



European territorial Cooperation

**Importance of cross-border collaboration between Friesland and North
Rhine-Westphalia / Germany**



Snapshot: North Rhine-Westphalia (NRW) 1/2

Most populous German federal state (~18 million inhabitants)

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- Political-administrative structure:
 - State government, various districts and municipalities
 - each responsible for specific administrative tasks
- Active in international cooperation
 - promoting global exchange and joint development
 - international orientation not only strengthens economic relations but also fosters cultural and scientific exchange
 - Example: partnerships like the NRW-Flanders cooperation on circular economy initiatives





Snapshot: North Rhine-Westphalia (NRW) 2/2

- Strong economy – industry, services and innovation
 - From traditional manufacturing to innovative technologies, climate technology and digital transformation / densest R&D landscape
 - characterized by its energy-intensive industries, including chemical and steel production.
 - The automotive sector is primarily focused on supplying components.
 - NRW is also home to numerous "hidden champions"—small to medium-sized enterprises that are leaders in their niche markets.
 - https://www.wirtschaft.nrw/sites/default/files/documents/hidden_champions.pdf





The Role of European Territorial Cooperation (Interreg)

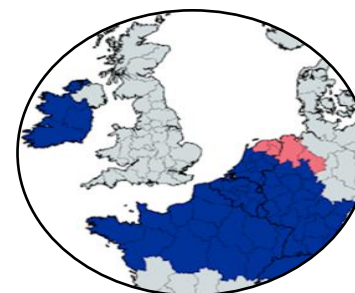
Focus: Greener,
low carbon Europe



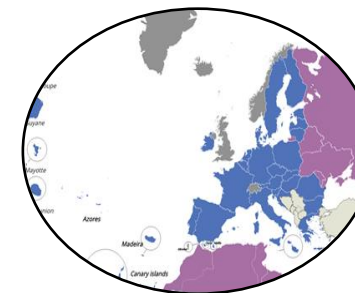
Germany-
Netherlands



Meuse-
Rhine



North-West
Europe



Interreg Europe



INTERACT
ESPON
URBACT



Promoting joint
solutions to
common
challenges —
economic,
environmental,
social, and cultural

■ Why ETC Matters for NRW and its Neighbours

- Helps regions tackle shared challenges that do not stop at national borders
- Encourages knowledge exchange, capacity building, and pilot projects
- Fosters long-term partnerships across regional and national lines
- Opens up funding and networking opportunities for municipalities, water authorities, research institutions, SMEs, and NGOs



■ Example: IB-Green (Interreg North-West Europe)

■ Climate-resilient Business Parks through Blue-Green Infrastructure

■ Different partners (FR, BE, NL, IE, DE) amongst which:

- **City of Leeuwarden (NL):** The city contributes Dutch expertise and provides pilot sites for the project, showcasing innovative approaches to climate resilience.
- **WILABonn – Bonn Science Shop (DE):** This partner facilitates knowledge exchange, conducts climate assessments, and organizes participatory formats to engage stakeholders in the project.
- The IB-Green project aims to enhance the climate resilience of industrial and commercial areas by implementing blue-green infrastructure. This includes the integration of green roofs, depaving or permeable surfaces, and systems for rainwater retention and reuse.

<https://ib-green.nweurope.eu/>



■ Example: TRANSIT (Maas-Rijn)

■ Cross-border Public Transport Made User-Friendly

- **Partners from Netherlands, Belgium and Germany** aim at improving **cross-border everyday mobility** by making public transport more **user-friendly and better coordinated**, across national borders.

- It is also studying how employers can support staff who travel across borders every day, and how better cooperation between local governments can improve services in the long run.
- **Aachen region (DE):** Involvement of public transport operators and local authorities
- **Arriva (NL):** Operator with HQ in Heerenveen, Friesland – contributes experience in regional mobility

<https://www.interregmeuserhine.eu/de/projekte/transit/>



Peer Review – A Practical, Low-Threshold Tool

Maintain
cooperation
moment

- supports **policy learning and capacity building** among public authorities and publicly funded organisations across the whole EU
- Currently **still fully accessible instrument** offered Policy Learning Platform
 - A regional/local authority identifies a **specific policy challenge** (e.g. how to scale up circular economy initiatives, improve waste collection systems, or foster circular public procurement).
 - Interreg Europe then organises the “match making” followed by a **2-day visit** where experts and peers are brought in to assess the challenge and provide **tailored, practical advice**.
 - The process is **free of charge**, requires **no co-financing**, and brings **direct, actionable benefits** to the hosting institution.
- City of Duisburg „Supporting urban revitalisation“ – contributions from GR, ES, IT, IR



Proven Formats for Exchange and Cooperation - Building on what already works – and exploring new pathways (1/2)

- Regular **intergovernmental consultations** between the Netherlands and German federal/Länder level
- regular exchange with the Dutch Consulate General, strengthening bilateral relations and facilitating ongoing dialogue on various topics
- **Enterprise Europe Network (EEN)**
 - EU-wide network supporting **SME cooperation** and **innovation partnerships**
 - Potential entry point for **Frisian-NRW exchanges**, especially in water tech, circular economy, smart regions
 - Could inspire **practical matchmaking and knowledge exchange**





Proven Formats for Exchange and Cooperation - Building on what already works – and exploring new pathways (2/2)



- **NRW would welcome participation in the North Sea Programme, e.g. on:**
 - Water management
 - Drought resilience
 - Extreme rainfall / climate adaptation



October 22, 2025 – “Expert Workshop”

Upcomming event

- focus on the **EU Port Strategy** and **Industrial Maritime Strategy**, specifically from the **perspective of inland shipping and inland ports**
- event aims to facilitate an exchange with representatives from the European Commission's directorates, providing input for the planned strategies
- stakeholders from Friesland are welcome to participate
- October 22, 2025, from 11:00 to 14:00 h at the Representation of NRW to the EU, located at Rue Montoyer 47, Brussels



Thank you very much for your attention!





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www.deutschland-nederland.eu

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Maas – Rhein (NL – BE – DE)

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