governments as we have already seen. These motivations can continue to enhance the daily lives of the inhabitants but may be adapted or added to. SRADDET (Schéma Régional d'Aménagement de Développement Durable et d'Egalité des Territoires) concerns a future vision of all the new French regions (Eurodistricts and the east) and is an ambitious plan of sustainable development. The themes include urban planning, transport and mobility, the environment (climate, air quality and noise) biodiversity (waste preventions and management, renewable energy and water). (eurodistrict,n.d.) The aim is to implement cross-border projects in a sustainable way, integrating people from the same Eurodistrict and other regions. SRADDET is an example of a French initiative which has been adopted by the SOE in both France and Germany, being used to enhance the long-term well-being of inhabitants from both countries (Grand-Est,n.d.).

2.7. Projects in the Strasbourg-Ortenau Eurodistrict

Since this section concentrates on the projects in just the SOE, most of the references are from the official website, eurodistrict.eu (n.d.).

Projects may be small in nature and appeal to just a small group of citizens, such as choirs, or may be large-scale and involve practically all the population of the Eurodistrict, such as transport and hospitals. Local inhabitants of the SOE are encouraged to apply for funding for micro-projects (cultural and sporting events) via the official website on a dedicated page, “project société / project zivilgesellschaft”. There is a list of deadlines and required formalities. Contact details are provided from both countries for when

further help or information is needed. Funding is provided by INTERREG. Each project must have at least one German and French partner and the maximum amount given is 40,000 euros for each project (eurodistrict,n.d.). In the case of the ETB, extra finance is provided from Switzerland if the project involves a Swiss partner (basel,n.d.). The projects concentrate on 14 themes and due to the vast nature of these projects, only a certain number of examples will be given.

2.7.1. Education and Bilingualism

In 2017, 30,000euros (50,000 euros in 2019) were allocated to encourage cross-border exchanges and the promotion of bilingualism in schools by paying entrance fees and transport costs relating to this theme. One of the motivations to create the SOE was to reduce complicated administration and the website provides comprehensive information, in French and German, for teachers to apply for this funding (eurodistrict,n.d.). Across the Eurodistricts approximately 100 projects were devised in 2017 to increase knowledge of the neighbouring language and to promote integration, including the cross-border vocational training initiative where the theoretical part of a course is in one country and the practical part in the other (espaces-transfrontaliers,n.d.). There is a European school in Strasbourg with 910 students who speak more than 50 languages and the language section specialises in French, German and English (eurodistrict,n.d.).

The Information Centre on European Institutions (CIE) in Strasbourg is the result of a joint French and German initiative and was created in 1995. Its aim is to inform the general public of the services and politics of the EU. There is access to a library, a librarian and a variety of documents in different formats and languages (Int.strasbourg,n.d.).

2.7.2. Employment

Regular events held include entrepreneur week and business awards. Career advice is given to students in the form of professional profiling from businesspeople from both countries. The initiative, “un marché de l’emploi à 360°” is EU funded and focuses on local employment, using the expertise of both German and French job centres to balance

the unemployment rate in both countries. The aim was to address unemployment in France and the need for manpower in Germany by providing three advisors, transparency in the job market and help for employers as well as employees (interreg,n.d.). This large-scale project (2016-31/12/2018) has a budget of 2,147,99.20 euros in total, with 1,073,599.60 euros being provided by the EU and 187,026.30 euros provided by the EGTC (portal,n.d.). A budget of 50,000 euros has been given to support the job market of Ortenau (Eurodistrict,n.d.). In 2017, 7,377 workers crossed the Rhine to work in Ortenau versus 6,785 in 2015. The unemployment rate in Ortenau in December 2018 was 2.8% (interreg-rhin,n.d.). Crossing the border to work is not a question of just finding a job as the workplace must be accessible to personnel who may never have worked in another country. To facilitate this transition, training courses and workshops are offered to help personnel adapt to a new culture and language (interreg-rhin,n.d.).

One successful project of the SOE is the “coffee to go nochemol” initiative which won an EU award (the special prize of a European commitment to reduce waste) and concerns takeaway coffee. It is an example of a local initiative which has been recognised internationally. This initiative introduces reusable coffee cups following a local study which counted the amount of coffee cups thrown away. Initially these reusable cups were only accepted in bakeries but due to the success of this initial experiment, these cups are now widely distributed and all citizens who are encouraged to buy them. These biodegradable cups are produced in Germany and this project creates jobs, boosts the economy, promotes the SOE while protecting the environment (eurodistrict,n.d.).

2.7.3. Health

By means of a project of joint funding by INTERREG and local donations combined with joint administrative cooperation, an addiction treatment centre was created in Kehl in the form of a French micro-structure but with French and German staff. Addicts from both countries are able to access this centre which has a capacity for 120 patients (eurodistrict,n.d.). Strasbourg and Kork hospitals also collaborate in the treatment and research of epilepsy with funds provided from ITERREG IVA (1, 247 million euros)

(portal,n.d.). Micro-projects include a workshop “sport sur ordonnance...sans frontières” which looks at ways health has improved by doctors prescribing sport (eurodistrict,n.d.).

2.7.4. Infrastructure- transport

If CBC and employment is a motivation, then transport and mobility is vital between the two countries. Europa 2020 strategy is a large-scale project implemented by the EGTC (portal,n.d.). A bus service has been introduced between Erstein and Lahr for border workers which runs according to business hours and was introduced following public consultation. It was initially a trial but proved to be a success. On the official website members of the public are invited to vote if they wish to have the bus accessible for everyone and not just workers, an example of the bottoms-up approach of administration and public participation. In 2017, Tram line D between Strasbourg and Kehl was extended with the aim of promoting employment, integration and bilingualism. Further CBC was ensured by a competition to see who would decorate the trams and this was won by Kehl (eurodistrict,n.d.).

Not all projects are completed or even started despite public consultation. Priorities are assessed and some projects (such as a ferry across the Rhine between Schwanau and Ottenheim) require additional studies before implementation and some projects are not pursued (bus service for Europa Park employees) (eurodistrict,n.d.). Europa Park, opened 1975, is a private enterprise between the Black Forest and Vosges. It is an immense attraction park receiving 5.6 million visitors a year and is one of the largest hotel resorts in Europe with 3,500 hotel beds. Although not a SOE project, it offers employment opportunities for the region, employing 3,100 workers in season from all of Europe (Europa park,n.d.).

The “jardin de deux rives / zwei Ufer » has been described as a “symbol de rapprochement”, uniting the cities of Strasbourg and Kehl and being a place of relaxation, meetings and exchanges (jds for Strasbourg,n.d.). The idea for a public garden joined by a bridge across the Rhine was born in 1995 and work started in 2002 and the park inaugurated in 2004. The landscape designer was German, and an artistic architectural bridge for use by bicycles and pedestrians only joins the two banks and the Tram D crosses the park (jds for Strasbourg,n.d.). This ambitious project “deux rives” not only

involves the park but the creation of 9,000 dwellings to attract 20,000 new inhabitants, 8,500 jobs, businesses and leisure facilities on the French side of the SOE. 200,000 million euros of public funds have been invested in this project which will be implemented in an ecological manner in keeping with the objectives of the SOE. This project is long-term looking to future needs of the population, with an aim to building 400-450 homes a year between 2017-2026 (strasbourgdeuxrives,n.d.).

2.7.5. Environment

Since November 1st 2017, all motorists wishing to drive in Strasbourg during periods of peak pollution must display a sticker (vignette) in their car showing the level of pollution their car emits between “green” (electric) and “6” (old diesel vehicles). This initiative “Crit Air” is a law of the French government and applies to all vehicles, including those from abroad. The equivalent German sticker (Feinstaubplakette) is not acceptable in this case. Germany has been developing environmental zones since 2008 and the German sticker is valid for environmental zones of all German cities and is applicable at all times. The “Crit Air” sticker is not accepted in Germany. This is an example of national projects being implemented on both sides of the border which, although slightly different, complement each other and both fulfil the objectives and motivations of the SOE by improving air quality and protecting the environment. The official website offers advice in both languages so that inhabitants understand the regulations of both countries (eurodistrict,n.d.).

2.7.6. Solidarity and social exclusion

Money is set aside for refugee children and adolescents aged 0-25. The amount of this fund is voted annually and was 30,000 euros in 2016 and 50,000 in 2017. This money is used for projects and actions facilitating integration (eurodistrict,n.d.). A fund-raising event “KM-solidarité” is held over two days and in 2017, 22,500 primary pupils from 120 schools of the SOE took part in a sponsored race on day one as well as 4,300 other participants on the second day. In total 8,249 euros was raised, and two cheques were presented to both a handicapped centre for children and an orthopaedic centre for children (eurodistrict,n.d.)

2.7.7. Various other projects of the SOE

There are a number of cross-border associations open to everyone, including the choir of Strasbourg which became a member of the Federation of French and German choirs and attends events of the other Eurodistricts. The hockey club describes itself as, “une association multilingue et très cosmopolite et mixte,” (eurodistrict,n.d.) being formed of ten different nationalities. The BAAL Novo Theater (Offenburg and Strasbourg) has theatre productions devoted to intercultural themes and the “Kunstverein Garland eV” is an association of French and German artists who regularly organise exhibitions, theatre pieces and concerts. There are tours, festivals, markets and family events and excursions open to everyone (eurodistrict,n.d.).

In regards to the security of the SOE, police and customs officers work together, exchanging information about local crime. Information about French and German traffic regulations is available to both countries in both languages. Mixed police patrols on bikes attend events (eurodistrict,n.d.).

An INTERREG programme of 2017 was “Bicycle Gourmand “where 350 participants cycled 34kms in the company of experienced cyclists. The objective was to cycle through German villages of the SOE tasting local produce of both countries. This project had the aim of providing an integrated leisure activity which also promoted local produce and an awareness of the rural areas of the SOE. On a larger scale, the whole of the SOE is promoted by international trade and tourist fairs which aim to boost the economy and awareness of the region (eurodistrict,n.d.).

2.8. Possible reasons for failure of a Eurodistrict

The previous section about the projects of the SOE may give the impression that a Eurodistrict is a harmonious place to live with total integration and cooperation based around a variety of projects aimed at enhancing daily life, but is this the case? Specific examples of failed projects are hard to find in literature as the Eurodistrict websites tend to promote their successes and not failures. Details of a planned urban and land development project of Saar-Moselle was refused funding by INTERREG but details of

this refusal is only found at the bottom of the yearly report which is several pages long (Pamina,n.d.). It can be difficult to determine if a shelved project is a success or failure sometimes. In the SOE, Strasbourg was against the suppression of a foreign language in the 1st primary classes which had been decided by the government of Bade-Wurtemberg. The French wanted to continue the learning of the French language in the border zone but it was not agreed and lessons ceased (eurodistrict,n.d.). Is this a failure or a success of democracy?

Despite the major motivation to create CBC being one of integration with neighbouring countries, the threat of European instability is still present. The historical inter-ethnic conflicts in Cyprus as well those between Northern Ireland and Ireland have not been totally forgotten. The INTERREG III and IV programmes allocated money to projects relating to peace, such as joint youth activities, educational exchanges and employment initiatives in Ireland but despite a common culture and language, businesses and investors have been reluctant to invest (Sanguin 2013). It is possible that as time passes and citizens who have been part of border conflict die (Ireland, World War II), cooperation increases and the Euroregion prospers. Perkmann (2005) suggests that a Eurodistrict is unlikely to succeed in politically charged situations and unjust borders.

Borders and politics do not remain static and the prospect of BREXIT (British exit of the EU) is looming in October 2019. Even this close to the date of EU departure the effects on the relationship between the North of Ireland and Ireland is unclear as are the restrictions that may occur at the border. The relationship between Europe and the United Kingdom (including the cooperation between the UK and Gibraltar) remains unclear and this may affect the success or failure of the Euroregions concerned (for example Kent / Nord Pas-de-Calais /Belgium, East Sussex/Seine-Maritime / Somme). It is predicted that following BREXIT, and depending on the final agreement, funds for the INTERREG programme will reduce by up to 16%. This decrease effects all of the EU and will depend on which countries are prepared to make up this deficit (McMaster, 2017).

As in the majority of decisions, finance is often at the heart and INTERREG has often been a casualty of budget cuts. INTERREG originally started as a way to provide money for projects to enhance CBC and improve the daily life of its citizens but these projects have become more complex, specialised and expensive (McMaster, 2017). This

is supported by Sanguin (2013) who states that projects have become too ambitious and political, losing sight of the original objectives of solving cross-border problems. In the ETB the co-financing fund of 2017 was 50,000 per project but this was reduced to 30,000 in 2019 and in spring 2019 this fund was already exhausted (basel,n.d.). The Eurodistricts need the support of their citizens which is not achieved by cutting access and funding to micro-projects. Lack of funds is considered to be one of the biggest problems of a Eurodistrict and has the potential to lead to failure. Economic development requires finance and the European commission states that there is not enough money to cater for increasing numbers of member states (Vovenda and Plotniknov, 2011).

The value for money of INTERREG has been questioned with concerns that richer areas benefit and not those countries in greater need (McMaster, 2017) although INTERREG states that money is allocated based on the GDP (Gross Domestic Product , measuring the value of economic activity in a country) per capita (e.c.europa,n.d.). CBC is more undeveloped in the south of Europe although the region of Portugal -Spain received 382.5 million euros in 2017 (INTERREG and national funding). The GDP per capita in Greece, Portugal and Spain is less than 80% of the EU average whereas the GDP of Luxemburg is 60% more than the EU average. The INTERREG II has been described as a failure in Spain and Portugal due to a lack of experience in cooperation and trust between administrative bodies but, it has been suggested that INTERREG continues to allocate money with the view to cooperation projects being more successful in the future (e.c.europa,n.d.). Vovenda and Plotniknov (2011) suggest that there has been a weakening of CBC in certain countries (Portugal, Italy, Greece) after the financial crises of 2008, the financial problems becoming insurmountable in relation to integration. Any CBC initiatives require finance and human resources. There has also been a question around the economic failure of INTERREG II in Spain and France as only 20% of projects received money from companies and only 18.6% of projects were orientated towards improving the economy. France, where there was more cooperation in the projects, also received a greater allocation of money (e.c.europa,n.d.).

Administration can become too complex; requiring time, money and commitment and so has the possibility to contribute to failure of CBC. Eurodistricts have been criticised for having too much administration with an overlap of organisations, such as input from both the EGTC, the Euroregion and the Eurodistrict at the same time (Engl,

2009). This has the potential for an unclear structure where different organisations do not complement each other and a lack of a single legal framework (Sanguin, 2013). Many Eurodistricts (the SOE) are also an EGTC which, although may be beneficial to newer member states lacking the economic equality of former states, has a non-compulsory legal framework. Sanguin (2013) continues that this lack of clarity can lead to individual interpretation and implementation. Political relations are also vital to the success of the Eurodistricts. Between 2001-2008, under the mandate of Mayor Robert Grossmann, the cooperation in the SOE stagnated. Cooperation increased again in 2008 after the appointment of Mayor Roland Ries, who had a good relationship with his German colleague, Gunther Petry. On being elected, Mr Ries stated that he wished to create a true Eurodistrict with its own juristic and fiscal statute (Reitel, 2015).

Projects have become more ambitious and complex, as in infrastructure, and demand more time-consuming administration which in turn can lead to projects taking too much time to implement with a lack of motivation to continue (Sanguin, 2013). Any project meetings demand the collaboration of participants from both countries and can be difficult to organise. This is furthered by bordering countries having different forms of legal systems. Germany and France have different working hours per week and different rules regarding salaries, public holidays and the number of days off (portal e.c.,n.d.) and, it is difficult to find qualified, bilingual staff who are willing to accept the working conditions of a different country and culture. Education is controlled by the state in France but there is more local control in Germany (Sanguin, 2013). Citizens may be tempted to seek employment in a neighbouring country that offers higher salaries to the detriment of their own country, but people need to be aware of the different housing markets, pension rights and the possible non-recognition of qualifications (Böhm and Opiola, 2019). There is the additional complication of data protection where some member countries do not allow certain issues to be shared and openly discussed (McMaster, 2017), although examples were not found. To avoid failure, CBC is needed at national and not just regional level. Official documents and websites must be available and concise in both languages and any administration requirements clearly detailed (espaces-transfrontaliers,n.d.). It has been suggested that cooperation in the Eurodistricts is only in environmental matters which is actually mandatory under European law (McMaster,2017).

Euroregions are not static and populations can increase to become enormous entities as in the Euroregion of DKMT, Danube-Kreis-Mures-Tisza, (Hungary, Roumania, Serbia) which has a population of 5.3 million (density 71,867/km²) and so requires a high level of finance and such a large population can result in a lack of identity (Sanguin, 2013). These large powerful regions have been accused of being too competitive (including the SOE), making it difficult for others to obtain EU funding. Objectives and projects are said to be too distant from the needs of the citizens and priority is given to large-scale projects such as roads and bridges as opposed to local projects of sport and art events (portal, n.d.). Projects of infrastructure and common planning involve numerous meetings, personnel, documents as well as time and money and so are prone to failure (Engl, 2009). In 2016, a tram-train project in Saar-Moselle demanded further information as well as finance for the work and an agreement about responsibility for the tram-train after completion. The website states that the project has stalled due to a lack of financial backing by the Germans and a lack of response from local government (SaarMoselle, n.d.). Infrastructure at the border is often a problem of geography (rivers, mountains) and a problem that may be banal in a national setting becomes arduous at a regional level due to its complexity.

The nature of a border may also affect its likelihood of failure. The distances of industrial sites and towns from the border can affect the economy of an area. Consider the wealthy industrial sites along the Rhine and the smaller more urban areas of the Spain-Portugal border. Cooperation is perhaps more likely if the Eurodistricts are symmetrical; in the SOE, 60% of the population is urban and concentrated in Strasbourg (int Strasbourg, n.d.). The two countries are not equal economically or geographically with more unemployment in Germany but less expensive housing (McMaster, 2017). It is possible that the success of one Eurodistrict or country within a Eurodistrict results in the failure of another. A French article, by a French author (Bollmann, 2010 p.26), believes that all Eurodistricts only serve the interests of Germany and that, “les liens étroits entre l’Allemagne et la France ont provoqué une certaine Germanisation de notre pays”. The author gives the example of an agricultural project on the German side of the SOE, “Europa Farm” which was promoted by a finance group of south Germany. It is suggested that this project only benefits Germany as there is no French partner involved and so is not

from the Eurodistrict, but there seems to be a lack of evidence to show that this farm actually exists and there is a question mark around that fact that no French partner is said to be involved which is against the regulations of the SOE. The article also states that industry benefits Germany in the SOE as there is a large workforce in Strasbourg but due to a lack of young people and personnel in Germany, businesses must find approximately 30.000 French apprentices. This exchange of personnel has previously been stated to be a motivation of the Eurodistricts and not a failure as it fulfils the motivation of bilingualism, integration, employment and economic development.

Fear of dominance by one country or Euroregion is ever present and there appears to be growing scepticism in Europe. The signing of the Treaty of Aix-la-Chapelle (Aachen in German) by Angela Merkel and Emmanuel Macron in January 2019, has the aim of strengthening links between France and Germany by developing the Eurodistricts; merging economic and defence policies and offering incentives for the cross-border area (gov.fr,n.d.). In response, the daily British tabloid, The Sun (2019), wrote the following headline, “EU JUGGERNAUT. France and Germany plot to merge borders, economies and defence policies in latest step towards EU superstate.” The sensational opening paragraph describes the merging as a “twinning pact” which was made just two weeks before the UK was (previously) set to leave the EU. The remainder of the article describes the formation of a Eurodistrict rationally and talks about motivations for its creation but neglects to mention that Eurodistricts are not a new phenomenon. The Times Uk (2019), a respected broadsheet, also describes the formation of a Eurodistrict but its headline is more concerned with the cooperation of the two countries, “Paris and Berlin herald a new era of integration; Two nations to share defence, foreign and economic policies” The article continues in an inaccurate manner stating that regions along the French German border WILL be encouraged to form Eurodistricts and that money incentives will come from Paris and Berlin, ignoring the fact that Eurodistricts already exist and the new treaty is to develop and not create these regions.

Negative opinions of the treaty and the development of Eurodistricts also comes from the countries concerned, especially from the right of the political spectrum. Marine le Pen (leader of the Front National in France) describes Alsace as, “pour une part sous la tutelle de l’Allemagne”. Despite bilingualism being a theme and motivation of the

Eurodistricts, (dna.fr,2019,p.p.3) she is cited as saying that it is, “d’imposer l’allemand à l’école ou dans l’administration,” (p.p.4) but she makes no reference to the fact that French is taught and encouraged in Germany. This non-acceptance of bilingualism is reinforced by Jordan Bordella (head of the list of the “Rassemblement national aux européennes” in Alsace) who believes that the French already have difficulties to master French and do not need to “aller à marche forcée vers le bilinguisme” (dna.fr,2019,p.p.6). This criticism of CBC is also witnessed in Germany with Alexander Gauland (one of two leaders of the far- right nationalist party AFD – Alternative for Germany) stating that the signing of the treaty is an erosion of the national sovereignty of Germany (Hedge, 2019).

The extent of negative comments about the treaty and its aim , both in the press and social media has led the French government to defend its actions explaining that; the treaty does not change laws, there is no question of German becoming the administrative language in Alsace and Lorraine, France has no wish to relinquish or share its position as a permanent member of the UN Security Council (gov.fr.,n.d.). How much this scepticism is related to the migrant crises of 2015-2016 is impossible to assess but one million refugees sought asylum in Europe between these dates, although a third who arrived in 2015 found work by autumn 2018 (dw.com, 2019). The article states that hate crime increased during this period but describes the handling of the crises by the German government as a success. Davis and Deole (2017) analysed data and concluded that support of the Far-Right and nationalism has dramatically increased since the refugee crises and there is the possibility that this is giving rise to scepticism in Europe. Reitel (2018), believes that the attempt to eliminate borders has been a failure as these borders have not disappeared and there is a resurgence of nationalism and Euroscepticism.

2.9. What is RED radio Eurodistrict?

RED radio Eurodistrict was created in the SOE in 2004 by a team of animators and journalists. The project was implemented by the “Association for Promotion of European Exchanges” (APEE), a voluntary organisation started in 2004, and was in both French and German. Reports concerned the culture and politics of the Eurodistrict and there were debates as well as music of different genres. It was seen as a way of improving the daily

life of the inhabitants of the SOE (espaces frontaliers,n.d.). There is no literature available about RED radio Eurodistrict. The website of Strasbourg radio stations (onlineradio,n.d.) has a link to RED radio but the “listen live” button results in the message “Unfortunately, the station stopped broadcasting” being displayed. Contact details are still available, but the phone number goes directly to email and being an “09” number is connected to the internet and so no longer functions. The email address is no longer valid, as indicated in an automatic response from Google. On clicking on the link to the official RED radio website (RED,n.d.) the page is in Japanese with no association to the radio station. The last Facebook posting was in German on the 3rd November 2014. A letter to APEE remains unanswered. After having sent a direct message to them through Facebook, I notice that it has been seen but not answered. Foreign media is not dismissed by the SOE however as there is a bilingual daily newspaper in written and online format, L’Alsace-le-pays (Lalsace,n.d.), and ARTE TV is broadcast in six languages with sub-titles available in a variety of languages. It has been co-financed by the EU since 2015 and has the aim to, “foster EU integration through culture by providing new subtitled versions of selected TV programmes across Europe” (Arte.tv, n.d.), integration being one of the motives to develop a Eurodistrict as demonstrated.

3. Methodology

3.1. The use of languages

The choice of language for this Master thesis was quite simple knowing that English is my mother tongue and my French still comes with many mistakes, making this paper easier to be corrected if completed in English. Therefore, whilst fulfilling my literature research, I came across the problem that many of the specific French-German cooperation documents were not available in English, only French or German, meaning I had to translate and find out English acronyms for certain precise concepts such as EGTC (European Grouping of Territorial Cooperation) in English and GECT (Groupement Européen de Coopération Territoriale) in French, or for projects such as “Vélo gourmand” or “Rad und Genuss-Tour” which I translated as “Bicycle gourmand”. This was also a complication when faced with the interview with the general secretary (the interviewee) of the SOE, as it took place in French, meaning that my results and discussion section had to be completely translated. However, the ability to speak and understand various languages allowed my research to be highly broadened. I was able to read and understand articles in English, French and German but to avoid any misinterpretation on my part, I decided not to include German references.

3.2. The use of literature

One drawback was the fact I was located in the Czech Republic while researching the literature, which meant I didn't have access to an English, French or German library. Most of the suggested specialized literature was available in the library but only in the Czech language which I do not understand. The suggested reading list was available online, but all required payment to access, some up to over 30€. Knowing that I am a student with limited resources I could not allow myself to spend these fees. Thus, I had to complete a more in-depth research by means of various information sources. Articles and books about Eurodistricts were very limited as the term isn't very well known to the larger public, therefore researching EGTC, Euroregions, CBC and EURGIO was

necessary. These sources varied from website articles and books, to newspaper articles in order to widen my understanding. Since I wished to research the motivations and projects of the five Eurodistricts, the websites of these regions were regularly consulted as well as official sites such as the French government site, INTERREG site and Schengen visa site. The research not only focused on the Strasbourg-Ortenau Eurodistrict, but also other Euroregions, where the motivation and functioning are similar, and this allowed the literature review to expand, looking at other examples of CBC. However, one big setback was the lack of information about the RadioEurodistrict as it is an independent project to the SOE and there is an absence of an internet site, a current working email address and telephone number.

3.3. The use of Tools

After my literature research was thorough enough, I decided to proceed with an investigation and for this I decided to use the qualitative research method –
“the qualitative research method involves data collection of personal experiences, introspection, stories about life, interviews, observations, interactions and visual texts which are significant to people’s life (Peshkin p.24 1993)”
– which allowed me to gain in-depth insight into specific concepts. This preferred choice was made because quantitative research –
“Quantitative research methods are research methods dealing with numbers and anything that is measurable in a systematic way of investigation of phenomena and their relationships. It is used to answer questions on relationships within measurable variables with an intention to explain, predict and control a phenomena (Leedy, p.16 1993).”
– would have been irrelevant because I did not require statistics. Qualitative research would allow me to better understand this concept rather than just confirming what I already knew.

I decided to complete an interview with the general secretary (the interviewee) of the Strasbourg-Ortenau Eurodistrict which made her a very interesting person to speak to. As general secretary she has experience of overseeing projects in both countries and would have a good understanding of the SOE. I was able to find her details from the official SOE website and first contacted her by phone. Before agreeing to an interview, I

was requested to sign a letter promising that all information divulged was to be used only for my thesis and that the transcript was to be destroyed at the end of my studies. My aims were to better understand the motivations and functioning of the SOE and to collaborate what I had found in my literature result pertaining to the funding and projects. Due to a lack of literature concerning the specific failures of the Eurodistricts, I hoped that the interviewee would be able to elaborate on this, including the failure of the RED radio.

I decided to use a semi-structured interview –

“Semi-structured interviews are as the name suggests based on an outline structure or some key questions but with a degree of latitude for the interviewer to explore the topic in more detail, depending on how the conversation is going. Semi-structured interview is usually one in which the interviewer has a check list of questions that the respondent is asked to address.” (Harvey, L. 2012-19)

– as I had a set of questions prepared but had no need to ask all of them as the interviewee answered many of them in other segments of the interview, even before my first question was asked. A semi-structured interview allowed me to use the questions as a guide towards topics that I wished to investigate, and I was then free to follow the way of the conversation. This made my interview pass faster and was a lot more fluid, allowing her to speak independently without me interrupting her. Unfortunately, she also had no information about the RED radio, which was problematic, which led to many of my questions being irrelevant and unasked. When I read over the interview transcription, I saw that the questions could have been modified, some being more concise, some less as at times. Some questions were too broad, and she does not know where to start answering as the question is too vast. Instead of the interviewee giving me her personal opinion of the SOE, she referred me to the official website on two occasions, which I had already consulted but I had wished to hear her own explanations and interpretations. As the interviewee developed so many of her answers, this allowed me to transform my original 15 questions (not counting those about RED) into a mere seven. As she is of German nationality, I made sure not to overcomplicate my words and sentences, having no prior knowledge how good her French was. Our conversation was informal to make the interviewee as comfortable as possible and to feel at ease while going into detail.

In order to complete this interview, I used Skype. This way we could video call and I could record our conversation whereas I would not have been able to if we had used a telephone. To record the conversation, I used a software program called Camtasia which allows me to record both her voice and mine simultaneously. The only failure I made was, as we were on video, I tried to be fully visible for her which meant I had to move back making it hard to hear me at times. During the interview, the interviewee received two phone calls which broke the flow but not enough for her to continue her sentence immediately after. In total this interview lasted a little under 26 minutes once her phone calls were removed. As the interviewee is German, she made a few mistakes which sometimes made it difficult whilst transcribing the interview. She very often didn't finish her sentences and would say "enfin, voilà" without saying enough information for it to make sense. This made my analysis harder as I wasn't always sure what she meant, and it confused my interpretation. Unfortunately, I did not ask her to explain what she meant.

4. Results

Knowing that the aim of this thesis is to understand motivations to create an Eurodistrict, to analyse functioning of the district and identify reasons of failure, I interviewed the general secretary of the Strasbourg-Ortenau Eurodistrict. Our conversation lasted approximately 26 minutes with the most part being monologues from her. This allowed me to receive the most information necessary for this analysis.

4.1. The use of Eurodistrict

Before even asking my first question, the interviewee explained that the word Eurodistrict is free to use by anyone in the world, “le terme Eurodistrict n’est pas protégé, donc tout le monde peut s’appeler.” and adds that this has been problematic in the past as they would receive calls about events they didn’t create, “du coup c’est un peu problématique”. An example is given of the Eurodistrict youth football club which is organised by parents and has no association with the SOE. She explains that her team do not know this association and that this may be the case for the RED radio, “on les connais pas, on sait pas qui c’est mais ils peuvent s’appeler et va de même pour la radio enfaite.”

4.2. The main objectives of the Eurodistrict

The interviewee states that the goal of the Eurodistrict is for people to cross the border to visit, not only go to go shopping. They want people to use the common space and not see it as another country, “vont pas faire que les courses de l’autre côté mais vont vivre de l’espace comme un espace commun”.

The interviewee speaks about a frequent debate of the Eurodistricts, asking who these Eurodistricts are for and if they benefit those who cross and live on the other side? Is their job to help and make this small percentage of people’s lives easier, “on essaye de les augmenter entre guillemets et leur faciliter leur quotidien”, or do they focus on making an ordinary person cross the Rhine for the first time to see a concert for example, “Vivre le petit Europe en quelques sorte” ? Should they help everybody or those who

already live the ‘cross-border life’? “On n’est pas très sûr quel groupe cible on vise enfaite”. She continues that the people are not necessarily in agreement with this aspect on the SOE, but it is the reality, “les gens sont pas forcément d’accord”.

Following the Aix-La-Chapelle treaty of 2018 (not explained by the interviewee) the SOE became the only Eurodistrict to have its own jurisdiction in the Upper Rhine, implementing its own projects such as the bus line, “c’est vraiment mon équipe et moi qui réalisons les projets”, an important objective of the SOE. The second important objectives are the cross-border associations and administration, and the third the political and lobbying ability to appeal to higher government. The interviewee states that the result of these objectives will be that inhabitants have the impression of living in a common space and administration is for the common good, “il a l’impression de vivre dans un espace commun et que du coup le, que les administrations travaillent dans une réflexion commune”.

4.3. The Eurodistricts

The interviewee explains that there are four Eurodistricts situated on the Rhine river, “il faut distinguer que vous avez plusieurs Eurodistricts sur la Rhin supérieure”, these having different compositions, “donc la cons constitution enfin composition n’est pas la même”. First there is Strasbourg-Ortenau being French German, then PANIMA being French and two German as there are two different German regions, Freiburg-Centre-Sud Alsace which is French and German and The ETB composed of French, German and Swiss. She continues to say that the objectives of each are different as they have different expectations due to their varying histories, “ça vient du l’historique de chacun”. PANIMA being a local CBC grouping for thirty years believes they consider themselves to be the fossilisers of Eurodistricts “eux ils se voient comme un fossilisateurs”. The SOE was created from a higher level after Schröder and Chirac came together in 2003 to create a Eurodistrict like the Washington district, “un Eurodistrict selon le Washington district”. This made the creation process longer, “nous a fait pas mal de temps dans la création,” as there was more pressure and high expectations which made the turnover for the interviewee’s post very high, “on avait eh pas mal de changement au au niveau de mon poste ‘mt’, c’était un peu compliqué”. She stresses that this is often a

problem of local government where results are expected immediately while following regulations which had been difficult for her predecessor, “c’était très très compliqué”. Not every Eurodistrict has the same judicial status as the term Eurodistrict is free to use, meaning The SOE and PANIMA are EGTCs, The Freiburg-Centre-Sud Alsace are currently undergoing the transformation to become an EGTC whereas The ETB is an association, which means they receive subsidies.

4.4. Projects of the SOE, implementation and difficulties

The interviewee had no statistics concerning the level of bilingualism in the SOE, “je pourrais pas vous dire”. It is necessary to differentiate between the projects of the SOE, projects with a partner and subsidised projects. There is a fund for school children from kindergarten up until the end of high school, which allows them to meet other children from the neighbouring country for a bilingual exchange, “ça fonctionne pas mal mais”. The interviewee has noticed a high growth in demand of this project which made this fund grow from thirty thousand to fifty thousand euros, “on est submergé de demandes”. There is no rise in the number of mixed marriages, but this was not the aim of the SOE. When asked to comment on projects that are never implemented, the interviewee says that their group is experienced enough to know when a project will work or not before starting one. It’s a question of opportunity and star alignment, “pour moi une question d’opportunité et d’un alignement d’étoiles si vous voulez.”. Both sides/countries have to be interested, and when this happens, a project usually sees the light of day, “c’est deux portes et quand ils sont ouverts au même moment, c’est là où il faut, faut traverser”. Projects are a joint effort between the two countries to decide what themes and subjects will be addressed, “quand nous, vraiment nous on fait les projets en général eh ça aboutisse”. The SOE have many projects including annual ones to which they try to add one or two new ones a year. She mentions the fact they are a small team which means they cannot have too many yearly projects, as they are then unable to add any extra ones, “quand vous avez trop de projets annuels, vous arrivez pas à en développer d’autres” and it is necessary to vote for the priorities.

There are fourteen different themes that they officially deal with such as: health, environment... “santé, environnement, tout”, but with only four people responsible for this mission, of these, three or four are chosen, “c’est très difficile de traiter tous les

thématiques”. This year the priorities are mobility and culture and last year economy and environment. Each of these fourteen themes still have current running projects, just not as important and time consuming as the two main ones, “donc c’est pour ça m, on a demandé à nos élus de bien focaliser et de choisir deux thématiques,”.

The main project of the SOE is their bus service “le bus qui vraiment notre projet phare plus”, but the interviewee did not elaborate about this, “je vous invite à vous renseigner un petit peu là-dessus”. The SOE also has projects like the Bicycle gourmand (the interviewee did not expand on this) which they are preparing for the third time. The third edition of their meeting to share their ideas and projects about youth projects is being organised for November and last year there were 70 participants. This exchange, “c’est un premier échange, ça fait un peu une table eh, un tour de table”, allowed the two areas of Strasbourg and Lahr, that do not usually come together, to realise they were working on a similar project (Parkour) and helped them do it together. They are currently in the middle of preparing a new environmental project for September, the first cross-border climate booklet along, “le premier livret climat transfrontalier où suis en plein correction”. There are three sessions in the year where the projects and associated budgets are planned. Several projects run at the same time whether they are sole or partner projects of the SOE or INTERREG projects and there is funding from different sources, including a refugee fund. The interviewee states that this extra work is on top of their usual work, “Donc ça se rajoute au travail habituel eh, voilà. Donc on est bien occupé”. The organisation and implementation of projects is a continuous activity, “oc Ah bah on est constamment en projet, enfin je veux dire”

The SOE also hold forums every year with certain associations and there is a specific theme. In 2017 the forum concerned air quality and in 2016 on prevention and security. Although there was no forum in 2018, “on a pas eu le temps”. Every two years they also have a meeting for citizens and elected members which in 2018 was for under 25-year olds. She continues that there are a variety of events based on different subjects, “fin voilà, il y a plusieurs évènements dans ce style-là”. In 2020 they will hold a forum about special needs sport and probably a culture forum, “et en mai très probablement, on ne sait pas encore eh, on va faire un forum culture, parce qu’on a décalé du coup les deux forums parce qu’on avait pas le temps eh voilà.” The interviewee stresses that these are just a selection of the projects available and does not elaborate further, directing the interviewer

to the themes on the website, “a c’est à peu près les, des choses” “eh, mais si ça vous intéresse, vous regardez dans les thématiques sur notre site internet”.

4.5. Failed Projects

Some projects have been abandoned for financial reasons or due to regulations. They had organised a marathon which was abandoned as in France you need a medical certificate to take part whereas you do not in Germany and the interviewee was not aware of this regulation, “on a vraiment jamais su de le”. This meant that not many Germans registered to take part as they had no interest in obtaining this certificate. This was unfortunately not the only problem with this marathon as in France you can receive free barriers but in Germany you must pay for them. This became too expensive and the interviewee states that although it could have gone ahead these are situations that need to be considered, “on aurait pû le, le faire quand même. Donc c’est des réflexions comme ça”. The SOE helps people to arrange projects but the latter often have no experience in cross-border projects and are too set in their ideas. This complicates matters and the interviewee comments that the members of the SOE realise that they cannot work with this person, the project has previously been implemented, the expectations are different, or they have joined with the person too late for example, “on s’est rendu compte, c’était pas le bon partenaire, que les attentes c’étaient pas les mêmes, on a associé le partenaire trop tard, enfin ce genre de choses, donc ça ça peut arriver bien sûr”.

4.6. Financing

The Strasbourg-Ortenau Eurodistrict has a total annual budget of 850.000€ which is acquired through contributions and is used for daily functioning, wages and rent. The interviewee gave no details of the budget but there are yearly budget reports available, “d’ailleurs vous pouvez regarder nos rapports annuels et c, c’est affiché”. These reports, every March, indicate how the budget and priorities are set and there is a user-friendly table. They have nine members who contribute to the budget; Eurometropolis of Strasbourg, Southern commune (previous three communes which joined in 2017) and the French state on the French Side. On the German side there is the Ortenaukreiss, which is

sort of a department, “donc c’est comme un département on va dire” and the five big cities which have a specific statue. “großkreisstädt ça s’appelle en Allemagne”.

The interviewee stresses that it is necessary to differentiate between a Eurodistrict and a EGTC to understand the finance, “alors il faut différencier, y a plusieurs choses différentes”. An EGTC is a European legal framework whereas PAMINA is a Eurodistrict with the name Eurodistrict PAMINA, “ils appelaient comme ça, ils s’appellent Eurodistrict PANIMA”, but they have only been an EGTC for two years. The Eurodistrict Centre-Sud-Alsace is currently becoming a Eurodistrict and before it was the administration from both sides who were using this term during the planning stage, “avant c’était les administrations de chaque côté qui s’appelaient Eurodistrict quand ils étaient en réunion planifiés”. The ETB who are with the Swiss, have had the statute of an association for a long time. There is a difference between the term Eurodistrict and the legal framework behind each structure. Each Eurodistrict is different with different members, such as the SOE and PAMINA, with the later receiving contributions from members and subsidies. The interviewee acknowledges that the SOE has an annual budget funded by the SOE, “c’est la commune, ou l’Eurométropole qui me la finance de son budget à elle, c’est des impôts”, via a one-euro tax per inhabitant, approximately.

There is a programme called Upper INTERREG Rhine to aid the implementation of micro-projects, but the interviewee says that this is not necessarily for the Eurodistrict, “c’est pour des porteurs de projets, c’est pas forcément pour les Eurodistrict”. The role of the SOE is to help people with the complicated paperwork and to offer support via the official website. These INTERREG funds are for one year compared to the standard three, “c’est un INTERREG en mini, parce que INTERREG c’est trois ans et là c’est en un an.” These projects have the same criteria as larger projects on a smaller scale. They are funded by the European Union as Eurodistricts had very limited budgets before which would have severely limited the number of possible projects especially those costing 60,000euros. The inhabitants can register for help on the SOE’s internet page. The current phase of the programme is named INTERREG V and is soon passing to INTERREG VI. The interviewee emphasises that INTERREG funds are European funds, “Ça c’est pas

mon argent”, “C’est pas mon argent, c’est pas notre argent en tant que Eurodistrict”, “les fonds Européens n’a pas d’influences sur notre budget annuel”.

The SOE doesn’t know how much the commission will give to these INTERREG programs but their job is to help a maximum of people and associations to receive financial help. These are not real typical projects which would be set up by universities by example, but are rather small set up by people who work during their free time, “et les tous petits comme une association où les gens bossent le, eh, le dimanche et le soir quoi”. The SOE are the middleman putting both groups in contact with each other, and so have relatively no influence although there has been a discussion as to whether funds could be allocated to the SOE from INTERREG for these micro-projects but this would be aside from their own funds and result in the SOE being responsible for everything.

The SOE also works with the region especially now that it has expanded after the fusion of departments. For the last two years there has been discussion concerning the new bus line of the Eurodistrict and there has been a request for it to become a public line but the SOE has no legal right to introduce public transport as in France this is the responsibility of the region. If the region believes this proposal is interesting, they will ask for proof of the need for this line. The German mayor, vice-president of the interviewee, is responsible for this theme and is willing to provide 50% of the finance and requests that the programme “regibus line” runs 19 times a day but the region will not permit this. They are unwilling to pay 50% for a project that benefits the SOE only and not the region to the south. The downside to this is, as the region has grown and the border lengthened, if they give money to the SOE, other Eurodistricts such as PAMINA and Saar-Moselle will ask for the same amount of money for their projects too, “je peux pas mettre autant parce que les autres vont me demander ça aussi et je ne peux pas. Donc ça c’est un peu contraignant pour nous”. This is not possible for the region. The SOE would like to have more independence in order to receive more financial aid and expand their number of projects. It is unclear how the fusion of the regions will influence the functioning of the SOE. She hypothesises that more confusion will arise if a new collective group, “là vous avez la nouvelle collectivité d’Alsace qui va arriver, on sait pas encore” wish to organise a CBC project and demand money from the region.

5. Discussions

5.1. The use of the term Eurodistrict and Radio Eurodistrict (RED)

I had assumed that RED radio had been formed as part of a micro-project of the SOE, since the term Eurodistrict is in the title, but this is a misnomer. I believe that the consensus of definition needs further research and consolidation to prevent an overlap and confusion of intentions. If the term Eurodistrict is open to use by everyone, the failure of an initiative such as RED radio could be mis-interpreted as a failure of a Eurodistrict project which was the case for me. This means that anyone could have created the RadioEurodistrict and explains why there was no information about it on the official SOE website. The interviewee confirms the opinion of Duran (2007) that there is no definitive definition of the term Eurodistrict and she adds that the term is not protected. She states that they had previously received phone calls concerning events that had no connection with the SOE and were unknown to them, such as the Eurodistrict youth football team organised by parents. The difficulty of defining this concept is complex as no Eurodistrict mirrors its neighbour in terms of administration, motives, size, population density and demography. This was confirmed in the interview when the Eurodistrict PAMINA was described as using this title despite being a Eurodistrict for only two years and Eurodistrict Centre-Sud-Alsace who uses this term despite currently being at the planning stage of becoming a Eurodistrict. This confusion is further complicated by the use of other terminology for CBC initiatives such as Euroregions, EGTC, Eurégios and the fact that a Euroregion may contain a Euroregion..

The reason for the failure of RED radio is purely conjecture due to a lack of literature. Perhaps there was no demand for a bilingual radio station with citizens preferring to listen to their own language. Bilingual newspapers do exist however and ARTE television broadcasts a selection of foreign language films. It is possible that there was a lack of finance for the station or maybe its owners or presenters were inexperienced animators or even students completing a short-term project. The Japanese, former RED

radio, site is in “word press”, which is used by amateurs and it is possible that the RED radio was also using this tool for amateurs and so were not professionals.

5.2. Main objectives of the Eurodistricts

An initial motivation to create a Eurodistrict was one of integration and CBC as stated by Vovenda and Plotnikov (2011). This is referenced by the interviewee who sees the goal of the Eurodistrict as one of enticing the inhabitants to cross the border without realising they are in another country. There are many cross-border activities and associations in the SOE but there are also projects such as the “jardin de deux rives” , a park on both sides of the Rhine joined by a pedestrian bridge as described by Reitel and Mouillé, (2015) which helps to eliminate the border and create a common space, giving the impression that the visitor has not entered a different country. The interviewee raised the issue of the Eurodistrict only benefiting a small range of people, but the activities and events are open to every inhabitant and there is no obligation to participate

It has been acknowledged by Sanguin (2013) that motivations and objectives may overlap across the Eurodistricts, but they may also differ. During the interview one of the main objectives was cited for the SOE following the Aix-La Chapelle treaty of 2018; lobbying to a higher government as in the “Regiobus” line expansion. Although I recognised that the SOE has its own budget and is an EGTC, and although acknowledging associations, aside from business and governmental groups, I had not considered the political side of the EGTCs. The function of political lobbying was not addressed during the literature review and in retrospect I would have liked to have researched this further. The initial motivations to create Eurodistricts also concerned the economy, health, education and, transport and infrastructure (Sanguin, 2013) but these were not referenced during the interview. Although I had asked about the motivations, the interviewee invited me to consult them on the SOE website instead of discussing them with me, which suggests that my question had been too broad and the subject too vast. The individual websites of the Eurodistricts all refer to a change of motivations, more adapted to a modern world but the larger-scale projects based on the newer motivations of sustainability, protection of the environment and low- carbon emissions are extremely costly. If these large- scale projects are to be the norm in the Eurodistricts there is the danger that surrounding regions and

areas will feel neglected and demand finance to enhance the lives of their own citizens. This was alluded to during the interview by the interviewee in reference to the bus service project “notre projet phare plus”, recently implemented in the SOE. Since the expansion of the Grand-Est region of France the geography has posed added problems for the SOE. Although the south of this region is not a part of the SOE, the inhabitants are requesting that this bus line is extended along the border, a costly and complex request which is out of the jurisdiction of the SOE and has resulted in them having to lobby the region. This demonstrates how the changing politics of one country (France changing region borders, and elsewhere the future Brexit) as well as European politics (the financial crises of 2008) and the increasing in size of an area can influence the smooth functioning of the Eurodistrict.

5.3. The different Eurodistricts

Not only does the definition of a Eurodistrict vary but also their means of functioning and composition. The interviewee took time to explain the different structures of the Eurodistricts which supported the literature research, that the ETB is an association (SaarMoselle,n.d.), PAMINA became an EGTC two years ago and that Freiburg-Centre-Sud Alsace is in the process of becoming an EGTC (Freiburg,n.d.). Again, this lack of common ground makes it difficult to understand the administration and financing of Eurodistricts. Along with the lack of definitive definition it gives the impression that there are too many differences for these Eurodistricts to merit the same title. The interviewee tried to explain the differences in terminology and administration across the different districts, but I found her answer difficult to interpret and made the mistake of not interrupting and asking her to clarify certain points.

Engl (2009), states that the administration of Eurodistricts is complex, requiring time and money and this is supported by the interviewee who commented that her predecessors faced many challenges and difficulties to organise and implement the structure and rules of the ETGC, which resulted in a high turnover of staff. Although the EGTC is now in place the interviewee still finds that the administration of the SOE is time-consuming and that projects must be prioritised, but she states that she only has a small number of staff. Is the administration too complex or is there a lack of personnel?

The simplicity of administration has also been seen to be relevant in improving the quality of life for the inhabitants who need to access information and health care as in a Saar-Moselle project which aims to have “social cohesion” by simplifying administration (SaarMoselle,n.d.). This review of administration needs to be supported on a regional and national level with all inhabitants having access to documentation and websites in their own language. A criticism of the Netherlands -German Eurégio refers to the time-consuming administration in two languages (Pallagst and Caesar, 2018). Any differences in regulation needs to be clearly explained as in the different approaches to “Crit-Air/ Feinstaubplakette “. A lack of understanding can lead to a lack of participation and ultimately affect the success of a project.

5.4. Failures

The SOE has a political history with the treaty being signed by the French president and German Chancellor in 2004 (Reitel, 2015). This political backing may give sway to the criticism that the SOE is becoming a favoured “superstate” (The Sun, 2019), reinforcing the idea that France and Germany are trying to dominate Europe and that the Eurodistricts are becoming too powerful (Reitel, 2018). Although the motivation may be to increase the cooperation between the two countries and improve daily life, this is not always interpreted to be the case as seen by the articles in the British press and the criticism by high profile French and German inhabitants such as Marine Le Pen and Jordan Bordella (dna.fr,2019). The fact that the French government website has felt the need to defend its actions after the signing of the Aix -La- Chapelle Treaty suggests that the number of social media negative comments was significant. (gov.fr,n.d.). This negative backlash could lead to the failure of a Eurodistrict which needs support and participation of the inhabitants as well as investment and support by business. Sensational headlines may be the only part of an article that the reader takes notice of without taking time to study the actual article which may be more accurate and rational. We have no idea if these critics are from within or outside of the Eurodistricts. The increasing rise of the Far-Right in Germany and France (Reitel, 2018) could lead to the rejection of CBC and bilingualism, with an increase in nationalism and Euroscepticism. The interviewee states that not all inhabitants agree with the SOE and that the benefits of the Eurodistricts are

often discussed by the different Eurodistricts who have no recognition of their target group. Further quantitative research is required to find the number of inhabitants who actually benefit from the SOE, including participants of events and associations, cross border workers and investment in SMEs. The event “bicycle gourmand”, for example is described as a success on the website but in fact there were only 350 only participants from all of the SOE. INTERREG has been accused of not being value for money (McMaster, 2017) and a research study of this nature would help to establish this.

If these Eurodistricts become too powerful with an increase in the number of large-scale projects, there is the risk that there will not be enough funding to complete smaller projects. Although the improvement of the infrastructure can benefit all the inhabitants, these projects can be slow to implement, the administration very complex and extremely expensive and so are prone to failure (Sanguin, 2013). The interviewee regularly addressed the complexity of the administration of the SOE in reference to the implementation of the EGTC “c’était très très compliqué”. If the inhabitants do not see projects being completed, (large or small- scale) this may result in a lack of motivation and interest of the citizens to accept and participate in the ethos of the Eurodistrict. If the Eurodistrict becomes too large there is the possibility that the inhabitants no longer identify with it (Sanguin, 2013). If you do not live directly on the border and rarely perceive the benefits from the projects would you refer to yourself as French, from the Grand-Est, from Strasbourg, or from the SOE, for example? Cooperation needs to be equal on both sides of the border to benefit all citizens.

Examples of specific failures of projects are difficult to find on the official Eurodistrict websites as it is natural to promote the successes. Any difficulties to complete a project tend to be written at the bottom of a yearly report, as in the refusal of funding by Interreg of an urban and land development project in Saar-Moselle (SaarMoselle,n.d.). The interviewee stated that the feasibility of projects is discussed and if not practical stopped in the planning stages which avoids failure. She continued that a planned French-German marathon was abandoned due to the complication of different regulations in the two countries. Sanguin (2013), describes the state control of local government in France compared to the decentralisation and autonomy of local government in Germany. This example of the marathon was not found in the literature review.

5.5. Education and bilingualism and employment

The interviewee speaks about the success of a school project, which is funded for all ages, where school exchanges and bilingualism are encouraged, although there are no statistics for the level of bilingualism. The demand for this project has resulted in an increase of funding from 30,000 euros to 50,000 euros a year. This contradicts the opinions of both Marine le Pen (2019) who believes that bilingualism is imposing German in France and Jordan Bordella (2019) who believes that people are being “force marched” to bilingualism. A report in SRADDET (2018) states that language remains a barrier in CBC, especially between France and Germany and that there has been a reduction in cross-border employment for 15 years. In the SOE however, cross- border employment in 2017 rose by 592 in comparison to 2015 and help is offered to those wishing to relocate (Interreg-rhin,n.d.). The literature also referred to a lack of school exchanges and bilingualism in the Poland-Czech Euroregions (Dolzblasz,2013). There are currently large-scale projects to improve employment in the SOE (“marché de l’emploi 360°” and “deux rives”). This increase in cross -border employment is supported by Böhm (2019) who reports that 1.9 million crossed the border to work in 2014. These figures must be considered carefully, and Böhm continues that this was primarily across the wealthier regions and not in areas such as the Poland- Czech border. This opinion is shared by Dolzblasz (2013) who states that there is no competitiveness in these areas where there is a history of mistrust and stereotyping of former enemies, although small-scale events of integration are becoming increasingly successful. This raises the question of why this is not the case in other regions of former conflict, including the Rhine Eurodistricts. It may be a question of culture but also the effects of communism when inhabitants were unable to integrate with other countries and mistrust of strangers was the norm. As time passes and the older inhabitants die this may change and CBC become the new norm.

5.6. Projects

Being an EGTC, the SOE has autonomy to implement and fund its own projects (Interact, 2008) with a budget of 850,000euros comprised of a 1-euro public contribution via tax as confirmed by the interviewee. The SOE website and the interviewee state that there are 14 themes related to the projects but due to this vast range and a lack of

personnel, the interviewee states that the SOE is unable to accommodate them all and must vote on the priorities. This results in two or three projects being addressed each year and for 2019 this is centred on the themes of culture and mobility. The SOE is also in the process of implementing youth projects as well as writing a booklet on the cross-border climate issues which relates to the newer motivations of the Eurodistricts to adapt to the modern demands for environment protection as stated by SRADDET (2018). Initial consultation of the website gives the impression that 14 themes are constantly being addressed but in fact two are usually prioritised yearly which suggests that along with a budget of 850,000 euros for a population of 921,000, the projects benefit a small number of the inhabitants. The interviewee refers to cross-border forums, and exchanges to discuss projects and this confirms the motivation of integration in the creation of a Eurodistrict (Sanguin, 2013) and the requirement to have inhabitants from both sides of the border involved (Interact, 2008).

The interviewee clarified the position of the SOE in relation to INTERREG, describing their role as an intermediary, providing help with the complex administration which, as we have seen (Sanguin, 2013), can have a negative impact on participation in cross-border projects. She stressed that these micro-projects are not SOE projects and that funds come from the EU and that there are not enough funds in the SOE for these small projects. It is vital that the SOE website provides help for its citizens to develop micro-projects as the core motivation is to improve the daily life of the inhabitants (eurodistrict,n.d.). If the administration is too complex, people will not be able or motivated to organise events and associations which may alienate the general public, making them feel more remote from the Eurodistrict. The SOE website actively encourage citizens to participate in INTERREG micro-projects. Relevant documents; forms to complete, regulations, requirements, are written in both languages and contact details are given of French and German staff who are able to answer questions and give advice. The range of events and associations are listed along with the finance report pertaining to each activity (eurodistrict,n.d.). In an appeal to all generations, events and news can also be followed on Facebook, Twitter and You Tube.

The major project, the implementation of the bus service between Erstein and Lahr is an example of infrastructure being improved according to the needs of business, and therefore the economy, and the needs of the citizens, therefore improving daily life. The

public were consulted on this project and continue to be involved. At the moment the bus runs according to business hours but on the website (eurodistrict,n.d.) there is a section where the inhabitants are invited to vote if they wish the bus be accessible to everybody and not just workers. This demonstrates the willingness of the SOE to allow local decisions to be influenced by local people. Not everyone is willing or able to attend meetings or write letters of support or disagreement but by allowing members to express their opinion by a simple click of a button, the project is reaching out to more citizens of the SOE.

It should be remembered that finance is not exhaustible, and priorities and budgets must be adhered to. This is naturally not unique to the Eurodistricts but is a fact of the economic climate at any given time. I asked about the finance of the Eurodistrict and on reflection I should have based my question on the relationship between the SOE, the EU and INTERREG in regards to funding, as this was described by the interviewee and proved to be more relevant and interesting. The specific funding was available on the website and I had already referred to this before the interview meaning that I should have reviewed my question.

5.7. Past and present

Border conflicts have occurred throughout history and the formation of the first Eurodistricts were described by Vovenda and Plotnikov (2011) as having the aim of improving the socioeconomic backwardness of these borders. This motivation can be said to be a success if the number of large businesses such as Daimler etc, are considered. The criticism of the SOE being a “superstate” as written by the Sun newspaper (2019) can be considered as a negative comment or interpreted as positive, alluding to the success and wealth of this region.

Despite a relatively peaceful period in Europe currently, there are still tensions and an undercurrent of friction and instability. This is supported by McMaster (2017) when referring to the possible effects of BREXIT on not only the cooperation between Northern Ireland and Ireland but the economic effects on the EU. What will be the results of the

rise of the Far-Right in Europe on cross- border cooperation and the desire to increase bilingualism?

5.8. Discussion Conclusion

Regarding the interview, I feel I had chosen a relevant person to interview as she is the general secretary of the SOE with experience of all aspects of the Eurodistrict. A qualitative approach was warranted as I wished to find the opinions of the interviewee and by deciding to stage a semi-structured interview, I allowed her to talk freely and I was able to adapt or omit certain questions as necessary. I acknowledge that my questions were often too broad as in the case of the motivations and finance where instead of being offered information by the interviewee, I was requested to consult the website or the power point document she later sent me. The use of skype was positive as it allowed the interview to feel more like a face to face conversation and we were able to develop a relationship. One of the biggest difficulties was the fact that the interviewee was not speaking in her mother tongue and was difficult to understand at times and made some mistakes in French. She had a tendency to start to talk about a subject but suddenly veer towards a completely different topic and at times left the sentence unfinished. Although this may be considered to be a part of normal conversation, it made the understanding and analysis of her transcript difficult. On reflection, I should have interrupted her and summarized what she had said to be sure I had understood.

For further study of the SOE I would like to conduct qualitative interviews with various members of this Eurodistrict to discover if inhabitants feel they that they do benefit from the various initiatives and if they identify as a member of a cross-border area. This would be an ambitious project requiring time and consideration to ask the relevant questions to the relevant inhabitants as well as being very time-consuming to transcribe and analyse the interviews.

The interviewee confirmed the complexity and confusion attached to the definition and administration of the Eurodistricts, which corresponded to the literature review and after the interview I had a deeper awareness of these complexities. Although the specific motivations to create a Eurodistrict were not detailed by the interviewee, I understood the importance of CBC and the desire to have a common space which was frequently referred

to and supports the literature of the original motivations of the Eurodistricts. The interviewee broached issues that I had not discovered in the literature such as the implications of political decisions (the expansion of the Grand-Est and its effect on the bus line) and the differing cross-border laws effecting projects, such as in the cancelling of the marathon. The separation of INTERREG and SOE funding was clarified during the interview and I had a deeper understanding of the different roles and functioning of these bodies. Although the different funding possibilities can be found in the literature, as we have seen, all Eurodistricts differ and I appreciated clarification of the funding and the functioning of the SOE specifically. Having previously found little evidence of individual failures in the literature review, I discovered that projects are abandoned in the planning stage and not allowed to continue if deemed not to be viable. I was surprised that the interviewee questioned the effectiveness of the SOE and its relevance to some of the inhabitants, but this was supported by criticism in the literature. My principal disappointment was finding no information about RED radio from the interview, which had been a main focus of this paper.

6. Proposals

Qualitative research study researching the lobbying powers of the Eurodistricts

Quantitative research investigating the number of inhabitants who benefit from the SOE in the field of association members, event attendees, cross-border workers, bilingualism, investment into SMEs.

Qualitative research questioning a cross-section of inhabitants of the SOE to discover what benefits they perceive from the Eurodistrict.

Comparison of the functioning and motivations of a western Eurodistrict (such as the SOE) compared to a Central-Eastern Euroregion.

7. Conclusion

In order to learn more about RED radio and the Eurodistricts, I completed a literature review, using mainly free internet articles, books and studies due to a lack of access to a library as well as finance to pay for access to certain literature. To enhance my knowledge and understanding of the subject I conducted a qualitative semi-structured interview with the general secretary of the Strasbourg-Ortenau Eurodistrict via skype. This method was chosen as it allowed the interviewee to speak freely and I was able to omit, expand or adapt my questions according to her answers. Since RED radio was situated in the SOE, I concentrated a large part of my research on this region.

This paper demonstrates that the topic of the thesis can sometimes influence the literature review, and therefore the results and discussion, in an unexpected manner. I had anticipated researching RED radio and its influence on the bilingualism and integration of a border region. This was not to be the case as the radio station no longer exists and there is no literature about its history and functioning. I had wanted to ask three questions about this radio station during the interview and was forced to omit them which corresponds to my use of a semi-structured interview. Once I discovered that the use of the term Eurodistrict could be used by anyone it led me to research the actual definition of this terminology which is not definitive and has been interpreted differently by different people. CBC is a complex issue, not only owing to the variety of definitions used, Euroregions, Eurégios etc. but also the functioning of these regions both financially and politically and their history and geographical position. If the terminology has the aim of describing a concept, I believe that further studies are required to find a word that is protected and accurately describes the regions concerned. It is not just myself and researchers who have identified a lack of definition but also the administration of the SOE and this was stated by the secretary general of this Eurodistrict during the interview when she admitted that it had been problematic for her team.

In order to study the motivations to create a Eurodistrict it was necessary to contemplate the history of the border regions of Europe which had been subjected to war and conflict. I wanted to know if this CBC had been a recent phenomenon and so researched the history of the Eurégio created in 1958 between Germany and the Netherlands, discovering that

the original motivation to strengthen a weak economy is deemed to be a success. By comparing a Euroregion of the Centre-East of Europe (Poland-Czech Republic) I was able to appreciate the influence of its history on integration (communism) as well as the geography and economic background of different region. Although not appropriate for this paper, I consider that the comparison between the functioning and motivations of this area in relation to a western Euroregion to be worthy of further study. The history of the SOE was discovered in the literature and my knowledge of this was deepened by extra information provided during the interview.

This paper has demonstrated the understandings to create a Eurodistrict in general terms but also in relation to the SOE specifically. Having initially been an experiment to improve the socioeconomic situations of border countries by CBC, the motivations developed to focus around a variety of themes which had the aim of improving the daily lives of the inhabitants. Although I had seen a list of 14 themes on the official website of the SOE, I made the mistake of asking the interviewee what the motivations to create this district had been and I was directed to the website indicating that I had not asked a focused question and that it had been too broad. It has been shown that the Eurodistricts are not static and that motivations and themes are consistently being adapted to the requirements of a modern world, acknowledging the need for more environmentally friendly, sustainable, low carbon projects. A main objective of the Eurodistricts has been the improvement of cross-border infrastructure and transport and this has been referred to in the literature and the interview in relation to the Erstein-Lahr bus line. The interviewee was able to provide information not found in the literature and elaborated on the implication of the changing regional borders, and formation of the Grand-Est region by the French government and expectations of this new population who demand the same benefits as inhabitants of the SOE.

The motivation to improve education, bilingualism and employment has been seen across borders with the introduction of bilingual schools and universities, business location to border areas and employment initiatives such as “un marché de l’emploi 360°”, in the SOE. This has not always been well received, as in the Poland-German border where bilingualism rates remain low compared to a growing demand in the SOE. Unfortunately, the interviewee had no statistics although further quantitative research into cross-border bilingualism, education and employment would be a means of measuring the success of CBC. This paper has also confirmed criticism from people of the Far-Right who have no desire to promote bilingualism.

If the motivation to create a Eurodistrict is one of integration and cooperation, then this has been demonstrated to have occurred if the number of social activities and events are considered across the various Eurodistricts. The literature of the SOE refers to the success of the KM solidarité fund raising event for disadvantaged children, which had nearly 27,000 participants in total. The interviewee asked the question of who the Eurodistricts are aiming to target and if it is people who already live at the borders. Without further statistics of who attends these events and initiatives it is impossible to answer this question. I feel further qualitative research is needed to ask the inhabitants what the Eurodistrict does for their daily life, as well as quantitative research considering which groups of the population use the different facilities and associations.

The functioning of the Eurodistricts has been shown to vary according to the administration and framework of the CBC initiative. This paper has shown how an EGTC functions and the relevance of INTERREG and European funding which have been defined and described. The interview allowed me to better understand the function of an EGTC in relation to the SOE and other Eurodistricts but at times the interviewee's explanations were difficult to follow and I made the mistake of not asking further questions or asking for clarification of certain points which is the role of a semi-structured interview. By defining the function of INTERREG from the literature, the interviewee confirmed my understanding of this concept in relation to micro-projects in the SOE and in other Euroregions.

Whether discussing the EGTC or INTERREG, the interviewee confirmed the opinion of Engl (2009) that the administration of the Eurodistricts is too complex and time-consuming overlapping with other groups. A motivation of the Eurodistrict is to simplify complex administration however, and attempts have been made to do this in several regions such as the Saar-Moselle health initiative. The interviewee found the administration of INTERREG extremely complex and the implementation and management of projects very time-consuming. This is related to the questions raised about the value-for money of INTERREG and who it aims to benefit as mentioned by McMaster (2017).

Having already alluded to some difficulties in the Eurodistricts, I have considered the reasons for the possible failure of them, although specific failures are difficult to find in the literature. A cross-border initiative obviously concerns different countries with different regulations. In Germany and France this can relate to the working hours, salaries and holidays, although cross-border workshops can help address these as seen in the SOE.

Some government initiatives can differ but run well across the two countries such as the “Crit Air” policy of France and the equivalent of Germany which address air pollution. Other differences are insurmountable or too complex and expensive, as in the cancellation of the SOE marathon where the two countries could not adapt to the rules of the other country. This was explained by the interviewee and not the literature and helped me to understand how a simple event can lead to complex issues.

The expansion in size and wealth of the Eurodistricts has led to criticism that they are too powerful. This not only leads to a problem of finance as projects become too large, but a distancing from the people if the micro-projects, suggested and planned by the inhabitants, are ignored as suggested by Vovenda and Plotnikov (2011). This was supported by the interviewee who had cancelled forums and addressed only two new projects a year due to a lack of time. Criticism of the Eurodistricts has been in the French and British press and resulted in the French Government defending this criticism after the Aix-La-Chapelle treaty of 2019. The interviewee referred to the treaty but did not elaborate and I missed an opportunity to ask her about this criticism.

This paper has identified the motivations to create a Eurodistrict and has analysed their functioning. Difficulties and reasons for failure have been addressed. This was done by a literature review and a semi- structured interview with the general secretary of the SOE. She was able to confirm my findings and elaborate on certain details while providing information that I had not found in the literature. I believe that I used the correct methods to obtain this information and acknowledge that I made some mistakes in the questions I asked. This should not be considered a failure on my part but rather serve as a lesson for future studies. I feel I have identified areas that require further research.

8. Summary

This paper has considered the history of the Radioeurodistrict (RED) which led to the difficulty of defining the concepts of Eurodistricts and Euroregions. A literature review was undertaken initially, and further information provided by a semi-structured interview with the general secretary of the Strasbourg-Ortenau Eurodistrict (the focus area). In order to understand the objectives to create a Eurodistrict the history of an established Eurégio (Germany-Netherlands) was examined as well as a Euroregion of the Centre-east of Europe (Poland-Czech Republic). The consideration of the history of war and conflict in these European regions further facilitated the understanding of the motivations which are shown to have changed over time. Since the main focus of this paper is the SOE, the motivations to form this Eurodistrict and its specific projects were described. By considering the functioning and administration of these regions, their complexity was examined. The SOE as an EGTC was addressed in relation to the finance and the administration and the role of INTERREG was discussed. The interview greatly enhanced the understanding of the functioning of the SOE. Reasons for the failure of RED radio were surmised and failure of the Eurodistricts examined. Some evidence of failure was provided by newspaper articles from as recent as this year as well as the interviewee who spoke of some of her difficulties. In order to improve future study, weaknesses in the questions asked are addressed and further research ideas put forward.

8.1. Keywords:

Eurodistrict, Euroregion, Eurégio, EGTC (European Grouping of Territorial Cooperation), INTERREG, SOE, RED

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I. Map



II. Transcription

https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/1I1-DtiPa8gMq2C0tBMyIUGcY_RHdLfHE?usp=sharing

00:00 – 00:09

T : C'est sur l'Eurodistrict, du coup les motivations, l'analyse des Eurodistricts et aussi sur la RadioEurodistrict

00:09 – 00:20

A : d'accord, qui fait pas partie de nous hein, parce qu'enfaite ce qu'il faut savoir c'est que le terme Eurodistrict n'est pas protégé donc tout le monde peut s'appeler Eurodistrict.

00:20 – 00:21

T : Ok oui

00:21 – 00:22

A : Et du coup

00:21 – 00:23

T : Bah ça fa, ça faisait partie de mes questions.

00:23 – 00:51

A : Voilà Et du coup c'est un peu problématique parce que vous avez aussi un eh un foot de club pour les jeunes Eurodistrict eh et c'est eh c'est des parents d'élèves qui ont organiser ça, et donc quand il y a pas de réponse rapide ect.. ils nous contactent nous et suis obligé de leurs dire mais ils font pas partie de nous, c'est pas une sous-branche ou une service ou machin. On les connais pas, on sait pas qui c'est mais ils peuvent s'appeler et va de même pour la radio enfaite

00:52 – 00:58

T : ok oui, du coup j'ai juste une quinzaine de questions

00:59 – 01:00

A : Allez-y

01:01 – 01:04

T : Du coup, bah en tout depuis quand travaillez-vous à l'Eurodistrict

01:05 – 01:09

A : moi personnellement depuis 2015, (reçu d'appel) donc juin 2015

01:09 – 01:16

T : Ouais, eh et eh quels sont vos objectifs principaux eh principaux dans l'Eurodistrict ?

01:18 – 05:44

A : vos objectifs principaux pf, si vous voulez je peux vous faire un hahin je, je vous envoie notre Power, PowerPoint, c'est, on a une jolie liste d'eh d'objectifs formulés après dans la réalité quand moi je suis arrivé, il faut distinguer que vous avez plusieurs Eurodistricts sur la Rhin supérieure. Chacun eh déjà est différent par rapport à sa composition. Eh nous on est que Franco-Allemand, les collègues du nord Pamina sont deux allemands, ils sont tripartis si vous voulez mais avec deux allemands parce que il y a deux länder différents. Donc la cons constitution enfin composition n'est pas la même. Ou vza vous avez le centre-sud Alsace qui pour le moment était juste une eh un Eurodistrict de nom mais qui n'était pas une structure propre qui, ils sont de de devenir un GECT justement et que vous avez le Sud avec eh avec l'ETB. Et de même du coup vous avez aussi au niveau des objectifs, des attentes qui sont complètement différentes ça é, ça vient du l'historique de chacun. Pamina était un GLCT depuis trente ans, ils ont fêté leurs trente ans. Groupement Local de coopération et donc ils étaient là depuis eh depuis trente ans et eh eu ils se comprennent plus comme eh une animation, une plateforme d'animation de la société civile, pour que la société civile fasse des projets et eux ils se voient comme un fossilisateur. Not Notre Eurodistrict à nous à été créé avec une eh annonce politique eh à un plus haut niveau Schröder et Chirac en 2003 qui ont dit allez on fait un, un Eurodistrict selon le Washington district. Um, tout de suite la, la bonne eh motivation, allez le, on vise le plus haut c'qui nous a fait pas mal de temps dans la création aussi parce que les attentes du coup étaient très très importantes et que eh, moi quand je suis nu v, fin eh je sais pas si vous avez vu notre historique qu'on avait eh pas mal de

changement au au niveau de mon poste 'mt', c'était un peu compliqué. Mais parce que eh vous pouviez pas mm, eh et c'est souvent le problème avec la politique locale, il faut livré tout de suite avec des effets d'annonces et que en même temps il faut construire une toute, toute une structure avec un règlement et tout ça, c'est très très compliqué à mettre en place, ça reste une administration et donc je pense que eh, je connais pas mes prédécesseurs personnellement mais je pense que c'était très très compliqué. Et effectivement les attentes n'ont pas aidé à c'que voilà, et donc quand moi je suis arrivée eh, on m'a recruté avec eh une, une eh, une eh, un objectif très clair. C'est-à-dire faire les projets propres, c'est-à-dire de là où il y a marqué Eurodistrict dessus c'est aussi Eurodistrict dedans et pas que en coordination c'est une partie c'qu'on fait Mais c'est surtout faire nous même des projets, être un vrai acteur, et d'ailleurs eh, quand vous regardez sur nos revendications depuis longtemps mais surtout encore par rapport à là où sa soit très très fortement aussi c'est avec le traité d'Aix-la-Chapelle, nous avons fait des résolutions pour dire qu'est qu'on voudrait de l'Aix-la-Chapelle, le notre est eh était en juin 2018. C'est dans nos archives sur notre site si ça vous intéresse um. On a demandé à ce, avoir une compétence propre et on est le seul Eurodistrict, je parle du Rhin supérieur, qui demande une compétence propre eh, parce que voilà on veut faire nous-même, on à mis en place une ligne de bus, on mis en place pas mal de projets, où c'est vraiment mon équipe et moi qui réalisons les projets. Et effectivement donc on à cet aspect-là, c'est une grande partie que vous trouvez pas forcément chez les autres mais qui eh voilà, une partie importante. La deuxième partie c'est, ça reste quand même aussi la mise en relation et devenir cette plateforme de rencontre des associations de la société civile, l'animation de la société civile pour du transfrontalier mais aussi des administrations. Et d'u, le troisième volet si vous voulez, c'est eh du lobbying et de eh la partie politique pour porter les dossier à un niveau supérieur parce que bien sûr, manque de compétences doc eh très peu de pouvoir de eh mettre en place ou de réaliser. Voilà donc ça c'est nos trois objectifs je pense. L'idée vraiment c'est que bah, que vous, vous sentez plus la frontière. A dans une, dans une vision très, très haute mais voilà c'est, c'est un peu ça le but et que quand un citoyen vit l'un ou l'autre côté du Rhin, il n'a pas vraiment l'impression ou, fin, il, il a l'impression de vivre dans un espace commun et que du coup le, que les administrations travaillent dans une réflexion commune, fin ce voilà, c, c'est ce genre de chose qu'on, qu'on essaye de mettre en place avec un équipe qui est quand même très petite mais voilà. C'est un peu ça le, le, l'idée.

05:44 – 05:56

T : Ok, ouais, et eh, Bah depuis l'Eurodistrict eh, vous avez vu une augmentation en termes de Bilinguisme, d'intégration et par exemple de mariage mixte ?

05:56 – 07:58

A : Alors, pf, on fait, on fait pas des statistiques hein du coup ça je pourrais pas vous dire mais par contre ce qu'on peut constater c'est que effectivement erm, nous avons eh, plusieurs eh, alors le budget est différencier entre projet propre, ce qu'on réalise nous et les projets en partenariat et puis la partie eh de subvention qu'on donne à des projets eh, erm, à des projets ehh, de la société civile des associations, et on a un fond qui est assez intéressant, c'est un fond pour le eh, pour les enfants scolaires, pour les, les rencontres bilinguisme, donc des classes eh qui eh, jardin d'enfant jusqu'à eh terminal qui peuvent se rencontrer et ehh qui peinait à démarrer et que nous avons eh, effectivement maintenant dû l'augmenter de trente mille euros à cinquante mille euros parce que on est submergé de demandes donc eh, je pense que ça fonctionne pas mal mais ça à un aspect, voilà, maintenant eh, on veut pas que il y a plus de mariages mixte hein , c'est pas ça le but, le but c'est que les gens traverse la frontière, vont visiter, vont pas faire que les courses de l'autre côté mais vont vivre de l'espace comme un espace commun, que les gens et là il faudrait regarder les statistiques de travaille frontalier, ce genre de chose. Mais là aussi se poser la question et ça a toujours été un peu le débat, pour qui eh ces structures de Eurodistricts sont-ils là. Est-ce que c'est pour renforcer ceux qui traversent et qui vivent de l'autre côté et qui sont frontalier en quelque sortes ? Est-ce qu'on travaille pour cet petit pourcentage de personnes et on essaye de les augmenter entre guillemets et leur facilitil, faciliter leur quotidien ou est-ce qu'on on essaye aussi de chercher le citoyen lambda qui lui du coup va voir la première fois traverser le Rhin pour aller visiter une structure de l'autre côté, aller voir un concert, aller voilà. Vivre le petit Europe en quelques sorte. Voilà, donc ça c'est aussi une réflexion que eh, qui, qui court toujours où on n'est pas très sûr quel groupe cible on vise enfaite. Est-ce qu'on vise tout le monde eh, est-ce qu'on vise ce qui font déjà, quel est la réalité de eh, voilà, donc eh ça c'est un peu le eh, une des questions où voilà, les, les gens sont pas forcément d'accord et, et, et ce qui jouera aussi sur les, les, la tactique de, de, de voilà, quels projets qu'eh qui eh qu'eh, on, on s'adresse ect. Voilà.

07:58 – 08:06

T : Ok, ouais. Et eh, vous avez déjà eu des projets eh, par exemple que vous avez planifiés eh mais qui n'ont du coup jamais vu le jour ?

08:07 – 09:56

A : alors pf, Oui, Non, alors des projets qu'on met en place nous en général, on a assez d'expérience en tant que, dans l'équipe pour savoir si ça, si ça marche ou pas. De toute façon, le transfrontalier c'est une, pour moi une question d'opportunité et d'un alignement d'étoiles si vous voulez. Ou je dis toujours eh, c'est deux portes et quand ils sont ouverts au même moment, c'est là où il faut, faut traverser et donc nous on a cette information et cette sensibilité parce qu'on, on fonctionne avec les deux côtés pour savoir quels thématiques, quels sujets, à quel moment d'intéressant, et où les intérêts se rejoignent pour en faire un plus-value, donc quand nous, vraiment nous on fait les projets en général eh ça aboutisse. On a dû abandonner certains projets mais c'était plus une question de financement ou de réglementation. On a pas repu aller plus loin par exemple le marathon parce qu'il faut ce certificat médical côté français et qu'on a vraiment jamais su de le, de eh le contourner et du coup les allemands vont pas chercher un certificat allemand fin français, pour eux c'est, c'un, c'un, c'un, correspond pas et donc du coup on avait peu d'inscriptions côté allemand. C'était pas le seul facteur pour les peu de sss d'inscription allemand et puis y'en, y'en avait d'autres problématiques comme les barrages eh qui de côté allemand son payante et côté français, c'est la ville qui me prends ça en charge, enfin voilà Donc au niveau de coûts c'e, c'est devenu trop cher, on aurait pû le, le faire quand même Donc c'est des réflexions comme ça. Après ce qu'on a souvent ou pf pas souvent, ça dépend, on a, on fait l'accompagnement de projets pour les porteurs de projets et eux, qui n'ont pas l'expérience, qui veulent faire un projets transfrontalier et qui le font pour la première fois qui sont quand même dans leur rigidité de projet, là c'est plus compliqué et là on a déjà eu de projets aussi qui finalement, on s'est rendu compte, c'était pas le bon partenaire, que les attentes c'étaient pas les mêmes, on a associé le partenaire trop tard, enfin ce genre de choses, donc ça ça peut arriver bien sûr.

09:56 – 10:03

T : Ok, et bah, vous avez parlez de financement, mais du coup le financement ça vient de eh où ?

10:04 – 10:06

A : Notre financement à nous ? de nos membres ?

10:06 – 10:08

T : Bah des projets par exemple

10:08 – 11:21

A : C'est des cotisations, nos, nos, nos, nous avons un budget annuel de 850.000€ et on paye tout avec ça. C'est-à-dire eh tout ce qui est frais foncti eh frais de fonctionnement, l'équipe eh, le loyer, le voilà et après eh, tout ce qu'il reste pour le budget erm, d'ailleurs vous pouvez regarder nos rapports annuels et c, c'est affiché. mt, eh, et tout les mars, tous les séances de mars dans les archives si ça vous intéresse, vous pouvez regarder, vous voyez comment on construit le budget et comment, quels priorités ect. Y'a un tableau qui est assez facile à, à, à déchiffré et donc on paye avec ça et c'est les membres, c'est les cotisations de nos membres, on a, nous avons neuf membres, nous avons le co, la, eh, l'Eurométropole, mt, de Strasbourg, on a la Comcom du sud, qui avant était trois Comcoms, mais maintenant qui ont fusionnés depuis 2017, on à l'Etat français. Ça c'est le côté français et le côté Allemand nous avons l'Ortenaukreiss, donc c'est comme un département on va dire, eh, et les cinq grandes villes qui eux, qui elles aussi qui ont un statut spécifique : großkreisstädt ça s'appelle en allemand et qui du coup finance eh, finance eh, notre, notre budget annuel sur lesquels, avec lesquels on travaille. Voilà.

11:22 – 11:30

T : Et eh, par exemple, eh vous avez eh des projets eh qui sont maintenant en cours ou eh des projets en tête pour le futur

11:31 – 11:34

A : Ah bah on est constamment en projet, enfin je veux dire

11:34 – 11:34

T : Ouais, et

11:35 – 11:35

A : Mais

11:35 – 11:39

T : Je voulais dire eh quel, bah quel genre de projet

11:39 – 15:17

A : Alors, nous avons des projets annuels qui revient tous les ans, puis on a, on essaye de rajouter un ou deux nouveaux projets par an, Parce que avec une petite équipe à un moment quand vous avez trop de projets annuels, vous arrivez pas à en développer d'autres. Donc il faut eh, regarder par rapport à ça, en chaque, tous les ans, enfin tous les deux ans on vote des priorités. Parce que on traite quatorze thématiques ofofof, officiellement on traite quatorze thématiques : santé, environnement, tout, tout, sauf que avec quatre personnes en chargé de mission c'est un peu compliqué, d'ailleurs quand vous regardez un tout petit peu notre organigramme, vous allez voir que chaque chargé de mission à au moins trois ou quatre thématique. C'est très difficile de traiter tous les thématiques. Donc on fait une priorisation ça veut dire que on, on a quand même des projets en cours dans chacun mais de, de vigueur, enfin de, d'importance différente et aussi le temps qu'on investit lad, là-dans. Donc c'est pour ça m, on a demandé à nos élus de bien focaliser et de choisir deux thématiques, cette année on est sur la mobilité et, et eh, de la culture, les années précédentes on était sur le, l'économie eh l'environnement, fin voilà. Donc ces, ces thématiques qui changent un petit peu notre très, très grand projet eh, qui encours c'est eh, le bus qui vraiment notre projet phare plus Eurodistrict, je vous invite à vous renseigner un petit peu là-dessus et sinon actuellement, qu'est-ce que je peux vous dire, alors nous avons un projet qu'on organise pour la troisième édition, c'est le vélo gourmand eh, le 22 Septembre eh, si vous avez le temps, participer ça va être génial. En plein préparation donc voilà. On prépare pour novembre une bourse à projet avec des porteurs de projets jeunesse et des animateurs de projets jeunesse, ça veut dire que c'est aussi la troisième édition qu'on fait. L'année dernière il y avait 70 participants donc c'est des animateurs de jeunesse de notre, de tout, tout le territoire qui viennent et on fait une première scé, partie où les porteurs de projets montrent quels, qu'est-ce qu'ils ont fait comme projets, pour donner un peu des idées hein, je sais pas, le maillon, donc un théâtre pre, pre montre son projet transfrontalier qu'ils ont fait, les autres animateurs sont au tour et ils regardent et ah tu as fait comment, vous avez fait, voilà. C'est un premier échange, ça fait un peu une table eh, un tour de table comme ça et après on explique les financements et on explique voilà et puis y'a un moment d'échange pour qu'ils voient qu'est-ce qu'ils font, peut-être, on a crée des partenariats, y'a des projets qu'ils ont sortis

parce que voilà. Lahr et eh la Meinau de Strasbourg c'est vraiment pas des quartiers qui vont se rencontrer, des animateurs se sont rendu compte qu'ils travaillaient sur la même thé, thématique, c'est-à-dire du parkour. Donc ils ont fait un projet qu'on a soutenu du coup financièrement sur du parkour ou les jeunes français et allemands se sont rencontrés pour faire du parkour, Voilà. Ce genre de chose, donc ça c'est l'animation, fin ça c'est une eh, donc toute l'organisation ect, tout l'évènement est organisé par nous. Donc ça va être en novembre. Ensuite qu'est-ce qu'on a d'autres eh, on va présenter en début de septembre notre nouveau petit pro, enfin notre nouveau projet environnement, c'est livre, livret de climat transfrontalier, le premier livret climat transfrontalier où suis en plein correction, voilà. Ehhh, donc ça, qu'est-ce que j'ai d'autres tetetetete, octobre il y avait aussi quelque chose, j'ai oublié. Décembre, on a notre conseil, parce qu'on a trois séances dans l'année qu'on prépare aussi complètement donc eh on a notre conseil en décembre avec discussion budgétaire et d'autres thématiques à, à traiter. Et puis il y a plusieurs projets eh où on est partenaires qui sont en cours, aussi des projets INTERREG. Et puis à côté de ça, ça c'est les projets qu'on fait nous. On fait l'accompagnement donc eh, pour eh, les eh, porteurs de projets pour des projets classiques pour les fonds réfugiés, on a un fond réfugié, pour les associations, fin voilà, il y a plusieurs fonds que on accompagne au cours de l'année. Donc ça se rajoute au travail habituel eh, voilà. Donc on est bien occupé.

15:18 – 15:19

T : Ok

15:19 – 16:31

A : Et au début de l'année on fait un forum sp, ehh, on f, ----- un Forum parce que chaque année on fait un forum, donc avec des associations spécifiées sur des thématique spécifique. On a fait un forum sur la qualité de l'air en deux mille ss dix-sept, on a fait un forum sur prévention et sécurité en 2016, 2018 on a pas eu le temps, eh 2019 eh on a fait un, eh, c, tous les deux ans on fait aussi un, une rencontre élu-citoyen. 2018 on en a fait un avec les jeunes de moins de 25 ans et nos élus, fin voilà, il y a plusieurs évènements dans ce style là aussi donc vraiment, la participation avec le, la société civile et donc en janvier on a un forum pour l'anim, eh, pour le sport handicap et en mai très probablement, on ne sait pas encore eh, on va faire un forum culture, parce qu'on a décalé du coup les deux forums parce qu'on avait pas le temps eh voilà. Donc ça c'est juste un, une partie

mais voilà, ça c'est à peu près les, des choses eh, mais si ça vous intéresse, vous regardez dans les thématiques sur notre site internet, y'a les thématiques et là-dedans vous cliquez dessus, vous avez les actualités de chaque eh voilà, ou vous suivez notre actualité sur le réseau sociaux, là aussi on parle régulièrement de ce qu'on fait.

16:32 – 16:37

T : Ok, et eh, juste une dernière petite question, eh

16:37 – 16:37

A : mm

16:38 – 16:41

T : Vu que vous étiez un peu eh, la première Eurodistrict eh

16:41 – 16:42

A : Le

16:42 – 16:43

T : A être créée eh,

16:43 – 16:44

A : Oui ?

16:43 – 16:52

T : Est-ce que eh depuis l'arrivée eh des autres eh, Eurodistrict, vous avez vu les fonds par exemple les fonds eh de la France diminuer ou pas ?

16:52 – 17:03

A : mt, non, alors il faut différencier, y a plusieurs choses différentes, c'est-à-dire que chaque Eurodistrict, eh, et comme je disais, nous on n'était pas les premiers, alors il faut différencier entre Eurodistrict et eh GECT

17:03 – 17:03

T : Ouais

17:03 – 17:28

A : GECT c'est le statut Européen qui permet que vous êtes une forme juridique, mt, D'accord donc eh, là par exemple, le PANIMA c'est un Eurodistrict, ça a jours été un Eurodistrict, ils appelaient comme ça, ils s'appellent Eurodistrict PANIMA, mais jusqu'à il y a deux ans, ils étaient pas un GECT. L'Eurodistrict de ehh su, Centre-Sud-Alsace, il est en train de se constituer en GECT, avant c'était les administrations de chaque côté qui s'appelaient Eurodistrict quand ils étaient en réunion planifiés

17:28 – 17:29

T : Ok

17:29 – 17:48

A : Le ETB Bâle, donc le Tri national à Bâle, c'est pareil, ils sont avec les suisses, ils existent depuis longtemps aussi, ils sont un, un, ils ont un statut association. Donc je pense que c'est important que vous regardez, vous différenciez entre le terme Eurodistrict et le statut juridique qui se cache derrière chaque structure parce que c'est pas la même chose

17:49 – 17:50

T : Ok ouais

17:50 – 18:30

A : Donc déjà il faut différencier. Et donc, chaque, chaque Eurodistrict a différen, a de différents membres, par exemple la région et le département sont membre de, chez PAMINA et ils sont pas membre chez nous. Donc, ils ont des cotisations ou ils ont pas des cotisations. Si c'est des associations ils ont des subventions, c'est pas la même chose. Nous, on a un budget annuel donc on fonctionne là-dessus, maintenant eh, ça n'a pas de eh, influence sur les fonds Européen parce que là mon budget, c'est la commune, ou l'Eurométropole qui me la finance de son budget à elle, c'est des impôts. Un Euro par tête à peu-près, un peu moins mais fin voilà, à peu-près, à l'époque c'était ça, voilà. Donc ça n'a rien à voir avec les fonds Européens.

18:30 – 18:31

T : Ok ouais.

18:31 – 20:00

A : par contre ce qui existe c'est un programme qui s'appelle eh, Rhin supérieur, INTERREG Rhin supérieur, donc c'est vraiment juste pour la Rhin supérieur et là en l'occurrence erm, nous ce qu'on fait c'est qu'on, c'est pour des porteurs de projets, c'est pas forcément pour les Eurodistrict, c'est pas nous qui vont en utiliser, par contre nous on aide à monter les dossiers parce que c'est extrêmement compliqué. Vous avez ce qu'on appelle les fonds micro-projets, c'est un INTERREG en mini, parce que INTERREG c'est trois ans et là c'est en un an, mais quasiment les mêmes critères et c'est soi-disant pour les structures qui, fin, qui sont plus petites et qui veulent faire un petit projet. Et vu que les Eurodistrict de l'époque n'avaient pas beaucoup de budget pour soutenir tous les projets possibles, surtout les projets qui coûtent 60.000€. Mt, eh, Du coup, ils ont fait ce lien avec eh les fonds Européens où ils ont a, a, accès à ce, ce, à ce microprojet et c'est les Eurodistricts qui le, ça dép, dépend de la l'année en, en, eh, de, là on est en INTERREG V, on va bientôt avoir INTERREG VI, ça change à chaque fois. Là par exemple, nous, on fait que l'accompagnement. On fait quand un porteur veut, c, vous pouvez regarder, on a fait eh sur notre site, une catégorie qui s'appelle soutien, là où vous voyez les fonds que j'ai, enfin que nous avons et y'a un truc qui s'appelle microprojet. Ça c'est pas mon argent. Donc j'accompagne les porteurs de projets pour qu'ils puissent accéder à des fonds Européens. C'est pas mon argent, c'est pas notre argent en tant que Eurodistrict.

20:00 – 20:01

T : Ouais

20:01 – 24:58

A : Et eh, et donc du coup eh, on voit pas d'influence par rapport à ça. La question est combien la, la région enfin la, la commission va donner à ces programmes INTERREG pour financer et quelles critères ils vont mettre. Pour la prochaine édition on est en discussion avec elle parce que on aura dit : c'est trop compliqué à monter. Les toutes petites associations n'arrivent pas à porter ça, faut des pros pour ça, c'est pas possible et ça correspond pas à des mini-projets et vous devrez différencier entre INTERREG, les vrais projets que une université ou autre peuvent déposer. Et les tous petits comme une association où les gens bossent le, eh, le dimanche et le soir quoi. Donc voilà, alors on, on joue ce rôle-là, et donc là ils nous ont proposé que s, ils vont nous donner un fond à

nous, de l'argent, en plus que mon budget eh, qui est à part hein. Une autre bud, eh, un fond est que eh, et du coup les porteurs de projets vient chez moi. J'ai quand même des critères à respecter que eux ont mis en place, mais qui viennent chez moi et que c'est moi qui traite avec les porteurs de projets et que je fais tout le, eh, le tout en gros. Le contrôle derrière ect et vous l'auriez dit bien sûr que l'on aura pas les capacités pour donc on négocie mais c'est un peu le rôle intermédiaire. On fait l'intermédiaire entre la commission et ehh, la société civile eh, de base j'ai envie de dire c, même si c'est pas de, le bon terme mais, c'est un peu ça quoi. Donc ça c'est à part donc ça n'a aucun influence, fin les, les fonds Européens n'a pas d'influences sur notre budget annuel, par contre ce qui est intéressant c'est que quand vous travaillez avec la région par exemple qui maintenant a fusionné et qui est plus grande, nous on est en train de discuter pour notre bus, on veut que ça soit une ligne publique. Mt, nous on a pas le droit actuellement par les statues de porter une ligne publique. La l'autorité de transport en France surtout avec la nouvelle loi LOM, c'est la région. Ça fait deux ans qu'on est en négociation avec la région pour que ça devient une ligne transfrontalière. La région, elle va vous dire : Ok, maintenant on trouve ça un intéressant, vous avez montré qu'il y a un besoin sur cette axe-là, ok. De côté Allemand j'ai eh la Landratsamt, donc mon vice-président qui, qui est responsable de la, la thématique mt, qui me dit : Ok, j'ai un programme du Land qui s'appelle Regiobus ligne, par contre il faut que ça roule 19 fois. Mais si ça roule, ça correspond au, au, aux critères, j'ai la moitié du financement. La région va vous dire : Jamais de la vie je laisse ça rouler 19, 18 fois même si je dois payer jusque, eh, que jusque la moitié de eh, fin jusqu'au Rhin quoi. Parce que mon territoire est beaucoup plus grand maintenant. Si je vous finance une ligne à 19 aller-retours, y'a PAMINA qui va venir, y'a Saar-Moselle. Parce qu'il y a une Eurodistrict aussi Saar-Moselle. Y'en a d'autres qui vont venir, donc ça, ça joue maintenant. C'est plus les partenaires quand ils vont participer ou quand nous on doit convaincre dans une, un autorité de gestion parce que nous on n'a pas la compétence. Si je veux faire mé, moi-même, ça n'a aucun influen, aucune influence sur, eh, sur mes eh, sur mon, mon budget. Je peux même demain monter un INTERREG projet, enfin projet INTERREG si je le cofinance moi et je peux profiter de, tant que je respecte les critères, je peux faire un vrai INTERREG sûr trois ans pour mettre en place, tout ça je peux. Ça n'a aucune influence sur mon budget. Par contre que la région 1. Est plus grande et que du coup doit calculer, bah leur frontière est beaucoup plus longue, donc quand moi je viens avec un projet et je dis : Voilà, si vo, faites, allez on fait partenariat, vous devez mettre ça en place, puisque je ne peux pas faire toute seule, va si, combien tu

mets ? il va me dire : Ouais, je peux pas mettre autant parce que les autres vont me demander ça aussi et je ne peux pas. Donc ça c'est un peu contraignant pour nous. Donc c'est plus la constellation de chaque interl, enfin interlocuteur et leurs compétences et pour voir qui nous pousse eh, fin qui, qui peuvent influencer, là vous avez la nouvelle collectivité d'Alsace qui va arriver, on sait pas encore, soit disons avec un ----- en transfrontalier, on sait pas ce que ça veut dire. Est-ce que ça veut dire que dans une compétence qui à la base n'est pas la leur c'est-à-dire pf, apprentissage transfrontalière, ça c'est ch, apprentissage c'est une thématique qui est géré par la région. Est-ce que demain, le département le, la nouvelle collectivité peut faire un projet transfrontalier, parce que sous le qua, contexte que c'est eh, prétexte que c'est transfrontalier, ils peuvent le faire et mettre en place un projet sur l'apprentissage sans que la région ai un, joue, moi je pense pas mais voilà. Donc ça c'est des questions pour nous, qui est notre interlocuteur ? et comment, ques, quelles marches de manœuvre ils ont ? puisqu'on a pas a compétence. C'est pour ça sur quelques aspects on dit : ça serait plus simple si les Eurodistricts auraient la, enfin les GECTs hein pas les Eurodistricts, les GECTs auraient la compétence, parce qu'on pourrait faire plus facilement surtout qu'on a la connaissance de chaque côté, (reçu d'appel) après eh ce qui, ce qui est problématique là-dedans c'est une, la compétence une chose, après il faut aussi avoir les financement qui vont avec et c, c'est aussi le, le, la nerf de la guerre, je crois on dit voilà. Donc eh, donc c'est ça aussi qu'il, qu'il, qu'il faut voir quoi.

24:59 – 25:06

T : Ok ouais, j'avais pas pensé à ce côté-là. Eh bah merci beaucoup, c'était, bah c'était mes questions

25:07 – 25:08

A : Ok, très bien

25:08 – 25:11

T : Eh, du coup merci beaucoup c'était eh très intéressant

25:12 – 25:14

A : Ah bah j'espère haha

25:14 – 25:20

T : Haha, et bah bonne chance pour tous les futurs projets et pour bah, pour le bus ha

25:20 – 25:36

A : Merci, merci et puis bonne chance pour votre travail, si jamais vous avez encore des questions eh, vous pouvez m'envoyer un mail eh, si vous avez besoin d'une précision ou quelque chose n'hésitez pas et sinon eh, il y a beaucoup de choses sur nos archives et eh je vais peut-être vous faire transférer le, notre PowerPoint, c'est assez simple pour

25:36 – 25:37

T : Ok, merci

25:38 – 25:41

A : On, on voilà, il y a quelques exemples de projets aussi, ça peut peut-être vous servir

25:41 – 25:43

T : Ok, merci beaucoup

25:43 – 25:47

A : très bien, et encore désolé pour le retard, c'est pas dans mes habitudes ha

25:47 – 25:49

T : Non, non, non c'est pas grave haha, bonne journée

25:49 – 25:51

A : Bonne journée aurevoir