

Educational concept VIADRINA 21+

Lifelong learning in the Euroregion PRO EUROPA VIADRINA

Analysis of the thematic area of education / Lifelong learning in the
German-Polish context to derive cross-border approaches
for the case study of the Euroregion PRO EUROPA VIADRINA



Euroregion
PRO EUROPA VIADRINA

WITH THE SCIENTIFIC SUPPORT FROM



EUROPA-UNIVERSITÄT
VIADRINA
FRANKFURT (ODER)



ZENTRUM FÜR
INTERKULTURELLES
LERNEN

„Kto nic nie wie i wie, że nic nie wie, wie więcej niż ten,
kto nic nie wie i nie wie, że nic nie wie.”

*Fragment z: Tablice szkolne. Język niemiecki. Gimnazjum –
Secondary technical school (technikum) – Liceum, Grupa
Wydawnicza Adamantan s.c.,
Warszawa 2014, p. 147*

“He who knows nothing and knows that he knows nothing,
knows more than the one who knows nothing and does not know
that he knows nothing.”

*Excerpt from: Tablice szkolne. Język niemiecki. Gimnazjum –
Secondary technical school (technikum) – Liceum, Grupa
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dla regionalnego rozwoju



BB-PL
INTERREG V A
2014-2020

Redukować bariery – wspólnie wykorzystywać silne strony
Barrieren reduzieren – gemeinsame Stärken nutzen

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Foreword

With the fall of the Iron Curtain three decades ago, the interdependencies also increased rapidly in the German-Polish border area. Barriers have been removed in all areas of society. Residents of both countries are increasingly taking advantage of the offers made in the fields of trade, services, health, education and culture on the other side. The consequences of the border closure caused by the coronavirus pandemic by both states clearly demonstrated the degree of this interdependence. For many citizens, the border, which was no longer visible, once again became an insurmountable obstacle. With the containment of the pandemic starting from May 2020, the gradually returning normality immediately revived the manifold German-Polish relations.

Today's normality in the German-Polish border region is also characterized by the fact that the opportunities existing in connection with the situation in the border region are gaining in importance. Every year, the Euroregion PRO EUROPA VIADRINA hosts hundreds of meetings of German and Polish citizens of all ages which are funded by the European Union and the German-Polish Youth Office. They have been steadily increasing over the years, testifying to the broad spectrum and intensity of common activities. The experience of the neighbour's culture, the discovery of the natural and cultural heritage in the neighbouring country, the commonality in sports and games or the learning from each other is perceived as an enrichment on all sides.

In the epoch of demographic, digital and global change, the citizens and institutions of our Euroregion are also confronted with the issue of how to deal with these challenges in cross-border activities, what opportunities does the situation at the border offer? Thanks to the DIALOGUE project, funded by the INTERREG VA Brandenburg – Poland 2014 – 2020 cooperation programme, the Euroregion PRO EUROPA VIADRINA and the Euroregion Spree-Neisse-Bober were able to take on the topics relating to health system and/or education within this meaning by way of example.

Within the Euroregion PRO EUROPA VIADRINA, we examined the situation in the field of education and lifelong learning. Based on international, national and cross-border framework conditions, the focus was on the questions of what advantages arise from cross-border approaches, what objectives and interests are to be taken into account, how to characterize the age groups from preschool pupils to elderly people, on which experiences from previous activities can be built. The present brochure reflects the result of this situational analysis as well as the identified approaches to action.

The present situation analysis shows that cross-border approaches in the field of education contribute significantly to cross-disciplinary skills development from young to old. In addition, it clearly shows that the Euroregion has a great potential in terms of expansion of cross-border educational opportunities.

Now, let us take up, concretize and implement the identified approaches together. Take advantage of the offers made by the educational institutions and extracurricular places of learning on the natural and cultural heritage of our Euroregion. Let us strengthen cooperation, join forces and jointly face the challenges for the benefit of the citizens as well as the region as a whole. The Euroregion PRO EUROPA VIADRINA will be very glad to support residents and institutional actors in their respective initiatives, in the development as well as in the implementation of innovative solutions.



Fig. 1: German-Polish Board Meeting of the Euroregion PRO EUROPA VIADRINA, Gorzów Wlkp., month of August 2019 (Photo Archive of the Euroregion)

The publication you hold in your hands is the result of the project DIALOGUE. Its publication would not have been possible without the support offered by many committed individuals and institutions. Hundreds of people have made an essential impact on this document in the context of expert discussions, workshops, study trips and other meetings which resulted from our educational dialogue. In this context, we would like to express our sincere thanks to the teachers, educators, school principals and managers in the child daycare centres, schools and secondary education institutions of all types, the organisers of internships, youth exchanges and meetings, the sponsors of projects, the employees and decision-makers in the municipalities, cities, offices and districts, the representatives of the education departments, the institutions that support the German-Polish exchange financially and in terms of content, the business-related institutions and chambers, the decision-makers and employees of the Board of Trustees and the ministers.

Frankfurt (Oder)/ Gorzów Wlkp., month of July 2020

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1. Introduction

Inducement

Euroregions across Europe are addressing intergovernmental borders in almost all areas of society in order to improve cross-border cooperation between citizens and institutions (see AEBR 2020). For more than 25 years, four Euroregions have been active on the German-Polish border, which are legitimized in particular by the municipal level (cities, municipalities, and counties). After the Iron Curtain has fallen, the entry of Poland into the Schengen area and the European Union, as well as the granting of free movement of workers for EU citizens, have created essential political framework conditions which greatly facilitated the cross-border cooperation. Cross-border interdependencies increased markedly, whether in the economy, at civil society level or in the interpersonal sphere. For example, the current objectives and approaches of the Euroregions, beyond the dismantling of existing barriers, are increasingly geared towards unlocking the potential of the involved border regions.

In the context of the project DIALOGUE, funded by the cooperation programme Interreg VA Brandenburg - Poland 2014 - 2020, the sponsoring associations of the Euroregion PRO EUROPA VIADRINA and the Euroregion Spree-Neisse-Bober jointly attempted to systematically address selected priorities for action.

They offered courses to the actors of cross-border cooperation in order to improve their level of knowledge in the field of administrative structures and language of the other side, or also workshops relating to intercultural competence in order to facilitate the understanding of the neighbour. Furthermore, they systematically analysed two topics of particular relevance to the inhabitants and the development of the region - health and education - in order to identify, starting from the status quo, the requirement for action to generate a reduction of the barriers and/or to create scope for action to unlock potential.

Fig. 2:
Project DIALOGUE –
project partners



The figure shows a map of the Euroregion area, divided into four colored regions: blue, green, yellow, and red. To the right of the map is the DIALOGUE logo, which consists of two curved arrows, one red and one yellow, pointing towards each other, with the word "DIALOGUE" in bold black letters in the center.

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Situational Analysis Education – Lifelong Learning

Poland and Germany included aspects **of culture and education in their treaty concluded between the Federal Republic of Germany and the Republic of Poland on good neighbourliness and friendly cooperation** (1991). This treaty provides the framework for cooperation in the fields of language learning and in the areas of school, university, education and further training. The treaty also attaches particular importance to cultural exchange as well as to encounters, especially among young people. Both states directly implemented this treaty by, among other things, structurally founding the German-Polish Youth Office (Deutsch-Polnisches Jugendwerk/DPJW) and providing it with financial resources in such a manner that thousands of youth encounter projects could be implemented since then. In addition, it resulted in the work of the German-Polish Government Commission, which since then with its committees and working groups has devoted itself especially to border and educational cooperation as well as to the aspects concerning culture and education. A recent result of the work of the Committee on Educational Cooperation is the successful support of the German-Polish Textbook Commission in the preparation and publication of the four-volume history book entitled “Europe – our History” („Europa – unsere Geschichte“) (see Georg-Eckert-Institut 2020).

Against the background of the above-mentioned political framework conditions, as well as the corresponding national and bilateral efforts, special challenges and opportunities arise in the direct border area of Poland and Germany in the field of education – lifelong learning. The aspect relating to education represents a daily challenge for residents of all ages, for almost all public institutions, companies as well as other social groups. Consequently, the increase in interdependencies for the actors in the civil society, administrative or economic area of the border area beyond the general need for action, e. g. in the context of demographic change and shortage of skilled workers or the dynamics of digitization and/or globalization, is associated with additional effort. On the other hand, the spatial proximity also offers various opportunities to acquire and/or to further develop the (key) competences sought by both states for their residents in the sense of lifelong learning.

During the recent decades, numerous cross-border projects have also been implemented in this field as a result of the support offered by German and Polish actors through funding programmes (especially INTERREG, Phare/CBC; DPJW, national programmes of the Republic of Poland and the Federal Republic of Germany) and/or also on their own initiative (including among others budgetary resources, use of human and/or material resources). Bilateral educational projects of this kind cover all age groups and a variety of thematic and societal fields. Many of them also reached an exemplary level in view of the depth, continuity and/or the reach of the content in the involved target group. By contrast, it is clear from a selective perspective that only a small proportion of preschool children, pupils, apprentices, students, adults and/or senior citizens working on a professional or voluntary basis in the border area are involved in cross-border activities having an educational character each year. The majority of these activities are selectively effective projects.



The two sponsoring associations of the Euroregion took up these observations and subjected the topic of **education – lifelong learning to a systematic situational analysis by using the case study of the Euroregion PRO EUROPA VIADRINA**. For the said purpose, the following objectives were pursued:

- The collection, analysis and presentation of the actual situation of the education systems in Poland and Germany, as well as of the existing cross-border activities;
- The execution of a cross-border comparison of education systems with regard to commonalities and cross-border complementarity;
- The identification of approaches to the systematic development of cross-border activities and the deduction of conclusions for further institutional and substantive cooperation.

The document "Erster Bildungsreport Frankfurt (Oder). Internationaler Bildungsstandort Frankfurt (Oder) – Słubice 2018" (Frankfurt (Oder) 2018) represents a cross-border and data-based situational analysis for the field of education – lifelong learning for the twin city of Frankfurt (Oder) – Słubice and is available for the first time. Its results are taken into account in this context.

The situational analysis carried out in this context now systematically and holistically refers to the area of the whole Euroregion PRO EUROPA VIADRINA. The approaches identified in this context provide a basis for the systematic increase of the share of citizens of all ages in cross-border activities, together with the relevant institutions and actors, and for the contribution made to the development of the potential resulting from proximity, acquisition and/or consolidation of key competences.

Methodology

An essential basis for the systematic situational analysis started in 2017 in the context of the project DIALOGUE was the evaluation of the past and/or ongoing activities of actors within the Euroregion. The focus was on projects which have an informal, non-formal and/or formal



Fig. 3: Project DIALOGUE – Study trip to the Euroregion Śląsk Cieszyński at the Polish-Czech border (photo archive of the Euroregion)

educational character. For this purpose, the two sponsoring associations of the Euroregion evaluated in particular the projects funded by the DPJW (extracurricular and/or school sector) and the EU (small project funds within the framework of the Operational Programme Poland (Lubuskie Voivodeship) – Brandenburg 2007-2013 and the Cooperation Programme INTERREG VA Brandenburg – Poland 2014-2020). In addition, there were other (INTERREG) projects as well as the experiences resulting from the commitment of the two sponsoring associations to improve cross-border cooperation.

These activities were questioned with regard to content and methodological approaches, inhibiting and promoting aspects, in order to be able to derive indications for approaches to action. Insofar as corresponding statistical data from both sides were available and accessible, they were prepared for the respective age groups and circumstances in such a manner that quantitative statements could be made beyond qualitative elements, e. g. on the range and/or intensity of the interaction. In 2019, the determined state of knowledge was prepared in cooperation with the Centre for Intercultural Learning at the European University Viadrina. Then it was integrated by administrative and scientific foundations, as well as by the evaluation of further best practice examples of other border regions and reflected in interviews with experts and actors as well as through German-Polish workshops.

The results of the cross-border situational analysis on education – lifelong learning using the example of the Euroregion PRO EUROPA VIADRINA are presented here in the following. The introductory chapters set out the essential framework conditions relating to the cross-border approaches to education.

Starting from this basis, the analysis provides a chapter-by-chapter overview of the age-group-specific situation within the Euroregion by listing approaches resulting in a greater integration in the educational field of the German-Polish border region and by providing an opportunity for the inhabitants of all age groups and the institutions acting in this region to consolidate or expand their skills. The entire analysis is based on a holistic approach taking into account both formal education and non-formal and informal learning, as well as the potential of extracurricular learning venues located in the Euroregion.

2. Framework conditions

2.1 Administrative and legal bases

More than 70 years ago, education was elevated to a human right by the **United Nations**. Since then, education has been regarded as a state task, and basic education is to be made free of charge and compulsory for everyone; in addition, vocational and/or further education is to be accessible to everyone. The states belonging to the international community have complied with this task to varying degrees. Among others, this conclusion can be gained from the regular PISA studies.

Universal Declaration of
Human Rights (1948),
Article 26

(1) Everyone has the right to education. [...]

(2) Education shall be directed to the full development of the human personality and to the strengthening of respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms. It shall promote understanding, tolerance and friendship among all nations, racial or religious groups, and shall further the activities of the United Nations for the maintenance of peace.

Since then, everybody has been granted a right to education, which – at least for basic education – should also be compulsory and free of charge. Further technical and vocational education and/or university education should also be accessible to everyone. From this principle, all over the world the tasks being in state responsibility have been derived from. However, parents have their obligation to cooperate as well. Since this human right to education is directed beyond the “full development of the human personality” to the promotion of “understanding, tolerance and friendship between all nations...”, it also offers an orientation in the analysis and/or design of cross-border educational approaches.

At the European level, this human right is reflected in the Charta of Fundamental Rights of the **European Union** (2012):

Article 14

Everyone has the right to education and to have access to vocational and continuing training.

Article 15

Everyone has the right to [...] work and to pursue a freely chosen or accepted occupation.

As a consequence, the individual member states of the EU also comply with the said principle accordingly. This aspect will be illustrated here by the example of Germany and Poland, whereby the responsibility for education in the Federal Republic of Germany according to its federal

structure essentially belongs to the federal states while in the Republic of Poland it is primarily perceived as a national task. As a consequence, the **Constitution of the State of Brandenburg** (1992) complies with this human right, in particular under Article 29 while the **Constitution of the Republic of Poland** (1997) states the same right under Article 70:

(1) Everyone has the right to education.

Constitution of the State of Brandenburg, Article 29

(2) The State is obliged to create public educational institutions and to promote vocational training systems.

(3) Everyone has the right to equal access to public educational institutions, irrespective of the own economic and social situation and political convictions. Special support should be given to the gifted, the socially disadvantaged and people suffering from disabilities.

(1) Everyone has the right to education. Education up to the age of 18 shall be compulsory. [...]

Constitution of the Republic of Poland, Article 70

In the bilateral relations existing between the two countries, the **Treaty of Good Neighbourship and Cooperation concluded between the Federal Republic of Germany and the Republic of Poland** (1991) provides a basis for action:

(1) The contracting parties reaffirm their willingness to provide all interested persons with full access to the language and culture of the other country, and support adequate governmental and private initiatives and institutions.

Article 25

(2) The contracting parties shall promote the dissemination of classical and contemporary literature of the other country in the original language and translation.

(3) The contracting parties shall make every effort to develop opportunities for learning the language of the other country in schools, universities and other educational establishments. The objective is also to establish schools in which both languages are taught. Furthermore, they will endeavour to expand the opportunities of studying German and Polish studies at the universities of the respectively other country.

(4) The contracting parties shall cooperate in the posting and training of teachers and the development and provision of teaching materials, including the use of television, radio, audio, video and computer technology.

(5) The promotion of the work of the independent German-Polish textbook commission will be continued.

Article 26

(1) The contracting parties hereby point out the requirement for a substantial increase in the field of scientific and educational cooperation. They will especially promote and further develop the direct cooperation as well as the exchanges between schools, universities and scientific research institutions, both through exchanges of pupils, students, teachers and academic staff and through the implementation of joint projects.

(2) The contracting parties hereby reaffirm their intention to examine the options of the mutual recognition of periods of study and university degrees.

The treaty also attaches particular importance to the deepening of cooperation in the field of vocational education and training for cultural exchange and encounters, especially among young people.

Within the above-mentioned meaning, a large number of national legal regulations serve the implementation of human rights education in Poland and Germany. Based on the focus chosen in this context, regulations with a special reference to education – lifelong learning in a cross-border and intercultural context should be emphasized here: for example, reference should be made to the **Brandenburg School Act** (2018) and the **Polish Education Act** (2016):

Brandenburg School Act (Brandenburgisches Schulgesetz – BbgSchulG 2018):

Section 4 para. 5

“The school promotes the readiness for peaceful neighbourhood in the border region. [...] The school promotes a willingness to cooperate peacefully with its Polish neighbours.”

Polish Education Act (Prawo Oświatowe 2016):

Preamble

(...) Education and training serve to develop in the youth a sense of responsibility, patriotism and respect for the Polish cultural heritage, while at the same time opening up to the values of the cultures of Europe and the world.

Art. 1

The education system ensures the following:

[...] 13) The diffusion of knowledge and required skills among children and young people to actively participate in national and global culture and art; [...]

[...] (15) The diffusion of knowledge of the fundamentals of sustainable development and develop attitudes to promote its uptake at local, national and global levels. [...]

The Polish Council of Ministers has also adopted the **perspectives for lifelong learning** (Rada Ministrów 2013) in the form of a resolution. This document is the result of the work of an Inter-ministerial Working Group concerning issues around lifelong learning, including a national qualification framework. The working operations are coordinated by the Ministry of National Education.

The foundations of the "Perspectives for Lifelong Learning" (MEN 2014) shall be the following:

[...] Orientation towards learning - with an emphasis on the most extended potential access to a good quality of education (regardless of the situations in which this education takes place) and the acquisition of a qualification which is valued at a domestic as well as international level.

Subordination of measures to the interests of people who learn in different settings (in schools and universities, in traineeships and courses, in internships, in different organisations and simply in everyday situations) and are of different ages. The focus here is on the requirement for the interaction of the measures of many institutions, departments and partners.

Equal treatment, appreciation and promotion of learning in different forms and at different stages of life - by stressing the requirement for the development of the less developed forms and stages of learning, by including in particular early education, practical education, which is closely linked to the requirements of business and civil society, as well as adult education, including education for the elderly.

The so-called "Lifelong Learning Perspective" also presents the matters around the evaluation and confirmation of learning results. Among others, this perspective concerns the opportunities relating to the development of the knowledge and skills of persons (competences) and the confirmation of their acquisition in accordance with the requirements of the labour market (through the provision of qualifications), as well as the facilitation of the free movement of workers not only between the EU countries but also between the various economic fields.

2.2 Strategic content-related bases

Organisation of the United Nations – Educational agenda 2030

In the more than seven decades since the Second World War, the economy has developed so rapidly that the worldwide interdependence of e. g. flows of goods has an impact on the countries all over the world. The consequences associated with this globalization require, in turn, community action in view of the foreseeable challenges (including climate change, resource scarcity, and wealth gap). What followed was the United Nations General Assembly Resolution “**Transforming Our World: The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development**” (Vereinte Nationen 2015), which applies to all countries of the world for the first time in economic, social and environmental terms. Among the objectives formulated in the resolution there is the Sustainable Development Goal No. 4, the **Education 2030 Agenda** (Vereinte Nationen 2015) stating the following:

[...] Goal 4: Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all

4.1 By 2030, ensure that all girls and boys complete free, equitable and quality primary and secondary education leading to relevant and effective learning outcomes;

4.2 By 2030, ensure that all girls and boys have access to quality early childhood development, care and pre-primary education so that they are ready for primary education;

4.3 By 2030, enable equal access for all women and men to affordable and quality technical, vocational and tertiary education, including university;

4.4 By 2030, substantially increase the number of youth and adults who have relevant skills, including technical and vocational skills, for employment, decent jobs and entrepreneurship;

4.5 By 2030, eliminate gender disparities in education and ensure equal access to all levels of education and vocational training for the vulnerable, including persons with disabilities, indigenous peoples and children in vulnerable situations;

4.6 By 2030, ensure that all youth and a substantial proportion of adults, both men and women, achieve literacy and numeracy;

4.7 By 2030, ensure that all learners acquire knowledge and skills needed to promote sustainable development, including, among others, through education for sustainable development and sustainable lifestyles, human rights, gender equality, promotion of a culture of peace and non-violence, global citizenship, and appreciation of cultural diversity and of culture's contribution to sustainable development.

To achieve the said goal, the recommendations are the following:

4.a Build and upgrade education facilities that are child, disability and gender sensitive and provide safe, non-violent, inclusive and effective learning environments for all.

4.b By 2020, substantially expand globally the number of scholarships available to developing countries, in particular least developed countries, small island developing States and African countries, for enrolment in higher education, including vocational training and information and communications technology, technical, engineering and scientific programmes, in developed countries and other developing countries.

4.c By 2030, substantially increase the supply of qualified teachers, including through international cooperation for teacher training in developing countries, especially least developed countries and small island developing states.

Education 2030 Agenda (Deutsche UNESCO-Kommission 2017):

"Education equips learners of all ages with the skills and values which are necessary to be responsible citizens of the world. These skills and values include respect for human rights, gender equality and environmental sustainability. Investments in the field of education and the strengthening of the educational sector constitute a key to the development of a country and its people. By 2030, ensure inclusive, equal and high-quality education and opportunities for lifelong learning for all people."

In recognition of the fact that education has a significant impact on the development of nations and people, the world community has set itself a goal which shall include lifelong learning by 2030. The UNESCO coordinates the process, carries out a worldwide monitoring of the achieved progress by also submitting substantive and formal proposals. The United Nations General Assembly launched the **International Day of Education** in 2018, which was first celebrated on 24 January 2019, to celebrate the role of education for peace and development in the world (United Nations 2018).

European Union - Vision European Education Area 2025

As early as 2009, the Member States of the European Union agreed on a strategic framework for European cooperation in the field of education and training "Education and Training 2020 / ET 2020"(European Commission 2010), which also takes into account cultural diversity throughout Europe. In this common strategic framework, the Member States also set themselves the following concrete, quantifiable targets, which should be achieved by 2020:

- at least 95% of children should participate in early childhood educational measures,
- the proportion of 15-year-olds with insufficient knowledge of reading, mathematics and science should be below the level of 15%,
- the proportion of early school leavers between the ages of 18 and 24 should fall below the level of 10%,
- at least 40% of the- 30-34 year olds should have a university degree or equivalent,
- at least 15% of the adult population should participate in lifelong learning,
- at least 20% of university graduates and 6% of 18-34 year olds with initial vocational qualifications should have completed a study or training period abroad,
- the proportion of graduates in employment (20-34 year olds with at least one upper secondary education qualification) who completed their training between one and three years ago should be at least 82%.

The implementation status of these indicators is reviewed annually and in 2018 Germany and Poland reached a certain progress in many cases (European Commission 2019a; see the table presented in the following). Consequently, the proportion of university graduates in both countries has increased significantly, while Poland exceeded the target of 45.7% (2018). In contrast, there is a need for action in both countries on the criteria of "adult participation in lifelong learning" and "learning mobility".

Key indicators		Germany		Poland		EU average	
		2009	2018	2009	2018	2009	2018
Early school and training leavers (from 18 to 24 years)		11.1%	10.3%	5.3%	4.8%	14.2%	10.6%
Degree in tertiary education (from 30 to 34 years)		29.4%	34.9%	32.8%	45.7%	32.3%	40.7%
Early childhood care and education (from 4 years to the age of compulsory schooling)		96.0%	96.4%	70.9%	91.9%	90.8%	95.4%
Percentage of 15-year-olds with weak performance in:	Reading	18.5%	16.2%	15.0%	14.4%	19.5%	19.7%
	Mathematics	18.7%	17.2%	20.5%	17.2%	22.3%	22.2%
	Natural sciences	14.8%	17.0%	13.1%	16.3%	17.7%	20.6%
Employment rate of Graduates by educational level (from 20 to 34 years, leaving the education system between 1 and 3 years before the reference year)	ISCED* 3-8	85.3%	92.1%	78.4%	83.1%	78.3%	81.6%
Adult participation in lifelong learning (from 25 to 64 years)	ISCED 0-8 (total)	8.0%	8.2%	4.7%	5.7%	9.5%	11.1%
Learning mobility	Mobile graduates from abroad (ISCED 5-8)	:	5.1%	:	1.0%	:	3.6%
	Graduates with study-related mobility (ISCED 5-8)	:	12.8%	:	:	:	8.0%

* International standard classification in education for the production of standardized, international comparative statistics on education systems.

Tab. 1: Implementation status for the indicators according to ET 2020 in 2018 for Germany and Poland (European Commission 2019a)

Against this background and in the face of the current challenges, the Member States of the European Union continue to unite in recognising that education and culture are key drivers for economic and social development and as a consequence for a sustainable Europe. As early as 2018, the European Council supported its vision of the future with conclusions that the European Commission used as a basis for various initiatives to build a European Education Area:

The conclusions gained by the European Council (2018)

- strengthening of the strategic partnerships between higher education institutions across the EU and promotion of the development of some twenty 'European universities' by 2024 (allowing students to obtain a degree through a combination of studies in several EU countries in order to make a contribution to the international competitiveness of European universities);
- increased learning of foreign languages, in addition to one mother tongue, so to speak at least two European languages;
- increase of the mobility for students through the introduction of the 'European Student Card';
- promotion of the cooperation between Member States in the mutual recognition of higher and secondary education qualifications within an adequate framework;
- use of the European Year of Cultural Heritage as a chance to raise awareness of the social and economic importance of the culture and cultural heritage.

In this context, specific strategies, among others for youth, culture and digital education, have been developed. The European Commission pursues the following vision for Europe with the European Education Area.

Vision of the EU Commission (2018e) for a Europe in which

- stays abroad for study and learning purposes become the norm,
- school and higher education qualifications are recognised throughout the EU,
- it is pretty usual to speak two other languages in addition to the own mother tongue,
- everyone has access to quality education, regardless of the own social and economic background and
- people are fully aware of their European identity, Europe's cultural heritage and its diversity.

In order to support the efforts of all EU countries in the implementation of this vision of a European Education Area, in particular the Erasmus+programme constitutes an essential instrument. Thanks to its help, the learning mobility is increased so that participants can improve their individual knowledge (e. g. language) and (intercultural) skills as well as develop a European awareness through their stays abroad.

The initiatives launched by the EU Commission are also aimed not only at formal aspects (e. g. recognition of school and university degrees, equal opportunities), but also at content (e. g. language skills, awareness of European identity and cultural diversity). The actual strategic framework in accordance with ET 2020 will continue to be applied. Consequently, the quality and effectiveness of education from early childhood to vocational and higher education of adults is given fundamental importance. In a formal, non-formal and informal manner, lifelong learning should be made possible, while innovation, creativity and also entrepreneurial thinking should be promoted as well. For the said purpose, the EU Commission developed a guideline framework for key competences (see also what stated under Chapter 2.4 Scientific principles), digital education, shared values and inclusive education. Another focus will be placed on the following aspects:

- the early childhood care and education,
- the mutual recognition of qualifications and periods of learning and
- the teaching and learning of languages.

In this context, the EU Commission especially makes reference to the findings on the majority of early childhood care and education (EENEE 2018). To mention an example, the Pisa studies show that children who participated in early childhood education for more than 1 year perform better in languages as well as in mathematics. In addition, this will contribute to a lower dropout rate and to a higher level of social cohesion.

Since the European Council followed these initiatives, these strategic aspects are a fundamental basis for the development of education policy in the Member States. For this reason, a uniform orientation framework for both sides of the German-Polish Euroregion also results for the actual situation analysis.

German-Polish border area

According to the above-mentioned national and international efforts, the German and Polish regions also assume responsibility when it comes to educational aspects within their competence. Selected strategic documents relevant to the area of the Euroregion PRO EUROPA VIADRINA and the aspect of cross-border education approaches will be discussed in more detail here in the following.

With the **“Joint Concept for the Future of the German-Polish Interconnection Area – Vision 2030” („Gemeinsames Zukunftskonzept für den Deutsch-Polnischen Verflechtungsraum – Vision 2030“)** (DPRK 2014), the Committee for Spatial Planning of the German-Polish Government Commission for Regional and Border Cooperation published a mission statement in 2014. For the border federal states of Germany as well as for the border voivodships of Poland and in addition for Berlin and the Wielkopolska voivodeship the said mission statement contains target statements on education by 2030. In this document, in addition to intercultural competence, the importance of bilingualism, university cooperation and the experience of the common cultural heritage is emphasized.

In its **spatial planning plan** (UMWL 2018b), the **Lubuskie voivodeship** aims to “improve the quality of education in schools by improving their technical equipment as well as their orientation towards the regional labour market”.

The Lubuskie voivodeship (SWL 2010), among the main areas of international cooperation, also points to the “increase of the quality of education and schooling through international cooperation based on partnership, the exchange of experience and the support of measures aimed at the European integration”. This document also stresses the role of the Euroregions, with one of the priorities being “cooperation with the Euroregion Spree-Neisse-Bober and the Euroregion PRO EUROPA VIADRINA”.

In its **internationalisation strategy** (MdJEV 2014), the state of **Brandenburg** attaches fundamental importance to language skills, intercultural competence at all levels and international mobility in the field of children and young people. In addition to the description of the situation regarding international mobility (university, profession, and school) and partnerships, action needs are also addressed. The in evaluation of 2018 the document provides a comprehensive overview of the cooperation with Poland which has been achieved so far (MdJEV 2018).

In the **development and action concept of the Euroregion PRO EUROPA VIADRINA 2014 (Entwicklungs- und Handlungskonzept der Euroregion PRO EUROPA VIADRINA Viadrina 2014)** (ER PEV 2013) the Euroregion formulated the objective of “intensifying partnership-based cooperation for the development of cross-border potential” and also dedicated a sub-objective specifically to the “promotion of innovation and education”. Also in the other 3 sub-objectives, there are aspects which have been attributed an educational character. Examples are the increased cooperation taking place between administrations, associations, etc., the promotion of meeting events, the strengthening of industry competences or the implementation of measures to respond to demographic change. In addition to direct educational aspects, appropriate measures should also contribute to the development of competences in the context of cross-border interactions, especially on an informal basis.

At the initiative of the Language Centre of the European University Viadrina and the Saxon State Office for Early Neighbourhood Language Education, experts from Poland, the Czech Republic, Austria and Germany met and agreed on the **“Memorandum on Neighbouring Language Education in the German-Polish and German-Czech Border Regions” („Memorandum zur Nachbarsprachenbildung in den deutsch-polnischen und deutsch-tschechischen Grenzregionen“)** in a three-day event (LaNa et al. 2019). There are positions on structural, financial and methodological aspects which serve to exploit the opportunities of a continuous acquisition of the respective neighbouring language. In addition to the promotion of language learning, it also addresses competencies in the field of language teaching. Accordingly, those working in the field of education also need knowledge in the field of the theoretical foundations of language learning, the relationship between language and identity, and intercultural sensitivity.

The “First Education Report Frankfurt (Oder), International Education Location Frankfurt (Oder) – Słubice 2018” („Erster Bildungsreport Frankfurt (Oder), Internationaler Bildungsstandort Frankfurt (Oder) – Słubice 2018“) provides an extensive data collection concerning the situation of education in terms of lifelong learning for both cities (Frankfurt (Oder) 2018). This publication serves the two municipalities and their actors as a basis for action to shape the “International Education Location” – an objective of the Frankfurt-Słubice **Frankfurt-Słubice Action Plan 2014-2020 (Frankfurt-Słubicer Handlungsplan 2014-2020)**, which is especially aimed at the improvement of the structural and content-related methodological aspects as well as the bilingualism of children to seniors and consequently also at securing skilled workers.

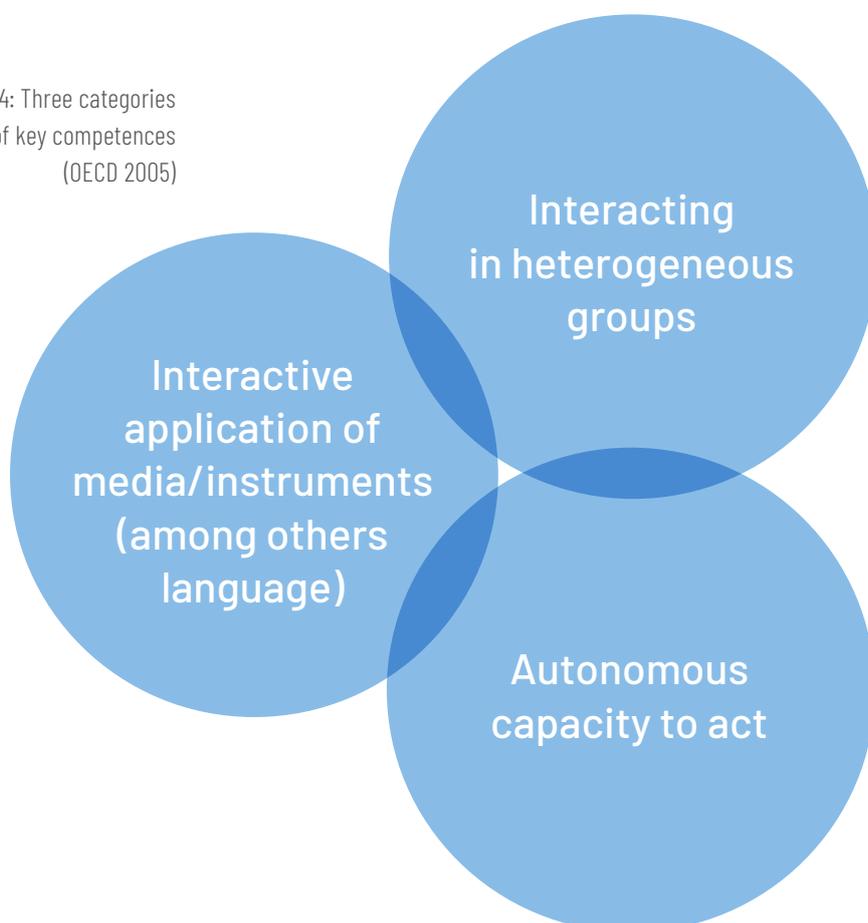
2.3 Scientific basis

For cross-border approaches to education, intercultural competence is a key competence for education and lifelong learning. Its scientific basis will be outlined in the present chapter.

Intercultural competence (Thomas 2003) is considered to be a key competence that manifests itself in the ability to grasp, respect, appreciate and productively use cultural factors of influence in perceiving, thinking, feeling, judging and acting in oneself and in foreign persons in the sense of mutual adaptation, tolerance for incompatibilities and development of synergistic forms of coexistence and of world orientation. However, the intercultural competence should not be equated with an independent competence. According to Bolten (2012), in this context, intercultural competence is understood as the interplay of partial competences (professional, strategic, individual and social competence) taking place in an ongoing process, which are present in different forms in the concrete person and must be continuously developed (in the sense of lifelong learning).

The importance of acquiring key competencies in the globalized world is increasing. In 2005, the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) published a reference framework for this purpose and referred to the interplay of three categories of key competences in context:

Fig. 4: Three categories of key competences (OECD 2005)



The core competence is the ability to reflect, which is formed in particular by (regular) interaction in heterogeneous groups and is essential for the training of an intercultural competence.

The reflexivity involves not only the ability to routinely follow a formula or method in dealing with a particular situation, but also to deal with changes, learn from experiences, and think and act in a critical manner. (OECD 2005)

The European Union has also intensively addressed the advantages of intercultural competence in lifelong learning by developing a corresponding reference framework about it. Accordingly (Rat der Europäischen Union 2018) the key competences are the following:

A dynamic combination of knowledge, skills, and attitudes which a learner must develop starting from childhood throughout life. Education, training and lifelong learning of high quality and in an inclusive form provide an opportunity for everyone to develop key competences. For this reason, competence-oriented approaches can be applied in all educational and learning settings and in all phases of life“.

The Reference Framework sets out eight key competences:

- ability to read and write,
- multilingual competence,
- mathematical competence and competence in natural sciences, computer science and technology,
- digital fluency,
- personal, social and learning competence,
- civic skills,
- entrepreneurial competence as well as
- cultural awareness and expression

Fig. 5: Key competences for lifelong learning (Rat der Europäischen Union 2018)

Particularly noteworthy are the further recommendations made by the Council of the European Union on key competences for lifelong learning (Rat der Europäischen Union 2018):

“All key competencies are considered equally important, as each of them contributes to a successful life in society. Competencies can be applied in many different environments and in numerous combinations. The said competencies overlap and interlock; important aspects in one area support the competencies in another. Skills such as critical thinking, problem solving, teamwork, communication and negotiation skills, analytical skills, creativity and intercultural competence constitute an integral part of all key competencies.”

Also with regard to the desired (multilingual) competence, a “positive attitude with the appreciation of cultural diversity” has a conducive and motivating effect (Rat der Europäischen Union 2018). As a consequence, cultural awareness and cultural expressiveness are also closely related to this. This strengthens the role of intercultural competence by suggesting the inclusion of elements of natural and cultural heritage in the Euroregional context.

Against the said background, the present analysis derives the general approach of aligning cross-border educational approaches in addition to knowledge transfer (through formal and non-formal education), in particular to cross-border interactions as core elements of the development of e. g. appreciative attitudes (informal education). In doing so, it contributes to the expansion of key competences.

Here in the following, the theoretical foundations will be examined in this sense.

Learning spiral

The acquisition of intercultural competence is a lifelong process which cannot be considered completed by the acquisition of individual competences or by completing a course of study. This means that it should take place again and again in all educational phases, from kindergarten to school, vocational technical school and university to senior academy. For this purpose, the model of the learning spiral was developed. The learning spiral refers to the processual interlocking of all subcomponents (Deardorff 2008).

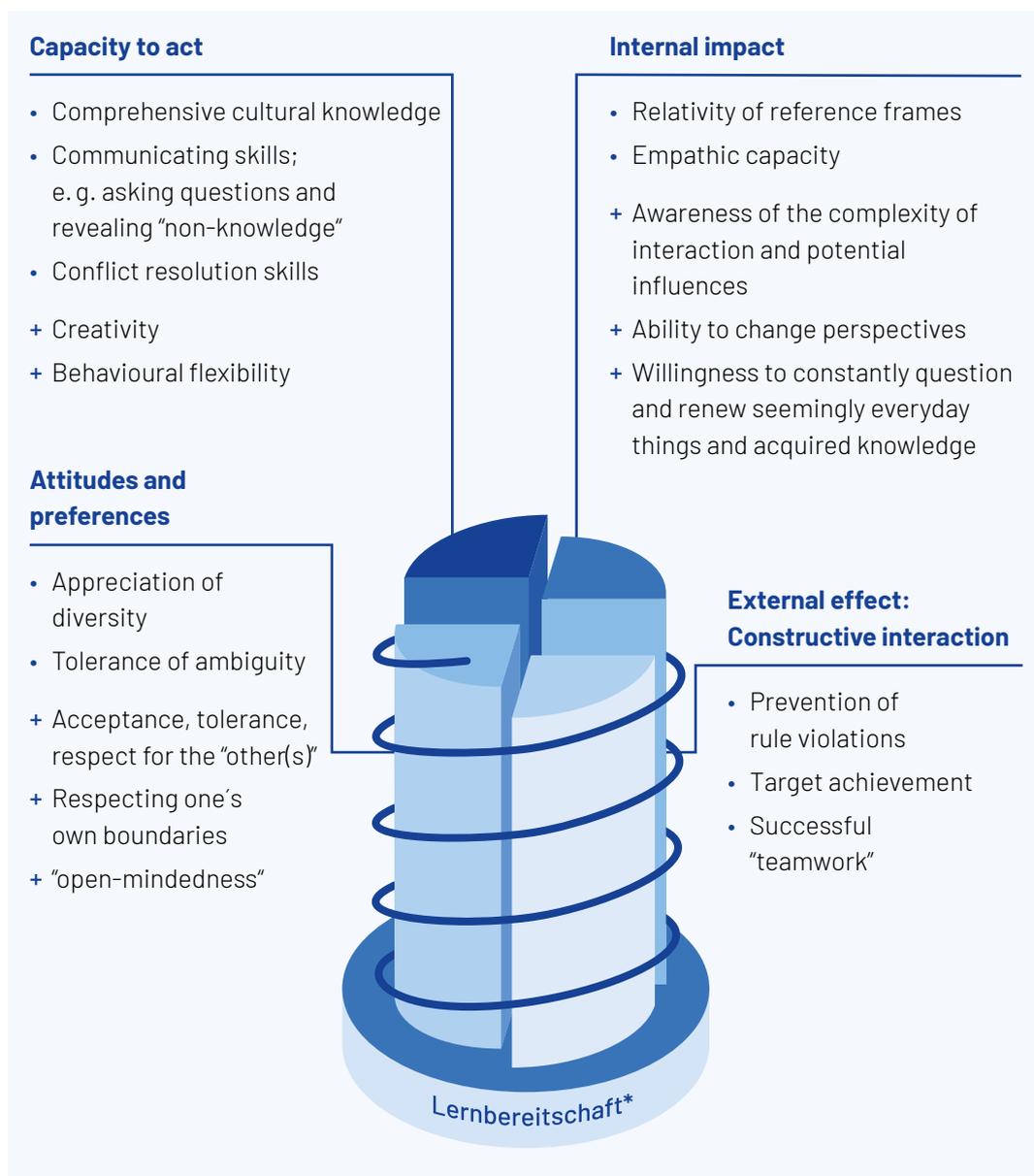


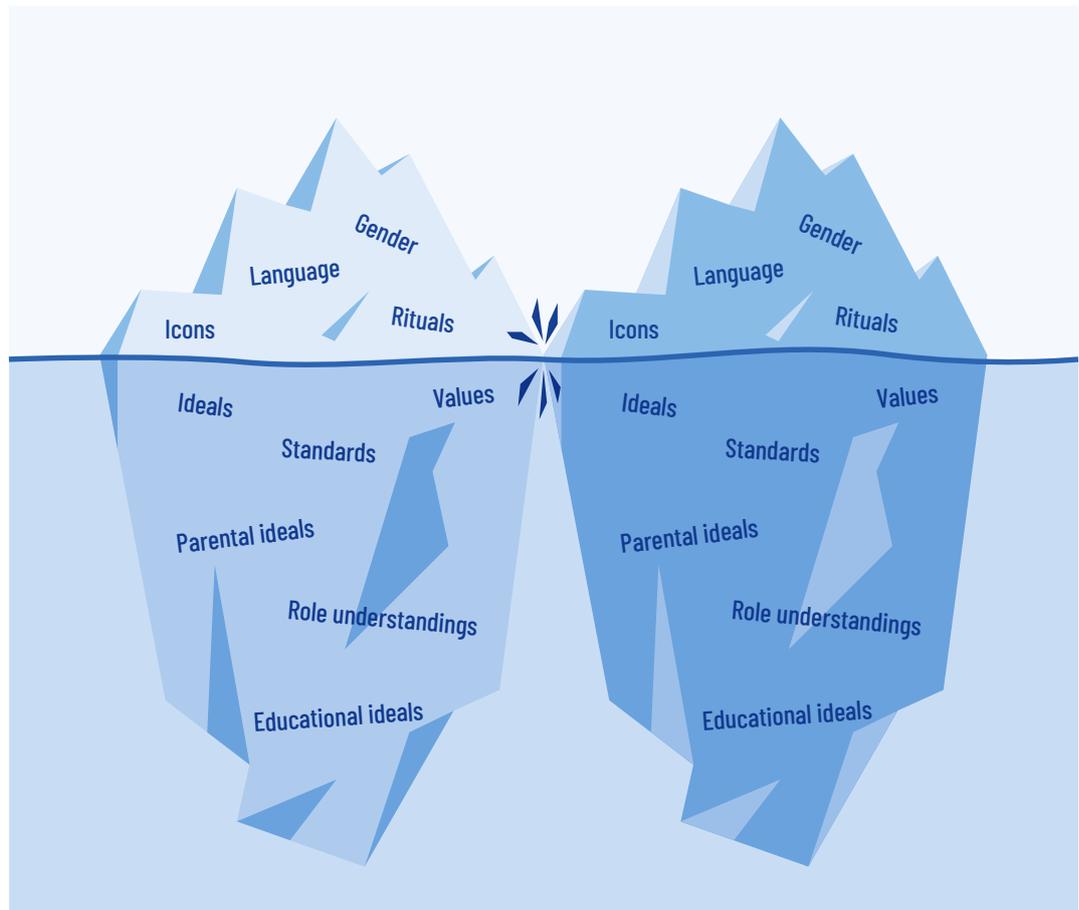
Fig. 6: Learning spiral (own illustration; ZIL, Medvedieva according to Deardorff 2008)

* Willingness to learn forms the basis in the sense of an expansive motivation to learn (Holzkamp 1995)

Cultural understanding

The significance of culture with regard to intercultural issues will be illustrated by means of an iceberg model. The iceberg symbolizes that our idea of another culture initially only includes the top and/or surface (the visible elements), e. g. symbols, language, rituals, etc. while deep values, norms, ideals, etc. remain hidden in comparison and cannot be understood at first glance (Hiller 2016).

Fig. 7: Iceberg model – Visible and invisible aspects of culture (own presentation; ZIL, Medvedieva according to Hiller 2016)



In the context of intercultural encounters, irritation can occur when the hidden values, roles and conventions of two cultures meet, as it is the case in the collision of two icebergs. This is usually expected in an international exchange, e. g. in international youth encounters. However, the iceberg model can also be applied to other "cultures" in a national context, e. g. in terms of KITA culture (~childcare culture), school culture, learning culture, etc. Such types of collisions naturally take place regularly. It depends on how you deal with it.

Cultural value orientations

Cultural differences are often represented schematically in the specialist literature as cultural dimensions or alternatively as cultural standards. Cultural dimensions and cultural standards identify values or norms, conventions and/or ideals which are considered characteristic of certain cultures (Hiller 2016). As a consequence, the cultural dimensions (Hofstede 2001) represent a universal grid into which (national) cultures can be classified.

The model developed by Hofstede, also called value star model, shows a number of categories describing the said cultural value orientations. As dimensions the lines connect two opposing but at the same time complementary cultural orientations. Along the said dimensions, one's own values can be assigned to each category, reflected on and related to cultural values of third parties. However, this model should be viewed critically if stereotypes are thereby established. This model should only serve as an orientation to which of the poles one feels attracted to and in which manner the said orientation behaves with the other. However, the latter always depends on the context.

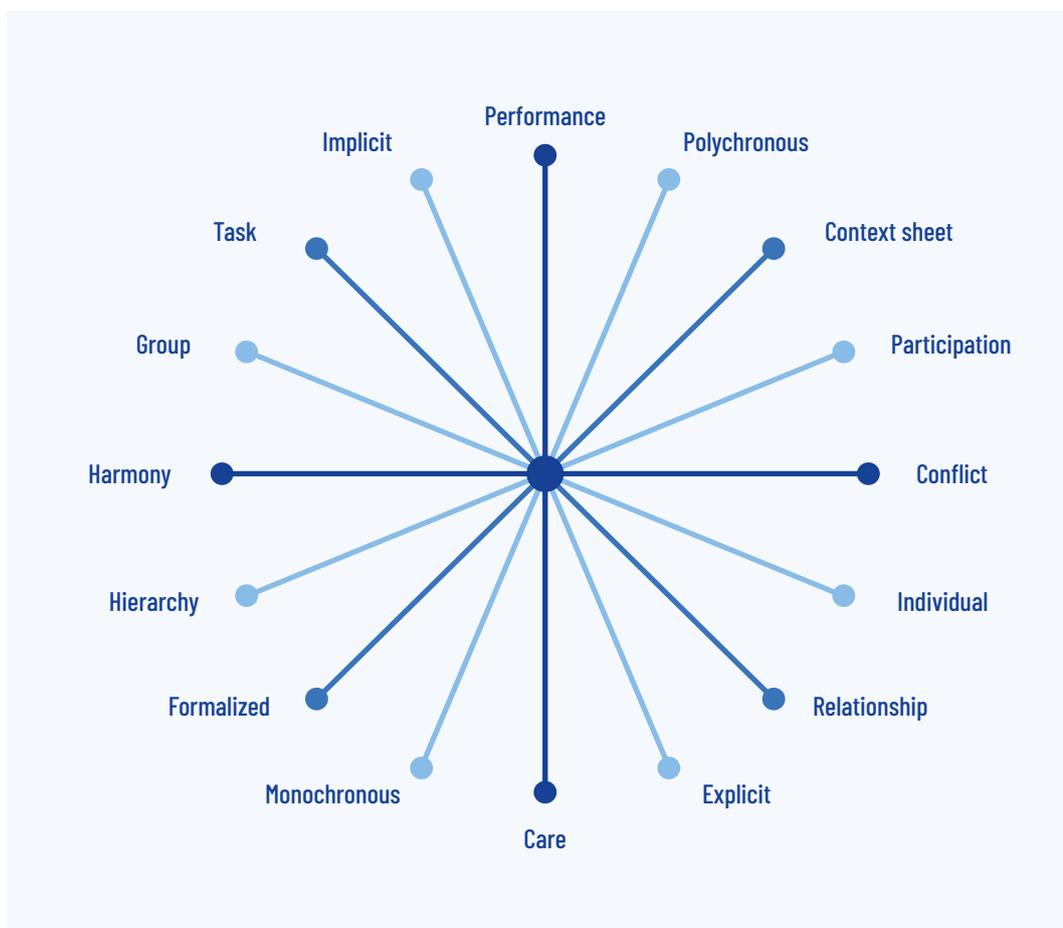


Fig. 8: Value stars (own representation; ZIL, Medvedieva according to Hofstede 2001)

Importance of Border Regional Identities

Cross-border cooperation is also an intercultural cooperation between representatives of different (national) cultures. In order for the said cooperation to take place successfully, the degree of existing intercultural competence on both sides shall play an important role. Beyond getting to know each other, dealing with each other should lead to the reduction of stereotypes.

In addition to the dominant national, social and collective identities on both sides of the border, the border regional identity describes an established, attractive offer of a cross-border identity for the border area population. The border regional identity can be seen as both a social and a collective identity (see Höbler 2011). In the professional world, different models and categorizations are used for border-regional identity, its intercultural competence as well as its meaning.

Social categorization, that also complicates cooperation:

1. The members of foreign groups are perceived as much more similar to each other than the members of the own group. This phenomenon is called foreign group homogenization.
2. Stereotyping creates a simplified, generalized and schematic picture of the foreign group based on existing experience and knowledge, even if the information base is small or uncertain.
3. The social categorization refers to the phenomenon according to which the differences existing between groups are emphasized, especially in order to be able to distinguish the own group from third-party groups.
4. Since every human being has a fundamental need for positive self-assessment, they make a social comparison between their own and third-party groups, consciously or unconsciously evaluating the group they belong to in a more positive manner.
5. This pursuit of positive social distinctiveness (also called self-group favoritism) is a very pronounced aspect. Resourceful strategies are applied and social comparison dimensions are selected in such a manner that they allow the distinction made between the own group and the third-party groups in a favorable manner. If a group has no prospect of success in performing better than another one in terms of economic, technical, intercultural, sporting, etc., this group will assess itself better, for example, in terms of moral criteria.

The model of border competence according to Raasch (Höbner, 2011):

1. Country-specific competence refers to the knowledge of the other culture beyond the existing border.
2. The contrastive country-specific competence is understood to mean knowledge of the own culture and, moreover, the ability to compare the own culture with the culture of others.
3. The empathy competence is achieved when understanding can be gained for the other culture, whereby this does not necessarily have to be accompanied by a feeling of sympathy for the respective foreign culture.
4. The intercultural competence is reflected in the constructive interaction and cooperation with the representatives of the other culture.
5. The fifth and highest level represents a competence that creates jointly responsible spaces across borders in joint-decision making and must therefore be described as a new intercultural competence through the dissolution of national-cultural boundaries.

Measures for the development of border regional identity according to HÖBLER (2011):

1. Learning the language of the neighbour.
2. Systematic official orchestration. First of all, the border residents must develop the awareness that they are not only Germans, French or Czechs, but also German-Polish border area residents, who are specifically promoted and have the opportunity to be authentic pioneers when it comes to an European identity. This can be done, for example, through official ceremonies, study days in schools, posters, newspaper reports, etc.
3. Transfer of knowledge about the neighbour: The information base on which stereotypes are formed must be maximally expanded so to allow the creation of a picture of the neighbouring nation reaching the highest level of differentiation possible. This transfer could be promoted through measures such as regional studies courses, blocks of lessons in social science subjects (geography, history, etc.), joint university programmes, historical performances and plays, publications on common history, excursions to cultural and industrial institutions beyond the border, etc.
4. Transfer of intercultural knowledge and competences: If resources and interest are available, intercultural and/or bicultural or tricultural training could be offered in order to raise awareness of foreign cultural orientation systems and the influence of culture on human behaviour and to promote intercultural competence based on it.
5. Intensive contact with members of the neighbouring nation: A differentiated image of the others must not only remain theoretically cognitive, but must be filled with life. For this purpose, it is essential that the representatives of both nations meet in person and spend time together in order to get to know each other better. Possible platforms for this can be the following: joint festivals, youth camps, travel, cooperation at institutional and club level and manageable joint projects at municipal level, where a safe, rapid success can be guaranteed, so that efforts are intensified without resulting in any frustration.

Rules when it comes to the organized contact with foreign cultural actors

Empirical studies, e. g. by Allport (1954; cit. In Hübler 2011), have clearly shown that the contact alone does not guarantee the promotion of mutual understanding and productive cooperation. On the basis of the case study of the European University Viadrina, even Hiller noted that no mutual understanding results from the coexistence of Polish and German students during their studies alone. For this purpose, an interaction is required. As a result, Dr. Hiller has launched intercultural training sessions in which the students solve a task together, and carry out intercultural communication beyond the contact hypothesis (see Hiller 2016).

In order to avoid the quite realistic effect, in the absence of sufficient intercultural competence, of reinforcing prejudices through cross-border contact, and to make positive development more likely, the following framework conditions are specified (see Hübler 2011):

1. Cooperation instead of competition: cooperation between the people during their encounter favours the reduction of prejudices while competition hinders it;
2. Status similarity: the elimination of prejudices is promoted if during their encounter the people have the same or a similar hierarchical or socio-economic status;
3. Close rather than superficial contact: The more superficial the contact between people from different cultures, the more likely the danger of an apparent confirmation and consequently the consolidation of existing prejudices. The closer and more intensive the contact is, the more likely there is the chance of an as undistorted and differentiated as possible perception of the respective partner;
4. Positive social climate: The reduction of prejudices is facilitated by the fact that the involved groups consider cross-border contacts to be positive, desirable and as such worthy of support;
5. Models promoting the contact: The reduction of prejudices is promoted by the presence of people who are open to contact and capable of cooperation, who show an exemplary behaviour of intercultural competence by stimulating model learning;
6. Overlapping categorization: Since categorization according to nations is initially unavoidable in international encounters ("we Germans meet the French"), a opportunity should be given to form a so-called third category. These are categories including parts of both nations;
7. No extremely negative reciprocal attitudes: If the reciprocal attitudes on important topics are too negative, it is almost impossible to break down the prejudice through contact. In this case, an attempt should be made to effect an at least partial change of attitude before the meeting, e. g. by means of targeted information about the third-party group.

Conclusions from which we can derive cross-border approaches to education

Against the background of the above-described context of key competencies and their further development over time, methodological hints are to be taken up to structure the derivation of action approaches.

For example, the OECD study (2005), which has already been quoted, also pointed out that, based on the context of the respective situation, the three main categories of key competencies are in different degrees of demand. This correlation illustrates a 3-dimensional model, so that, e.g., the cognitive state of knowledge of a person (the interactive use of media and means) and their role behaviour in social groups (autonomous ability to act) influences the cooperation ability (of interaction in heterogeneous groups). For this reason, this requires a sufficiently differentiated analysis of the specific situation for the target groups and, based on this, the derivation of adequate approaches for this context.

In this regard, Bolten (2012) recommends a method map in which simple (non-culture-specific) to complex (intercultural) learning content can be combined with simple (instructive) to complex (collaborative) teaching methods. This model also assumes overlaps and/or stepless transitions between the constellations according to the given context.

Pauli (2015) developed a 3-stage model for the process of cultural integration using the example of the German-Polish border region. This model can also be applied to cross-border educational approaches. Since the above-mentioned context-related constellations of key competencies can also be considered in the context of this model, here it should be approached in a slightly modified form (see FIG. 9).

To mention an example, the creation of multilingual teaching materials, the training of teachers in intercultural aspects or the multilingual labelling of exhibits in museums involved in German-Polish school or adult projects could be assigned to level 1. The exchange of the experiences between German and Polish teachers, the meeting of school classes from both sides or the participation of sports groups in a competition would be a type of crossing of borders according to level 2. If the cooperation of teachers in a long-term school partnership leads to students working together in several encounters and possibly also using the internet to explain exhibits in museums in several languages, level 3 would certainly be achieved.

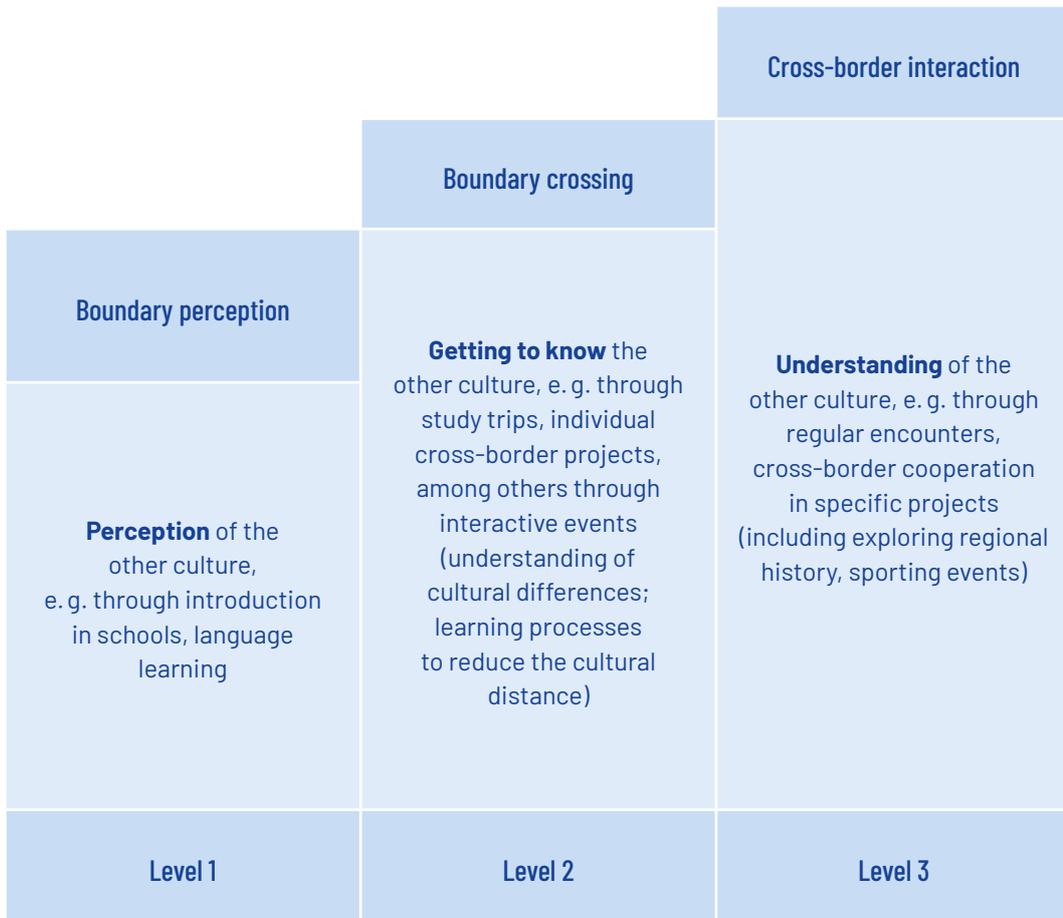


Fig. 9: Levels of cross-border cultural interaction (own presentation; ZIL, Medvedieva according to Pauli 2015)

Based on the interaction of key competencies, we start from the assumption that the respective degree of “interaction in heterogeneous groups” allows an assignment to the 3 levels relatively easily (e. g., in the sense of “instructive”, “interactive” and “collaborative”). Furthermore, preparatory and/or flanking approaches to action (e. g., for level 1: learning intercultural action strategies, languages or gaining media competence) can be classified equally well. This results in a systematically structured set of possibilities for action, from which the adequate approaches can be selected according to the context of the specific situation.

2.4 Educational systems of Poland and Germany (Brandenburg)

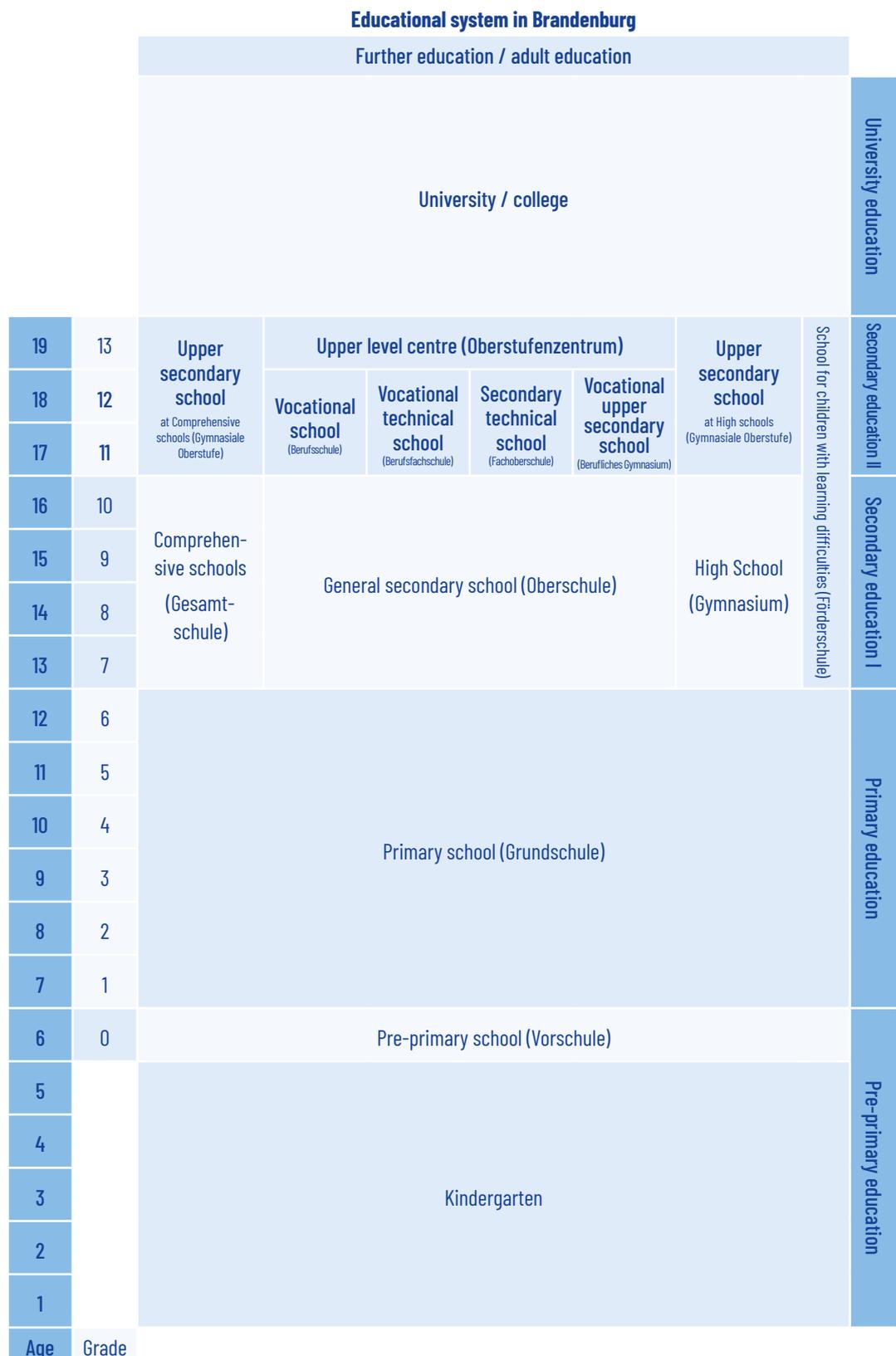


Fig. 10: Educational system in Brandenburg (own presentation; according to LISUM 2005 and KMK 2019)

Commonalities and differences existing between the education systems in Germany and Poland are to be roughly characterized with regard to cross-border aspects. Since the federal states are responsible for the education in Germany, in this context, reference is made mainly to the situation found in the federal state of Brandenburg. In Poland, on the other hand, the essential part of education shows a centrally organised structure which is uniform in the voivodeships. Here in the following, aspects will be highlighted that provide indications for cross-border approaches to education with regard to the situation analysis carried out in this context. Consequently, the issue concerning the recognition of qualifications (e. g., double qualifications in the vocational and higher education sectors) is treated as a subordinate issue, as competence development within the current framework of both education systems is at the heart of it. In this context, reference is made to already established procedures for recognition in the field of studies as well as vocational training (see BIBB 2020a; MEN 2020; MNiSW 2020).

		Educational system in Poland				
		Further education / adult education				
		University / college				University education
		Post-secondary vocational technical school (szkoła policealna)				Post-secondary area
19	13	Vocational technical school of the 2nd degree	Secondary technical school (technikum)	High school (liceum ogólnokształcące)	Schools for children with learning difficulties (Förderschulen)	Secondary education II
18	12	(branżowa szkoła II stopnia/= Vocational technical school)				
17	11	Vocational technical school of the 1st degree				
16	10	(branżowa szkoła I stopnia/= Vocational technical school)				
15	9					
14	8	Primary school (szkoła podstawowa)				Secondary education I
13	7					
12	6					
11	5					
10	4					
9	3	Preschool (zerówka)				Primary education
8	2					
7	1					
6	0	Kindergarten (przedszkole)				Pre-primary education
5						
4						
3						
2						
1		Nursery (żłobek)				
Age	Grade					

Fig. 11: Educational system in Poland (own representation, according to Prawo Oświatowe 2016)

In both education systems, citizens are generally offered the chance to take advantage of offers in the sense of lifelong learning. Thanks to the freedom of movement obtained between the two European countries, the use of these offers on the other side has also been taking place for some time, provided that communication is guaranteed and that there is spatial proximity. For example, German and Polish children attending preschool institutions on the other side or Polish adults attending adult education courses are not uncommon. However, they are limited to individual cases.

In view of the differences in the types of schools and courses of education, as well as the nationally different terminology and definitions in the professional world, the derivation of the approaches to action will be based on age groups (early childhood education, school education, vocational education, higher education, adult education). In this regard, we start from the assumption that the cross-border interaction within the framework of educational offers among participants of more or less the same age is particularly effective, in particular because a systematic expansion of such interactions is easier to be implemented from an organisation-related point of view. Nevertheless, approaches to action in the transition area of educational levels or the interaction between, e. g. young people and seniors should be considered. The diversity of responsibilities (among others, in terms of the performance of tasks by third parties, non-governmental/private sponsors) should also be mentioned in this context. The said aspect plays a decisive role, especially in the implementation of approaches to action, since in the case of distributed responsibilities, the cooperation of the institutions influences the interaction-related success.

Early childhood education

In both countries, children's attendance at preschool facilities is the decision of the parents, however, parents on both sides have a right to this day care. In addition to the task of care and education, the institutions follow the preparation of the children for primary school in different ways. The content-related profiling is more or less the responsibility of the institutions themselves.

In Poland, it is possible to attend a pre-school (the so-called "zerówka") from the age of 5 whereby the attendance shall be compulsory from the age of 6 (Prawo Oświatowe 2016). According to the programme basis for the pre-school education in Poland (MEN 2017), all children in kindergarten from the age of 3 learn a modern foreign language, mostly English, and in part German.

For this reason, it is obvious that the cross-border approaches to action should be initiated from the age of 3 and mediated through the municipalities because in many cases the competence belongs to the municipalities. In addition, other sponsors can be approached. Through holiday leisure offers you can then also reach children who experience individual care.

School education

In Poland, the compulsory schooling begins at the age of 7 (Prawo Oświatowe 2016). After the recent reform of the school system in Poland, a form of secondary schools (the so-called gimnazjum) were dissolved and returned to the 8-year primary school. This primary school period is divided into 2 sections. The first stage is early school education, including the grades

Education		Responsibility	
Stage	Type	Germany	Poland
Elementary	Preschool education	Federal state / Municipality / Parents	National (Ministry of National Education – Ministerstwo Edukacji Narodowej, MEN) Municipalities / Parents
Primary	School	Federal state / Municipality	National (MEN) / municipal executive bodies *
	Personnel costs	Federal state	National (MEN) / municipalities
	Educational curricula	Federal state	National (MEN)
	Material costs and non-teaching personnel (building layout, maintenance and administration of the school, equipment, etc.)	Municipality	Municipality/ executive bodies of non-public bodies
	Certain special educational establishments and specialized schools	Federal state	Administrative district
Secondary	Vocational training	Federal state / administrative district / company providing training	National (MEN) / Administrative district **
	Vocational training divided into sectors		National (corresponding ministries, e. g., agricultural schools: Ministry of Agriculture; forestry school: Ministry of Environment; art school: Ministry of Culture)
	Schools and institutions with a regional focus		Voivodeship (Marshal's Office, e. g. medical schools)
Tertiary	College	Federal state	National (Ministry of Science and Higher Education)
Quaternary	Further education	Federal state / Administrative districts / Municipalities / Chambers	Municipalities, Voivodeship (Marshal's Office)

* In addition: executive bodies of non-public institutions

** supported by employers, employers' organisations, business self-governments

Tab. 2: Responsibilities in the educational system in Germany (Brandenburg) and/ or Poland (own presentation; ZIL, Medvedieva)

from I to III of the primary school and in which the subjects are taught as integrated lessons. In the grades from IV to VIII, however, the classes take place with a weekly set number of hours dedicated to the respective subjects. After the completion of the primary school (szkoła podstawowa), the pupils can choose one of the secondary schools (szkoły średnie), including the high schools (4 years – liceum ogólnokształcące), the secondary technical schools (5 years – technikum) and the vocational technical school of the 1st degree (3 years – branżowa szkoła I stopnia) (Prawo Oświatowe 2016 and European Commission 2019b).

The Polish Ministry of National Education (Ministerstwo Edukacji Narodowej, MEN) is responsible for the financing, organization, training of teachers, preparation of framework curricula and regulations of education in all the voivodeships of Poland. The Polish municipalities are primarily responsible for the planning of the school network and the supervision of the educational institutions in their territories, as well as for the kindergartens and primary schools. The Polish administrative districts are responsible for the secondary schools (szkoły ponadpodstawowe). The school directors have relatively wide-ranging powers in the preparation of curricula in both general education and vocational training, by taking into account all the contents of the framework curricula (see Reum 2019, p. 151 et seq.). To mention an example, during the grades I to III, the school directors are entitled to the free arrangement of 3 hours per week, while during the

Subjects

Brandenburg (Grades 1 – 10)	Poland (Grades 4 – 8)
Astronomy	Polish
Biology	1.+2. Modern foreign language
Chemistry	Music
German	Fine arts
English	History
French	Social studies
Geography	Nature
History	Geography
Social sciences	Biology
Computer science	Chemistry
Art	Physics
Latin	Mathematics
Lifestyle-Ethics-Religion (LER)	Computer science
Mathematics	Technology
Music	Physical education
Natural sciences	Classes with an educator
Philosophy	Civil defence
Physics	Preparation for family life (optional)
Political education	Religion / Ethics (optional)
Polish	Language of the national or ethnic minority
Psychology	Regional language – Kashubian
Russian	Vocational guidance lessons
General Science Education (Sachkundeunterricht)	
Spanish	
Physical education	
Theatre	
Economy-Work-Technology (WAT)	

Tab. 3: Overview of the subjects taught in Brandenburg and Poland (according to LISUM 2019; MEN 2017)

grades from IV to VIII the hours for free arrangement are 4. In the High school (liceum ogólnokształcące) they are 3, in the Secondary technical school (technikum) 4 and in the vocational technical school of the 1st degree (branżowa szkoła I stopnia) they are 3 (see MEN 2019).

In Germany, the compulsory schooling begins at the age of 6. The primary school in the Federal State of Brandenburg lasts for 6 years, after which the pupils can choose their secondary school according to their achievements and/or inclinations. In the Federal State of Brandenburg, there is the option of obtaining a degree at the secondary school, comprehensive school (Gesamtschule) or high school, whereby the so-called "Abitur" (school-leaving examination) can only be achieved at high schools and comprehensive schools (Gesamtschulen).

The federal states of Berlin and Brandenburg coordinated the preparation of the framework curriculum, which was developed by the Berlin-Brandenburg Federal State Institute for School and Media (Landesinstitut für Schule und Medien Berlin-Brandenburg) and is now applicable in both countries starting from the school year 2017/2018 (LISUM 2015a). In addition to the regular subjects, the curriculum also lists overarching topics to be integrated into the school's internal curricula, either in the regular subjects or in interdisciplinary teaching forms or projects. For this purpose, cooperation with extracurricular partners and parents is also recommended (see LISUM 2015b). The German Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports (Ministerium für Bildung, Jugend und Sport) and the School Offices – for the area of the Euroregion the Frankfurt (Oder) School Office – exercise the professional and administrative supervision of the schools and besides content requirements (framework curriculum, methodology) provide for personnel and teaching materials. In general, the municipal school sponsors are responsible for the buildings and other personnel. According to the Brandenburg School Act (BbgSchulG, Brandenburger Schulgesetz 2018), schools can develop their own profile by using 10% of their lessons for this purpose.

Interdisciplinary competencies (grades 1 - 10, Brandenburg)

Language skills
 Media literacy
 Inform
 Communicate
 Present
 Produce
 Analyse
 Reflect
 Vocational and study orientation
 Education for the acceptance of diversity
 Democracy education
 European education at school
 Health education
 Violence prevention
 Promotion of gender equality
 Intercultural education and training
 Cultural education
 Mobility education
 Traffic training
 Sustainable development
 Learning in global contexts
 Sexual education
 Consumer education

Tab. 4: Interdisciplinary competencies (grades 1 - 10) in Brandenburg (LISUM 2015)

In addition to the flexibility we notice in schools on both sides, the framework curricula also contain objectives, methods and subjects providing points of reference in cross-border approaches (see Prawo Oświatowe 2016 and MEN 2017). They also show noticeable intersection points of matching subjects concerning the relevant grade levels. Another aspect pursued by both systems, is the cross-sectional competence development. The interdisciplinary competencies explicitly identified in the framework curriculum of Brandenburg (cf. Tab. 4) correspond to analogue subjects on the Polish side. For this reason, in the subjects ethics, social sciences and modern foreign languages, intercultural competence and the development of awareness of (non-)discrimination are taught. Starting from grade VII approximately 10 hours a year can be used for professional orientation (see MEN 2017).

On both sides, the topic of vocational (and study) orientation starts during grade VII and/or VIII and is a task currently addressed also by an INTERREG project organised by the IHK-Projektgesellschaft mbH Ostbrandenburg (see IHK-Projektgesellschaft 2020a) and its cooperation partners operating in the cross-border context. Due to the responsibilities, it is also advisable in the school sector to use existing partnerships between schools, municipalities and administrative districts as a starting point for cross-border educational approaches. In addition, the said responsibilities can also be extended to extracurricular activities and designed for holiday leisure so to address individual interests as well.

However, a comparison of the content taught in the subjects and grades would exceed the scope of the present analysis. The accuracy of the methodological and/or didactic approaches applied on both sides, including language formation (including immersion method), should also be reserved for the action-based approaches (e. g. teacher training, German-Polish exchange of experience between teachers and educators and preparation of teaching materials).

Vocational training

The vocational education and training system differs significantly in that it is mostly provided by vocational technical schools in Poland. It is also possible to carry out practical vocational training at the employer's premises (after the apprentice and the employer have signed an employment contract on preparation for the profession or after the school director and employer, where the apprentice will receive practical vocational training, signed a contract on practical vocational training). In Germany, the dominating system is the so-called dual system, in which training companies contribute a large part of the training in cooperation with respective vocational technical schools.

From an organisational point of view and in terms of content, the (school) framework curricula in both countries already provide for the transition to the vocational training. On both sides, the administrative districts are essential sponsors of vocational technical training, with the East Brandenburg Chamber of Commerce and Industry (Industrie- und Handelskammer Ost-Brandenburg) and the Frankfurt (Oder) Chamber of Crafts (Handwerkskammer Frankfurt (Oder)) playing a central role (including recognition, coordination, further training, etc.) on the German side.

On the Polish side, the director of the school providing vocational training determines the professions in which the school provides training, in agreement with the school's governing body and after the approval by the curator of education and the voivodeship and/or administrative district council for employment.

Moreover, national rules on vocational education and training are taken into account with corresponding, partly national competences, e. g. when it comes to the definition of general objectives and educational tasks in the professions as well as in the classification of professions.

In this context, reference is made to the comparison of job profiles of Germany and Poland for more than 300 occupations carried out by the IHK Projektgesellschaft GmbH in cooperation with its Polish partner (Wojewódzki Zakład Doskonalenia Zawodowego – Voivodeship Vocational Training Institute Gorzów Wlkp.), which also lists the relevant vocational education and training institutions in the German-Polish border region (see IHK-PG 2020a). The portal also presents the vocational education and training institutions which, in addition to the vocational technical schools within the Euroregion and beyond, offer further occupational and/or sector-specific vocational training opportunities, e. g. for the nursing professions.

Selected professions and occupational groups in the Euroregion PRO EUROPA VIADRINA

on the German side	on the Polish side
<p>Business and administration (e. g. real estate, office management, wholesale / retail, dialogue marketing, banking, logistics, security and safety, sports)</p> <p>Technology and design (e. g. industrial/plant mechanics, electronics technicians, information and communication technicians, paint shop, bricklayers, automotive mechatronics, metal, machine, vulcanization, orthopedic technology, plasterer, carpenter, drywall)</p> <p>Agriculture, hospitality and food (e. g. hospitality, hotel and restaurant compartment, cook, gardener, farmer, animal farmer)</p> <p>Education, health and care (e. g. medical/dental assistant, social assistant, social pedagogy, educator, therapeutic educators, healer, hairdresser, social security assistant)</p>	<p>Administrative and commercial area (e. g. economy, trade, logistics, freight forwarding advertising, accounting)</p> <p>Building sector (e. g. construction, road construction, geodesy, wood technology, carpentry automotive mechanics, mechatronics, bodywork)</p> <p>Electronic sector (e. g. electricians, renewable energy systems, computer science)</p> <p>Agriculture, forestry and environmental protection (e. g. horticulture, agriculture, forestry, landscape architecture, environmental protection)</p> <p>Tourism and gastronomy (gastronomy, food technology, bakery, cook, pastry shop, hairdresser)</p> <p>Medical and social sector (e. g. veterinary services)</p> <p>Art area (e. g. graphics, photography)</p>

Tab. 5: Selection of professions and occupational groups trained in the Euroregion PRO EUROPA VIADRINA (Office of Statistics Berlin-Brandenburg/Amt für Statistik Berlin-Brandenburg 2020a; Curatorship Oświaty w Gorzowie Wlkp./ Kuratorium Oświaty w Gorzowie Wlkp. 2020)

In addition to the school elements, the trainees learn practical experience in school workshops and/or within the companies. On the Polish side, the institutions which cooperate with the schools include both vocational education and training institutions, e. g. the Voivodeship Institute for Continuing Vocational Training (Wojewódzki Zakład Doskonalenia Zawodowego), as well as business institutions and other organizations, e. g. the Western Chamber of Industry and Commerce (Zachodnia Izba Przemysłowo-Handlowa) and the Lubusk Employers' Organization (Lubuska Organizacja Pracodawców). Each of these organizations has been cooperating with German partners for many years and implements a number of German-Polish projects.

Apart from the training of Polish adolescents in German training companies, the use of cross-border aspects is currently limited to internships within the framework of individual projects, which can also have an informal educational character through the cooperation of Polish and German adolescents as well as through the joint visit of so-called extracurricular "places of learning". The scope existing in the vocational technical schools is supported by the regular internships in the gastronomic sector (cf. Chap. 3.3). The programs currently practiced by the East Brandenburg Chamber of Commerce and Industry (Industrie- und Handelskammer Ost-Brandenburg) and the Frankfurt (Oder) Chamber of Crafts (Handwerkskammer Frankfurt (Oder)), Azubi-Mobil (IHK-PG 2020b) and MobiPro-EU (HWK 2020), should also be highlighted in this context since they provide German young people with valuable experience through internships abroad whereby Polish and Spanish young people receive vocational training.

Vocational education and training is also an important part of the implementation of European and national programmes – e. g. the programmes in accordance with the Polish plan for the development of vocational education and training in the Lubuskie Voivodeship using the funds of the Regional Operational Programme – Lubuskie 2020 adopted by the Lubuskie Voivodeship Board. In this context, we would like to make reference to the measure 8.4 of the Lubuskie 2020 Regional Operational Programme entitled "Improving the quality of vocational education and training" as well as to the measure 9.3 "Development of educational infrastructure" (UMWL 2020).

On the Polish side it can be noted as well, that cross-border projects (e. g. VIVA 4.0. and "Budujemy bez granic" – "Building without Borders") become an integral part of the concepts of existing or newly created educational institutions (in this case of the Centre for Vocational Education and Business in Gorzów Wlkp. – Centrum Edukacji Zawodowej i Biznesu, cf. also what stated under Chap. 3.3).

Among other things, the measures taken by the administrative district in Sulęcín in cooperation with the vocational training body of the Berlin Brandenburg Construction Industry Association (Berufsförderungswerk des Verbandes der Bauindustrie Berlin-Brandenburg e.V.) can be mentioned. Their project entitled "Duales System der Berufsbildung – Chance für die Entwicklung der Euroregion PRO EUROPA VIADRINA/Dual Vocational Training System – Opportunity for the Development of the Euroregion PRO EUROPA VIADRINA" (funded under the Small Projects Fund) included the exchange of experience and the implementation of internships on the other side of the border.

In vocational training – in addition to professional knowledge and skills – interdisciplinary competences are of great importance for the professional development of individuals, also with regard to the future viability of the companies which employ them. In order to increase the proportion of trainees from both sides with relevant experience from cross-border training programs, it is obvious, in view of the structure of both education systems, to develop further

potential for mutual internships through the contact of chambers, vocational schools and their supporting institutions, both occupation-related and cross-occupational, and to align curricula and competencies of teaching staff accordingly. In addition to continuing training and the cross-border exchange of experience between teachers, trainers in the companies and master craftsmen may be involved. Such offers are already made by the chambers for trainers, but in this case the focus must be directed to the interaction in the German-Polish context. Furthermore, when it comes to the training of key competencies, getting to know yourself, your own talents or your own ability to act in interactions is also essential.

In the context of the situation analysis carried out, the issue of the shortage of skilled workers on both sides (and the resulting special needs in certain occupational groups) was not examined in detail, as the objective of the study was aimed at the opportunities for competence development through cross-border interactions based on the already existing training courses.

Higher education

Within the Euroregion, 6 universities offer studies in various disciplines, which are open to all interested parties meeting the admission requirements. In some cases, their international orientation is pretty advanced. The European University Viadrina in Frankfurt (Oder) cooperates with 250 universities worldwide. At this university, students from 100 different nations take advantage of the offers for Bachelor's and Master's degree programs. Of the 6,500 students, about 25% come from abroad, while almost 10% are Polish students (see EUV 2020e). The Collegium Polonicum is a joint scientific institution of the European University Viadrina Frankfurt (Oder) and the Adam Mickiewicz University in Poznań. This form of cross-border cooperation in the fields of research and teaching is exemplary in the European higher education landscape. Within the next few years, it will be supplemented by an institute of digital studies which is still under construction.

An aspect deserving attention is the cooperation of the Jacob of Paradies Academy Gorzów Wlkp. (Akademia im. Jakuba z Paradyża) with the Brandenburg University of Technology Cottbus-Senftenberg (BTU Cottbus-Senftenberg) in Germany, which offers pedagogical students a unique opportunity in Poland. Upon graduation from the academy in Gorzów Wlkp., students can simultaneously obtain a diploma from the BTU Cottbus-Senftenberg in the German-Polish subject area of pedagogy and the specializations of care pedagogy or pedagogy of educational assistance (AJP 2020).

In addition to the universities, research institutions e.g. the association Leibniz Centre for Agricultural Research in Müncheberg and the Leibniz Institute for Innovative Microelectronics in Frankfurt (Oder) are particularly suitable for internships.

When it comes to cross-border approaches, it is advisable for students to deal with specific issues existing in the Euroregion in internships and/or in the context of papers written by students. In this context, the cooperation of students of the institutions of both sides in the processing of a topic would be conceivable. However, students would already be able to benefit from informal learning in institutions on the other side of the border. A starting point for the study topics could consist of the development of extracurricular learning locations for non-formal, intercultural educational offers of educational sponsors. In this context, the potential places for internships are also welcome when it comes to the development of offers.

Place	College	Fields of study (selection)
Frankfurt (Oder)	European University Viadrina	Cultural sciences Law Economics and business administration
Gorzów Wielkopolski	Akademia im. Jakuba z Paradyża w Gorzowie Wielkopolskim (Jacob of Paradies Academy)	Administration and national security Economics Humanities Technology Tourism Health sciences
	Wyższa Szkoła Biznesu (=Business college)	Management
	Akademia Wychowania Fizycznego Zamiejscowy Wydział Kultury Fizycznej w Gorzowie Wlkp. (University of Physical Education, branch in Gorzów Wlkp.)	Physical education Physiotherapy and dietetics
	Wyższa Szkoła Zawodowa (= University of Applied Sciences)	Medical rescue Electroradiology
Słubice	Collegium Polonicum	Intercultural German Studies Polish Philology Languages Communication and cultures in Europe Law

Tab. 6: Higher education institutions in the Euroregion PRO EUROPA VIADRINA

Adult education

In Poland and Germany, basic provision for further training in the sense of lifelong learning is also guaranteed on a legal basis. According to this understanding, adult education means vocational training as well as the desire for additional knowledge and skills resulting from personal interests after school, occupation and/or studies up to retirement age. Almost all educational sponsors playing a leading role in the educational programmes outlined so far also offer various courses and events for this target group. On both sides, their spectrum ranges from municipal institutions, e.g. adult education centres, church organisations, sector-specific providers, e.g. chambers, companies and employment agencies, to non-governmental organisations which also devote themselves to corresponding offers addressed to seniors. In addition to the perception of such offers by individual participants from the other side of the border, the joint participation of representatives of both sides in such events continues to be an exception. To mention examples, we can make reference to German-Polish events which are organised in particular for seniors and are implemented by municipal institutions within the framework of the EU-funded Small Project Funds, e.g. the House for Social Welfare

(Dom Pomocy Społecznej) in Kamień Mały (municipality Witnica) with the city of Seelow, the Cultural Centre of the municipality Santok with the municipal office Neuhardenberg, the Centre for Social Welfare in Pszczew with the municipality Letschin, and the German-Polish Seniors Academy Frankfurt (Oder) – Słubice (Deutsch-polnische Senioren-Akademie Frankfurt (Oder) – Słubice).

Adult education in the Euroregion PRO EUROPA VIADRINA

On the German side	On the Polish side
<p>Obtaining of degrees on the second educational path</p> <p>Lectures on subjects such as history, politics, social issues, culture, nature, health</p> <p>Study tours / Hiking / Excursion / City tours</p> <p>Courses:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • English, French (for beginners) • New media • IT basics • Traffic training sessions • Ageing and health <p>Other activities</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Theatre, choirs • Exhibitions, concerts • Dance evenings 	<p>Lectures on subjects such as history, politics, social issues, culture, nature, health, psychology</p> <p>Hiking / Excursions / City tours / Bike tours</p> <p>Courses:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • German, English, French, Esperanto • Computer courses • History, tourism • Photography <p>Other activities</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cabaret, theatre, choirs, music groups • Exhibitions, concerts • Visits to daycare centres • Voluntary work, charitable aid • Physiotherapy, psychological and professional counselling • Publications
<p>Open meetings (for seniors)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Singing • Handicraft • Games, chess, rummy, skat • Craftmanship • Book exchange • Sport, gymnastics 	<p>Open meetings (for seniors)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Singing • Handicraft • Games, bridge • Craftmanship • Book and Press Club • Sports, gymnastics, yoga, swimming • Dance evenings • Handicrafts for children, led by seniors

Tab. 7: Thematic offers in the context of adult education in the Euroregion PRO EUROPA VIADRINA

Also in this area it is advisable to come back to existing partnerships between municipalities and districts as a starting point for cross-border approaches to education. Furthermore, the educational sponsors can seek contact with analogue providers working on the other side of the border in order to jointly develop offers and later make them accessible to non-organised, interested persons.

2.5 Potentials related to the natural and cultural heritage in the Euroregion

In the above-mentioned administrative, strategic and scientific framework, education is often associated with culture. As a consequence, since the present situation analysis relates to the Euroregion PRO EUROPA VIADRINA, regional potentials of the natural and cultural heritage for the derivation of cross-border educational approaches should also be addressed in this context. In the curricula of both school systems, extracurricular places of learning represent an essential element of formal education for the vivid transfer of knowledge and skills. For example school classes can visit museums, theaters, and memorials. Within the meaning of lifelong learning, such places of learning are equally important to preschools, other extracurricular activities, vocational training, higher education, further professional education or to seniors (non-formal education). In addition, there are various events (including concerts and festivals) and other peculiarities of natural and cultural heritage, which have a more or less great potential for (non-formal and informal) educational offers.

Many of these elements belonging to the natural and cultural heritage in the Euroregion PRO EUROPA VIADRINA are already used by educational sponsors and other actors in their formal and/or non-formal programmes. The present analysis attaches great importance to the development of other elements of this kind and the perception of corresponding offers by mixed groups of German and Polish participants offering an opportunity for the further development of the region. On the basis of the already existing competences and experiences of educational sponsors and other actors on both sides, the existing natural and cultural heritage is valued through such educational offers. In this manner, it contributes to the effective development of key competences among the participants (see LIS 2016). To support this aspect, the situation analysis was supplemented by a separate brochure introducing selected museums located in the Euroregion.

Elements of natural heritage	Potential educational areas
Oder, Warta, Neisse, Spree	Education for sustainable development (flood protection, biotope network, species and biotope protection, sustainable land use: fishing, tourism, shipping), health promotion and sports
General richness of water body	biology, chemistry, education for sustainable development (species and biotope protection; sustainable land use: water management, fisheries, tourism), hydrologic balance, health promotion and sports
National parks, nature parks, landscape parks, nature reserves, reserves, nature education trails	Environmental education (ecosystem, biotope network, knowledge of species, species and biotope protection, protection, care and development, sustainable land use), wilderness education
(Cultural) landscapes and parks	Professional and study orientation, geography, education for sustainable development (sustainable land use, utilization of space and planning), health promotion and sport

Tab. 8: Exemplary elements of natural heritage for potential educational opportunities



Fig. 12: Examples of natural and cultural heritage in the Euroregion PRO EUROPA VIADRINA (photos: Horst Drawing, Krzysztof Szydłak, Winfried Mausolf, Euroregion archive)

Elements of cultural heritage	Potential educational areas
Agriculture and forestry, fisheries, trade, renewable energy facilities, settlements	Professional and study orientation, geography, physics, consumer education, education for sustainable development (sustainable land use, public services, utilization of space and planning)
Museums (regional history, weather, writers, sculptors, nature)	Museum pedagogy, history, cultural education
Memorials	History, intercultural education, European education
Monuments (architecture, public figures)	Professional and study orientation, geography, history
Spa towns and tourist routes	Health promotion and sport
Theatre and exhibitions	Cultural education
(Major) events	Cultural and intercultural education

Tab. 9: Exemplary elements of cultural heritage for potential educational opportunities

3. Cross-border approaches

The previous chapters identified key legal, strategic, scientific and regional bases at national, European and global levels which provide the framework for cross-border education approaches in the Euroregion PRO EUROPA VIADRINA. This results in a uniform education objective for both sides of the German-Polish border region. In this manner, the training of key competences in a process of lifelong learning is given its adequate importance.

On the basis of cultural diversity and the effects of globalisation, which can be felt in almost all areas of life, intercultural competence plays a key role for both the individual resident and the whole society. In order to achieve this competence, interaction with people coming from other cultures is required on a regular basis for a lifetime. For the direct German-Polish border region, there is great potential due to cross-border educational approaches, in particular due to the proximity of the region.

In the situational analysis carried out in this context, in addition to the framework conditions, previous activities in border regions were then also considered, promoting and inhibiting factors were determined through interviews, questionnaires and German-Polish workshops with experts from both sides, and action objectives as well as corresponding action approaches were derived. Here in the following, these cross-border approaches for the Euroregion PRO EUROPA VIADRINA are grouped according to age, as follows:

- Initial situation
- Cross-border relevant activities
- Objectives and approaches
- Implementation notes

Building on and/or in addition to the above-mentioned chapters, the initial situation per age group is first outlined in this context, by including among others the characterization of target groups and the specific framework conditions. Subsequently, previous cross-border relevant activities are listed, which either take place unilaterally, at national level ("instructive", e. g. learning the neighbouring/foreign language), or, in addition, already as exemplary cross-border activities ("interactive", "collaborative") stimulate adaptation in new partnerships. In addition to the examples from the Euroregion PRO EUROPA VIADRINA, examples from other border regions can also be taken into account. The objectives resulting from the situational analysis are supported by action approaches, which are assigned to the 3 levels ("instructive", "interactive", "collaborative") and finally commented on by implementation-related notes. The potential of natural and cultural heritage in the Euroregion, which can be used for educational approaches, is taken into account accordingly in the specific chapters relating to the age group.

Pre-school/early childhood education 3.1

The preschool sector is of particular importance as a first stage of education for the development of children and as a consequence also of society as a whole. This is the reason why it will be dealt with in greater detail here.

Initial situation

In the Country Analysis on Education and Training in Europe (European Union 2019), Germany achieves a level of care of 96.4% in the field of early childhood care and education for children aged 4 to 6 years (as of 2018) while Poland achieves 91.9% (as of 2017). For 3-year-old children, this percentage is 67% in Poland and 30.3% in Germany for children up to the age of 3. The EU set a target of 95% for the year 2020 (see Chap. 2.2; European Commission 2010). For the local authorities in the Euroregion PRO EUROPA VIADRINA, the indicator is not separately recorded in this form.

On the German side, daycare also includes children up to the age of 12 who attend a daycare centre in their own primary school (Grundschule). In Polish schools there are school daycare centres (the so-called *światlica*). According to the provision under article 103, para. 1 of the Polish Education Act (Prawo Oświatowe 2016), schools have the obligation to care for all students who stay longer in school due to the working hours of the parents (at the request of the parents), and to organize student transport or other measures so to ensure the care of the students in the school. For the employment in the school daycare centre, there are no legal requirements. The Polish legislator merely obliges the school to take into account the educational and developmental needs of the children and adolescents, their psycho-physical opportunities and interests, as well as the time for activities which ensure normal physical development and the completion of homework.

In the German federal state of Brandenburg, however, the childcare rate for the age group from 3 to less than 6.5 years in 2016 reached an amount of 97.09%, for the age group from 0 to 12 years (including school daycare) it was on average 70.63%. In comparison, the administrative district of Märkisch-Oderland determined a childcare rate of all children up to 12 years in the amount of 68.3% on average (Landkreis Märkisch-Oderland 2018). In the individual communities, this value differs depending on whether children are cared for, e. g. in other communities or at home. For example, the city of Frankfurt (Oder) has a degree of care of 116% based on the available places, which results, among others, from supervised children coming from the neighboring communities. The space capacities of the care facilities also differ, covering a spectrum of up to 265 places.

In Gorzów Wlkp., the level of care of children in preschool is 103% in relation to the reported children, which is similar to Frankfurt (Oder) partly due to the care of children coming from the neighboring communities.

Tab. 10: Degree of childcare in the preschool area using the example of the city of Gorzów Wlkp. (Urząd Miasta Gorzów Wielkopolski 2020)

Number of children	3 years	4 years	5 years	6 years	Total
Public kindergartens	967	990	1,055	1,048	4,060
Non-public kindergartens	121	132	108	136	497
Total	1,088	1,122	1,163	1,184	4,557
Number of caretakers	1,103	1,097	1,113	1,095	4,408
Degree of childcare	98.64%	102.28%	104.49%	108.13%	103.38%

In the Polish daycare system, daycare facilities for children up to the age of 3 are offered in crèches (żłobek) or in so-called "children's clubs" (klub dziecięcy). However, the access to care at this stage of life is inappropriate. In this context, programmes and projects are being implemented in order to improve this situation. One example is the programme MALUCH+ initiated by the Polish Ministry of Family, Labour and Social Policy and implemented by the Lubuskie Voivodeship Office in Gorzów Wlkp. This programme promotes the creation of new care places (both for local authorities and independent sponsors). Furthermore, the maintenance of existing places is encouraged. The programme is implemented in annual terms, in 2020 contracts for the creation of new places were signed by, among others, the municipality of Zwierzyn (16 places), the municipality of Międzyrzecz (48 places) and also by an independent sponsor of the municipality of Sulęcín (LUW 2020a, 2020b). In Poland, there is also the opportunity of caring for children up to the age of 3 by daycarers ("opiekun dzienny") or child minders ("niania") who are also co-financed to varying degrees by the Polish state.

The preschool education includes children from the beginning of the school year in the calendar year in which the child reaches the age of 3 until the end of the school year in the calendar year in which the child reaches the age of 7. In particularly justified cases, a child can be admitted to preschool care at the age of 2.5 (see Prawo Oświatowe 2016). In the year before starting the primary school (at the age of 7), the children then go to the so-called "0" grade, in Polish referred to as "zerówka". Since this grade is mandatory for all children, 100% care is achieved starting from this age.

Childcare takes place in preschool institutions, mainly in kindergartens ("przedszkole"), but also in preschool departments of primary schools ("zerówka"), preschool education centres ("zespół wychowania przedszkolnego") or preschool centres ("punkt przedszkolny"). These can be conducted both through the municipal institutions and in a non-public form, through independent sponsors (non-public sponsors).

Public daycare centres can be set up by the municipality or a municipal association – setting up and operating daycare centres is one of the obligatory tasks of the municipalities. The state supports the activity of the municipalities only to a small extent by subsidizing, among others, the operation of the daycare centres. In a limited form, the state also subsidizes the institutions with an independent sponsorship.

In this context, it must be added that the number of places in the community-owned or state-owned crèches and kindergartens is still inappropriate, and their maintenance is a huge burden on the budget of the municipalities. However, the main activity of these institutions is not a complementary response to today's needs. In this context, we have also to point out the new challenges for the Polish side since immigrants from different parts of the world are settling in

Poland and also in the Lubuskie Voivodeship due to the changing economic situation. The said immigrants are mainly Ukrainians and Belarusians, but also citizens coming from Asian countries. In this respect, the development of intercultural competences appears to be even more necessary and urgent.

On the German side, various care models are used in the early childhood area, which are supported by municipal, independent, private (church, etc.) sponsorship or by parents' initiatives. The 11 institutions which have been interviewed in the context of the present analysis are daycare centres in public sponsorship, whose supervision ratio is 1:5 (up to 3 years) and/or approximately 1:11 (3 – 6 years), from 2020 the latter is to be reduced to 1:10 in the German federal state of Brandenburg. The foundation Bertelsmann Stiftung recommended a care ratio of 1:3 for children up to 3 years and 1:7.5 for children aged 3 to 6 years (see Bertelsmann-Stiftung 2014). The survey carried out in the context of the situational analysis shows that the capacity utilization of the daycare centres is usually 100%. However, the needs can partially not be met.

In Poland, the number of children in the preschool department does not go beyond 25 (see MEN 2018). Generally speaking, a preschool department is supervised by two teachers (nauczyciel). For the integration departments, the number of children is lower (a maximum of 20 children, including a maximum of 5 children with disabilities). In these departments, additional team members are employed as well. In addition, the kindergartens employ a person supporting the teacher for the younger groups as well as other supporting team members (e. g. psychologists, therapists, and speech therapists). The Polish teacher cadres in preschool education are among the best educated in the European Union: in 2018 86.1% of those employed in preschool education had a master's degree (or even a doctorate) with a pedagogical orientation while 10.2% had a bachelor's degree (with pedagogical orientation). Only 2.5% of preschool teachers had an education below a bachelor's degree (European Commission 2019c).

Childcare facilities

Age group	On the German side (D)	On the Polish side (PL)
Up to 3 years	Nurseries (crèche), daycare centres (KITA), Integration daycare centres, Parent-Child Centres	Nursery ("żłobek") Integration nursery, "Children's Clubs"
3-6 years	Daycare centres (KITA) Integration daycare centres	Kindergartens ("przedszkole"), including integration kindergartens with special or integration groups
Age 7	preschool preparation in daycare centres	One-year preschool preparation, the so-called "Zerówka", in kindergartens or preschool groups in primary schools, including in integration institutions, with special groups or integration groups
7-12 years (in Germany) 7-15 years (in Poland)	Daycare centres (with after-school care)	Daycare in primary school ("światlica szkolna"), daycare in school with artistic profile, for general education in the field of primary schools and special schools

Tab.11: Childcare facilities for preschool /early childhood education

Within the Euroregion PRO EUROPA VIADRINA, a total of 428 institutions (243 in German and 185 in Polish municipalities) offer pre-school education (as of 2018). And childcare is an integral part of this education. In the age group from 4 years until school entry, these offers reach a total of 26,837 children: 13,433 children on the German side and 13,404 children on the Polish side (Landkreis Märkisch-Oderland 2018; Landkreis Oder-Spree 2018; Stadt Frankfurt (Oder) 2018; SIO 2018).

More than half of all children up to the age of 6 are cared for either in crèches/Żłobki (age groups up to 3 years) or by their parents. Since the degree of care from the 3rd/4th year of age until school entry is quite high on both sides and as a consequence the respective structures reach a large part of the target group, the focus is placed on this area. Nevertheless, the children not directly affected by this are also considered in the respective approaches.

On the basis of the care key applied on both sides, the 428 daycare centres located in the 66 municipalities on both sides of the Euroregion PRO EUROPA VIADRINA currently have about 2,440 pedagogical specialists available. The increase in this supervision ratio planned for August 2020 in the German federal state of Brandenburg would add 122 jobs for preschool professionals from the age of 4 onwards on the German side, which would account for approximately 0.5 jobs for each of the 243 daycare centres. This demand for skilled workers in preschool institutions, which is extrapolated for the German side, is an example of the acute demand for skilled workers generally existing in this educational field. In connection with the increasing number of children in pre-school education on the Polish side, among other things due to the opening of new kindergartens (kindergartens have recently been opened and/or are under construction in the municipalities of Deszczno, Kłodawa, Drezdenko and in the municipality of Międzyrzecz, among others), it can be assumed that the number of jobs will also grow here.

Tab. 12: Population structure – children up to 6 years in the Euroregion PRO EUROPA VIADRINA (Amt für Statistik Berlin-Brandenburg 2019; Główny Urząd Statystyczny 2020)

	Age group		
	0-3 years	4-6 years	0-6 years
Polish side	11,054	15,152	26,206
German side	10,756	15,029	25,785
Total	21,810	30,181	51,991

According to the Brandenburg Act on Child Daycare Centres (KitaG 2018), pedagogical concepts must be drawn up for each facility, which aim to fulfil the tasks of care and education, including those of elementary education, but also provide information on the method of revision of the quality of the pedagogical work. For this purpose, reference should be made to the “Needs Plan for Daycare for Children in the Oder-Spree County” (“Bedarfsplan für Kindertagesbetreuung im Landkreis Oder-Spree”) (Landkreis Oder-Spree 2018), which exemplarily reflects the spectrum of pedagogical approaches in daycare centres. The said plan also shows in what form both the quality of the educational work is tested, the child development is documented and/or the training of the employees is planned, or in what form the sponsoring institutions, the youth welfare office of the administrative district or external experts provide their assistance. During the recent years, intercultural education and multilingualism have gained importance in the context of further education in addition to individual language support.

On the Polish side of the Euroregion, the programme basis of pre-school education, in accordance with the Polish Education Act and the relevant regulations issued by the Polish Minister of National Education, points, among others, to the objective of pre-school education, namely to support the overall development of the child. This support is implemented through the process of care, education and teaching. Through this support, the child reaches maturity to take up lessons in the first stage of education (see MEN 2017). According to the programme basis, one of the tasks of the kindergarten consists of the creation of educational situations, which should arouse the interest of the child in a modern foreign language and in getting to know new cultures. For this reason, we can affirm that since the recent years the emphasis in the Polish education system has been placed on intercultural education. The pedagogical supervision of kindergartens is carried out by the responsible Board of Trustees – in the case of the institutions of the Euroregion PRO EUROPA VIADRINA, this is the Board of Trustees for Education (Kuratorium Oświaty) in Gorzów Wlkp. The Lubuskie Voivodeship Self-Government Office acts as sponsor of the Voivodeship Methodological Centre (Wojewódzki Ośrodek Metodyczny) which is a teacher training centre located in Gorzów Wlkp.

At this point, the determination of the child's level of proficiency in a modern foreign language at the end of pre-school education on both sides of the border should be highlighted (see MEN 2017 including Annex 1).

The more or less large problems existing in daycare centres, which are familiar to the professional world, were confirmed by questionnaires, interviews and workshops (including high documentation effort, low appreciation of the educational activity, lack of personnel, low financial leeway, low correlation of predicted and actual need for places in daycare centres).

The Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports of the German federal state of Brandenburg launched the funding programme "Kiez-Kita – Bildungschancen öffnen" for the period between 2017 and 2021. This programme enables the use of additional specialists in selected daycare centres for 2 years in order to support parents in the development of the offer and professionalization of educational activities.

The Lubuskie Voivodeship has a budget of EUR 15 million in the context of the Lubuskie 2020 Regional Operational Programme for the measure 8.1. "Improving access and quality of pre-school education", including 0.5 million euros for the Municipal Functional Area ("Miejski Obszar Funkcjonalny") Gorzów Wlkp. and 13 million euros for the municipalities outside the said area (UMWL 2020). Among others, the supported measures include the creation of new places in the institutions and the increase in the skills of children as well as of teachers.

For the border triangle Germany-Poland-Czech Republic, in 2014, the Saxon State Ministry of Culture established the Saxon State Office for Early Neighbouring Language Education (Sächsische Landesstelle für frühe nachbarsprachige Bildung, LaNa) in the district of Görlitz. In doing so, the ministry institutionalized the corresponding tasks that resulted from the so-called "Görlitzer Modell" for data-based regional education management for lifelong learning within the framework of the federal programme called "LernenVorOrt". Its website serves as an informative portal on this topic, including multilingual teaching materials.

The tasks of the Saxon State Office for Early Neighbouring Language Education (Sächsische Landesstelle für frühe nachbarsprachige Bildung, LaNa 2020a) are the following:

- Establishment of monitoring for early neighbouring language education in the border regions of the Federal state of Saxony,
- Provision of instruments for the Saxon-wide transfer of current scientific knowledge and good practice on the ground,
- Development of quality standards as well as implementation tools for the qualification and support of professionals in educational institutions,
- Lobbying activities and public relations.“

In addition to the above-mentioned tasks, this state office has also acted as a recognized central office of the German-Polish Youth Office (DPJW) since 2018. In this context, it supports the daycare centres in Saxony in cooperation with Polish daycare centres as part of the funding programme “Kind trifft dziecko”.



Fig. 13: Strengthening Euroregional Identity: Open Days of the European Funds in the Euroregion PRO EUROPA VIADRINA (photo: Euroregion Archive)

Cross-border relevant activities

In the field of early childhood education, the already practiced, cross-border relevant activities include getting to know foreign languages (in an "instructive", one-sided manner) and also cross-border encounters among children. In the following section, we will analyse its spectrum within the Euroregion as well as example activities organised in the other border regions.

In 2017, a total of about 8,800 preschool children came into contact with English on the Polish side in numerous municipalities in the Euroregion, while more than 500 children in 8 municipalities took an offer in the German language (see SIO 2017). In Słubice, with 276 children, a comparatively high proportion (27%) of children in the daycare centres got to know the German language. With the national framework programme for daycare centres in the Polish part of the Euroregion PRO EUROPA VIADRINA, all children from the age of 4 in pre-school education now have the opportunity to learn at least 1 foreign language in a playful manner. Generally speaking, the languages used here are English and German (see MEN 2017 including the Annex 1).

On the German side, the city of Frankfurt (Oder) has a German-Polish education concept for 7 daycare centres with 487 children (12%), while in 7 other daycare centres the English and Polish language offers come from external providers (Frankfurt (Oder) 2018). As a result of the survey conducted in 2019 in the context of the present analysis, 4 other daycare centres located in the districts of Märkisch-Oderland and Oder-Spree indicated that English learning opportunities are offered to about 420 children.

With regard to the cross-border activities taking place within the Euroregion PRO EUROPA VIADRINA, the long-standing cooperation existing among daycare centres in the cities of Frankfurt (Oder) and Słubice is to be highlighted. In cooperation with the municipality of Frankfurt (Oder), the municipality of Słubice implemented the construction of the German-Polish kindergarten "Pinokio" in 2014. The said kindergarten was built in the context of the project "Education without Borders", funded by the Operational Programme of the European Territorial Cooperation Poland (Lubuskie Voivodeship) – Brandenburg for the years 2007 – 2013. In addition to the construction of the facility, a number of so-called "softer" measures have also been implemented. They increased the competencies of the educators for the international facility. The so-called "Eurokitas" daycare centres built in both cities provide space for children from the other side, so that these children benefit particularly intensively from intercultural aspects in addition to the promotion of the respective neighbouring language.

A similar long and intensive partnership exists between the municipal kindergarten "Tygrysek Pietrek" in Gorzów Wlkp., Poland, and its partner kindergarten "Haus Sonnenhügel" in Eisenhüttenstadt, Germany. Every year, about 65 Polish and 50 German children participate in several meetings. Each year, a series of meetings and a specific theme (e.g. healthy eating, sports, home, etc.) are established on the basis of an annual work plan agreed by both institutions. Over the years, many children in these institutions have been able to learn about cultural differences by developing fundamental social skills. Another important aspect is the cooperation not only with the children, but also with the teachers working in both institutions. During the working meetings and mutual visits, which also take place outside the meetings promoted by the Euroregion, there is an exchange of experiences, mutual inspiration and getting to know the



Fig. 14: Singing and dancing have no language barrier: Children of a daycare centre from Krzeszyce visit daycare centre in sister town Altlandsberg (photo: town of Altlandsberg)

working methods on both sides. The teachers of both kindergartens also develop German-Polish educational material as well as methodological documents, which can also be used in other institutions (e. g. German-Polish board game, instructions for games, German-Polish songs, etc.).

Another exemplary cross-border interaction in terms of continuity and intensity is the cooperation between a daycare center in Altlandsberg and its partner daycare center in Krzeszyce, which has been ongoing since 2004. Twice a year, 22 children from one daycare centre visit the other and organise joint activities often relating to the region. For example, local museums, regional markets e. g. the Scarecrow Market or the Wildlife Park are visited and joint projects are also realized, e. g. music projects in Gorzów Wlkp. or in the sense of the projects of the foundation "House of Little Researchers" („Haus der kleiner Forscher“) 2020). In this context, the acting parties notice that the children can communicate well with each other when playing together since the language barrier does not have any negative effect. The teachers were already supported by a one-day fast language course. It is also noteworthy at that point that the daycare centre in Altlandsberg also includes seniors from the neighbouring retirement home in its activities, including visits to Krzeszyce.

An event that has been taking place for more than 20 years is the Kita-Olympiade with about 400 children, organized by the Kreissportbund of Märkisch-Oderland together with the children's association FRIZZ Seelow. In 2019, 60 children coming from 6 kindergartens from the Polish side and about 340 children from 15 kindergartens from the German side participated in it. In the football tournaments organized by ARLE gGmbH in cooperation with the municipality of Słubice, the 250 participants included 50 kindergarten children (25 from Poland and 25 from Germany). Also the children's days organised in many municipalities, e. g. in Frankfurt and Słubice, are increasingly taking place with the participation of children coming from the neighbouring country. Among the 200 children at the children's day in Seelow there were also about 40 kindergarten children coming from the partner municipality Kostrzyn nad Odrą. Joint German-Polish projects have also been carried out by the kindergartens of the municipality of Kłodawa, of Baczyzna, of the municipality of Lubiszyn or of Lubniewice together with the kindergartens of the partner municipalities.

The above-mentioned activities often belong to the category which received funding through the cooperation programme INTERREG VA Brandenburg – Poland 2014-2020, through the Euroregion PRO EUROPA VIADRINA Small Project Fund (SPF), which is also financed by this programme, or through the German-Polish Youth Office (Deutsch Polnisches Jugendwerk, DPJW). Summing up the annual number of children reached by these examples, it can be noticed that within the Euroregion only a fraction (assuming 1,000 children per year, corresponding to < 4%) of the 26,837 children aged 4-6 are currently involved in cross-border interactions. Since such activities are not centrally statistically evaluated beyond funded projects, this estimate is used here for orientation.

Many cross-border activities are also taking place in other Euroregions, often within the framework of interactive projects funded by the SPF as well as by the DPJW. At this point, two projects funded by INTERREG should be highlighted, which in the early childhood area are dedicated in particular to learning the neighbouring language according to a systematic method.

To mention a first example: In the Euroregion Neisse, the district of Görlitz, the Saxon State Agency for Early Neighbouring Language Education (Sächsische Landesstelle für frühe nachbarsprachige Bildung, LaNa) and the Jelenia Góra branch of the Lower Silesian Teacher Training Center Wrocław (Dolnośląski Ośrodek Doskonalenia Nauczycieli we Wrocławiu Filia w Jeleniej Górze) implemented the project "Big for small" ("Groß für Klein – Duzi dla małych"), which was funded by the cooperation program INTERREG Poland-Saxony 2014-2020.

Project: "Big for Small" ("Groß für Klein – Duzi dla małych") (see NaLa 2020b)

Objective: Improvement of the cross-border cooperation in order to promote intercultural and neighbouring language education in the field of pre-school education – continuing education for educators, raising awareness among children/the public.

Measures – Target group of educators:

- Pilot courses of a German-Polish further training in the areas of neighbouring language, regional studies and methodology
- German-Polish workshops
- Exchange of experience

Measures – target group children:

- Project Days "Language and Culture of the Neighbouring Country"
- Language animations by native speakers

Measures – target group local public:

- 2 German-Polish conferences
- German-Polish methodological publications for daycare practice

In the Euroregion POMERANIA, the city of Szczecin/Stettin, the Teacher Training Center of the West Pomeranian Center for Maritime and Polytechnic Education (Zachodniopomorskie Centrum Edukacji Morskiej i Politechnicznej - Ośrodek Doskonalenia Nauczycieli), the administrative district Vorpommern - Greifswald, the University of Greifswald, the administrative district Uckermark, the municipal office Gramzow and the association Regional Office for Education, Integration and Democracy (RAA) M-V e.V. (Regionale Arbeitsstelle für Bildung, Integration und Demokratie (RAA) M-V e.V.) are implementing the project „Neighbourhood Language Acquisition from Kindergarten to School Graduation” (“Nachbarspracherwerb von der Kita bis zum Schulabschluss”). The said project is funded by the cooperation programme INTERREG VA Mecklenburg-Western Pomerania - Brandenburg - Poland 2014 - 2020.

Project: Neighbouring language acquisition from kindergarten to school leaving - the key to communication in the Euroregion Pomerania (Nachbarspracherwerb von der Kita bis zum Schulabschluss - der Schlüssel zur Kommunikation in der Euroregion Pomerania)(GS 2020)

Objective: Development of a systematic approach for early and successive language acquisition from kindergarten to school graduation. In this context, the focus lies on the cross-border development of an innovative and transferable overall concept for the continuous acquisition of neighbouring languages for the common German-Polish border region, which is tested and evaluated at many pilot locations on both sides of the partner municipalities participating in the project.

Among others, the measures include the following:

- qualification of pedagogical professionals in the field of intercultural learning,
- support in working with parents,
- support in the organization of interactive projects for children,
- use of educators for bilingual language education in four participating kindergartens.

Approaches to action

In Chap. 2.2 we have already referred to the research published in 2018 on the economic added value of early childhood education and training, which is an essential basis for the objectives set by the EU Commission for the European Education Area (see EENEE 2018). From the said research you can among others deduct that

- the early childhood care and education will significantly improve the individual competences, e. g. reading and writing, and as a consequence increase the development opportunities of the person as well as of the society.
- the benefit of early childhood education is significantly higher the earlier it starts ("return to investment"). This means that commitment in this area is particularly effective and at the same time sustainable.

This gives rise to the great amount of demands, that the society places on early childhood care and education. Thus, both on the German side (see KitaG 2018) and on the Polish side (see MEN 2017 including Annex 1), the following goals are specified for the early childhood sector in addition to parental education,

- provision of a high-quality, holistic care to children,
- development of the children's physical, mental, creative and linguistic skills,
- encourage openness to other cultures and interest in foreign languages,
- training of the ability to act and also to deal with conflicts,
- promotion of the understanding of current values and democratic principles,
- ideal preparation of the children for school.

Furthermore, according to the national framework plan for Poland, the inclusion of regional peculiarities is encouraged.

In order to fulfil these national tasks of daycare centres, cross-border approaches often offer opportunities for particularly effective educational measures. Concerning this, we can make reference to the combination of pedagogical approaches with "working in heterogeneous groups" and the importance of intercultural competence highlighted in Chap. 2.3.. For the pre-school area, the advantages as a result of cross-border interaction should be exemplified as follows:

- They promote an understanding of different perspectives (ability to reflect, communicative competence, empathy and openness).
- They support the development of endurance towards contradictions (flexibility and ambiguity tolerance).
- They promote education to treat other people with respect (tolerance and acceptance).
- They support the reduction of prejudices (conflict skills, self-reflection, creativity).
- They support the recognition of heterogeneity and plurality in society (lifelong learning, dissolution of hierarchical thinking, orientation to everyday culture).

In view of this, the situational analysis introduced in this context assumes that cross-border interactions in the preschool area have a particularly great potential for the formation of basic competences in both the social and technical areas. In addition to the directly achievable teaching of e. g. empathy, teamwork and conflict resolution, the promotion of creativity and motivation e. g. for learning foreign languages, takes place as well. This is also indicated by the experience of the actors who are already active in the cross-border context and participated in the analysis, e. g. in interviews or workshops.

Objective

As a consequence, the objective of cross-border pre-school education approaches within the Euroregion PRO EUROPA VIADRINA is, that every child should participate at least once in a cross-border activity. Based on the given situation, the following sub-objectives can be derived from the main objective:

- Continuation of existing cross-border activities.
- Development of cross-border activities, so that every child from the age of 4 until school entry participates at least once (ideally annually) in a cross-border (if possible multi-day) interaction.
- Expansion of cross-border activities for all other children up to the age of 3 and beyond that in the preschool sector not covered by daycare centres.

This concept is also based on the approach of the “learning spiral” (cf. Chap. 2.3) providing for intercultural interactions at all ages. Thus, it would be desirable for every child to have the benefit of such intercultural experiences, ideally on an annual basis, and for this to be repeated regularly at all subsequent ages.

Against this background, within the framework of the present situational analysis, action approaches were identified and then assigned to 3 levels (cf. Chap. 2.3). They result from activities which have already been successfully carried out, from the experiences of the actors in their cross-border activities and from the transfer of useful approaches to lifelong learning from other age groups. In view of the diversity of actors involved in this area, the approaches are presented in a differentiated way according to the respective target group.

Level 1	Level 2	Level 3
Boundary perception (instructive)	Boundary crossing (interactive)	Cross-border interaction (collaborative)
Children		
Playful acquaintance with the culture and language of the neighbour	Excursions to places on the other side (playful acquaintance with children from the neighbouring country, e. g. playing together during the visits to partner kindergartens, museums, as well as to companies and vocational technical schools)	Playful “experiments” (together with children from neighbouring countries, e. g. by using the potential of the Technology Park in Stanowice or the offers of the foundation “House of Little Researchers” („Haus der kleinen Forscher“))
Educators		
<p>further education (including intercultural learning, language animation, immersion procedures, regional studies, languages, other methods and materials)</p> <p>Playful teaching to children (including language, regional studies, culture)</p> <p>Raising awareness among parents (advantage of cross-border encounters)</p>	<p>Excursions / study trips to the neighbouring country (for professionals)</p> <p>“Educational walk” (Participation of professionals in interactive events of third parties)</p> <p>Exchange of experience (between German and Polish professionals)</p> <p>Visits / excursions to the neighbouring country (with groups from a daycare centre)</p>	<p>Development of playful offers in collaboration with professionals from the neighbouring country (Sports, music, “House of Little Explorers” („Haus der kleinen Forscher“), dance, theatre, pantomime)</p> <p>Regular realization of interactive events (including with external institutions, e. g. business-related institutions, vocational training, participation of parents)</p>
daycare management / sponsoring association		
<p>Integration of aspects of intercultural learning and learning of foreign languages into the concepts of daycare centre (further education, pedagogical concepts)</p> <p>Evaluation (of internal activities)</p>	<p>Maintaining contact with the partner daycare centre</p> <p>Search / referral of new contacts (starting from the already existing local partnerships)</p> <p>Exchange of experience (between German and Polish directors/sponsors)</p>	<p>Implementation of events with the possibility for third parties to participate (e. g. Kita-Olympiade, Grandma’s Day, Grandpa’s Day)</p> <p>Evaluation (of cross-border activities carried out with partners from the neighbouring countries)</p>
External partners		
<p>Museums (Development of interactively usable, age-appropriate playful offers)</p> <p>Education institutions, business-related institutions (Development of holiday offers: e. g. artisan-, music-, sports- and nature camps, parent-child days)</p>	<p>Museums / educational institutions (Testing of cross-border offers made during holidays or parent-child days for children outside of daycare centres)</p>	<p>Museums / educational institutions (permanent implementation of the offers)</p>
Regulatory authorities		
	<p>Ministry / Youth Welfare Office / Board of Trustees for Education, Voivodeship Center for Methodology (Development of methods and content tailored to the border region for pedagogical concepts and further training)</p>	<p>Ministry / Youth Welfare Office / Board of Trustees for Education, Voivodeship Centre for Methodology (Technical support of the institutions / daycare directors during concept development; evaluation)</p>

Tab. 13: Approaches to action in the pre-school sector

Fig. 15: Looking at a map: Children of the municipal kindergarten "Tygrysek Pietrek" in Gorzów Wlkp., exploring the natural and cultural heritage of the German-Polish border region (photo: Euroregion Archive)



Implementation notes

In the context of the situational analysis, it was also confirmed by interviews, technical discussions and workshops that the personnel resources in daycare centres are often more than utilized with the fulfillment of the regular tasks of supervision, education and care, including conceptual and documentary work.

The implementation of cross-border activities is usually an additional task, resulting in additional personnel, material and financial expenses. In the interest of implementing the above-mentioned approaches in the pre-school sector as comprehensively as possible, suggestions for implementation are to be given here against the background of the framework conditions. This also includes recommendations relating to accompanying measures.

Personnel requirements

In the 428 preschool institutions of both sides, there are already around 2,440 professionals for the care and education of children from the age of 3-4 years. An improvement of the supervision key in the sense mentioned above would be desirable at this point. However, the need for additional positions outlined at the outset cannot be met successfully in the medium term simply by increasing the supervision key, since the issues concerning the availability of suitable professionals and their financing will still be unanswered.

In order to develop personnel capacities for the implementation of cross-border activities, it would be required to examine the extent to which, in the context of the institutions, professionals can be reactivated for temporary tasks (e. g. retired educators or other professionals working at the sponsoring or other educational institutions) or can be recruited as auxiliary team to offer support (including the participation of parents and the use of voluntary services). In order to relieve the burden on the professionals – as already practiced at a national level – pupils from e. g. local General Secondary as well as High Schools could also be considered, selectively for care or also for the playful teaching of regional studies or languages to the children attending

the daycare centres. A similar potential exists for retirees and students. Analogous to the model of the Senior Expert Service, which mediates the use of seniors as experts both nationally and worldwide (SES 2018), active pensioners could also be used in the German-Polish border region to offer their support in the context of assistance and/or educational tasks. The participation of students in daycare centres, e.g. for the playful examination of foreign languages, could then be envisaged in the university environment if internships in early childhood educational institutions can be recognised.

This support offered by third parties for the care and/or education becomes more important as soon as cross-border encounters take place and a particularly intensive support effort is incurred in the processing of tasks in mixed small groups. Expert colleagues from other institutions should also be offered to participate and/or get involved in cross-border activities in order to provide them with appropriate suggestions for their own work. This is dealt with, for example, in the context of joint further training courses taking place within the framework of an "educational walk".

In addition, when it comes to cross-border activities, it is currently possible to use various types of project funding in order to cover personnel costs (e.g. professional support, language mediation, experts) temporarily occurring in the specific activities and to finance them through the reimbursement of expenses and/or fees. In case it may be necessary, adequate support programmes at a national level can also be developed for the border region in addition to programmes funded by the EU.

Educator/Children

By building on existing qualifications and experiences of professionals, their further training should especially focus on the fields of particular cross-border relevance:

- intercultural learning,
- regional studies,
- languages,
- speech animation, immersion method,
- other methods and materials

In order to make this as effective as possible and realistic with regard to the scarce resources, modular programs are adequate since they can be implemented within the limits of daycare activities in the daycare centre itself or within the framework of one-day to multi-day courses conducted by suitable specialists. The objective should also be to ensure that all professionals are introduced to and learn how to apply essential content and methods in this regard, while not having to master the comprehensive knowledge and skills of specialists themselves.

In this context, it would be advantageous if a cross-border panel of experts from responsible authorities and representatives of institutions developed an orientation framework for annual, modular training sessions. Finally, the objective should be to convey basic principles to all educators in an application-oriented manner, which can be supplemented by the selective use of

Fig. 16: Experiencing the tradition of Christmas in Germany and Poland together: joint crafting of Christmas decorations by children from a kindergarten in Lubiszyn and the kindergarten Kinderrabat in Briesen (Mark) (photo: Beata Byczkiewicz)



specialists, e. g. to help choose suitable methods in the development of tasks for mixed groups. Professionals trained in this way would then also have the task of sensitizing parents to the advantages of cross-border interactions and, if necessary, persuading them to participate, especially in the case of events lasting several days.

For the care and education which regularly takes place in daycare centres, the first level of cross-border activities could be examined as to what extent the playful teaching of e. g. regional studies, language and culture of the neighbouring country, can be integrated into their everyday program. For this purpose, the (at least by the day) involvement of native speakers, e. g. students, would also be beneficial. With regard to the type of foreign language, a context-oriented approach is advocated here. Depending on the parents' wishes and/or the consistency of foreign language offers in the communities, English, Ukrainian, French or Spanish would consequently also be feasible in addition to German and/or Polish.

In principle, it is assumed in the framework of this situational analysis that the communication of children from both sides in the early childhood area is more or less independent of each other's language skills and that cross-border interactions initially promote the motivation to learn languages. The foreign language skills potentially attained by the children are strengthened when they are applied. For the design of the playful offers, it is recommended to also check the usability of the methods and materials developed in other border regions (e. g. age-appropriate multilingual teaching materials, cf. LaNa 2020a) and to exchange experiences with colleagues on both sides of the border. This area could also be supplemented by excursions and/or study trips by German and Polish professionals, e. g. by attending specific cross-border interactive events. The so-called "educational walks" established in a school in Słonek would also be a suitable way in the early childhood area to allow not only the own staff but also the professionals from e. g. neighbouring daycare centres to benefit from appropriate experiences through a participation opportunity in cross-border activities.

Visits to sights, events, museums, businesses and vocational technical schools on the other hand – in the sense of crossing boundaries (level 2) – represent another essential step towards the acquisition of key competences. Nevertheless, it is only the encounter and interaction with children of the same age from the neighbouring country (level 3) that has a greater effect in terms of improving the skills aimed at in the preschool area. For example, annual meetings of children from partner institutions over the span of several days and their playful confrontation with the posed tasks, represent an ideal form of cross-border educational measures. The extended range of age-appropriate offers used in early childhood, e.g. games, sports, singing, dancing, making music, mime, handicrafts, painting, etc., is also adequate when working in mixed groups. It is recommended that professionals develop further playful offers for future encounters within the framework of meetings and/or exchanges of experience, including locations or cultural events in the region, e.g. museums, events, holidays or special offers (e.g. the "House of Little Researchers" („Haus der kleinen Forscher“) or the Artisan Camp).

Management/sponsor of the daycare centre

In consideration of the respective orientation of pedagogical concepts of daycare centres, it would be advantageous in the context of their revision to integrate the topics of intercultural learning, language and regional studies, as well as corresponding methods and materials. Analogous to the Polish side, it should also be examined on the German side to what extent the objective of basic knowledge of a modern foreign language can be pursued during the children's transition period to primary school (Grundschule). Furthermore, the relevant participation of children in cross-border meetings should be included in the documentation of their development.

To assess the success and/or to derive further measures, an evaluation is recommended. This evaluation should also be developed at the level of a German-Polish panel of experts from competent authorities and representatives of the institutions.

In addition to the said conceptual work, the task is to attract further daycare centres from both sides to cooperate beyond existing partnerships. In view of the often municipal sponsorship of childcare institutions, it is advisable that the municipalities use their already existing cooperation with partner municipalities in the neighbouring country for this purpose. Cross-border events, e.g. the Kita-Olympiade, are also suitable for the participation of other institutions and the subsequent establishment of new contacts due to their openness. In addition, cross-border network meetings („partner exchanges“) for those involved in the daycare sector and study trips of daycare representatives on the other side offer the opportunity to get to know partner institutions. Experiences show that for this purpose the one-time contact must be questioned for its suitability and sustainability for joint cross-border encounters of groups of children by means of subsequent mutual visits (e.g. Euroregion POMERANIA: cooperation between daycare centres in Szczecin and Löcknitz). This entails a correspondingly large organizational and communicative effort for the gradual, nationwide expansion of cross-border cooperation, which must be managed through cooperation between all involved parties.



Fig. 17: Sport connects:
KITA-Olympiade organised
by the Kreissportbund
MOL, Strausberg, 2017
(photo: Andreas Prinz)

External partners

The diverse structure of the landscape of the daycare centres on both sides is not only characterized by the cooperation of the institutions with the sponsors and specific authorities. In fact, it also benefits from the involvement of external educational sponsors, other children and youth organisations, the regional museums, organisers and also companies. All these actors enrich the spectrum of „extracurricular places of learning“ with their facilities and/or events. In many cases, various museums represent destinations for educational visits so that as a result of this situational analysis a supplementary publication has focused on the selection of important museums on both sides of the Euroregion PRO EUROPA VIADRINA. Through their exhibits, the museums convey educational content in a vivid way. In addition, they often offer special offers for children’s groups to solve creative tasks or playfully familiarize themselves with the exhibition content (e. g. Muzeum Lubuskie im. Jana Dekarta in Gorzów Wlkp.: Musical instruments in history and now; children’s toys of the past; knowledge about Earth; Viadrina Museum: special exhibition on Christmas customs in Germany and Poland). Knowledge and skills are made easily comprehensible and conveyed in a particularly sustainable manner by such a clear handling of history, culture, tradition, etc. With regard to cross-border approaches, the representatives of the museums of both sides have got in touch and are currently exchanging their experiences in the field of museum pedagogy. What is essential now is to make and/or develop potential offers available to all for cross-border activities. Children who are not cared for by daycare facilities can also be reached through such offers from museums.

For this reason, other educational sponsors and specific children and youth organisations (e. g. sport associations, art and cultural organisations) also play a key role when it comes to the establishment and expansion of cross-border activities. Even now, successful examples such as the Kita-Olympiade, show us that the services offered by external educational providers can be a full package for the daycare centres. The professionals working in daycare centres are freed from the need to cope with the organisational effort. Consequently, they are able to focus on their actual tasks. Such offers must be expanded and also developed for the closing or holiday periods. Multi-day offers for cross-border activities e. g. during the holidays would effectively complement others throughout the year, by allowing for a special intensity in the interac-

tions between children, and also be open to children who are not cared for in the organized sector. It would also make sense to concentrate such activities on specific educational topics for specific age groups. Offers already established in this sense, e. g. artisan-, music-, sports- and nature camps or the „Young inventor’s club“, could increasingly be expanded into cross-border offers for other children.

Due to the workload in the daycare centres and the multitude of tasks that have to be managed in parallel to achieve the goal formulated at the beginning, external coordination and cross-border support of the efforts of daycare centres and their providers is essential. For this purpose, a cross-border board of representatives of responsible authorities (e. g. ministry, youth welfare offices, board of trustees), daycare centres, external educational institutions and, if necessary, parents should be established as a coordination platform. Here, the upcoming tasks could be measured, prioritized and initiated:

- agreement on the type and scope of further training measures,
- conception (contents, methods, organizational implementation) of a further training program for all professionals in daycare centres of the Euroregion,
- transfer of know-how and exchange of experience with other cross-border regions,
- coordination of the integration of intercultural learning, regional studies and language in the pedagogical concepts of the daycare centres,
- professional support of the daycare centre managers in updating their concepts,
- supporting the facilities in maintaining contacts between partner daycare centres,
- development of a strategy for the mediation of new contacts and the expansion of new partnerships and their implementation,
- professional support for the development of offers for cross-border activities,
- organizational support for the implementation of cross-border activities,
- derivation of lump sums for a simplified financial support of cross-border activities of daycare centres,
- agreement on the type and scope of the evaluation of these activities, including the derivation of instructions for the documentation and evaluation in the institutions themselves,
- organization of study trips, exchange of experiences and
- public relations.

In order to maintain the working capacity of such a coordination platform in view of the entire range of tasks, it should be informally developed into a network in which specific tasks are carried out in cooperation or with the support of third parties. In this context, nationally existing regional support structures can also be used. Ideally, essential parts of this commitment could also be delivered through funded projects.

In addition to the already mentioned funding opportunities, information on funding instruments which can be used in the following is provided at the end of the present situational analysis.

3.2 School education – primary schools and general schools

Initial situation

In the educational systems of Poland and Germany (Brandenburg), the educational mission for the age group of school students is differentiated into general and vocational education. On the Polish side, vocational educational institutions can usually be visited after the completion of the eight-grade primary school and on the German side after the 10th grade (cf. Chap. 2.4). Against this background, the present chapter deals with primary and secondary schools with a general educational character on both sides, which also includes extracurricular aspects in this age group. The vocational training will be discussed in the next chapter. However, overlaps between the two types of education cannot be ruled out entirely.

At the European level, the proportion of 15-year-olds with insufficient knowledge of reading, mathematics and natural sciences, which is expected to be below 15% by 2020, is regarded as a benchmark for the evaluation of the development of competences in the school sector. (cf. Chap. 2.2.; European Commission 2010). Both in Germany and Poland the values for this indicator were almost reached in 2018. In Poland the set value was even met with a share of 14.4% for reading (cf. European Commission 2019a). In any case, both countries were able to achieve significantly better values than the European average in all three subjects.

For the local authorities in the Euroregion PRO EUROPA VIADRINA, the indicator is not separately recorded in this form. Cross-border educational approaches have an indirect effect on the improvement of these three specialist competences. In order to characterise the situation within the Euroregion, the criteria for study abroad and language proficiency (cf. Chap. 2.2.; Europäische Kommission 2018e) should thus be placed in the foreground.

In Chap. 2.4 the German (state of Brandenburg) and the Polish educational systems were presented. For the area of school education, all institutions which serve the general school education and enable the transition to vocational education or university studies should be considered here (cf. following table).

Type of School	German side		Polish side		Type of School
	Qty. of Students	Qty. of Schools	Qty. of Schools	Qty. of Students	
Primary schools	19,299	76	127	32,596	Primary schools
Schools for children with learning difficulties	1,828	15	9	553	Special primary schools
Primary and secondary schools	4,704	9	21	5,224	High school
General secondary school	4,913	21	1	135	Lyceum for Fine Arts [= liceum sztuk plastycznych]
Secondary school with upper secondary school (including one Waldorf school)	2,258	5			
High Schools (including three "upper level centres")	9,970	20			
Adult education centre [= Volkshochschule]	145	3			
Total	43,117	149	158	39,738	Total

Tab. 14: Structure of general education schools in the Euroregion PRO EUROPA VIADRINA (own presentation; based on the Office for Statistics Berlin-Brandenburg (Amt für Statistik Berlin-Brandenburg 2020a, RSPO 2020)

With 307 schools and 82,855 students, school education – primary and secondary education – is the largest target group within the Euroregion PRO EUROPA VIADRINA in the field of formal education, including the entire age group (as of 2020).

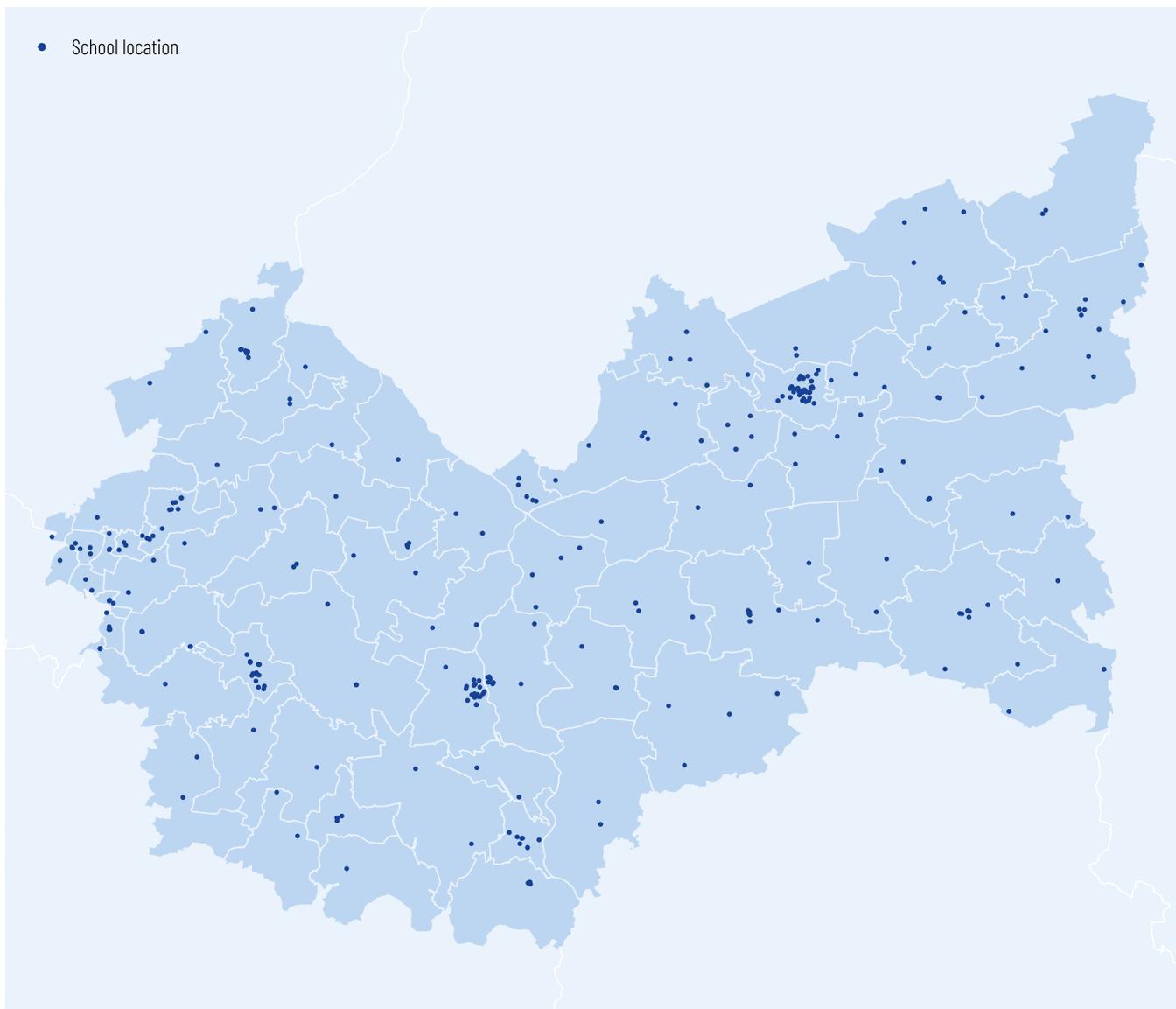


Fig. 18: Primary schools and general schools in the territory of the Euroregion PRO EUROPA VIADRINA (own representation; based on AfS BB 2020a, RSP0 2020)

Due to the different school systems in Poland and Germany in the transitional area and different reference periods, the student-teacher ratio for general and vocational schools could not be determined in a comparable manner for both sides of the Euroregion. If the total number of teaching positions (8,586 teachers; AfS BB 2019a+b; LubKurOs 2020) is compared to that of all students from general and vocational schools (100,209 students), the total value for the Euroregion PRO EUROPA VIADRINA is 11.68 students per teacher. On the Polish side, this ratio of 10.92 is more favourable than the ratio on the German side of the Euroregion amounting to 12.54. In the federal state of Brandenburg, a ratio of 13.3 was given for the school year 2018/2019 (MBS 2020). Nevertheless, it is essential to point out the general shortage of teachers, which will increase in the coming years due to demographic changes as well as the increased retirement of teaching professionals. The determination of the resulting need for teaching professionals goes beyond the scope of the investigation planned here and should be reserved for later analyses.

At this point, we would like to refer to the analogies in the educational systems of both countries identified in Chapter 2.4, which highlight points of reference for cross-border approaches to education both in terms of content (including subjects, interdisciplinary competence development) and organisational aspects (in particular school-related flexibility in teaching design). A concrete example of the successful cooperation between the two sides in this sense is the history book „Europe - Our history“ („Europa - unsere Geschichte“), which was compiled and published by the German-Polish Textbook Commission. The third volume was published in 2019 and is available for history lessons in German and Polish schools.

In response to experiences from international youth work and the EU Youth Strategy, the Children's and Youth Committee of the federal state of Brandenburg presented its conclusions in 2016 in the recommendations for action to promote cross-border youth mobility. The Ministry of Education, Youth and Sport (Ministerium für Bildung, Jugend und Sport) (MBS 2016) pursues such a strategy in cooperation with the administrative districts. As a part of this, one of the aims is to provide every young person with at least one cross-border mobility experience. The training of skilled professionals and the involvement of disadvantaged groups are also taken into account. For this purpose, the MBS launched a funding programme for pilot projects „Cross-border Youth Mobility“ („Grenzüberschreitende Jugendmobilität“) in the administrative districts.

Against the background of the above-mentioned holistic competence development on both sides and the scientific and strategic foundations, cross-border educational approaches in the field of school education represent a special opportunity. In addition to formal education in the school sector, both education systems also allow the integration of non-formal and informal activities, especially in the context of external institutions and Euroregional learning sites.

In the context of the situational analysis, the interviews, questionnaires and workshops questioned not only supporting but also inhibiting factors for cross-border activities. Both sides are interested in German-Polish contacts and projects carried out in the school sector. This can be seen both in the schools and in the institutions, e. g. the Board of Trustees for Education. This means that the benefits of cross-border cooperation are seen both for the students and the teaching professionals, as well as for the institutions themselves. However, the generally known shortage of teaching professionals on both sides has a particularly negative effect on this aspect. The fact that such activities are not increasingly implemented is mainly due to the fact that such project-related work – in particular in the case of a stay abroad for several days – often takes place outside the regular working hours, is neither recognised nor remunerated in a suitable manner. The issue is exacerbated in the case of part-time employment (mainly on the German side) or low remuneration (mainly on the Polish side). Cross-border activities are also associated with additional effort in the school sector, which often exceeds the already strained personnel capacities of the institutions, especially when it comes to organizational issues. If these kind of activities are associated with costs and even if financial instruments are available for this purpose, as in the direct border area through INTERREG or DPJW, the funding conditions and application procedures often pose an additional challenge. These issues are often raised by sponsoring institutions, in particular by those belonging to municipalities. The expenses for education provided by them take up a significant percentage of the budget each year, which in turn is only partially covered by subsidies from the state. However, other inhibiting factors are bureaucracy, issues about data protection, insurance and liability. For example, finding a bus company for trips across the border, is associated with a certain effort because primary school students from the state of Brandenburg can not just easily leave the state up to the 7th grade within the school framework. Furthermore, it is important to involve parents and to demonstrate the advantages of early intercultural experiences, which can be gained here in the direct border area in a comparatively simple way. Depending on the catchment areas of the schools and the associated time constraints for arrival or departure, there are restrictions when it comes to the attractiveness of extracurricular school work groups (e. g. language groups, one-sided/“instructive”) or for individual project days in the neighboring countries (“interactive”, “collaborative”). There is a regular need for information among professionals in schools, institutions and external educational institutions on the current opportunities of receiving funding for German-Polish cross-border projects.

Cross-border relevant activities

In the field of school education, relevant activities in the Euroregion PRO EUROPA VIADRINA and in other border regions are also to be introduced, which are characterized here not only by learning foreign languages (“instructive”, one-sided) and cross-border encounters (“interactive”, “collaborative”) of students, but in particular by long-term partnerships among schools.

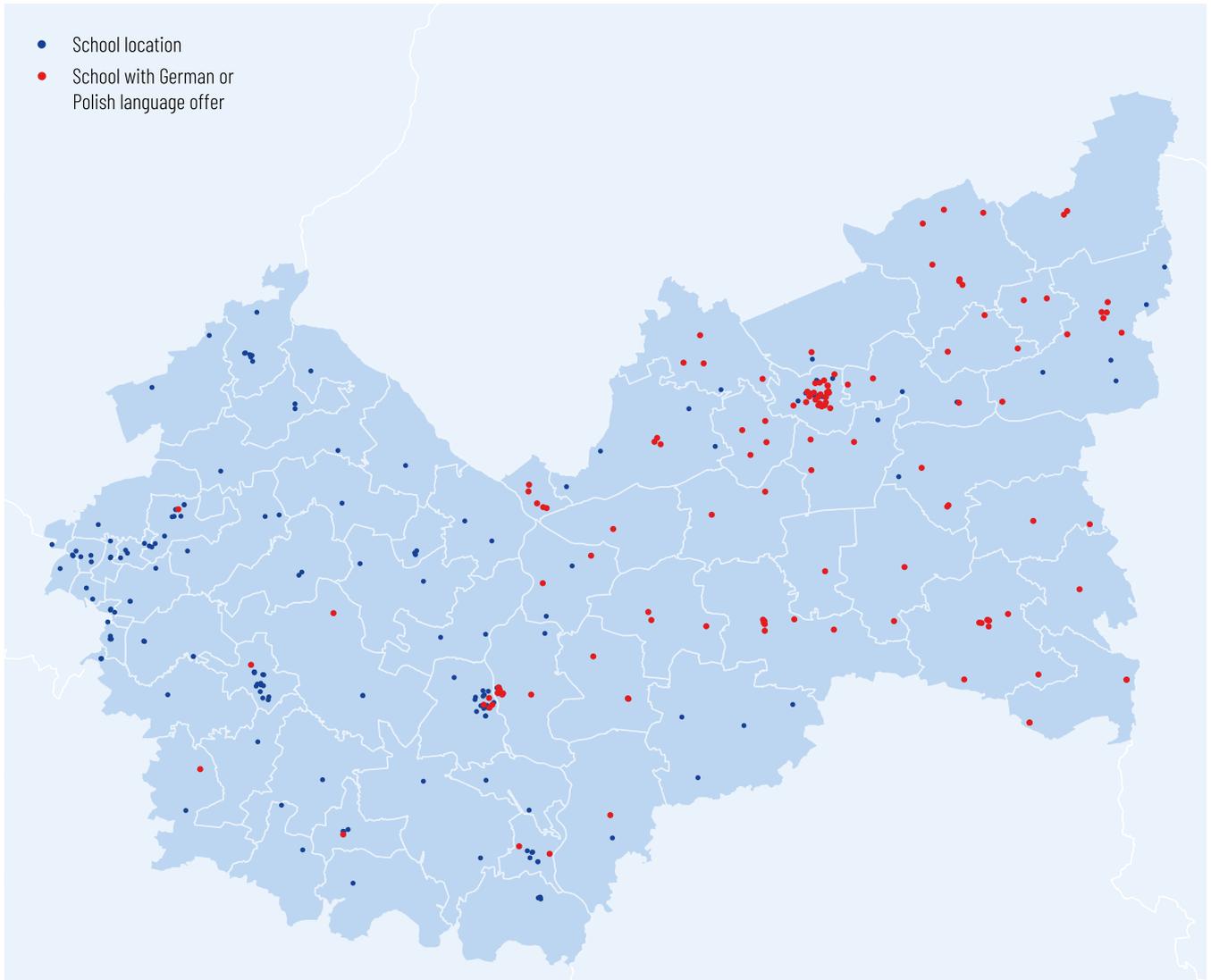


Fig. 19: Primary schools and general schools with Polish or German lessons in the area of the Euroregion PRO EUROPA VIADRINA (own presentation, based on MBS 2019a; SIO 2017)

The following table illustrates the perception of foreign language teaching in schools in the Euroregion. The dominant first foreign language on both sides is English. In the German part of the Euroregion, 11 schools offer Polish and about 4% of all students learn Polish as a foreign language, while almost half of all students (48%) study German in the Polish part of the Euroregion. Furthermore, French, Russian and Spanish are also taught on both sides.

Foreign Language	German side		Polish side	
	Number of schools	Number of students	Number of schools	Number of students
German or Polish	11	1,461	145	19,152
English	113	40,635	160	35,332
French	38	5,412	8	436
Spanish	7	1,031	2	127
Russian	24	2,193	6	373
Italian	-	-	4	105
Latin	12	1,496	-	-

Tab. 15: Foreign languages in general education schools of the Euroregion PRO EUROPA VIADRINA (own presentation, based on MBS 2019a, SIO 2017)

Neither on the German nor on the Polish side, the offers of individual extracurricular school working groups (Arbeitsgemeinschaften, AG) and privately owned schools are included in the statistics. However, these offers would not significantly change the general picture. In this context for example a working group in Neuzelle involving 100 Polish learners could be mentioned, which is not recorded in the data.

From the geographical distribution (see cartographic overview in Fig. 19), it can be deduced that the Polish schools where German is taught are almost evenly distributed over the Polish part of the Euroregion. In the German part, the offer of Polish lessons is concentrated on the city of Frankfurt (Oder). This offer extends within the city from a primary school to a general secondary school (Oberschule) and high schools to the upper level centre (Oberstufenzentrum) and gives the opportunity to take Polish lessons continuously from the 1st grade all the way to school graduation. In the case of the other 10 schools of German municipalities, Polish is initially only used in one form of school at a time.

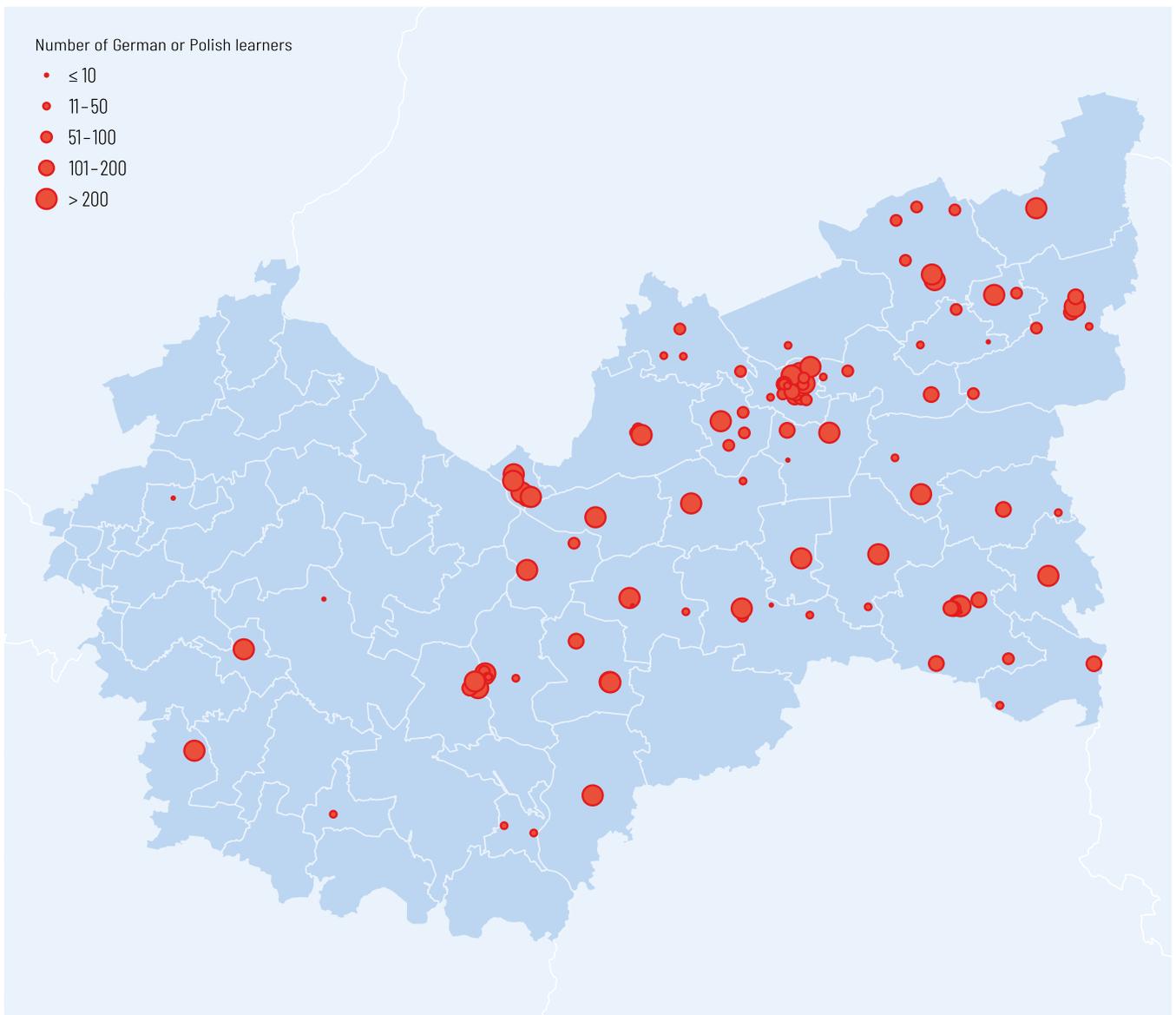


Fig. 20: Use of foreign language offers in Polish or German at general education schools in the Euroregion PRO EUROPA VIADRINA (own presentation; based on MBJS 2019a; SIO 2017)

A part of the schools on the Polish side of the Euroregion cooperate with the Central Agency for Schools Abroad (Zentralstelle für das Auslandsschulwesen) of the Federal Office of Administration (Bundesverwaltungsamt) in terms of the certification of the language learning. The German Language Diploma II (Deutsches Sprachdiplom II, DSD II) is an annual state examination conducted all over the world. It is based on European standards and confirms the knowledge of the German language at the level B2/C1, in accordance with the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages. The DSD II diploma enables you to study in Germany in any course of study without the need to take an additional language exam. An example of a school having such an offer is the I. General Education Lyceum in Gorzów Wlkp (IV LO Gorzów Wlkp. 2020).

On the Polish side there is also the State Commission for the Confirmation of Knowledge of the Polish Language as a Foreign Language (Państwowa Komisja do spraw Poświadczania Znajomości Języka Polskiego jako Obcego; see PKdsPZJPjO 2020) . Among the foreign institutions entitled to conduct examinations for the recognition of the Polish language, there are no German universities. For this reason, interested students can only obtain such a certificate directly in Poland (MNiSW 2020).

The issue relating to the continuity of foreign language offers for German and Polish from the 1st grade to school graduation in the individual municipalities was not examined in depth in the present study. It should be reserved for future analyses in the course of the development of cross-border education. In this context, we start from the assumption that in addition to German and Polish, English and the other languages taught on both sides may be used if it is not possible to use the recommended languages German and Polish.

Of the 307 primary and general educational schools, nearly half (131) of them have international partnerships with schools in several countries all over the world. Within the Euroregion PRO EUROPA VIADRINA alone, there are 41 partnerships between German and Polish schools. Beyond those the international partnerships of 64 schools on the German side include 26 partner schools in other Polish voivodeships and 42 schools in other European countries as well as in Africa, Asia, South America and Australia (MBS 2019b). The international partnerships of 67 Polish schools extend beyond the Euroregion to 14 other schools in German federal states and to 20 schools worldwide (LubKurOs 2019).

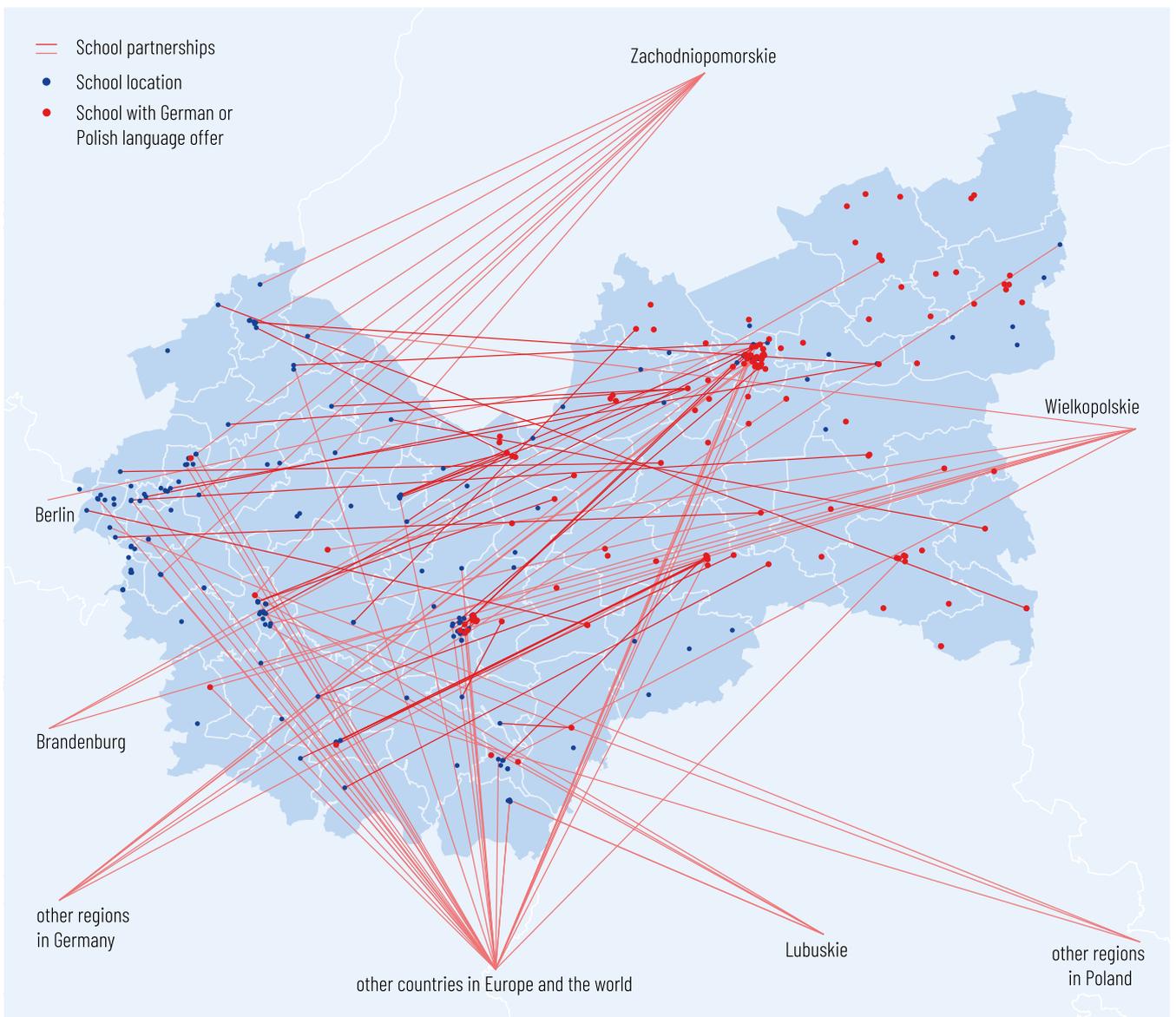


Fig. 21: International school partnerships of general education schools in the Euroregion PRO EUROPA VIADRINA (own presentation; based on LubKurOs 2019; MBJS 2019b)

In the case of school partnerships within the Euroregion, individual schools sometimes have several partners on the other side. Of the eleven German schools in the Euroregion offering Polish, 8 have a Polish partner school. Of the 32 Polish schools which maintain contacts with one or more German schools, all offer English and German as a foreign language.

Tab. 16: International school partnerships of general education schools in the Euroregion PRO EUROPA VIADRINA (own presentation; based on LubKurOs 2019; MBJS 2019b)

	Schools on the German side of the Euroregion	Schools on the Polish side of the Euroregion
Countries of the partner schools	Australia, Czech Republic, Belarus, Bulgaria, Great Britain, France, Russian Federation, Burundi, Lithuania, Sweden, Colombia, Hungary, South Africa, Egypt, Oman, China, Japan, Senegal, Peru, Italy, Denmark, Spain, Latvia, Israel	Italy, Sweden, Ukraine, France, USA, Turkey, Spain, Romania, Portugal, Cyprus, Netherlands

These school partnerships are characterized by regular, sometimes annual meetings of individual student groups or whole school classes to get to know each other and to cooperate in projects. In addition to the school partnerships listed here, the Euroregion hosts numerous school and extracurricular interactive projects every year, which are supported by the EU-funded Euroregion's Small Projects Fund (SPF) or by the German-Polish Youth Office (DPJW). The following table gives an example of the number of participants in these interactive projects, which were recorded in the offices of the Euroregion in 2018.

Tab. 17: Interactive projects (DPJW/SPF) within the Euroregion PEV in the school as well as in the extracurricular context in 2018 (own presentation)

Projects	Number of participating children				
	Type	Number	from Germany	from Poland	Total
In the school context		31	761	1,065	1,826
In the extracurricular context		56	3,076	4,701	7,777

Accordingly, in addition to the school sector, the extracurricular sector also plays a fundamental role on both sides. In the extracurricular sector, external providers (e. g. municipalities, associations) are often involved in the design of interactive projects for large groups, e. g. on holidays or weekends. Every year, the municipality of Klodawa offers a cooperation and recreation project for approximately 100 children and young people from Poland and Germany in Lipy, while more than 400 children from Germany, Poland and other countries regularly participate in the annual forest camp organised in Briesen. In the school sector, these projects are often carried out in class strength. From the long-lasting experience of the project managers for the SPF and the DPJW of the Euroregion, it is known that these figures only partly reflect the actual activities. In particular, many actors carry out interactive projects near the border without funding or support from other sources. Another quantitatively non-presentable phenomenon are the interactions of groups that are not part of the direct circle of participants in sponsored interactive events, such as meetings of peers from both sides, families hosting exchange children, or the local population participating in the individual activities.



Fig. 22: German-Polish cooperation in the extracurricular context – sports. LKS Lubusz Słubice and Kreissportbund Markisch-Oderland (photo: Piotr Boboryk)

Moreover, the type and intensity of the activities and partnerships could not be examined in greater depth in the context of the situational analysis, but could only by way of example. A systematic consideration of this is reserved for further analyses. As a result of the data evaluation, interviews and workshops, it has already become clear that

- the distance between schools and the language barrier do not preclude cross-border activities from the start, e. g. the cooperation of schools from Gorzów Wlkp. with Herford (distance: 500 km) or Eberswalde (distance: 100 km), or that of the municipality of Drezdenko with Winsen (Luhe; distance: over 500 km),
- partnerships between schools and vocational institutions also work in the transitional areas of school and work,
- in some cases the change of the school system or the loss of committed persons impede the continuous cooperation.

An outstanding example of cross-border activities is the cooperation of the High School Karl-Liebknecht Gymnasium (KLG) in Frankfurt (Oder) with the primary school number 2 in Słubice in the context of the Latarnia project (KLG 2020). Since 1992, the KLG has been leading German and Polish students to their high school diploma (Abitur) in joint classes and courses beginning from the 10th grade. In the school year 2005/06, the schools also opened the preparation for the participation in this project to students from grade 7 onwards. In both schools, 24 students are admitted to a 7th grade with extended foreign language teaching. They get to know each other through interactions, joint work in projects and on a common class trip. Starting in grade 8, lessons in selected subjects (mathematics, art, music, sports, computer science) are held on one day of a week in the other school in the foreign language. For this purpose, 12 Polish and 12 German students from a mixed course also change the place of instruction every 2 weeks, which in turn determines the language of instruction. Subsequently, Polish students at the KLG can be accepted into the 10th grade and as a consequence into the Latarnia project. Furthermore, the possibility of an exchange year will be opened for German students at the 1st High school (liceum ogólnokształcące) in Poznań, which is funded by the foundation Sanddorn. This example clearly shows that the success results from the interaction of committed school administrators, teachers, interested students and parents and that the close proximity of both schools allows an exemplary high degree of interaction between the parties involved.

Słubice and Frankfurt (Oder) are pursuing the promotion of the language of their neighbour in the context of a joint action plan. In addition to the already existing offers, the INTERREG-funded project "Neighbouring Language in the Twin City" („Nachbarsprache in der Doppelstadt") aims to enable 400 Polish primary school students to learn German and 360 students from Frankfurt to learn Polish in 24 extracurricular school working groups. The language courses are complemented by interactions and joint projects of the students in order to develop application-oriented language skills. This increases the motivation of the children to learn the neighbouring

language. In addition, this project envisages an extensive further education programme addressed to teachers, which, in addition to language skills and language didactics, is also geared towards intercultural learning and the management of interactions. Furthermore, parents will be involved and an open platform for e-learning will be set up. For what concerns the intended multilingual teaching materials, special features of both cities are to be taken up for illustration. In addition to the cooperation between schools and their sponsor institutions, an external educational institution is involved in the realization of the project in order to obtain the skills and capacities which are necessary for the development of this complex project. Another aspect having a positive effect is that the city of Słubice wants to reintroduce German lessons from class 1 onwards.

The general high schools (liceum ogólnokształcące) in Gorzów Wlkp. also maintain cooperation with schools abroad, e. g. the I Liceum Ogólnokształcące (I. LO), the II Liceum Ogólnokształcące (II. LO) and the IV Liceum Ogólnokształcące (IV. LO). In addition to many other examples, the two schools mentioned first are to be listed here as models. They regularly host international projects in which young people from many countries participate – including a simulation of United Nations consultations (I LO – PUSZMUN, II LO – POLMUN). The IV. LO actively participates as Polish delegation in an analogue series of events in Germany (SISMUN at the site of the Schulfarm Insel Scharfenberg). At this point, the quality of these projects should also be pointed out by the example of the cooperation of the II. LO with the Bernhardinum in Fürstenwalde and the Bednarska Szkoła Realna from Warsaw. Out of this project the international music group "No Borders Band" emerged. This group was awarded the prize of the German-Polish Youth Association in the context of the German-Polish Youth Competition. The project was funded by both the Small Projects Fund and the German-Polish Youth Office.

However, also in more distant cities, direct cross-border activities take place and promote the interest in foreign languages. In both school and extracurricular areas, there is a lively cooperation between the partner communities Seelow and Kostrzyn nad Odrą, which are at a distance of about 20 km. This results not only in formal but also non-formal or informal educational offers. At the primary school of Seelow Russian and English are offered as foreign languages while in the schools of Kostrzyn nad Odrą English and German are taught as foreign languages. In addition, there is a weekly Polish extracurricular school working group in the Seelower primary school, which is attended by about 10 children, but is not included in the aforementioned statistics. The students in Seelow went to Kłodawa to a joint summer camp. Students from both sides participated in various sports tournaments in Seelow or Kostrzyn and in the annual sports festival in Kostrzyn nad Odrą. Fourth grade students play football together at least once a year. In addition, both partners also involve other regional institutions, including the Gussow-Platow Museum, the Primary School number 2, cultural and sports facilities, e. g. the Cultural Centre in Kostrzyn (Kostrzyńskie Centrum Kultury) and the Municipal Sports and Recreation Centre (Miejski Ośrodek Sportu i Rekreacji), as well as many other municipal and independent institutions.

There is also a long-standing cooperation between the schools of Trzciel and Falkenberg. With several annual meetings and joint activities (e. g. bicycle tours, visits to memorials) supported by the German-Polish Youth Office, their partnership developed into the most enduring and long-lasting in the region.

Furthermore long lasting cooperations with schools from the municipality of Bogdaniec exist. For example, the primary school of Bogdaniec holds regular meetings with the schools of Prötzel and Neutrebbin, at which guests from Seelow also participate. The projects take place several times a year, and the meetings at Christmas time have already become a tradition. Through language animation, the presentation of Christmas traditions, various workshops and enactments, an exchange of experiences and learning about the traditions of the neighbouring country is promoted.

The cooperation between the primary school of Słońsk and the Bernhardinum, Fürstenwalde (Spree), that exists since 2010, is also an exemplary, cross-border collaborative activity. Both partners do not focus primarily on improving language skills. They take up the historical heritage of the German concentration camp in Słońsk, where at the end of World War II, on the night from the 30th to the 31st January 1945, about 800 political prisoners from several European countries were shot by the Gestapo and SS soldiers. Students from both schools participate in the annual commemorative events at the end of January. The schools regularly organize conversations between students and witnesses, while Polish and German students maintain the cemetery memorial together. The Martyrology Museum (Muzeum Martyrologii) in Słońsk is also involved in the organisation of this cooperation. The activities lead to at least two multi-day visits of German students to Słońsk every year. Only if needed, language mediators are involved. Both schools appreciate this interaction between students. In the joint examination of the history of the other side, they also learn about each other's culture in an informal way.

An example of a project that connects young people of school age and is organized in the context of extracurricular education are activities organized by the Women's Empowerment Foundation (Fundacja Animacji Kobiet), such as „Culture without Borders” (“Kultur ohne Grenzen”). This is a project that connects children from substitute families from Poland and socially disadvantaged children coming from the children's home in Prenzlau. Through joint workshops and getting to know the cultures of both countries, stereotypes are overcome and the participants experience international cooperation.

Since 2012, during every weekend of the summer season, the educational institution Schloss Trebnitz gives six German and Polish children and adolescents the opportunity to run a café together with refugees through the project „Coffee for Happiness - intercultural, inclusive Junior Company” (“Kaffee zum Glück - Interkulturelle, inklusive Juniorfirma”) (Schloss Trebnitz 2020). In this context, the children are professionally prepared and accompanied. They participate in courses for barkeeping, floristry, accounting, baking and serving. They learn how to found a company, how to identify tasks and how to distribute them within the team. As a result of the project, it is regularly determined that the children acquire soft skills, e. g. self-reflection, self-confidence, self-initiative, a sense of responsibility and teamwork, and overcome stereotypes, in addition to the helpful professional knowledge and skills.

In collaboration with the partners of the Municipality of Strzelce Krajeńskie, Vocational Training Institute in Gorzów Wielkopolski (Zakład Doskonalenia Zawodowego), Voivodeship Methodological Centre (Wojewódzki Ośrodek Metodyczny), Lubuskie Innovation Network Association



Fig. 23: Student café of the educational and meeting centre Schloß Trebnitz (photo: Svea Landschoof 2019)

(Stowarzyszenie Lubuska Sieć Innowacji), the Chamber of Crafts in Frankfurt (Oder) (Handwerkskammer Frankfurt (Oder)) and the Institute of Economic Education in Oldenburg (Institut für Ökonomische Bildung), the IHK Projektgesellschaft mbH Ostbrandenburg is running the Interreg project "learning – working – living without borders" („Grenzenlos lernen – grenzenlos arbeiten – grenzenlos leben") (MdFE 2020). In the context of this project, the partners strive to use the example of the Euroregion PRO EUROPA VIADRINA in order to develop a contemporary, systematic model for cross-border vocational orientation. In the cross-border approach, the actors see an enrichment of national efforts as well as a concrete contribution to increasing the attractiveness of the region for apprentices as well as employees. Tailored to the needs of students, schools, parents and the Euroregional labour market, tools and methods are developed. In joint practical and intercultural activities between students and teachers, including the training of teachers, the said tools and methods are also tested for their suitability.

Similar to the "Kita-Olympiade" mentioned in Chapter 3.1, an exchange based on sports cooperation can also be organized for school-aged children. An example of measures which are already taking place is the cooperation with the municipality of Rzepin and its sports clubs. Among others, there has already been a cooperation between the football clubs from Rzepin and Kowalów and the skate club of Kowalów and the municipality also organized international handball tournaments. For its primary school in Janczewo, the municipality of Santok, together with its German partner, the municipality of Rüdersdorf, organizes a "German-Polish Health Race" („Deutsch-Polnischer Gesundheitslauf") in which several hundred people participate every year.

The above-mentioned examples of cooperation are just a sample of the best practice projects implemented in the Euroregion. Within the framework of this analysis it is not possible to describe all measures. For example the long-standing contacts of the Deszczno Primary School and the School in Stavenhagen, the cooperation of some schools from the municipality of Sulęcín (including with the Primary School number 2, the Primary School in Wędrzyn, the School in Tauche, Zespół Szkół Samorządowych Witnica and the Bertold-Brecht-Oberschule Seelow).

The cooperation among schools in the Euroregion, which goes beyond the border area, should also be mentioned. For example the Zespół Szkół (school complex) from Cybinka, as a partner of UNICEF, participated in the following actions: "A Star for Africa" („Ein Stern für Afrika"), „All Colors of the World" („Alle Farben der Welt"), „We help the Children in Nepal to get back to School" („Wir helfen den Kindern in Nepal wieder in die Schule zu kommen"), "The Rights of Children and the Problems of the modern World" („Das Recht der Kinder und die Probleme der modernen Welt") and „First of all - the child" („Als erstes - das Kind").

The variety of activities listed here, which are carried out either continuously or selectively on a project basis, as well as their data basis did not allow for a more precise quantification of their scope or intensity for the area of the Euroregion. Based on the number of children and adolescents who participated in the DPJW and SPF-funded interactive projects in school and extra-curricular settings during the year 2018, at least 11% (9,600 out of 82,000) of all students were involved in cross-border activities.

Now Cross-border activities in the school sector are presented from other Euroregions, which also provide suggestions for action in terms of content, organisation or by including regional aspects.

Another example of the training of entrepreneurial skills by including elements of the regional natural and cultural heritage is the INTERREG-funded project "Regional Management. Professional competences and perspectives of the Saxon-Polish border region" („Regional Management. Berufskompetenzen und -perspektiven der sächsisch-polnischen Grenzregion")(Landesamt für Schule und Bildung 2020). Supported by the Saxon Education Agency (Sächsische Bildungsagentur), as well as the administrative districts of Zgorzelec, Lubań, Bolesławiec and Żary, a cross-border cooperation network of high schools in Görlitz, Bischofswerda, Hoyerwerda, Bolesławiec, Lubań, Żary and Zgorzelec with other regional tourist and cultural institutions was established, from which student travel agencies emerged. Through these, students from both sides get introduced to the common natural and cultural heritage and gain knowledge of the management of culture and tourism by the means of student and teacher exchanges on both sides of the border. They develop appropriate offers and then advertise their cultural and touristic offers as so-called "ambassadors of the region" to other schools located in the border area.

A different example can be highlighted in the Euroregion Śląsk Cieszyński. The objective of the project "Eco-responsible" ("Ekoodpowiedzialni") was the increase of the ecological awareness of students from high schools in the municipalities of Strumień and Šenov and their parents by imparting knowledge in the field of waste management and by teaching them the right behaviour in regard to waste sorting. Crucial elements for strengthening the infrastructure of the border area are the experimental gardens created on the Polish and Czech sides, the so-called pro-ecological health zones. On the Polish side, a fitness course was created in the garden in order to promote an active and healthy lifestyle as well as renewable energy sources. In that context, the Polish and Czech youth participated in educational and health workshops. Further workshops are held for children from schools and kindergartens. Students from both schools have worked in project groups under the guidance of teachers, conducting observations and research. Their results were presented at the meetings of the city council and on the websites of the schools. In addition, project days in Strumień and Šenov, an ecological picnic, a meeting and two conferences for administrative staff and entrepreneurs from Cieszyń County were organized in the context of the project.

Continuing in the Polish-Czech border region, in the Euroregion Silesia, there is an active co-operation of the School and Kindergarten Centre in Rzuchów (municipality of Kornowac) with the Primary School and Kindergarten in Branka u Opavy. The cooperation between the two primary schools has been successfully implemented for several years. In the context of the project „Polish-Czech Journey through Europe“, the partners drew attention to the fact that nowadays the subject of education and culture is gaining special importance and highlighted interesting and active ways of spending free time for children and adolescents. The project was conceived precisely to take into account the fact that it is fundamental for every person to engage them from an early age in cultural activities and to actively stimulate them by e. g. reading, playing theatre, learning languages, actively participating in sporting competitions, listening to or playing music, participating in dance and movement games and/or actively participating in excursions. Few students coming from small, rural areas have the opportunity to visit large cultural centres such as Vienna or other countries, such as the Netherlands or Germany. In line with the vision of the European Union the schools offered the young generation the opportunity to become acquainted with European culture and its influence on Poland and the Czech Republic in the context of this project and to therefore become aware of the wonderful contribution of our countries to culture, education and recreation.

The virtual tours of the following countries are planned in the project:

- Austria: Measure 2 - Polish-Czech meeting with Viennese waltz
- Germany: Measure 3 - Polish-Czech puppet theatre - Fairy tales of the Brothers Grimm
- Netherlands: Measure 4 - Bicycle competition at the border between two cultures

Thanks to the implementation of the project, conversations, games, competitions, sports activities and spending time outdoors became a real alternative to mobile phones, television or computers. Friendships were made between the children, and an increase in cultural, social and leisure activities was noted on both sides of the border.

In addition to raising awareness of the cultural diversity in Europe, civic competence is a further objective at the European level (cf. Chap. 2.3). The INTERREG project “future models - German-Danish Youth Shapes the Future” („future models - Deutsch-dänische Jugend gestaltet Zukunft”) (Hans-Werner Hansen Universität 2019), implemented at the German-Danish border, represents a model of cross-border activities for stronger youth participation. To achieve this objective, a new format for project days at schools is to be developed. These project days are carried out classically by face-to-face meetings organised on site as well as virtually. For the latter, a platform for virtual collaboration was developed in order to be able to involve more schools, if possible, in addition to the 29 schools with more than 2,800 students that have been involved to date. To ensure that the visions developed by young people are also heard and a public debate is initiated, an annual competition with media coverage is held in addition to intensive public relations work.

Out of the large number of other cross-border activities, the “Euregio Student Literature Prize” („Euregio-Schüler-Literaturpreis”) (EuregioKultur e.V. 2020) should be highlighted in this context as it links the interactive aspect with teaching content (language and literature) in an exemplary way. The Euregio Meuse-Rhine includes the tri-border area between Belgium, the Netherlands and Germany with the languages French, Dutch and German. Since 2001, approximately 400 students from 25 schools in all three countries have taken part in the competition every year, engaging with contemporary works and their authors and also exchanging ideas directly with students from neighbouring countries.

Approaches to action

The introductory chapters set out the strategies and objectives for education by explaining the advantages offered by cross-border activities. In addition to pre-school education, the field of school education bears the main responsibility when it comes to the basic development of the desired competences. Consequently, the actors in school and extracurricular institutions are exposed to extensive demands on the motor abilities, cognitive and social skills to be taught to both children and adolescents. The great dynamics of globalization and digital change, for example, put additional pressure on the involved actors. In addition to the material to be dealt with in conventional subjects, e.g. reading, writing, mathematics, natural sciences, it is increasingly important to integrate the partly highly dynamic content of cross-sectional topics into the school framework in a timely manner.

To mention an example, media literacy (cf. eg. Chap. 2.4, Polish programme basis for ethics, modern foreign languages or social studies as well as interdisciplinary competencies, grade 1-10, Brandenburg) does not only include the mastery of the comparatively rapidly changing software and hardware of modern media. However, media literacy also includes the ability to deal as objectively as possible with the flood of information coming from all over the world, as well as one's own expressiveness and the ability to reflect on its effects. Furthermore, children and young people should also be empowered, for example, in democracy, gender equality, cultural and intercultural education, sustainable management and ultimately also receive the suitable guidance when it comes to the design of their own professional future. In view of the human, material and temporal resources available in the facilities, the fulfilment of these tasks represents a more or less great challenge. At the moment, the lack of teaching professionals, the high financial burden on public budgets or the existing digital infrastructure (e.g. broadband connection and equipment of schools and parents' homes) already represent inhibiting circumstances. In order to raise the level of educational infrastructure in the border area and to align it with the international standard, its regular development and subsidization is an essential prerequisite. Cross-border activities are associated with a high level of additional expenditure in the school sector, which many institutions cannot cope with from their own resources.

Based on the advantages of cross-border learning experiences, in the interest of expanding corresponding activities in the Euroregion, the approach is advocated here to increasingly combine the goal of imparting several, especially cross-disciplinary competences with cross-border, „collaborative“ interactions. In order to make use of the opportunities that exist, especially in the border region, despite the obstacles, a targeted division of tasks and cooperation is required in addition to the direct support of actors in the institutions. This applies to all participants both in the preparation and in the implementation of cross-border activities.



Fig. 24: German and Polish school students during the joint simulation of the session of the European Parliament in Frankfurt (Oder) – Słubice 2019 (photo: Archive Euroregion)

As we have already shown, analogous objectives are pursued on both sides of the border. In this regard, it is worth recalling the vision of the European Union for a European Education Area, the key competences identified by the OECD and EU and the corresponding national targets in Poland and Germany (Brandenburg)(cf. Chap. 2.2 and 2.3). In order to derive cross-border approaches to the school area within the Euroregion PRO EUROPA VIADRINA, the following objectives are formulated on this basis:

- Continuation of existing cross-border activities.
- Expansion of cross-border activities so that every student participates at least once (ideally annually) in primary and secondary education in a cross-border (ideally multi-day) interaction.
- Strengthening of cross-border activities and development of adequate competences among teaching professionals and those responsible for education in local governments and sponsoring institutions, in the curatorships and ministries.
- Expansion of cross-border activities in the extracurricular area.

This concept is also based on the approach of the “learning spiral” (cf. Chap. 2.3) providing for intercultural interactions at all ages. For this reason, it would be desirable for every child to benefit from such intercultural experiences, ideally annually, and for this to be repeated at all subsequent ages.

Against this background, within the framework of the situational analysis, action approaches were identified and then assigned to 3 levels (cf. Chap. 2.3). They result from activities which have already been successfully carried out, from the experiences of the actors in their cross-border activities and from the transfer of useful approaches to lifelong learning from other age groups or national model examples. In view of the diversity of actors involved in this area, the approaches are presented in a differentiated way according to the respective target group.

Level 1	Level 2	Level 3
Boundary perception (instructive)	Boundary crossing (interactive)	Cross-border interaction (collaborative)
School students		
Getting to know the culture and language of the neighbour in class or in school working groups	Excursions to the other side (Getting to know students from the neighbouring country, including by visits made to partner schools, joint activities with sports, games, theatre, culture, history, and joint visits to museums) Use of holiday offers	Discussion of the tasks set together with school students coming from neighbouring countries in the context of one- to multi-day project days / weekends (on the topics: sports, music, dance, theatre, literature, architecture, scientific / technical experiments, and history) Maintaining collaboration through online formats
Teaching professionals		
Further education (including intercultural learning, language animation, languages, regional studies, culture, interactive / project management, other (digital, analogue) methods and materials) Teaching competencies to school students (including language, regional studies /geography, architecture, culture, and history) Raising awareness among parents (Advantage of cross-border learning experiences)	Excursions / study trips to the neighbouring country (for teaching professionals) "Educational walk" (Participation of teaching professionals in interactive events organised by third parties) Exchange of experience (between German and Polish teaching professionals) Visits / excursions to the neighbouring country (with group / class of school students)	Development of offers for the development of competences together with teaching professionals from the neighbouring country (sports, music, dance, theatre, literature, architecture, scientific / technical experiments, and history) Regular implementation of interactive events and one- to multi-day project days / weekends (Enable participation of parents)
School principal / sponsoring association		
Integration of aspects of intercultural learning and foreign languages into the curricula (further training, curricula) Evaluation (internal activities, including competences and capacities for cross-border interactions)	Maintaining contact with the partner school Search / referral of new contacts (starting from the already existing local partnerships) Exchange of experience (among German and Polish administrative staff / sponsoring associations)	Implementation of events with the possibility for third parties to participate (e. g. joint holiday offers for school students from several partner schools) Evaluation (cross-border activities carried out with partners from neighbouring countries)
External partners		
Museums (Development of interactively usable, age-appropriate offers) Educational sponsors, cultural institutions, independent sponsors, and business environment (Development of (complete) offers for school, leisure and holidays: e. g. vocational orientation, Lego League, artisan-, music-, nature-and adventure camps, film workshop; development of additional resources, e. g. through the integration of retirees and voluntary services)	Museums / educational institutions (Test run of cross-border offers during school hours, weekends and holidays; e. g. translation of information boards for museum exhibits by German-Polish student group)	Network of German and Polish museums, educational sponsors and economic institutions (permanent implementation of offers; mediation in the establishment of new contacts / partnerships; further training / exchange of experience with German and Polish specialists)
Regulatory authorities		
Ministry / School Office / Board of Trustees (Inclusion of cross-border activities in framework curricula and assessment of participation in performance documentation /final certificates) Conception and implementation of modular further education (specialisation; content/organisational)	Ministry / School Office / Board of Trustees (development of guidelines tailored to the border region on methods and contents for curricula, including project days and further education)	Ministry / School Office / Board of Trustees (Technical support of the sponsoring institution / school principals during the preparation of curricula; evaluation)

Tab. 18: Approaches to action in the school sector

Implementation notes

Within the framework of the situation analysis, it was confirmed, especially through the interviews, expert discussions and workshops, that even in schools the personnel resources are often more than fully utilized with the fulfillment of the regular tasks of education and care, including conceptual and documentary work. The implementation of cross-border activities is usually an additional task, resulting in additional personnel, material and financial expenses. In the interest of implementing the above-mentioned approaches in the school sector as comprehensively as possible, suggestions for implementation are to be given here against the background of the framework conditions. This also includes recommendations relating to accompanying measures. In this context, opportunities should be provided to realize tasks and ideas going beyond standard teaching methods – e. g. by realizing innovations and experiments in the Polish school system, in our Euroregion under the authority of the Lubuskie Board of Trustees for Education (LubKurOs 2020b).

These recommendations do not include detailed proposals of measures for Schools for children with learning difficulties (Szkóły Specjalne), Schools for children with special needs (Specjalne Ośrodki Szkolno-Wychowawcze) and other institutions for children and adolescents with disabilities, disadvantaged groups, etc. However, it must be pointed out here that each of the above measures can and should be applied in these institutions according to the given possibilities. Projects of this kind are already being carried out – among others by the Municipality of Strzelce Krajeńskie, (Small Projects Fund: “Art that goes to the heart - German-Polish workshop for the disabled” („Kunst, die ans Herz geht - Deutsch-polnischer Workshop für Behinderte“)), by the Special School Complex (Zespół Szkół Specjalnych) in Gorzów Wlkp. (Small Projects Fund), the Special School and Educational Center (Specjalny Ośrodek Szkolno-Wychowawczy) in Lipki Wielkie (DPJW), or by the German-Polish Artistic Workshops held in Ośno Lubuskie (Workshop for Movement Therapy by the Association “Razem” in Sulęcín and its partners from the Workshop for Disabled People in Fürstenwalde). In view of the changing demographic situation, consideration can also be given to institutions that specialize in the education of people at risk of exclusion or with disabilities, including those involved in German-Polish cooperation.

Regardless of the implementation of own projects, in accordance with the horizontal policy of the European Union, in particular in the implementation of the principle of equal opportunities and non-discrimination, including access for people with disabilities, it must be possible to participate in any project supported with EU funds.



Fig. 25: In cooperation with municipalities and schools for better education in the Euroregion PRO EUROPA VIADRINA – teaching materials for school students and schools (photos: Archive Euroregion)

Personnel requirements

More than 6,200 teachers are already working in the 307 schools on both sides. In the medium term, the shortage of teachers noted at the outset should be compensated by graduates and newcomers. In order to develop personnel capacities for the implementation of cross-border activities in the short term, it would be required, analogously to the preschool sector, to examine to what extent professionals in the environment of the institutions can be reactivated for specific, temporary tasks (e. g. retired teachers or other professionals working at the school or other educational institutions) or to additionally recruit assistants to offer organizational support (including participation of parents; use of voluntary services; and involvement of retirees). In order to relieve the burden on professionals, it would also be possible – as already practiced at national level – to use high school and university students selectively for the preparatory teaching of regional studies, languages or other specialist knowledge to primary school students or to offer support in interactive events as well. Analogous to the model of the Senior Expert Service, which mediates the use of seniors as experts both nationally and worldwide (SES 2020), active pensioners could also be used in the German-Polish border region to offer their support in the context of assistance and/or educational tasks. The involved municipalities can mainly coordinate the provision of this kind of personnel-related support. In many cases, external educational institutions (among others foundations, chambers, associations) are already available. In this manner, the efforts could be bundled for several school institutions or even across different municipalities. Such cooperation at the level of the districts or even for the whole area of the Euroregion would be advantageous, because the circle of persons potentially willing to support would be larger and the placement of e. g. university or academy students would be easier to put into practice.

The support offered by third-parties becomes increasingly important as soon as cross-border interactions take place and when tasks are handled in mixed groups, a particularly intensive level of support is needed. In the cross-border context, activities of municipalities, chambers, universities and associations for vocational orientation already taking place on both sides can serve as a model. In direct cross-border events, colleagues from other institutions should also be offered participation and/or involvement in order to provide them with appropriate suggestions for their own work (cf. "Educational walk").

In addition, when it comes to cross-border activities, it is currently possible to take advantage of various project funding in order to cover personnel costs (e. g. professional support, language mediation, speakers) temporarily occurring in the specific activities and to finance them through the reimbursement of expenses or fees. In case it may be necessary, adequate support programmes at a regional and national level can also be developed for the border region in addition to programmes funded by the EU or by the DPJW.

Teachers/students

By building on the existing qualifications and experience of the teachers, their **further training** should focus in particular on the fields of specific cross-border relevance:

- intercultural learning,
- language animation / language,
- regional studies / culture,
- project / exchange management,
- other digital and analogue methods and materials,
- knowledge of the education system and the system of further education,
- knowledge of the labour market.

For this purpose, it would be advantageous to develop an orientation framework for annual, modular training in parallel to regular further education measures through a Euroregional platform of experts from the relevant offices and representatives of the institutions. In view of the variety of (key) competences to be imparted and the large number of teachers, their subject-specific differentiated orientation and their possibly school-related special functions (e.g. social pedagogues), this modular further education could – in addition to the acquisition of basic knowledge (e.g. on intercultural learning) – be differentiated and staggered in the sense of a division of tasks to specific subject areas. The opportunities for further education should also include **exchanges of experience** with colleagues on both sides of the border. This could also be supplemented by **excursions or study trips** by German and Polish professionals, e.g. by attending specific cross-border meetings. The so-called “educational walks” established in a school and in the museum in Słonek would also be a suitable way to allow the professionals from e.g. neighbouring schools to benefit from corresponding experiences by participating in cross-border activities, in addition to their own staff. Another possibility would be to use the potential of such places as the Międzyrzecki Fortified Region Museum of Fortifications and Bats (Międzyrzecki Rejon Umocniony Muzeum Fortyfikacji i Nietoperzy) in Pniewo, the Museum of the Woldenberg Prisoners (Muzeum Woldenberczyków) in Dobiegniew, or the Museum of the Kostrzyn Fortress. Finally, the objective should be to convey basic principles to teachers in an application-oriented way and to build up or expand the organisational and professional skills required for the implementation of cross-border relevant activities at all school institutions. This aspect can be supplemented by the involvement of external educational institutions with their capacities or specialists, e.g. in activities in mixed groups. Such trained teachers (e.g. class teachers, school principals, social pedagogues) would then also have the task of sensitizing **parents** to the advantages of cross-border interactions, and, if needed, of gaining participation, especially in the case of events lasting several days.

In preparation for direct cross-border activities, teachers should use the scope of the framework curriculum or school curriculum to take up relevant content in the related subjects for the **instructional transfer of knowledge to the neighbouring country** (or the other countries among the respective school partnerships). Beyond language, in view of the level of requirements of the particular grade, special features of the respective countries and also of the Euroregion could be considered, e. g. dealing with:

- literature by writers with regional relevance (e. g. Theodor Fontane, Heinrich v. Kleist, Christa Wolf, Papusza, Irena Dowgielewicz),
- biology (e. g. sexology manual by Michalina Wislocka (which is already used in international cooperation by the municipality of Lubniewice), ecosystem/animal/plant species studies based on nature/ landscape conservation, national parks, rivers, lakes and forests and open landscapes),
- history of the region (e. g. settlement history; European history in relation to neighbouring countries; memorials / 2. World War II, heritage of the Cistercians – including the Cistercian market in Bledzew) with the involvement of persons and institutions who are already implementing measures of this kind, e. g. Zbigniew Czarnuch from Witnica in cooperation with a number of institutions from both sides of the Oder),
- geography of the region (e. g. population / settlement and economic development; renewable energies; landscape / architecture, weather; cartography; water management of Oder, Warta, Oder-Spree networks),
- culture of the neighbour in linguistic or social science subjects (e. g. cuisine, theatre, music, Europe on the example of the neighbouring country, Nobel Prize winners in literature, physics),
- institutions of the labour market (development of career paths inspired by the vocational training of labour needs according to the specific characteristic of regional industry and services).

On the basis of this content, which can be conveyed in an instructive manner, it is then possible to develop interdisciplinary offers for one- to multi-day project days, which, in coordination with the partner schools from the neighboring country, serve for **interactive and collaborative** interactions in mixed groups. In the context of currently implemented INTERREG projects, offers are already being developed in regard to career orientation or history in terms of the events of the Second World War. An interdisciplinary and multi-day approach would provide an ideal framework in terms of type and scope for the particularly intensive cooperation of German and Polish students both in class strength and in small groups. **Museums** in the Euroregion, which are dedicated to writers, regional history, weather or serve as a memorial to the history of the Second World War, are also suitable cooperation partners for this purpose (cf. brochure entitled "Museums in the Euroregion PRO EUROPA VIADRINA - Areas for cross-border, lifelong learning.". e. g. Lubuskie Jan Dekert Museum in Gorzów with projects on the topic of "historical cuisine"). The cooperation with vocational schools, including in the field of gastronomy, could also be used for this purpose. Furthermore, the Euroregion is characterized by numerous memorials, which are particularly suitable for illustrating historical aspects, for which the history book "Europe – our History" („Europa – unsere Geschichte") published by the German-Polish textbook commission, already offers recognized teaching material.





Fig. 26: Shared experience of the cross-border natural heritage (photo: Naturpark/Nature Park Märkische Schweiz 2010)

Such intensive cooperation between German and Polish students on shared tasks best meets the goal of developing key competences. Ideally, students are given the chance to participate in such international meetings several times. The objective would also be to continue or supplement individual tasks through the virtual cooperation of German and Polish students in the sense of extracurricular groups. With reference to the examples we have already mentioned, it would be conceivable for students of both sides to do the following in a class-specific manner:

- they can train together athletically and participate in cross-school competitions (e. g. volleyball and football),
- they can get to know nature and landscape in adventure camps (e. g. by using the educational potential of the Warta Mouth National Park (Narodowy Ujście Warty Park) or the Drawa National Park (Drawieński Park Narodowy) as well as the Centre for Nature Education (Ośrodek Edukacji Przyrodniczej) in Pszczew (under sponsorship of the Centre for Landscape Parks of the Lubuskie Voivodship (Zespół Parków Krajobrazowych Województwa Lubuskiego)) or the Rzepin Forest (Puszcza Rzepińska)),
- they can elaborate and perform theatre plays,
- after their visit to museums, they can create multilingual labels for exhibits or learning materials,
- furthermore, they can visit and analyse the natural and cultural heritage of the region, develop and promote offers for excursions, education or recreation (cf. student travel agencies),
- they can measure the electricity production of solar systems, compare it with the electricity consumption of the school, and, if needed, they can design a system for generating electricity from renewable energies which is designed for this consumption.

Such examples could be further expanded and extended to **extracurricular** events. Cross-border interactions on weekends or a joint holiday of German and Polish students would effectively complement school activities: they could also be designed for special content offers, e. g. artisan camp. In particular, in cooperation with external educational institutions, multi-day interactions can be designed in such a manner that the teaching content is accommodated and clearly conveyed in accordance with the curriculum and, in addition, the desired interdisciplinary competencies for reflectivity, entrepreneurial competence and intercultural learning are particularly well trained.

School principal / sponsor

National **framework curricula** and the school curricula based on them represent a key element in improving the accessibility of the benefits of cross-border activities to all students. In order to safeguard school activities, we recommend the mediation of interdisciplinary aspects, in particular intercultural learning, through direct cross-border interactions with students from the neighbouring country (resp. abroad). In the **school curricula** (within the scope of the possibilities of adaptation and adjustment of the programme at this level), the cross-border relevant topics, including intercultural learning, language, regional studies, corresponding methods and materials, should be (instructively) more closely integrated in almost all taught subjects. The flexibility afforded to schools on both sides should be used to devote 2-3 project days annually to cross-border activities. The number of project days or the frequency of multi-day projects should be based on the principle that every student should get the chance to participate in at least one collaborative, cross-border activity during the course of their education.

In addition, the participation of children in cross-border interactions should be reflected in their school report cards. To assess the success or to derive further measures, an **evaluation** is recommended. This evaluation should also be developed in terms of type and scope at the level of a Euroregional platform of experts from responsible offices and institutional representatives. In addition to the quality of the interaction, including its “instructive”, “interactive” or “collaborative” character, the criteria should include its reach in terms of cross-curricular competences and quantitatively, the measure of the proportion of students reached. Starting from this basis, conclusions can be drawn for exchanges of experience, further educational offers, as well as the type and orientation of project days. In addition to the said conceptual work, the task is to win other schools from both sides to cooperate beyond the already existing **partnerships**. In view of the often municipal sponsorship of the institutions, it would be advisable for the municipalities and districts to use existing cooperations with partner municipalities, municipal offices and administrative districts of the neighbouring country to establish new school partnerships. Beginning with schools offering German or Polish language courses, potential partner schools in the neighbouring country could be targeted. However, when opening new schools, it would be ideal to use new opportunities and potential for the realization of cross-border meetings and international exchanges. Examples include the school in Przytoczna or the Centre for Vocational Training and Business (Edukacji Zawodowej i Biznesu) built in Gorzów. At the same time, further investment in school infrastructure is required in order to improve the educational potential of the Euroregion.

In addition to this, cross-border partner exchanges especially for actors operating in the school sector or **study trips** of teachers on the other side would offer the possibility to get to know potential partner institutions. As shown by experience, for this purpose, the unique contact must be questioned by mutual visits on suitability and sustainability for joint cross-border interactions (cf. Chapter 3.1). For the school area, this also entails a correspondingly large organizational and communicative effort for the gradual, comprehensive expansion of cross-border cooperation, which must be managed through cooperation between all involved parties.

External partners

In the school sector there are various structural and content-related responsibilities on both sides which, in a cross-border context, suggest the involvement of external educational institutions beyond the cooperation of the school institutions with their corresponding sponsors, administrative offices and specialized authorities. Children and youth organizations, regional museums, promoters and also companies enrich the spectrum of “extracurricular learning spaces” due to their facilities and/or events. In many cases, various **museums** are already destinations for excursions, so that as a result of this situational analysis a supplementary publication has focused on the selection of important museums on both sides of the Euroregion PEV. Through their exhibits, the museums convey educational content in a vivid way. In addition, they often also make special offers for students to solve teaching-related tasks or to deal with the exhibition content in a creative way (e. g. the above-mentioned historic culinary workshops at the Lubuskie Jan Dekert Museum in Gorzów Wlkp., the artisan workshop “What do you make of clay?” („Co się robi z gliny”) of the Museum in Międzyrzecz; “The white sheet” („Das weiße Blatt”) from the Kleist-Museum in Frankfurt (Oder)). In this manner, knowledge and skills are easily comprehensible and conveyed in a particularly sustainable manner. With regard to cross-border approaches, the representatives of the museums of both sides are already in contact and are currently exchanging their experiences in the field of museum education. What is essential now is to make or develop potential offers available for cross-border activities. Moreover, the Euroregion is characterised by numerous sites of natural and cultural heritage, which should be made even more accessible for cross-border activities in the school sector by expanding the cooperation with their involved sponsors. Similar to the schools themselves, attention must be paid to the development and promotion of the required infrastructure.

For this reason, other **educational institutions** and sector-specific child and youth organisations (e. g. sports associations, art and culture organisations) also play a key role when it comes to the establishment and expansion of cross-border activities. For students, external educational institutions already offer a comprehensive package that is diverse in terms of content and method. Teachers in schools are exempted from coping with the organisational burden and can concentrate on their other tasks. Such offers must be expanded across borders in coordination with the schools (curricula) and must be developed for the holiday periods. Multi-day offers for cross-border activities, e. g. during the holidays, would effectively complement others throughout the year, by allowing a special intensity of interactions between students. In addition, it makes sense to concentrate such offers on certain educational focal points for specific age groups. The offers which are currently established in this sense, e. g. artisan, music or nature camps, could increasingly be expanded into cross-border offers. Another option may be to propose the broader cooperation of schools with institutions and institutes which are already engaged in the realization of international encounters and developed within the framework of European projects, e. g. the Centre for German-Polish Encounters (Centrum Spotkań Polsko – Niemieckich) in Górzycza, as well as the promotion of cross-border activities by institutions, such as Centre for Family support in planning in the district of Gorzowski.

Authorities

Since cross-border activities are usually additional tasks, it is essential to give them more weight in the context of framework curricula and to improve the personnel resources of schools for such activities, among others through time quotas, job shares or other measures to recognise the extra work performed by teachers.

Close contact with representatives of the ministries, boards of trustees, offices and authorities is also important, as well as their openness to interactions and exchanges, including through exchanges of experience, study visits, involvement of their representatives in the above-mentioned "educational walks" and model projects.

Given the multitude of tasks to be solved in parallel, the external coordination and coordinated support for the cross-border efforts of schools and their sponsoring institutions also seems essential to achieve the objective formulated at the outset in regard to the school sector. For this purpose, a cross-border body of representatives of responsible offices and authorities (including MBSJ, MEN Board of Trustees, school authorities), schools, external educational institutions and, if appropriate, parents would have to be set up in the sense of a **coordination platform**. In this context, the upcoming tasks could be measured, prioritized and initiated:

- coordination of the type and scope of the modular further education measures,
- conception (content, methods, organizational implementation) of a further education programme for all teachers in the Euroregion, differentiated according to basics and specializations,
- know-how transfer and/or exchange of experience with other cross-border regions,
- coordination on the integration of intercultural learning, regional studies, language, etc. into school curricula,
- provision of technical support to school principals in the further development of their curricula,
- support offered to institutions in maintaining contacts with partner schools,
- development of a strategy for the establishment of new contacts and for the development of new partnerships and their implementation,

- technical support of the development of offers for cross-border activities (interactive / collaborative; one – multi day; linking of teaching subjects with competence development),
- organizational support offered during the implementation of cross-border activities,
- derivation of lump sums for simplified financial support for cross-border activities,
- coordination of the type and scope of the evaluation of these activities including the derivation of information for documentation and evaluation in the facilities themselves,
- organisation of study trips, exchange of experiences and
- public relations.

In order to maintain the working capacity of such a coordination platform in view of the abundance of tasks, existing cooperations should be used and informally developed into a network in which specific tasks are carried out in a division of labour or through the support offered by third parties. In this context, nationally existing municipal or regional support structures can also be utilized. Since the range of tasks and the landscape of the institutions in the school and preschool sectors often overlap, the creation of cooperations as well as the division of labour for both forms of education are obvious consequences.

Ideally, substantial parts of this commitment could be provided by the means of funded projects, in which the determined expenses e. g. for the personnel, material and travel costs, fees for language learning, studies or subject matter experts can be financed. Currently, the EU-funded cooperation programme INTERREG VA would be eligible for this purpose and may be applicable in the next funding period from 2021 as well, if similar funding priorities are chosen. It is already foreseeable that the small project funds in the Euroregions, which are also financed by these cooperation programmes, will be able to support specific cross-border interactive projects organised within the school as well as the extracurricular area. For this purpose, grants from the DPJW could also be used.

3.3 Vocational education

Initial situation

For the vocational field, the following objectives can be used for guidance at the European level (cf. Chap. 2.2): here the values for the drop-out rate (max. 10%) and employment rate after qualification (min. 82%) are specified. In view of the cross-border context, the criteria for a stay abroad for learning purposes (at least 6% of 18-34 year olds with initial vocational qualifications) as well as the knowledge of at least two European foreign languages and the awareness of cultural diversity in Europe can be used.

For the said indicators, the analysis carried out in this context did not provide sufficient key data relating to the situation in the Euroregion PRO EUROPA VIADRINA. Comparable data were only available for the purpose of foreign language acquisition.

In Chap. 2.4 the education system in Germany (Brandenburg) and Poland was presented and the vocational education and training within the Euroregion outlined. On the Polish side, vocational institutions can be attended after completing the eight-grade of primary school and on the German side usually after completing the 10th grade. The most comprehensive overview of vocational education in the German-Polish border region is provided by the Internet portal "Eurojob.net" (IHK Projektgesellschaft 2020a), realized by the IHK project company (IHK Projektgesellschaft mbH) in cooperation with the Voivodeship Centre for Vocational Training (Wojewódzki Zakład Doskonalenia Zawodowego). The heterogeneity and complexity of this educational pathway on both sides is made accessible there via a catalogue of occupational groups, in which the individual occupational profiles on the German and Polish sides can be viewed and compared, and the locations of the vocational institutions can be found. In order to characterize the situation, reference should be made to the institutions listed under table 19, which provide basic initial vocational education within the Euroregion.

Type of school	German side		Polish side		Type of school
	Qty. of students	Qty. of schools	Qty. of schools	Qty. of students	
Upper level centres (Oberstufenzentren)	6,499	3	25	2,206	Vocational technical school (Szkoly Branżowe)
Vocational schools (Berufsschulen)	786	5	26	6,835	Secondary technical school (technikum)
			20	2,212	Post-secondary vocational technical school (Szkola policealna)
			8	127	Vocational preparatory school for children with learning difficulties (Szkola specjalna przysposabiajaca do pracy)
			3	Missing Information	Centre for Vocational Education and Training (Centrum Kształcenia Zawodowego)
			1	Missing Information	private institution of continuing and practical education with schools (Niepubliczna placowka ksztalcenia ustawicznego i praktycznego ze szkołami)
Total	7,285	8	83	11,380	Total

Tab. 19: Structure of vocational schools in the Euroregion PRO EUROPA VIADRINA in the school year 2019/2020 (own presentation; based on AfS BB 2020a and MEN 2020)

At these 91 vocational schools, approximately 18,600 students are educated in various professions. Regarding the heterogeneity in the number of schools, it should be mentioned that on the German side, more schools would be added (but not more students), if branches of the same school established in other places were to be considered. In terms of the number of students, we start from the assumption that the majority are from the region itself. However, many students also take vocational courses in occupational fields offered outside of the region. Approximately 10% of the students (Amt für Statistik Berlin-Brandenburg 2018) come from neighbouring districts or federal states to the vocational schools in the German part of the Euroregion for the same reason. In the school year 2017/2018, 4 Polish students studied at a vocational school in Frankfurt (Oder). For the student-teacher ratio (average 11.46), reference should be made to the comments on school education (Chap. 3.2). In the vocational sector, an indeterminate number of master craftsmen and trainers are also involved in the case of internships or apprenticeships in the “dual system”.

On the Polish side, the development of vocational education is a fundamental element of support in the context of the Lubuskie 2020 Operational Programme. In addition to the above-mentioned projects implemented by Gorzów Wlkp. within the framework of Integrated Territorial Investments (ITI), e. g. Zawodowcy 2.0, there is a strong support offered in the context of the sub-measure 8.4.1. to Improve the quality of vocational education. Here the projects are carried out outside of the ITI. In doing so, Polish districts of the Euroregion PRO EUROPA VIADRINA (Słubice, Gorzów and Sulęcín) carry out so-called system projects in order to support vocational education and training. These funds also benefit the municipalities of the Euroregion, including Dobiegniew, Skwierzyn and Witnica, as well as the School Centre for Agricultural Education (Zespół Szkół Centrum Kształcenia Rolniczego) in Kamień Mały of the Municipality of Witnica, which is subject to the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development (see UMWL 2020b). Although these projects do not provide a direct opportunity for cross-border exchanges, the modernisation of vocational education to such a large financial extent and the involvement of schools in the projects provide a solid basis for a development towards international exchanges.

In the context of the situational analysis, the interviews, questionnaires and workshops questioned not only supporting but also inhibiting factors for cross-border activities. The interest in learning experiences abroad is present to varying degrees in the vocational field on both sides whereby this depends on the type of training profession. It is therefore not uncommon for Polish adolescents to make full use of the opportunities to learn their professions on the German side, especially in construction trades. Temporary internships abroad in training programs for gastronomic professions take place with great regularity as well. In almost all other occupational fields (e. g. commercial professions, educators) this is rather an exception. In the German-Polish context, the training-related stay of vocational students from Poland in vocational institutions on the German side dominates as well. Internships of German trainees on the Polish side are limited to individual cases (including exchanges of trainees of commercial professions between partner municipalities; internships and/or performance competitions in the framework of INTERREG projects: emergency services, road/civil engineering, metal/electrical industry). In terms of content, contacts of this type focus on language skills or intercultural

competences in addition to professional knowledge and skills. For this purpose, the framework curricula on both sides with interdisciplinary competencies and foreign languages provide a point of contact for the school curricula. The organisational leeway available in both education systems also allows cross-border activities as well as the cooperation with regional “extracurricular” learning locations analogous to general educational schools. Thanks to many years of contacts between vocational education and training institutions, the exchange of experience between trainers from both sides often plays a certain role in these individual cases.

In addition, cross-border activities represent an additional organizational effort in the vocational field. With regard to the school-based part of vocational education, the situation is analogous to that in the school sector. Thanks to its variety of disciplines the vocational education course is characterized by a particular heterogeneity as well as by a higher level of individuality. With regard to the practical part of the training in the companies, however, the advantages of experiences made abroad are not fully recognized. In addition, in many cases, the exemption of trainees for, e. g. several-week internships abroad or the integration of foreign trainees in companies cannot be managed from a legal as well as organizational point of view. Experience also shows that in order to prepare for vocational training abroad, both parents and students need to be informed about the framework conditions of this at an early stage in the school environment. The latter refers not only to language requirements, but also to how the dual system works and the cost of living during a stay abroad.

On both sides of the border, various funding opportunities are available for cross-border activities. EU funds are regularly used via the Erasmus+ programmes, e. g. Sector Youth (Sektor Jugend)(FRSE 2020), Youth in Action (Jugend in Aktion)(Jugend für Europa 2020), trainee mobility (Azubi mobil)(IHK Projektgesellschaft 2020b), and via INTERREG for relevant activities. Support for individual internships and work shadowing in neighbouring countries is provided by the German-Polish Youth Office (DPJW) (DPJW 2020). Other national programmes can also be used for this purpose, including funds from the State of Brandenburg (MBS 2020b) and the Polish Ministry of Education (MEN 2020).

Cross-border relevant activities

In the following, an overview will be given of selected already exercised, cross-border relevant activities in the Euroregion PRO EUROPA VIADRINA and in other border regions. In addition these are characterized by long-term school partnerships besides their aims to improve the knowledge of foreign languages (“instructive”, one-sided) and to foster cross-border encounters (“interactive”, “collaborative”) of students.

English also dominates within the vocational schools in the Euroregion when it comes to the foreign languages learnt by the students on both sides. In the German part of the Euroregion, a total of about 6.5% of all students learn Polish as a further foreign language in extracurricular school working groups at 2 upper level centres, whereas 67% of all students in the Polish part of the Euroregion learn German. On both sides, French and Russian are also taught as foreign languages. However, generally speaking, only one modern foreign language is learned by the vocational students, and only a small part of the students are taught another European foreign language.

Foreign language	German side		Polish side	
	Number of schools	Number of students	Number of students	Number of schools
Polish or German	2	486	5,635	42
English	3	6,078	5,702	43
French	3	398	13	2
Spanish	1	189	-	
Russian	3	319	12	1

Tab. 20: Foreign languages in vocational schools in the Euroregion PRO EUROPA VIADRINA (own presentation; based on MBJS 2019a; LubKurOs 2018)

Teaching foreign languages in Secondary technical schools (Technikum, = Fachoberschule) and Vocational technical schools (Szkoły Branżowe, = Berufsfachschule) in Poland is based on the assumption that the main educational objective in modern foreign language teaching is the successful communication in the written as well as in the spoken foreign language. In this regard, the programme basis (MEN 2017) emphasises that “the creation and application of such language tasks should be made possible, which are suitable for using the modern foreign language in order to achieve one’s own communication goals, including in the profession in which the student/apprentice is trained, as well as the creation of educational situations serving to get to know and develop the students’ own interests and passions”. Finally, all these measures are intended to raise the student’s awareness of the importance of modern foreign languages in the various areas of social life, including in their professional life as well as in relation to the path of one’s own professional career.

In addition, the cooperation with the Federal Office of Administration (Bundesverwaltungsamt – Zentralstelle für das Auslandsschulwesen) in the certification of the learned language DSD II (German Language Diploma II), as described in Chapter 3.2, is possible.

The teaching of foreign languages at vocational schools in Germany (Brandenburg) focuses on professional issues and offers students the possibility of a certified degree in accordance with the “Common European Framework of Reference for Languages: Learning, Teaching, Assessment (CEFR)” up to level C1. On the German side, the professions are assigned to the following categories (KMK 2017):

- Business and administration
- Technology and design
- Agriculture, hospitality and food
- Education, health and care

In the federal state of Brandenburg, a foreign language certification in English is possible for all professional groups (MBS 2020d). In regard to Polish, only a level A2 certification is available for students of the professional group “Business and Administration (merchants for freight forwarding and logistics services)”.

On the Polish side, based on economic sectors, vocational areas are classified as follows:

- Administrative and commercial area
- Construction sector
- Electrical sector
- Mining and metallurgy
- Agriculture, forestry and environmental protection
- Tourism and gastronomy
- Medical and social sector
- Art

Based on the perceived foreign language offers, it is obvious to relate cross-border activities to occupational groups and to use English for the communication of the students in addition to German or Polish.

The 3 upper level centres in the German part and the 7 vocational schools in the Polish part of the Euroregion actively use international cooperations (MBS 2019b; LubKurOs 2019). Nine vocational schools located within the Euroregion alone accommodate 12 partnerships. Furthermore, there are 9 partnerships with institutions located in other parts of Germany or Poland, as well as in France, Israel, Japan, Latvia, Lithuania, Austria, the Russian Federation and Spain.

With regard to direct cross-border activities, the following examples will be introduced:

The administrative district of Sulęcín is responsible for several vocational schools and already in 2018 implemented the project “Dual System of Vocational Education - Opportunity for the Development of the Euroregion Pro Europa Viadrina” („Duales System der Berufsbildung – Chance für die Entwicklung der Euroregion Pro Europa Viadrina”) in cooperation with the association Berufsförderungswerk des Bauindustrieverbandes Berlin-Brandenburg e.V. The dual system of vocational education and training enjoys great recognition on both sides, as the extensive practical component provides students with a high level of knowledge and skills that are ready for application. In the framework of the project, experts from both sides got to know the system of vocational guidance and training in Germany and Poland through visits to vocational institutions. During a conference, they exchanged their experiences and summarized the findings in a final publication.

Fig. 27: Oderland Cup organized by the Chambers of Crafts of Gorzów Wlkp. and Frankfurt (Oder) – hairdressing competition of German and Polish trainees (photo: Handwerkskammer Frankfurt (Oder))



In 2018, the Chamber of Crafts in Frankfurt (Oder) (Handwerkskammer Frankfurt (Oder)) and the Chamber of Crafts and Entrepreneurs in Gorzów Wlkp. (Izba Rzemiosła i Przedsiębiorców w Gorzowie Wlkp.) held the German-Polish Expert Forum "Wellness 2018" in order to exchange experiences and transfer expertise in the cosmetics and hairdressing sector. The participants were trainers, lecturers, employers and employees in the hairdressing and cosmetics industry from Germany and Poland, who work in the training and further education sector of the chambers of crafts, guilds, vocational schools and other educational institutions. In 7 events, the visits of educational institutions on both sides of the border were linked with exchanges of experience and workshops held in the following topics:

- needs, challenges, working methods,
- cross-border promotion of vocational, linguistic and intercultural education and training,
- training content, course, methods and qualifications as well as recognition of professions in the neighbouring country
- recruitment of young talents,
- prevention of apprenticeship drop-outs.

The Centre of Gastronomy Schools (Zespół Szkół Gastronomicznych) in Gorzów Wielkopolski cooperates continuously with 2 German institutions, among others with the Qualification Center of Business (QualifizierungsCentrum der Wirtschaft GmbH) located in Eisenhüttenstadt. The management of the school sees internships and work shadowing abroad as a crucial basis to guarantee a successful training. It expresses this aspect clearly in its marketing for the school's training offers. Every year, the number of applicants exceeds the number of available places several times over, and every graduate is successful in his or her search for appealing jobs after completing the training. Each student participates in the cross-border exchange offers. During the third year, each apprentice completes an internship in a domestic or foreign hotel. The school makes use of various funding opportunities, in particular of INTERREG. In the framework of the INTERREG project „Cross-border Cuisine” (“Grenzübergreifende Küche”), German-Polish workshops for both students and teachers were organized and cross-border teaching modules were developed. The school is glad to accept the great effort involved in the preparation of stays abroad and the intensive supervision of the students. It sees a need for action to expand intercultural competences and to overcome the language barrier, and perspective the need for more cross-border certificates.

In Gorzów Wlkp. the innovative Centre for Vocational Education and Business (Centrum Edukacji Zawodowej i Biznesu, CEZiB) is being built. This is the largest investment in education made in the northern part of the Lubuskie Voivodeship. This centre takes up key competences for the development of a society based on science, technology, engineering, art and mathematics (STEAM), which provides formal and informal education by combining it with that of kindergarten children and seniors. The success of this initiative will depend on the ability of the environment to cooperate and to maintain high standards by the involved parties. Universities, entrepreneurs, technology centres, transfer centres, schools and kindergartens, including neighbours from Germany, will share their positive experiences and cooperate programmatically, thereby placing their institution at a significant position in the future. The opening of the CEZiB is planned for 2021-22.



Fig. 28: Apprentices of the Zespół Szkół Gastronomicznych from Gorzów Wlkp. and the Anna-Siemens-Berufskolleg of the district of Herford learn to cook together (photo: Iwona Stelmarczyk)

In preparation for this future cooperation, the city of Gorzów Wlkp. is currently carrying out a cross-border project involving school students, teachers and employers. This project focuses on the CEZiB's main sectors, i.e. automotive, transport, shipping, logistics, construction, mechanics and carpentry. It aims to develop the cross-border training model "ViVA 4.0" and is implemented in the context of the Cooperation Programme INTERREG VA Brandenburg-Poland 2014-2020 (Kooperationsprogramm INTERREG VA Brandenburg-Polen 2014-2020). The lead partner is the city of Gorzów Wlkp. in cooperation with the Lubusk Metal Cluster (Lubuski Klaster Metalowy) and the Qualification Center of Business (QualifizierungsCentrum der Wirtschaft GmbH) in Eisenhüttenstadt. The main objective of the project consists of the transfer of knowledge for the creation and introduction of the vocational training model "ViVA 4.0" in order to support the competitiveness of small and medium-sized enterprises working in the Euroregion PRO EUROPA VIADRINA and to increase the cross-border skills and competences for lifelong learning. The cross-border training model "ViVA 4.0" is an innovative pilot project of the joint German-Polish dual education. The involvement of small and medium-sized enterprises working in the metal and electrical industry and the development of modules for vocational education and training in German and Polish take into account the current needs of the region of Brandenburg-Lubuskie. The joint training program for vocational education and training will provide a lasting perspective for lifelong learning. The small and medium-sized enterprises are open to this initiative, as the target group will be particularly well suited to the sector-specific requirements when taking advantage of the offer.

The type and intensity of the activities and partnerships could only be questioned by way of example in the context of the situational analysis. A systematic consideration of this project is reserved for further analyses. However, based on the international partnerships existing in ten vocational schools, we start from the assumption that the proportion of all vocational students directly involved in cross-border ("interactive", "collaborative") interactions is below 10% annually (about 1,800 out of 18,000 students).

Cross-border occupational activities from other Euroregions will now be presented, which will also provide suggestions for action in terms of content, organisation or by incorporating regional peculiarities.

At the German-Danish border, partners from both sides are striving to ensure that trainees in selected professions receive a German and a Danish vocational qualification with the STaRForCE project (IHK Flensburg 2020). The prerequisite for it consists of common training models, including vocational school visits on both sides. In consideration of the legal foundations and teaching structures, experts have already developed models for the professions of businessman/woman in retail, wholesale and foreign trade, electronics technician for operational technology, warehouse logistics specialist, bricklayer, automotive mechatronics technician, chef and IT specialist (system integration). The project also addresses the preparation of school students for this type of training, the involvement of the parents, as well as the training of trainers and workers.

In the Tri-border area of Germany – France – Switzerland, cross-border training has been pursued on a project-by-project basis since 2011. As a result of a test run carried out in the Euro-district Strasbourg-Ortenau, the Upper Rhine Conference agreed in 2013 to sign a framework agreement on cross-border vocational training on the Upper Rhine (ORK 2020a). Since then, the approaches have been perfected. In fact, the participating trainees can complete their theoretical training in the home country and the practical part in a company located in the neighboring country. This offer exists for almost all professions. However, it requires good language skills. Based on the conviction that “the best way to expand professional, foreign-language and intercultural competences already during the apprenticeship [...] is to study abroad”, the Upper Rhine region has also launched the project „Euregio Certificate for Apprentices and Vocational School Students“ („Euregio-Zertifikat für Auszubildende und Berufsschüler“, ORK 2020b). During this project, vocational students beyond the above-mentioned binational training receive the opportunity to gain professional experience in neighbouring countries during their training, usually by means of a four-week internship. Companies consider this comparatively small step to qualify their trainees across borders to be of very high value.

The Europass(NEC 2020a) in turn goes beyond the above-mentioned certificate. The European Centre for the Development of Vocational Education and Training(CEDEFOP) has standardised the means of demonstrating qualifications and experience acquired abroad. It based the Europass Mobility on qualitative criteria(NEC 2020b), so that in order to prove mobility in education and training, conceptual requirements for cooperation between educational institutions from the countries concerned must also be met. Accordingly, among others, it is fundamental to document minimum requirements for the stay abroad, to ensure linguistic preparation (by the sending institution) and support by mentors (by the host institution).

Approaches to action

In view of the increasing cross-border interdependencies in both the social and economic spheres, the intercultural competence of the persons involved is becoming increasingly important. For vocational education and training, it proves to be advantageous if apprentices can already build on the mobility experiences they have gained in the preschool and school sectors. In the introductory chapters, the strategies and objectives for the education sector were explained. Furthermore, the advantages of cross-border activities for competence development (including reflection, conflict, team abilities) were pointed out.

In order to derive cross-border approaches to vocational education and training within the Euroregion PRO EUROPA VIADRINA, the following objectives are formulated on this basis:

- Continuation of existing cross-border activities.
- Development of cross-border activities, so that each vocational student participates at least once (ideally annually) in a multi-day cross-border interaction.
- Expansion of the proportion of vocational students who received a minimum of 4 weeks of professional learning experience abroad to 6%.

Since the interdependencies affect almost all sectors, the integration of the corresponding modules for cross-border interactions in all vocational training courses is fundamental. Against this background, within the framework of the situational analysis, action approaches were identified and then assigned here to 3 levels (cf. Chap. 2.3). They result from activities which have already been successfully carried out, from the experiences of the actors in their cross-border activities and from the transfer of useful approaches to lifelong learning from other age groups or national model examples.

Level 1	Level 2	Level 3
Boundary perception (instructive)	Boundary crossing (interactive)	Cross-border interaction (collaborative)
Vocational education students		
<p>Getting to know the culture and language of the neighbour in class or in work groups</p> <p>Intensive courses (intercultural competence, language, regional studies, culture)</p>	<p>Excursions to the other side (Getting to know vocational students from the neighbouring country, among others by visits to partner schools, joint occupational activities or by means of sports, culture, history, science / technology, visits of museums; and by the participation in performance competitions)</p>	<p>Joint project work with trainees from neighbouring countries as part of one or multi-day project days/weeks (on professional and interdisciplinary topics, including sports, culture, architecture, science / technology, and history)</p> <p>Professional learning experience abroad for a period of four weeks at least</p>
Teaching professionals		
<p>Further education (including intercultural learning, language animation, languages, regional studies, culture, project management, other (digital, analogue) methods and materials)</p> <p>Competence transfer to students (including language, regional studies/geography, culture, and history)</p> <p>Raising awareness among parents (Advantage of cross-border learning experiences)</p>	<p>Excursions/study trips to the neighbouring country (for teaching professionals)</p> <p>“Educational walk” (Participation of teaching professionals in interactive events organised by third parties)</p> <p>Exchange of experience (between German and Polish teaching professionals)</p> <p>Visits/excursions to the neighbouring country (with group/class of students)</p>	<p>Development of job-related and complementary offers for competence development together with teachers of the neighbouring country (job-specific projects, plus accompanying offers for sports, culture, science / technology, and history)</p> <p>Regular implementation of interactive events and one- to multi-day project days/weeks</p> <p>Mentoring for 4-week stays of guest students from abroad</p>
Management		
<p>Integration of the aspects of intercultural learning, foreign languages and multi-day stays abroad in curricula (further training, curricula)</p> <p>Evaluation (internal activities, including competences and capacities for cross-border interactions)</p>	<p>Maintaining contact with the partner school</p>	<p>Implementation of events for vocational students (multi-day project days/weeks; minimum of 4-week stays abroad; with participation options for third parties)</p> <p>Evaluation (cross-border activities carried out with partners coming from neighbouring countries)</p>
Vocational technical schools / external institutions		
<p>Development of occupational group-specific (complete) offers for cross-border activities (among others, the conceptual support for schools; development of additional resources, e. g. integration of retirees, voluntary services)</p>	<p>Networking of German and Polish vocational education and training institutions (expansion of training exhibitions / performance competitions / open days for cross-border offers; study trips for specialists; search/ placement of new contacts / partnerships / internships)</p>	<p>Networking of German and Polish vocational education and training institutions (Search / mediation of new contacts / partnerships; further education / exchange of experience with German and Polish specialists)</p>
Regulatory authorities		
<p>Inclusion of cross-border activities in the framework curricula</p> <p>Conception and implementation of modular further education (content-related/ organisational specialisation)</p>	<p>Development of orientation frameworks tailored to the border region on methods and content for curricula, including project days and further training</p> <p>Development of opportunities for representatives of the authorities to participate in projects and study visits in the neighbouring country</p>	<p>Technical support of the school supervisors during the preparation of curricula; evaluation of participation in performance documentation / final certificates / certificates for at least 4 weeks of learning experience abroad; definition of recognition criteria; evaluation</p>

Tab. 21: Approaches to action in the field of vocational education and training

Implementation notes

In the context of the situational analysis, it was confirmed, in particular through the interviews, technical discussions and workshops, that the realization of cross-border activities in vocational education and training is also a voluntary, additional task resulting in an additional personnel, material and financial effort. In the interest of implementing the above-mentioned approaches as comprehensively as possible, suggestions for implementation are to be given here against the background of the framework conditions. This also includes recommendations relating to accompanying measures.

Teaching professionals / vocational students

In order to enable all vocational students to have effective learning experiences abroad, there is a need for action in several places at the same time. When it comes to teachers and trainees, the focus is on ability and motivation. Building on the teachers' existing qualifications and experience, their further training should be aimed in particular at fields that are of particular cross-border relevance:

- intercultural learning,
- language animation / language,
- regional studies / culture,
- project / exchange management,
- other digital and analogue methods and materials,
- knowledge of the education and training system,
- knowledge of the labour market

In view of the high levels of demand in the professional fields, these cross-disciplinary aspects should be integrated into regular further education in such a way that the teaching professionals are able to provide vocational students (and their parents) with the benefits of cross-border learning experiences and to increase their motivation to participate in such activities. For this purpose, it would be advantageous to develop an orientation framework for annual, modular training in parallel to regular training measures through a Euroregional platform of experts from competent authorities and representatives of the educational institutions.

The training opportunities should also include **exchanges of experience** with colleagues on both sides of the border. This area could also be supplemented by **excursions or study trips** by German and Polish professionals, e. g. by attending specific cross-border meetings (cf. also "Educational walks", Chap. 3.2). Finally, the objective should be to convey basic principles to teachers in an application-oriented way and to build up or expand the organisational and professional skills required for the implementation of cross-border relevant activities at all school institutions.



Fig. 29: Erasmus Day 2018
– German and Polish
trainees practice
teamwork (photo:
Euroregion Archive)

In preparation for direct cross-border activities, the teaching professionals should use the scope in the school curricula to take up relevant content in the relevant subjects for the **instructional transfer of knowledge to the neighbouring country** (or the other countries of the respective school partnerships). Beyond foreign language and job-specific aspects, particularities of the respective countries and also of the Euroregion could also be considered (e. g. dealing with the history, geography or culture of the neighbour; see details under Chap. 3.2.)

On the basis of this knowledge, which can be conveyed in an instructive manner, it is then possible to develop interdisciplinary offers for one- to multi-day projects, which, in coordination with the partner schools from the neighboring country, serve for **interactive and collaborative activities** in mixed groups. Interaction in leisure time, in the context of sports, games or cultural events, would also contribute informally to interdisciplinary competence development during the project period lasting several days. Since English dominates as a foreign language on both sides, it is advisable to use it as a means of communication if German and Polish cannot be applied. An interdisciplinary and multi-day approach provides an ideal framework in terms of type and scope for the particularly intensive cooperation of German and Polish students both in class strength and in small groups. For all vocational students, the objective is to benefit from such learning experiences. The content-related composition of the groups could be based on the above-mentioned occupational groups which are similar when it comes to their professional orientation.

In addition to the above-mentioned activities between vocational students, modules for individual job-specific **internships** should also be developed, which are designed for a at least 4-week practical part of the training abroad (including in a company or vocational school). This form entails a great deal of effort in terms of content and organization. It requires a vocational training concept and technical and linguistic knowledge and skills of the vocational students. The placement of assignments, the mentoring of the trainees or their accommodation represent complex tasks with a highly individual character. Such internships would effectively complement the already practiced offers (e.g. hotel internships from the Gorzów Gastronomic School Complex (Zespół Szkół Gastronomicznych w Gorzowie Wielkopolskim), trainee mobile of the IHK project company) in the Euroregion. However, it is assumed that due to the complex framework conditions, only the target of 6% of all vocational students can be reached.

Fig. 30: German and Polish students collaborating together in the laboratory (photo: Stowarzyszenie Lubuska Sieć Innowacji)



It is adequate to exploit the economic potential of the region in the implementation of educational measures by establishing and strengthening a network of cooperation between schools, local authorities and companies (e. g. in the Kostrzyn-Słubice Special Economic Zone) with institutions from the economic environment, e. g. the Western Chamber of Commerce and Industry (Zachodnia Izba Przemysłowo Handlowa), the IHK Ostbrandenburg, Chamber of Crafts Frankfurt (Oder) (Handwerkskammer Frankfurt (Oder)), Lubuskie Employers' Organisation (Lubuska Organizacja Pracodawców) or independent institutions and other institutions providing vocational training, e. g. the Vocational Development Center (Zakład Doskonalenia Zawodowego) in Gorzów Wlkp. As we have shown in the above-mentioned examples, all these institutions are involved in cross-border measures and bring an additional quality to the vocational education and training sector.

The successful participation in such cross-border interactions should be recognised by vocational students (e. g. through participation certificates). For this purpose, experts from competent authorities or educational institutions are required to establish qualitative criteria for the recognition of interactions lasting several days as well as internships carried out over several weeks.

Management

In the **school curricula** the cross-border relevant topics, including intercultural learning, language, regional studies, corresponding methods and materials, should be (instructively) more closely integrated in almost all subjects taught. The flexibility afforded to schools on both sides should be used to devote between 2 and 3 project days each year to cross-border activities. The number of project days or the frequency of multi-day projects should be based on the fact that, if possible, each student participates in "collaborative", cross-border activities at least once during the course of their vocational training. In addition to the opportunities already used, training modules for at least 4-week internships on both sides of the border should be developed and implemented in cooperation with the respective employers' organisations. In this context, we would also like to point out the option of realising tasks and ideas going beyond the standard teaching methods, e. g. through the realisation of innovations and experiments in the Polish education system, in our Euroregion under the sovereignty of the Lubusk Curator for Education (LuKuOs 2020c).

In order to assess the success or to derive further measures, an **evaluation** is recommended, which at a school level, among others, questions the internal activities with regard to competences and capacities for the ability to act and allows e. g. conclusions for necessary resources. In a cross-border context, the evaluation should also be carried out by a Euroregional platform of experts from competent authorities and representatives of the institutions of both sides. In addition to the quality of the interaction, criteria could include its "instructive", "interactive" or "collaborative" character, as well as its reach in terms of interdisciplinary competencies. Furthermore, the said evaluation should regularly measure the proportion of the reached students. Starting from this basis, conclusions can be drawn for exchanges of experience, further training, the type and orientation of project days. The findings from this conceptual work can be incorporated into the further development of the existing **partnerships** between schools on both sides.

Vocational Schools / External Educational Institutions

In the professional field, the cooperation between school institutions and sponsors, chambers and specialist authorities, which operate at a supra-regional level in terms of content or structure and are partly responsible for several vocational schools takes place on both sides. Generally speaking, this cooperation also extends to external educational institutions and companies. Since not all vocational schools have international partnerships or carry out cross-border activities, it is likely that these supra-regional institutions will help to establish further **partnerships** and **network all the involved parties**. Starting from the improvement in terms of access to training exhibitions or internships for prospective students from the neighbouring country, the said supra-regional institutions can arrange partner schools or companies, organise study trips for skilled workers or exchange experiences on specific topics. In this context, attention should also be paid to the further linkage of existing offers (including the use of the internship database of the DPJW) in order to achieve synergies. Chambers and external educational sponsors can support vocational schools with comprehensive packages tailored to cross-border activities, in terms of content and methodology, and can also open up new resources in cooperation with the sponsors.

Authorities (Ministry / School Office / Board of Trustees)

National **framework curricula** and the school curricula based on them represent a key element in improving the accessibility of the benefits of cross-border activities to all students. In order to safeguard school activities, we would recommend the mediation of interdisciplinary aspects, in particular intercultural learning, through direct cross-border interactions with students from the neighbouring country. Since cross-border activities are usually additional tasks, it is essential to give them more weight in the context of framework curricula and to improve the personnel resources of schools for such activities, among others through time quotas, job shares or other measures to recognise the extra work often done by teachers. Similar to general school education, both the involvement of representatives of the authorities in study visits and their participation in selected model projects of the schools may be adequate in this context.

The external coordination and cross-border support for the efforts of schools and their institutions is also fundamental in the professional field, given the multitude of tasks which must be carried out in parallel in order to achieve the stated objective. For this purpose, the authorities can assume an initiating role. In this context, it would also be advantageous to establish a cross-border body of representatives of competent authorities (including MBSJ, school offices, board of trustees), chambers, schools, school sponsors, external educational sponsors as well as funding institutions (including the DPJW) as a **coordination platform**. In this context, the upcoming tasks could be measured, prioritized and initiated, e. g.:

- coordination of the type and scope of the modular further training measures,
- conception (content, methods, organizational implementation) of a training programme for all teaching professionals, differentiated according to basics and specializations,
- support for networking (among others, expansion of partnerships, know-how transfer),
- support offered to institutions in maintaining contacts with partner schools,
- know-how transfer and/or exchange of experience with other cross-border regions,
- coordination on the integration of intercultural learning, regional studies, language, etc. into school curricula,
- technical support of the school supervisors in the course of updating the curricula,
- technical support for the development of offers for cross-border activities (interactive / collaborative; one day – several days; linking of teaching subjects with competence development),
- organizational support in the implementation of cross-border activities (e. g. language learning, mentoring, preparation of multilingual teaching materials),
- coordination on the type and scope of the evaluation of the activities,
- derivation of "internship vouchers" for simplified financial support of cross-border activities,
- determination of recognition criteria for the assessment of the mobility experience of vocational students in diplomas or certificates,
- organisation of study trips, exchange of experiences and
- information management and public relations.

In order to maintain the working capacity of such a coordination platform in view of the fullness of tasks, the existing cooperation should be used and specific tasks should be carried out in a division of labour or through the support offered by third parties. In this context, nationally existing municipal to regional support structures can also be used from the field of general education schools. Regular financial support and the development of the educational base are also required to enable educational institutions to raise their level to the recognised standards.

3.4 College education

Initial situation

In the field of higher education, the objective pursued at European level is to ensure that at least 20% of university graduates have completed a stay abroad for study purposes (cf. Chap. 2.2). In addition, the objective is also for students to be able to use at least 2 European foreign languages in addition to their mother tongue while at the same time developing an awareness of cultural diversity in Europe.

For the said indicators, the analysis carried out in this context did not provide any comparable key data relating to the situation in the Euroregion PRO EUROPA VIADRINA. Nevertheless, the situation at the universities in the Euroregion listed under Table 20 is to be characterized in detail.

Tab. 22: Structure of universities in the Euroregion PRO EUROPA VIADRINA (own presentation; based on UMWL 2018; CIS 2020; TEU 2020e)

German side		Polish side	
College	Number of students	Number of students	College
European University Viadrina, Frankfurt (Oder)	6,020	1,922	Jacob of Paradies University, Gorzów Wlkp
		665	Poznań University of Physical Education, branch in Gorzów Wlkp
		118	College of Business (Wyższa Szkoła Biznesu), Gorzów Wlkp
		44	University of Applied Sciences (Wyższa Szkoła Zawodowa), Gorzów Wlkp.*
		581	Collegium Polonicum Słubice
Total	6,020	3,330	Total

* at the time of the data collection, the school existed as Wyższa Szkoła Zawodowa in Kostrzyn n. Odrą

The universities located in the Euroregion offer about 9,400 students the following subjects, that can usually be completed with a Bachelor's and/or a Master's degree. At the Europa-Universität Viadrina the option of getting a doctorate is also offered.

College	Selected degree programmes
Jacob of Paradies University	Administration and national security; Economics; Humanities; Engineering; Tourism and health
Poznań University of Physical Education, branch in Gorzów Wlkp	Sport, physiotherapy and dietetics
College of Business (Wyższa Szkoła Biznesu)	Administration, Law and Economics (Bachelor); Specializations (Master), among others, in administration, human resources, logistics, finance and tax
University of Applied Sciences (Wyższa Szkoła Zawodowa)	Medical Rescue, Electroradiology (Bachelor)
Collegium Polonicum	Intercultural German Studies, (German-Polish) law; Digital Entrepreneurship (Master's programme under construction)
European University Viadrina	Cultural Studies, Economics, Law

Tab. 23: Specialisations at universities in the Euroregion (own presentation)

In the context of the situational analysis, the interviews, questionnaires and workshops questioned not only supporting but also inhibiting factors for cross-border activities.

In the field of higher education, international activities are now a matter of course. In order to achieve exceptional results in the fields of teaching and research, it is essential in almost all fields to deal with scientific findings gained worldwide. In addition to studying literature, student and lecturer stays abroad are also playing an increasingly important role.

A stay abroad is often recommended in both Bachelor's and Master's degree programs at German universities, but in 2010 it was only required in the curricula to an extent of 10% (Bachelor) or 14% (Master) (DAAD 2010). The Brandenburg Higher Education Commission (Brandenburger Hochschulkommission) recommends that universities and colleges include quantitative and qualitative objectives in their respective internationalization strategies. This was taken up in the Higher Education Development Plan of the federal state of Brandenburg to the effect that "in the medium to long term, 50 percent of university graduates have several months of experience abroad" (MWFK 2013).

The internationalisation of Polish universities is becoming increasingly important as well (cf. UMWL 2018). However, compared to other OECD countries, Poland's universities have a very low level of internationalisation (cf. *ibid.*, p. 17, reference to the "Program umiędzynarodowienia szkolnictwa wyższego" of the Polish Ministry of Science and Higher Education, MNiSW 2015). This programme sets out challenges and approaches to action. At a national level the following is stated:

- Polish universities tend to rank lower in international rankings.
- To a limited extent, scientists can refer to international mobility, which is limited to individual disciplines.
- There are too few international scientists working at universities in Poland.

- Science and administration have too little experience in the field of international exchange.
- The universities offer unfavorable conditions for foreign students as well as for international research programs.

On this basis, the Polish Ministry of Science and Higher Education drew the following conclusions (MNiSW 2015):

- creation of attractive programs for foreign students and scholars, e. g. through international accreditation procedures, creation of study programs (BA/MA) and research programs in foreign languages, didactic training of lecturers, eLearning,
- opening up to international students through training on the structure of Polish universities or similar, training of university team/lecturers,
- creation of funding opportunities for the university team/lecturers permitting them to participate in international research programmes,
- support of students and lecturers during their stays abroad and after return, among others through language courses, information on opportunities to stay abroad,
- granting of scholarships and creation of a database on the type and availability of these scholarships.

Nevertheless, the four Polish universities located in the Euroregion have numerous international partnerships, allowing their students to stay abroad. In addition, they attach great importance to teaching foreign language skills to students and employees (see below).

However, this also involves a great deal of content and organizational effort in the higher education sector. For this purpose, the European University Viadrina operates its own department called "Viadrina International Affairs". Its tasks range from the organizational support of guest students and lecturers to the placement of internships and semester stays abroad. Furthermore, the faculties or student initiatives of the university offer project-related activities of a cross-border type. The spectrum is rounded off by individual commitment from students, especially in the context of internships in institutions operating in the Euroregion. As an obstacle, the interviews highlighted that the continuity in activities with a project character often cannot be maintained. On the one hand, committed individuals leave the university, on the other hand, the financing of projects cannot be secured entirely in every case.

In addition to the EU Erasmus+ programme, funding from foundations is a major financial source for such kind of activities. In this context, a particular reference can be made to the German-Polish Science Foundation (Deutsch-Polnische Wissenschaftsstiftung) (DPWS 2020), which supports research projects with thematic focal points, e. g. cultural and knowledge transfer, Europeanization processes, changes in norms and values, multilingualism or scientific events. The instruments mentioned for funding from the EU (small project funds of the Euroregion) and DPJW are also already being used for cross-border projects.

Cross-border relevant activities

Below, examples of cross-border relevant activities that have already been practiced in the Euroregion PEV and other border regions will be given, which include students getting to know foreign languages (“instructive”, one-sided) and cross-border encounters (“interactive”, „collaborative”) and also university partnerships.

The **European University Viadrina** is one of the most international universities throughout Germany. Although the university is comparatively small and currently has only 3 faculties (cultural studies, law and economics), the proportion of foreign students is 26.7% (EUV 2020e) based on the total number of students. The European University Viadrina is best known for its international character (students come from 80 countries), the opportunities to develop foreign language skills (you can learn 9 foreign languages), the potential for research and teaching resulting from international cooperation (250 partner universities in 50 countries) (EUV 2020a). In its university-specific quality management system, the European University Viadrina also attaches great importance to the mobility of students and lecturers. It has already been granted the Erasmus quality seal “E-Quality” from the DAAD several times, as 52% of the students completed a stay abroad (EUV 2018).

As enshrined in its founding memorandum, the European University Viadrina also has the task of contributing to regional development. From the wealth of cross-border relevant activities, examples that have been practiced so far will be highlighted below, which both illuminate the spectrum of intercultural commitment and illustrate the inclusion of regional aspects.



Fig. 31: Intercultural workshop organised in the context of the project DIALOG (photo: Euroregion Archive)

At the Chair of German-Polish Literature and Cultural Relations and Gender Studies, German- or Polish-language events are made available to other students, scientists and the public through translation. They also directly take into account the special features of the region. The conference "Kleist. Suicide" („Kleist. Selbstmord") was dedicated to the internationally renowned writer who worked in Frankfurt (Oder) at the time. In kindergartens with bilingual offers, students carried out internships and taught the children language skills in an easy-to-understand way, for example by singing songs. A master's student also temporarily supported a school in Słubice in teaching German. In the past, the chair also held a one-day language competition for Polish students from the region on English and German for many years.

The **Centre for Interdisciplinary Polish Studies (Zentrum für Interdisziplinäre Polenstudien)** deals directly with topics of cross-border relevance. On the occasion of the 100th anniversary of the restoration of Poland's independence, students of the centre dealt with the border between Poland and Germany at that moment in time in the context of the seminar "The Forgotten Border" („Die Vergessene Grenze"). In 2018, the students conducted a study trip along the course of this former border and summarized their findings in a publication.

In 2007, the European University took stock in the context of the **pilot project "InterViadrina"** (Hiller o.J.). Due to the fact that the coexistence of foreign students and the knowledge of the language alone do not result in a better understanding of other cultures, one-day workshops on intercultural awareness were developed. Over the years, several hundred students (from different nations/cultures) came together in such interactive workshops by getting directly in touch with the other cultures in the respective formats of discussions, role plays, etc. The documentation relating to this project shows that such an offer for intercultural awareness should be utilized by all students as well as by employees.

On the Polish side, the **Jacob of Paradies University (Akademia im. Jakuba z Paradyża)** in Gorzów Wlkp. cooperates with 25 universities in 13 countries (outside of Europe also in the USA, AJP 2020b). Four of these universities are located in Germany. In all their courses, learning a foreign language is obligatory. In this context, English dominates, while offers for French, Italian, German, Czech, Ukrainian for both students and the employees of the university exist as well.

The Jacob of Paradies University in Gorzów, in cooperation with the Brandenburg University of Technology Cottbus-Senftenberg (BTU Cottbus-Senftenberg), offers students in the pedagogy field the opportunity to also obtain a diploma of the German BTU Cottbus-Senftenberg upon completion of the academy. The prerequisites for participation in this project and the commencement of studies are the following:

- Student of the Pedagogy degree programme
- After one year you choose the field of study in care pedagogy or pedagogy of educational assistance
- Knowledge of the German language in such a manner that free communication is possible
- Successful completion of a semester at the BTU Cottbus-Senftenberg in the context of a student exchange
- Diploma thesis in the field of social work
- Defence in Poland and Germany (AJP 2020c)

The **Academic Centre for German and European Studies (Akademickie Centrum Studiów Niemcoznawczych i Europejskich)** organises the German-Polish Regional Forum and a series of cross-border scientific conferences entitled "Development on the Peripheries?" („Entwicklung an den Peripherien"/"Rozwój na peryferiach?"). The Euroregion PRO EUROPA VIADRINA is a partner of the academy and participates in these conferences with lectures, among others on the cooperation between local governments. In 2019, the fourth edition of the forum and the sixth session of the conference took place. The university also implements scientific programs funded by the DPJW as three-sided (Polish-German-Ukrainian) encounters.

The **Local Faculty of Physical Education (Zamiejscowy Wydział Wychowania Fizycznego)** in Gorzów Wlkp., is a branch of the Academy of Physical Education (Akademia Wychowania Fizycznego im. Eugeniusza Piaseckiego) in Poznań, which has 68 partner universities in 15 countries. Here stays abroad are also made possible through the Erasmus programme, and the foreign language English is prescribed in all curricula in the fields of nutritional science, physiotherapy and sport.

The **College of Business (Wyższa Szkoła Biznesu)** in Gorzów Wlkp., maintains a partnership with a university in Kaunas (Lithuania) as well as a language centre where English and German can be learned or certified with a TELC certificate at a B2 level. In addition, this school offers a course in Polish sign language. Occasionally, the university also uses the support of the Small Projects Fund to organise international conferences or scientific publications.

The **University of Applied Sciences (Wyższa Szkoła Zawodowa)** in Gorzów Wlkp. is a university offering courses in medicine, medical rescue and electroradiology. Until 2018 it was located in Kostrzyn and then transferred to Gorzów Wlkp. The students of the university, which is listed in the register maintained by the Polish Ministry of Science and Higher Education, can also take advantage of the Erasmus programme.

The **Collegium Polonicum** located in Słubice, is a joint institution of the European University Viadrina and the Adam Mickiewicz University, and can consequently draw on the partnerships of the universities. The UAM maintains approximately 250 partnerships with universities throughout Europe, Asia, Africa, Latin America as well as North America. German and English are among others a language of instruction in some degree programmes, for example in the Master of Intercultural Communication. Other MA degree programmes are completed entirely in German (see the Masters degree relating to the protection of European cultural goods (Schutz Europäischer Kulturgüter / Ochrona Europejskich Dóbr Kultury) or in English (Digital Entrepreneurship). In addition, the university carries out projects funded by the Small Projects Fund, e. g. the events organised on the occasion of the 25th anniversary of the institution.

The type and intensity of the activities and partnerships could only be questioned by way of example in the context of the situational analysis. A systematic consideration of this project is reserved for further analyses. Since the spectrum of cross-border ("interactive", "collaborative") interactions in the higher education sector with Erasmus projects, bachelor's and master's theses, student initiatives and individual internships is quite wide and cannot be compared in terms of scope, an estimate of the proportion of students involved should also be omitted in this context.

Cross-border activities in the field of higher education will now be presented from other Euroregions, which will also provide suggestions for action in terms of content, organisation and/ or by incorporating regional peculiarities.

Fig. 32: Study visit of the Euroregion PRO EUROPA VIADRINA to the Academy WSB in Cieszyn on university cooperation in the Euroregion Śląsk Cieszyński (photo: Archive Euroregion)



In the **Euregio Meuse-Rhine**, cross-border activities have been practiced in all courses of education for many years (cf. Chap. 3.2, School Education, Literature Prize). This commitment in the three-country corner of Belgium, the Netherlands and Germany is clearly outlined in the publication "At home in Europe – Cross-border educational cooperation in the Euregio Meuse-Rhine" („In Europa zuhause – Grenzüberschreitende Bildungs Kooperationen in der Euregio Maas-Rhein") (Region Aachen 2018). Here, for example, students are used as language assistants operating in schools of the neighbouring country. In coordination with the respective school, the university students are used in lessons or on project days, so that the school students get to know the respective language from the university students in their native language. In the course of the teaching degree studies, students teach English and French at German secondary schools during their 4-week internship. In addition, multilingual teaching materials were developed in the Linguacluster project, including a local history book entitled "Euregio Vis-à-Vis", which is used in all three parts of the Euregio. Teaching materials for foreign language acquisition are in turn used during the teaching degree studies.

The **University of Flensburg (Germany) and the Syddansk Universitet in Sonderborg (Denmark)** offer a double degree in the study program "International Management". For this purpose, the students complete lectures several days a week on the other side (Europa-Universität Flensburg 2020), whereby they can use a bus shuttle for the mutual visit.

The objective pursued by the project "EURO-IN", in the **Euroregion of Śląsk-Cieszyński**, was to establish and test a partnership (network of various institutions) on cross-border issues in the context of the efforts to establish an international centre for cross-border education – Polish-Czech-Slovak EuroInstitute (EuroInstytut Polsko-Czesko-Słowacki) (EuroInstytut 2020). The measures for the creation of the centre began in 2009 on the initiative of the Association for Regional Development and Cooperation "Olza" and the "Euroregion Śląsk-Cieszyński" as Polish partner of the regional contract. The institute EuroSchola also became a project partner. Among the many activities of this project we can mention the following:

- the development of an analysis of the obstacles and requirements in the context of the Polish-Czech cross-border cooperation,
- the preparation of documentation defining the form of cooperation and the implementation of joint actions within the framework of the EuroInstytut partnership (documentation of network cooperation and EGTC),
- signing of an agreement between the EuroInstytut partners (a total of 10 Polish, Czech and Slovak organisations representing 4 voivodeships),
- development of study material for cross-border training,
- organisation of a series of forums and subject-specific, interactive trainings, including intercultural trainings aimed at representatives of public institutions, NGOs, students and adolescents,
- publication of information brochures, catalogues for training courses and the scientific series entitled "TRANSCARPATHICA", which represents the figurehead of the EuroInstytut (and is regularly published in cooperation with the branch of the Polish Academy of Sciences in Katowice).



Fig. 33. Students of the European University Viadrina in Frankfurt (Oder) (photo: Winfried Mausolf)

Approaches to action

The understanding and imparting of intercultural competence are most firmly anchored in universities. This was also confirmed in the interviews, workshops and discussions. In this context, it is also fundamental that the offers can be maintained in the long term and do not just have a punctual effect. At European level, besides educational mobility and foreign language competence, the objective of the recognition of qualifications is also pursued in the sector of higher education. On both sides, the recognition falls in the field of competence of the Ministries of Education. This means that in this context reference should be made only to approaches to action which can be pursued in this context.

In order to derive cross-border approaches to higher education within the Euroregion PRO EUROPA VIADRINA, the following objectives are formulated on this basis:

- Continuation of existing cross-border activities.
- Expansion of cross-border activities so that all students participate at least once (ideally annually) in a multi-day cross-border interaction.
- Expansion of the proportion of students at a university who received a minimum of 4 weeks of study-related learning experience abroad to 20%.

Against this background, within the framework of the situational analysis, action approaches were identified and then assigned here to 3 levels (cf. Chap. 2.3). They result from activities which have already been successfully carried out, from the experiences of the actors in their cross-border activities and from the transfer of useful approaches to lifelong learning from other age groups or national model examples.

Level 1	Level 2	Level 3
Boundary perception (instructive)	Boundary crossing (interactive)	Cross-border interaction (collaborative)
Students		
Getting to know the culture and language of the neighbour in the context of (self) study	Participation in intercultural awareness workshops Participation in student initiatives with cross-border relevance Visits to students from a university in the neighbouring country	Joint project work with students from neighbouring countries as part of one- to multi project days/weeks (on study-related and interdisciplinary topics, including sports, culture, economics, law, history) Student internship (learning experience) abroad of at least four weeks
Lecturers		
Further education (including intercultural learning, language animation, languages, regional studies, culture, interactive/project management, other (digital, analogue) methods and materials) Competence transfer to students (depending on subject area including language, regional studies / geography, culture, history)	Excursions/study trips to the neighbouring country (For lecturers) Exchange of experience (between German and Polish lecturers) Creation of teaching material Visits/excursions to the neighbouring country (with student groups) Networking of universities with German and Polish institutions (Assignments/ tasks for internships)	Development of study-related and complementary offers for competence development together with lecturers from the neighbouring country (Development of subject-specific tasks involving regional aspects to be solved in mixed groups) Motivation of the students to implement the above-mentioned tasks Implementation of joint international scientific conferences
University management		
Recognition of internships of a minimum period of four weeks in the curricula (Appreciation of learning experience abroad; definition of the respective recognition criteria) Evaluation (of internal activities for the preparation of cross-border interactions)	Maintenance of the contact with the partner university Conferences for universities in the German-Polish border region / in the Euroregion (among others relating to the topics of intercultural exchange / development of interdisciplinary competences)	Evaluation (of the cross-border activities with universities from neighbouring countries)
External facilities		
Development of university-related offers for cross-border activities (among others regional studies, language, intercultural competence; projects / internships on cross-border issues)	Networking of German and Polish institutions with universities (Assignments/ tasks for internships)	Networking of German and Polish institutions (Placement of deployment centres; exchange of experience on topics and methods)
Authorities (Ministries)		
Expansion of the support for intercultural awareness-raising activities	Networking of German and Polish institutions with universities (specialist/interdisciplinary cooperation) Expansion of support for (at least 4-week) stays abroad / projects for study purposes	Technical support for universities (Recognition of the learning experience abroad; definition of respective recognition criteria; evaluation)

Tab. 24: Approaches to action in the field of higher education

Implementation notes

The mobility of students and lecturers as well as the international cooperation already play an important role at all universities in the Euroregion. This is evidenced by the statistically measurable Erasmus stays (semesters abroad, internships) as well as the diverse other activities of students and lecturers. In the context of the situational analysis, it was confirmed, in particular through the interviews, technical discussions and workshops, that the realization of cross-border activities in the higher education sector is also mainly a voluntary, additional task resulting in an additional personnel, material and financial effort. In the interest of implementing the above-mentioned approaches at all 5 universities in the Euroregion suggestions for implementation should be given against the background of the framework conditions.

Students / Lecturers

At all universities, the opportunities in the field of (further) education for intercultural awareness should be open to all students and employees and should be regularly used by them over the course of time. Furthermore, consideration could be given to enabling students from the four other universities to attend the one-day courses established at the European University Viadrina, and vice versa, to establish such courses at the four Polish universities and to open them to the participation of students coming from the European University. In order to develop cross-border offers for projects or specialist works, it would be advisable to establish and expand contacts at the level of lecturers between the universities on both sides in order to identify starting points in regard to the degree programmes. This aspect could also be supplemented by **excursions, study trips** or **exchanges of experience** between German and Polish lecturers. Multilingual teaching materials can emerge from this cooperation and further incentives for students to participate in cross-border activities can be found. In addition to the technical requirements, the tasks for working in mixed (heterogeneous) groups should also aim at the development of interdisciplinary competencies. This would also link the participants' engagement with the cultural diversity existing in Europe.

In preparation for direct cross-border activities, lecturers should use the scope of the curricula to include relevant content in the lectures and seminars for the **instructive transfer of knowledge of the neighbouring country** (or the other countries of the respective university partnerships). Beyond foreign language and course-specific aspects, particularities of the respective countries and also of the Euroregion (e. g. confrontation with history, geography, economy, law or culture of the neighbour) could also be taken into account.

Based on this knowledge, which can be imparted in an instructive manner, interdisciplinary offers can then be developed for one to multi project days. In coordination with the universities from the neighbouring country, they can be used for **interactive and collaborative** activities carried out in mixed groups of students from both sides (among others through winter/summer schools). Since English is the dominating foreign language on both sides, it is advisable to use it in addition to German and Polish as a means of communication. An interdisciplinary and multi-day approach provides an ideal framework for particularly intensive cooperation between German and Polish students in terms of type and scope. The participation of students of other nationalities enriches the experience gained for all participants.

In addition to the above-mentioned activities carried out between the students of both sides, modules for individual study-specific **internships** should also be developed, which are designed for a minimum 4-week stay abroad (among others in universities, schools, daycare centres, companies or other external institutions). This form entails a great deal of effort in terms of content and organization. The existing cooperation between universities and regional institutions should be further expanded and networked across borders to provide placements, support and accommodation for students.

It is also adequate to develop an offer for scientific international conferences in partnership with the universities of the neighbouring country. These conferences should take place on a regular basis and not just once. This method of consistently building a network of connections, relations and cooperation also supports the expansion of the network of international cooperation in order to include partners from other cooperating universities and provides further development impetus for the scientific cadres of the Euroregion.



Fig. 34: Art workshop of German and Polish students (photo: Burg Beeskow)

University management

Students should be given appropriate recognition for the successful participation in cross-border interactions within the curricula. For this purpose, universities and/or public authorities must set qualitative criteria for the **recognition** of interactions lasting several days as well as internships of several weeks.

In this context, the university managements could **evaluate** the curricula of the degree programmes in terms of the extent to which they can further integrate topics of cross-border relevance, such as for example intercultural learning, language, regional studies, or interactions (projects and internships). For this purpose, the university-specific quality management systems can be used. After that, they could be further differentiated with regard to the proportion of students or employees involved in such activities or the degree of intensity of the said interactions (within the meaning of their "instructive", "interactive" or "collaborative" character).

From this, conclusions can be drawn for the **further development of cooperations and/or partnerships**. This aspect extends both to the cooperation of universities and to further networking with external institutions, which are adequate, e. g. as a place of employment for interns. Exchanges of experience, further training, the type as well as the orientation of projects and study-specific tasks can then be aligned even better. In addition, regional aspects can be more closely integrated. The development of multidisciplinary competences through cross-border interactions should also be addressed and evaluated at **conferences** organised at the universities of the Euroregion.

External facilities

The universities of both sides practice an extensive cooperation with regional educational institutions, municipalities, chambers, authorities, companies and cross-border institutions. In view of the large number of students who would like to gain practical experience through cross-border interactions, we recommend to establish further **partnerships and to network all involved parties**. Starting with the provision or arrangement of internships for interested parties from the neighboring country, they can develop tasks and offer them for work in mixed student groups, organize study trips for students or lecturers or organize exchanges of experience on specific topics. In this context, attention should also be paid to the further linking of existing offers (including with the internship database of the DPJW) in order to achieve synergies. External educational institutions can support universities with comprehensive materials and methodological packages and can also tap into additional human resources.

Authorities (Ministries)

Since cross-border activities are particularly important for the development of interdisciplinary competences and consequently for the professional activity of university graduates, it is essential to give even more weight to such offers and their implementation. This includes improving the continuity of courses as well as increasing their capacity in order to give more students the opportunity to participate. For this purpose, it would be useful to improve the personnel resources of universities for such activities. Among others, this can be done through time quotas, job shares or other measures for the recognition of the additional work often carried out by teaching professionals. Depending on the framework conditions of existing financial instruments (e. g. Erasmus+; INTERREG and DPJW), it would also be advisable to close any gaps in financing the development and implementation of multi-day interactions or multi-week internships.

The responsible ministries also have the task of supporting their commitment both professionally and organizationally in coordination with the universities, by helping to recognize stays abroad, connecting different institutions or evaluating cross-border activities. Given the large number of tasks that need to be completed to achieve the stated goal, the authorities can take on an initiating and coordinating role.

3.5 Adult education

Initial situation

Among the European objectives in the field of adult education, it should be emphasised that at least 15% of adults should participate in lifelong learning (cf. Chap. 2.2).

In the presentation on the education systems of both countries, the structure of adult education was roughly depicted (cf. Chap. 2.4). In addition to the continuing vocational training, it also includes training entitlements of adults, including seniors. Due to the diversity of the numerically large group of adults, it was not possible to obtain comparable key data on the situation in the Euroregion PRO EUROPA VIADRINA as part of the analysis carried out here for the indicator targeted by the EU. As a consequence, it will therefore be characterized in more detail on the basis of the population structure in the adult age group, the identified interests and examples practiced to date.

Tab. 25: Population structure in the Euroregion PRO EUROPA VIADRINA (own representation, based on Afs BB 2019c; CIS 2020)

Age groups	Number of inhabitants		
	German side	Polish side	Total
0 - 4 years	18,155	17,819	35,974
5 - 19 years	54,813	58,261	113,074
20 - 64 years	249,405	235,868	485,273
age of 65	108,486	65,365	173,851
Total	430,859	377,313	808,172

Of the inhabitants living in the Euroregion PRO EUROPA VIADRINA, approx. 60% are of working age (19-65 years) and approx. 21% are over 65 years old. Of the approximately 485,000 adults of working age, about half are also employed (ER PEV 2013). If the EU target for adult participation in lifelong learning is set at 15%, around 100,000 inhabitants aged 19 and over should take part in appropriate educational programs. In the context of interdisciplinary skills development, it is also advisable to develop them across borders (cf. Chap. 2).

The proportion of teachers who are eligible for cross-border continuing education offers in the educational pathways from daycare to vocational training was estimated in previous chapters. A further sector-specific differentiation of the group of people exceeded the scope of the current situation analysis and is reserved for future studies.

In the interviews, expert discussions and workshops, factors that promote and hinder cross-border activities were examined in addition to the specific interests involved. In continuing vocational training, offers from educational institutions or in-house training courses offered by companies or institutions dominate in order to keep up with the state of knowledge in specific sectors. In addition, there are individual interests in expanding or refreshing knowledge and skills in order to obtain a further or higher qualification. With regard to issues of

cross-border relevance, the spectrum of interest in further training ranges from language skills to legal, cultural and regional studies and intercultural aspects. For cross-border educational approaches, these and other topics as well as the rich natural and cultural heritage in the Euroregion (e. g. sports, cuisine, tourism and active recreation) as well as current problems and challenges (e. g. modern technology, media, regenerative energies, fake news) are suitable.

The further education institutions based in the Euroregion are taking this into account and offering demand-oriented educational programs that can be taken part-time, at weekends or online. However, non-formal offers with an „instructive“ character dominate here. In language courses (e. g. tandem courses with a visit to the neighbouring country) or in self-organized educational events by German and Polish partner institutions (e. g. exchange of experiences between teachers, series of seminars by the Police), though, there are also „interactive“ to „collaborative“ formats. Long-standing partnerships also often form the starting point for joint interactions in the educational area. Social structures, e. g. further education institutions, local authorities, associations, chambers, industry associations, play a central role for both professional and continuing education based on individual interests. They bundle the needs and interests, by developing offers and implementing them. In many cases, the implementation of cross-border offers reaches the limits of their competences (including language competence) and capacities (including personnel and/or financial resources), whereby this is in particular due to the organizational effort made by them. Furthermore, the workshops addressed to this age group expressed the need for better networking in order to find new partners for joint activities or to increase the accessibility of the already existing offers. External institutions that actively initiate and coordinate tasks in the sense of a „travel agency“ are considered beneficial for this.

In addition to the EU Erasmus+ program, the INTERREG cooperation program, in particular the Euroregion's small project fund, is available for the promotion of cross-border adult education offers. Funds of the DPJW can be used in the context of internships or interactive events for young people up to the age of 27, as well as for the further education of skilled professionals.



Fig. 35: Further training of German and Polish teachers in wilderness education (photo: Naturschutzparkverein Märkische Schweiz)

Cross-border relevant activities

The following is an overview of cross-border activities already practiced in the PEV Euroregion, ranging from learning foreign languages (“instructive”, one-sided) to cross-border encounters (“interactive”, “collaborative”) between adults. From the abundance of cross-border relevant activities, the following will highlight examples that have been practiced to date, highlighting both the spectrum of activities and the inclusion of regional aspects.

At the **European University Viadrina**, there is a wide range of opportunities for part-time continuing education. There is the opportunity to combine a versatile, professionally relevant further qualification with theoretical reflection at an academic level. The following advanced Master’s degree programs can be completed, however, these require an university degree and several years of qualified professional experience:

- Cultural management and cultural tourism
- Protection of European cultural assets,
- Complementary Medicine – Cultural Studies – Medicine,
- Mediation,
- Human Rights & Genocide Studies,
- International Human Rights and Humanitarian Law.

On the other hand, the **International Centre for Science and Encounters of the European University Viadrina (IWBZ) gGmbH** (Internationale Wissenschafts- und Begegnungszentrum der Europa Universität Viadrina (IWBZ) gGmbH) develops customer-specific further training courses for companies and institutions in cooperation with chairs of the faculties of Business, Cultural Studies and Law as well as with the Language Centre of the University (EUV 2020d).

The **Jacob of Paradies University** (Akademia im. Jakuba z Paradyża) offers educational opportunities for people over 26 years of age in the form of free direct study. The study is organized in such a manner that the courses for the employed people are held in the evening. This type of education is possible in all degree programmes.

The **Working and living in historic buildings (ARLE) gGmbH** (Arbeiten und Leben in historischen Gebäuden (ARLE) gGmbH) operates, among other things, the Bolfrashauss located in Frankfurt (Oder), which houses several German-Polish institutions. In addition, in cooperation with the **Polish Association of Pensioners, Retirees and Invalids** (Polski Związek Rencistów, Emerytów i Inwalidów), they organize various events for senior citizens of the cities of Frankfurt (Oder) and Słubice. For years, they have also been responsible for the organisational support of the **German-Polish Senior Citizens Academy** (Deutsch-Polnische Senioren-Akademie) established in 2000 by the Senior Citizens' Advisory Councils of both cities (EUV 2020b). Among the training courses designed for seniors, the following should be highlighted:

- (Polish) language courses for seniors with approx. 80 participants, staggered in elementary and intermediate levels as well as tandems,
- Folk music festival for choirs from the border region with well over 50 German and Polish participants.

The German-Polish Senior Citizens Academy is currently also cooperating with the **Karl-Liebknecht High School** by advising senior citizens on the use of mobile phones and tablets in weekly consultation hours. The objective is to involve Polish seniors and students from Słubice in this cooperation. Furthermore, lectures on history, politics, culture, nature and tourism at various locations, e. g. at the European University Viadrina, at the Collegium Polonicum or at the SMOK in Słubice, or regional trips belong to the main offer in the field of further education. The „City meeting point without borders“ (Citytreff bez granic) at the city bridge, is also operated by the Arle GmbH for use by German and Polish seniors. The cross-generational connection between older and younger people, the identification of new content for older people and the expansion of cooperation with other senior academies have the potential for further development.



Fig. 36: Study visit from the Euroregion Glacensis – Old Town Kostrzyn nad Odrą (photo: Euroregion Archive)

The association of the **University of the Third Stage of Life in Gorzów Wlkp.** (Stowarzyszenie Uniwersytet Trzeciego Wieku w Gorzowie Wlkp.; UTW) is one of several institutions in the city whose programs reach over 650, or around 5% of all senior citizens. Its offer includes lectures on

- Psychology,
- Medicine,
- Art History,
- Musical education,
- Foreign languages (English, German, French, Esperanto),
- Tourism,
- IT,
- Sport.

Active participation opportunities cover the following topics:

- Section music (choir "Uniwerek", vocal group "Optymistki"),
- Section sports (yoga, dance, zumba, Nordic walking) and swimming (hydrotherapy, swimming lessons),
- Section visual arts,
- Section photography,
- Section bridge,
- Section cabaret and theatre,
- Section cycling,
- Therapeutic dance.

The association has branch offices located in Kostrzyn, Skwierzyna and Strzelce Krajeńskie and cooperates with foreign partners, e. g. with the associations "Jahresringe" e.V. in Berlin and "Urania" e.V. in Frankfurt (Oder), and with Polish partners, including the Jan Dekert Lubuskie Museum in Gorzów (Muzeum Lubuskie im. Jana Dekerta w Gorzowie), the Gorzów Philharmonie, and the cultural centre of the municipality (Miejskie Centrum Kultury w Gorzowie Wielkopolskim). Attention is also paid to the cooperation between the generations - with the Jacob of Paradies University (Akademia im. Jakuba z Paradyża) and the youth culture house (UTW 2020).

Based on the data coming from the member municipalities of the Euroregion, it can be stated that about 23 institutions in 14 municipalities offer similar services for seniors. These include third stage universities and senior associations in Drezdenko, Międzyrzecz, Witnica, Bogdaniec, Sulęcín, Lubniewice, Deszczno or Rudnica. In addition, there are local cultural centres which often offer events addressed to seniors.

The association of the **University of Third Stage of Life in Bogdaniec** (Stowarzyszenie Uniwersytet Trzeciego Wieku Trzeciego w Bogdaniec) carried out an international Nordic Walking tour with three groups of different levels of difficulty and also started a cooperation with seniors from the partner communities of Bogdaniec. This exemplifies the great importance of the municipalities, which provide the associations with significant support in establishing and expanding partner relationships and establishing contacts.

The **municipalities of Pszczew and Letschin** have been cooperating for decades, especially in the area of seniors citizens. This cooperation is expressed in annual mutual visits and joint projects. Back in 2011, they held a musical senior citizens' meeting with choirs in Pszczew, during which a mini songbook was also created jointly. Subsequently, further common projects were organised. They were dedicated to Polish and German cuisine, customs and traditions on both sides of the border and the Natura 2000 sites in both municipalities.

The **Municipality of Sulęcín** cooperates with the **Municipality of Friedland** among others things on joint activities for adults. There are regular projects for senior citizens' days. Joint and regular meetings involve this age group in the context of intercultural exchanges between the communities. This is also possible on other occasions, e. g. at Nordic walking events or cyclist' gatherings.

The **Municipality of Dobiegniew** cooperates with the **Municipality of Golzow** on senior citizens' meetings, exchanges of experience, joint integration and active regional tourism in connection with musical encounters.

The German part of the Euroregion is dominated by the three **adult education centers** (Volks-hochschulen) run by the districts and the city of Frankfurt (Oder), each of which offers Polish beginners' courses (TELC level A). In addition, there are numerous social institutions and local associations, which together provide a comprehensive range of services, e. g. for language teaching and regional studies.

However, adult education is not limited to the education addressed to elderly people. Regular further education is offered, among other things, in municipal continuing education institutions, e. g. **the Vocational Training Center in Gorzów Wielkopolski** (Centrum Kształcenia Zawodowego w Gorzowie Wielkopolskim), or **the Voivodeship Centre for Vocational Training in Gorzów Wielkopolski** (Wojewódzki Zakład Doskonalenia Zawodowego w Gorzowie Wielkopolskim) with Vocational Training Centres also located in Kostrzyn, Strzelce Krajeńskie, Międzyrzecz, Sulęcín and Trzciel. Training courses are also offered by organisations from the economic environment, such as **the Lubuskie Employers' Organisation** (Lubuska Organizacja Pracodawców) or the **Western Chamber of Industry and Commerce** (Zachodnia Izba Przemysłowo-Handlowa).

Cross-border educational opportunities are also offered within the framework of direct cooperation between other institutions from both sides of the border, e. g. **the Voivodship Command of the Police in Gorzów Wlkp. and the Police Department of the federal State of Brandenburg**. The officials of both countries have been conducting joint training for years, both in operational work and in intercultural communication, in language courses or in joint prevention actions.

As part of adult education, municipal institutions are also placing increasing emphasis on working with senior citizens and disadvantaged groups. For example in the context of the Small Projects Funds, **the Nursing home in Kostrzyn** (Dom Pomocy Społecznej) and **the Nursing Home in Kamień Mały** (Dom Pomocy Społecznej) organise various projects. Through various workshops and meetings with similar groups from partner institutions in neighboring countries, different skills are developed and the educational offer for residents is expanded.

A similar category of projects includes numerous measures relating to the education of people with disabilities. These activities are broader than a single project. For example, a project called “Caring Wings of the District” (“Opiekuńcze Skrzydła Powiatu”) is being carried out in the **administrative district of Słubice**. This project provides training and counselling for carers and families of disabled people. These tasks are carried out in Słubice, Rzepin and Cybinka. The aim of the training and counseling is to help families affected by the consequences of disability to solve serious everyday problems. Above all, parents and carers were able to share their experiences and learn how to deal with problematic situations. They also learned which institutions and organizations can provide help, what rehabilitation options there are for people with disabilities, what rights they have and what educational and employment opportunities are available.

In addition to the above-mentioned examples, every year around 200 projects between German and Polish partner institutions are managed by the Euroregion offices and supported by the Small Projects Fund out of EU funds, which to a large extent also include direct cross-border activities of a continuing education nature for adults. Similarly, some projects supported by the cooperation programme INTERREG VA include the said elements. For example, several administrative employees of the **cities of Frankfurt (Oder) and Słubice** changed their jobs on a temporary basis as part of a “change of perspective”. This gave them the chance to learn about the

Fig. 37: German-Polish training camp in Karpacz for 40 rescue service employees from Rettungsdienst MOL GmbH and Wyższa Szkoła Zawodowa in Gorzowie Wlkp. (photo: Rettungsdienst MOL gGmbH)



views of the other side in an informal way. In addition, employees in other INTERREG projects learned about their working methods by shadowing project partners. The very extensive number of offers from chambers and other public and private further education institutions could not be further investigated as part of the situation analysis. However, it can be stated that “instructive” continuing education dominates, and that there is great potential for “interactive” and “collaborative” interactions.

Cross-border activities in the field of adult education will now be presented from other Euroregions, which will also provide suggestions for action in terms of content, organisation and/or by incorporating regional peculiarities.

One example of how the qualifications of local government employees can be improved and the barriers to using the opportunities offered by the Internet for economic activity can be removed is the project of the EGTC TATRY mbH from the Polish-Slovak border region entitled “**Cross-border professional and vocational training in the EGTC TATRY**” (“Transgraniczne doskonalenie specjalistyczne i zawodowe w EUWT TATRY”) (EUWT TATRY 2020). The target groups have been given the opportunity to supplement and acquire key competencies, skills, knowledge and qualifications in the specific aspects of work in self-administration and the modern Internet tools used in professional work through a free training offer as part of a small-scale project. Training and language courses of a cross-border nature, led by experts, contribute decisively to the improvement of the level of education in the Polish-Slovak border region. Thanks to the change of participating in a free course on e-business and e-marketing in the context of the cross-border labour market through an e-learning platform, unemployed people from the Polish and Slovak sides will be able to acquire completely new skills. New qualifications enable the activation of unemployed people who can start their own business in the form of an e-business. Joint courses and training sessions will allow to break down existing barriers, by increasing the quality of cross-border cooperation and at the same time by acquiring new professional skills in the use of Internet tools to manage an economic activity.

Another example of cross-border cooperation in the field of adult education can be found in the same border area in the project “Formation and enhancement of cross-border competences of **mountain rescuers GP GOPR and Horskjej Zachrannej Sluzby**” (Grupa Podhalańska GOPR 2020). For many years, the mountain rescuers from Poland and Slovakia have been “condemned” to work together to a certain extent by their neighborly relationship. In fact, mountains are a common good. A person injured in a mountain accident must be supported, regardless of which side of the border he or she is on. In the context of mere rescue operations, more and more thought had been given to how this cooperation could be brought to a higher level with a somewhat more strategic character. The participants of the small project were Polish and Slovak mountain rescuers. They took part in a series of several cross-border training sessions to learn about rescue techniques and also to develop common guidelines for better communication during joint cross-border rescue operations.

With the German-Danish cultural agreement (Kulturfokus 2020b), the **German-Danish Euregio Sønderjylland-Schleswig** has created a strategic basis for cross-border cooperation in the cultural sector that is legitimized across borders. The established platform is based on the principles of tolerance, mutual understanding and open society. Their commitment ranges from

- the development and promotion of talents,
- the dialogue between the different cultures, including with other border regions, to the exchange of experiences in the face of the referendum and border demarcation in 1920, to
- interactions, communication and artistic exchange.

To implement the agreed objectives, project-related EU funds are available from the INTERREG program, which are used as follows (Kulturfokus 2020a):

- Cultural and network pool: Promotion of innovative German-Danish projects in the fields of culture, language, children, youth, sports and leisure in order to develop intercultural understanding and anchor German-Danish cooperation in the general population.
- Transport pool: funding is provided for transportation, entrance fees, fees and accommodation costs for schools, day-care facilities, associations and institutions actively cooperating and bringing together German and Danish children and youth up to the age of 26.
- Immediate pool: Promotion of network building and development of new project ideas.
- Language pool: promoting the teaching of the neighboring language.

The INTERREG VA project **WIPP** is currently also targeting the German-Danish border, to mobilize older people in the face of an increasingly ageing society, raise awareness of their skills and needs and improve their participation in social learning (Syddansk Universitet 2020). In terms of content, it is aimed at prevention in order to promote activity and health in old age. It is noteworthy that the involvement of people is ensured by giving each citizen a special e-mail address for communication or by having a representative take care of this.

Approaches to action

Based on the Europe-wide objective that 15% of adults should participate in lifelong learning, cross-border approaches to action have a huge potential, in particular

- to refresh and further develop interdisciplinary (e. g. intercultural and social) competencies,
- to develop language skills and
- to raise awareness of cultural diversity in Europe.

The large number of adults and the associated diversity of needs and interests did not allow for a detailed target group-specific differentiation in the context of the situation analysis carried out here. Nevertheless, it was possible to address the further training needs of teachers in the educational institutions and administrative staff in their supporting institutions in the previous chapters. Interviews, workshops and expert discussions also revealed that cross-border cooperation needs to be expanded into a network, in particular to attract additional partners, develop low-threshold offers, facilitate informal access to existing offers and involve the regional natural and cultural heritage to a greater extent.

In order to derive cross-border approaches to adult education within the Euroregion PRO EUROPA VIADRINA, the following objectives are formulated on this basis:

- Consolidation and expansion of existing cross-border activities.
- Expansion of cross-border cooperation and its target group-specific networking.
- Target group-specific needs assessment, offer development and implementation for professional or individual further education, by considering the natural and cultural heritage of the region.

Against this background, the approaches are assigned to the 3 levels as follows.

Level 1	Level 2	Level 3
Boundary perception (instructive)	Boundary crossing (interactive)	Cross-border interaction (collaborative)
Adults		
Acquaintance with the culture and language of the neighbour	Excursions or study trips to the neighbouring country (including visits to natural and cultural heritage sites)	Joint project-related activities with stakeholders from neighbouring countries in the context of one- to multi-day projects
Specialists (teaching professionals of educational institutions; administrative staff of the sponsoring institutions)		
<p>further education (including intercultural learning, language animation, languages, regional studies, culture, interactive-/project management, other (digital, analogue) methods and materials)</p> <p>Transfer of expertise to target groups (depending on requirements and/or interests, including language, regional studies / geography, culture, history, health, recreation, sports)</p>	<p>Excursions/study trips to the neighbouring country</p> <p>Exchange of experience</p> <p>Creation of teaching material</p> <p>Visits/excursions to the neighbouring country (with the respective interest group)</p>	<p>Development of low-threshold and complex offers for competence development in collaboration with specialists from the neighbouring country (Development of offers including regional aspects that can be used in mixed groups)</p>
Management of further education institutions and support structures		
<p>Determining needs and developing offers for cross-border activities involving the natural and cultural heritage (including intensive courses for language and regional studies)</p> <p>Evaluation (of internal activities for the preparation of cross-border interactions, including assessment of the need for further training and/or resources)</p>	<p>Maintaining contact with partner institutions</p> <p>Networking of German and Polish institutions (e. g. needs assessment, developing offers, finding partners and offers, exchanging experiences)</p>	<p>Development of low-threshold and complex offers for competence development in cooperation with partners from the neighbouring country (Development of offers including regional aspects that can be taken up in mixed groups, e. g. tandem language courses)</p> <p>Evaluation (of the cross-border activities carried out with partner institutions from the neighbouring country)</p>
External facilities		
<p>Determining needs and developing offers for cross-border activities involving the natural and cultural heritage (including intensive courses for language and regional studies)</p> <p>Evaluation (Effect and scope of the offers)</p>	<p>Cross-regional networking of German and Polish institutions (e. g. needs assessment, developing offers, finding partners and offers, exchanging experiences)</p>	<p>Networking of German and Polish institutions (e. g. needs assessment, developing offers, finding partners and offers, exchanging experiences)</p> <p>Evaluation (Effect and scope of the offers)</p>
Authorities (Ministries)		
Expansion of the support for (professional and individual) training activities of a cross-border nature	Support offered to networks of German and Polish institutions (professional / interdisciplinary cooperation, e. g. dealing with digitalization or fake news, supporting intergenerational offers, involving senior citizens in the world of work)	Technical support of the networks (Evaluation)

Tab. 26: Approaches to action in the field of adult education

Implementation notes

The realization of cross-border activities is also a voluntary, additional task for the most part in the area of adult education. It likewise entails additional personnel, material and financial expenditure. In the interest of making the above-mentioned approaches accessible to as many adults as possible, suggestions for implementation are given below.

Adults / Professionals

In the absence of a detailed target group-specific differentiation, the group of adults should be distinguished at this point in such a way that

- employed people undergo continuing vocational training,
- the remaining adults of working age seek further training,
- seniors are interested in continuing education in order to maintain their physical and mental capabilities.

For all target groups under this classification, educational institutions should provide specific offers for the 3 levels. The range of tasks for the group of teachers in the educational institutions covered in the previous chapters and for administrative staff in the supporting structures has already been listed. Similarly, other professionals in the further education institutions can perform the tasks listed here (their own further education, skills transfer to learning groups, excursions, study trips, exchange of experience, creation of multilingual teaching materials, development of offers, etc. for work in mixed groups including the regional natural and cultural heritage).

Management of further education institutions and sponsoring institutions

The management level of the further education institutions and supporting structures responsible for the specific target groups is tasked in particular with identifying needs and interests and initiating corresponding offers (at the 3 levels) and – beyond bilateral partnerships – with actively contributing to cross-regional networking. In cooperation with the experts and representatives of external institutions, they are also responsible for evaluating the experience gained in the further development of interdisciplinary skills through cross-border interactions with the target groups internally and with the cooperation partner across borders. From this, they can draw conclusions for the improvement of measures, e.g. for the in-house further training program or to secure material and personnel resources.

It is also possible to further develop the network of cooperation and „internationalization“ of centers for family support and day care centers created as part of the government's Senior+ program. A number of such facilities have been established in the Euroregion, e.g. in Przytoczna, Skwierzyna, Witnica, Cybinka, Lubiszyn, Santock, Międzyrzecz, Słubice, Drezdenko, Sulęcín, Gorzów Wielkopolski, Różanki, Ługi, Stare Kurowo and Zwierzyń (MRiPS 2018).



Fig. 38: Use of digital media in the field of adult education (photo: Euroregion Archive)

Such facilities and day care centers as well as nursing homes form an almost ready-made basis for the further development of education in a cross-border context. However, it is necessary to provide support for the infrastructure investments of the supporting institutions as well as for training and further education of the staff, including ensuring the financing of additional staff positions.

External facilities

On both sides, there is an extensive cooperation between continuing education institutions and other regional educational institutions, museums, municipalities, chambers, authorities, companies and cross-border institutions. In this context, supra-regional institutions, e. g. municipalities and chambers, already take on many networking functions at a national level. It is fundamental to connect these networks and in particular to expand them across borders. They can also play a decisive role in identifying needs and developing offers, contribute particularly effectively to the evaluation and play an initiating and coordinating role in cooperation with the relevant authorities. It would furthermore be advantageous if this cooperation resulted in a methodology for the up-to-date and transparent promotion of offers, e. g. an Internet platform that brings together all further education offers available in the Euroregion for specific target groups or subjects. In the interest of reaching the potential group of people as comprehensively as possible, the network should also consider proactively approaching e. g. association members via NGOs or residents via municipal support structures.

Authorities (Ministry / Board of Trustees)

Since cross-border activities are particularly important for the development of interdisciplinary competences and consequently for the development of professionals, it is essential to give even more weight to such offers and their implementation. This extends, on the one hand,

to the expansion of industry-specific, company-related further training opportunities and, on the other hand, to the support of other groups of people of working age who can contribute to safeguarding the needs of skilled workers according to their individual interests.

Furthermore, the responsible national authorities should give more attention and recognition to the area of continuing education tailored to senior citizens. At over 20%, senior citizens represent a large proportion of the population with a wealth of professional experience. In view of the general shortage of skilled workers and the ability and willingness to work that is largely present in this group, they can be integrated into cross-border activities in a supportive manner. In addition, the task is to enable this group of people to participate in the dynamic development of the economy and society in an appropriate manner so that they can, for example, keep up with the technical possibilities of digitalization or deal with the diversity of information (e.g. fake news). Cross-border educational programs are also suitable for this. Ultimately, cross-border interactions represent a very good opportunity to contribute to the maintenance of physical performance and health through joint, preventative, health-promoting activities.

It should be mentioned at this point that the implementation of corresponding projects in the field of adult education, in particular with the involvement of external providers, may also contribute to the strengthening of regional value chains. However, it should also be noted that the participation of non-employed adults or seniors in such offers could be limited to a significant extent by individual precarious economic circumstances. In addition, certain cross-border offers may also require investments into infrastructure (e.g. rooms, equipment) of supporting institutions, so that appropriate funding programmes should be put in place for this purpose.

The ministries and the Board of Trustees also have the task of providing technical and organizational support to the institutions active in this sector, as well as helping to network institutions and evaluate cross-border activities.



Fig. 39: Students of the Karl-Liebknecht-High School advise seniors in the handling of tablets and smartphones (photo: Archive Euroregion)

4. Financing options

The measures derived in the present analysis cannot be implemented exclusively with the own resources of the educational institutions and their sponsors. In the explanations on the individual educational pathways, it can be seen that the organization of international trips, the enhancement of teachers' and instructors' skills or simply the implementation of encounters in all age groups in the sense of lifelong learning are associated with costs. The publication cannot provide a complete list of the sources of funding for these actions, but it should be noted that there are already several types of funding available for sponsoring institutions from both Germany and Poland in order to implement these projects.

EU funds



The **ERASMUS+** program provides European funding in order to support education, training, youth and sport in Europe. The ERASMUS+ program can be used by individuals or organisations in Europe to study abroad, do internships and gain work experience. Children, adults, seniors and vocational training can be supported.



More information about financing options can be found at <https://erasmus-plus.ec.europa.eu/>.

In Poland, the ERASMUS+ program is managed by the Foundation for the Development of the Education System (Fundacja Rozwoju Systemu Edukacji).

In Germany, four national agencies implement the ERASMUS+ program:

- the German Academic Exchange Service (Deutsche Akademische Austauschdienst (DAAD)), which also maintains an Eastern Partnership programme
- the Pedagogical Exchange Service (Pädagogische Austauschdienste (PAD))
- the Federal Institute for Vocational Education and Training (Bundesinstitut für Berufsbildung (BIBB)) and
- the agency YOUTH IN ACTION (JUGEND IN AKTION).

Scientific institutions can benefit from funding from the innovation program **HORIZON 2020**. This program also supports the European Researchers' Night, which takes place every year on the last Friday in September in many different cities across Europe: Universities and research institutes open their doors and give children and young people in particular the chance to get to know science and research in a fun way.



More information about financing options can be found under the link: <https://wayback.archive-it.org/12090/20220124075100/https://ec.europa.eu/programmes/horizon2020/>.



The **INTERREG VA Brandenburg-Poland Cooperation Program 2014-2020** (Kooperationsprogramm INTERREG VA Brandenburg-Polen 2014-2020) is the current cross-border funding program for the border region of East Brandenburg and the Lubuskie Voivodeship. It enables the realization of both investment projects and "soft" measures, in which a larger number of partners can be involved and which may also be realized over a multi-year period.

German-Polish Information about the program can be found under the following link:
<https://interregva-bb-pl.eu/>.



The EU funding period 2014–2020 is coming to an end, but it is already known that this type of funding will continue in the years 2021–2027. The INTERREG 2021–2027 follow-up program is already in preparation and it is assumed that interactive projects with an educational character will be able to benefit from the funds.

The Euroregion PRO EUROPA VIADRINA is able to provide and arrange financial support in various ways through its offices in Gorzów Wlkp. and Frankfurt (Oder). For example, the small project fund supported by the Euroregion makes it possible to finance a wide range of projects in areas close to the border in partnership with an institution from the other side of the border. This support for the civil society cooperation is currently funded by the aforementioned European cooperation program **INTERREG VA Brandenburg-Poland 2014–2020** (Euroregion PRO EUROPA VIADRINA 2020; <https://www.euroregion-viadrina.de/kpf/>). The maximum funding in the current funding period amounted to up to 15,000 euros and up to 25,000 euros for projects of particular importance. The target group of the small projects and the topics of the projects are wide ranging, from education, culture and cultural heritage to the environment and nature conservation.



Bi-national institutions

The **German-Polish Youth Office** (DPJW/PNWM), which was founded in 1991 by the Polish and German governments and supports youth encounters in the school and extracurricular field, has been an active supporter of German-Polish encounter projects for young people for 3 decades (cf. <https://dpjw.org/about-us/>).



Both the German and the Polish sponsoring associations of the Euroregion PRO EUROPA VIADRINA have the status of a central office of the German-Polish Youth Office (DPJW/PNWM). On the Polish side, support is available for school and extracurricular exchanges from within the Euroregion (the German partner can come from anywhere in Germany); on the German side, extracurricular exchanges are funded for institutions from all over Brandenburg.

The funds of the DPJW/PNWM come from the budgets of Poland and the Federal Republic of Germany (cf. <http://euroregion-viadrina.eu/>). The **Federal Association for Cultural Education for Children and Youth** (Bundesvereinigung Kulturelle Kinder- und Jugendbildung) also accepts DPJW/PNWM funding applications.

The **Foundation for German-Polish Cooperation** (Stiftung für deutsch-polnische Zusammenarbeit (SDPZ/FWPN)) supports joint projects of German and Polish institutions in the fields of society, business, environment, education, media and public, science and culture. German-Polish cooperation is also supported by competitions and scholarship programs (<https://fwpn.org.pl/en/>).





Both the SDPZ/FWPN and the DPJW/PNWM support projects of the association **Community for Student Exchange in Central and Eastern Europe** (Gemeinschaft für studentischen Austausch in Mittel- und Osteuropa e.V. (GFPS)), which organizes semesters abroad, language courses and internships for German students in Poland and for Polish students in Germany (cf. <https://www.gfps.org/>).



Other institutions include the **German-Polish Science Foundation** (Deutsch-Polnische Wissenschaftsstiftung) (<http://www.dpws.de/>) and the German-Polish Film Fund (Deutsch-Polnischer Filmfonds).

Poland

In the Republic of Poland, there are a number of programs and government projects to support activities, including international exchanges, support for Polonia for Poles living abroad, etc. Examples of projects aimed at schools, local governments and educational institutions include the following programs:

- Toddler+ (Maluch+),
- Active Blackboard (Aktywna Tablica),
- National Program for the Development of Reading (Narodowy Program Rozwoju Czytelnictwa),
- Meal at school and at home (Posiłek w szkole i w domu),
- Open Activity Zones (Otwarte Strefy Aktywności),



Tenders for public tasks of the Polish Ministry of National Education: <https://www.gov.pl/web/edukacja/zadania-publiczne-ogloszenia>

Voivodeship Lubuskie

The funding described in the publication for the development of the vocational training system as part of the Operational Program (cf. Chapter 3.3) and the changing EU funding period are a good time to examine the support of cross-border exchanges through regional funding sources. Many of the national projects would gain in value if they could be realized as a format between Brandenburg and Lubuskie.



In the Lubuskie Voivodeship, support for youth initiatives is currently available among others through the Młodzi On-Life program (<http://lubuskie.pl/strona-glowna/zalaw-spraw/menu-mlodziez/mlodzi-on-life/>).

Germany

The German Federal Government also makes funds available for various interactive and exchange projects. The Minister of State for Culture and Media provides 300,000 euros annually for the **German-Polish cultural exchange**. The projects are intended to contribute to the preservation and cultivation of the Polish language, culture and tradition in Germany and to deepen mutual knowledge of the cultures of both countries through dialogue. The focus is on topics of regional history and culture (<https://www.bundesregierung.de/breg-de/bundesregierung/staatsministerin-fuer-kultur-und-medien/deutsch-polnischer-kulturaustausch-483620>).



In the field of pilot projects for cultural education, projects can be funded in which cultural institutions strengthen diversity in terms of personnel, program and audience. The target group may include Polish immigrants (<https://www.bundesregierung.de/breg-de/bundesregierung/staatsministerin-fuer-kultur-und-medien/kultur/kulturelle-bildung/modellprojekte-forderern/modellprojekte-kulturelle-bildung-481804>).



Encounter opportunities in the areas of literature, music, culture and theater that deal with the **culture and history of Germans in Eastern Europe** can be promoted for adolescents and young adults (<https://www.bundesregierung.de/breg-de/bundesregierung/bundespresseamt/projektfoerderung-beantragen-973886>).



The **German-Polish Foundation for Cultural Conservation and Monument Protection** (Deutsch-Polnische Stiftung Kulturpflege und Denkmalschutz) uses its own or acquired funds for research, for the renovation, restoration, preservation and care of buildings of art-historical or cultural significance as well as church buildings and for the support of events (<https://deutsch-polnische-stiftung.de/wir-ueber-uns/>).



Brandenburg

In Brandenburg, international projects can receive funding, for example, through grants from the Ministry of Agriculture, Environment and Climate Protection (Ministerium für Landwirtschaft, Umwelt und Klimaschutz (MLUK)), the Ministry of Education, Youth and Sport (Ministerium für Bildung, Jugend und Sport (MBSJ)) as well as the Ministry of Finance and for Europe (Ministerium für Finanzen und für Europa (MdFE)). International student exchanges and trips from students to memorial sites in Poland can be funded by the MBSJ.

5. Summary and outlook

Against the background of the scientific, strategic and political framework conditions and respective national and bilateral efforts, there are special challenges in the direct border area of Poland and Germany, but also **opportunities in the field of education – lifelong learning**.

The topic of education represents a particularly important daily challenge for residents of all ages, for almost all public institutions, companies as well as other social groups. On the one hand, it is fundamental to find forward-looking solutions within the Euroregion in the context of demographic change and a shortage of skilled workers or the dynamics of digitisation and globalisation. On the other hand, the increase in cross-border links in civil society and the administrative or economic sphere requires additional competences and resources in order to master legal, cultural or linguistic differences. Despite the resulting need for action, the geographical proximity also offers opportunities, e. g. to acquire or further develop **key competences** sought by both countries for their inhabitants in the sense of a lifelong learning process. The systematic situation analysis of the subject area of education - lifelong learning carried out within the framework of the DIALOG project was essentially based on two pillars using the Euroregion PRO EUROPA VIADRINA as a case study.

On the one hand, the external **framework conditions** were examined to what extent they result in the need for action and/or scope for action for cross-border activities. To mention an example, scientific studies show that working in heterogeneous groups decisively promotes the training of interdisciplinary competences, including the appreciation of cultural diversity (cf. Chap. 2.3). In this context, the complex, lifelong process of developing **intercultural competence** plays a key role. Consequently, global, European, national and regional strategies were also geared to this (cf. Chap. 2.2). In this context, the United Nations Education 2030 Agenda and the EU's vision of a European Education Area 2025 should be highlighted. The national administrative and legal framework conditions in Poland and Germany also comply with this by offering a scope for action for cross-border activities (cf. Chap. 2.1 and 2.4).

On the other hand, the **analysis of the current situation in the Euroregion PRO EUROPA VIADRINA** formed an essential basis. For this purpose, the population structure of the more than 800,000 inhabitants was characterized in terms of age groups, educational programs and target groups, and the landscape of educational institutions was examined. Furthermore, current and/or ongoing cross-border activities have been evaluated in terms of promoting or inhibiting factors. The focus was placed on projects that have **an informal, non-formal or formal educational character**. To this end, the editorial team evaluated in particular projects funded by the DPJW /PNWM (extracurricular and school-based) and the EU (including the small project funds of the Euroregion PRO EUROPA VIADRINA from the cooperation program INTERREG VA Brandenburg - Lubuskie 2014 - 2020). As part of the project, workshops and technical discussions were held with experts from educational institutions in Germany and Poland, which made a significant contribution to enriching the content of this analysis. In addition, exemplary other (INTERREG) projects in European Euroregions and the experiences resulting from the commitment of the two supporting associations of the Euroregion PRO EUROPA VIADRINA were used to improve cross-border cooperation.

The findings from the analysis served to derive the **approaches** which are presented in this context in a structured manner according to the preschool, school, vocational, higher as well as adult education. The relevant chapters summarize not only the formal education courses but also the non-formal education offers for the respective age group. This also allowed the landscape of educational institutions and the differentiation of target groups to be presented in relation to these age groups. In line with scientific recommendations, the **approaches were assigned 3 levels** (cf. chapter 2.3), which should be applied in a complementary or consecutive manner for each target group.

For the **pre-school sector**, the analysis on the added value of early childhood education presented by the EU Commission in 2018 represents a groundbreaking basis for action (cf. Chapter 2.2 and 3.1). Accordingly, it has been proven that the participation in pre-school education has a direct positive effect on the development of key skills in children. Preschool thus lays the foundation for reading, writing, mathematics and language skills, for instance, but also for interdisciplinary skills and values, e. g. social and intercultural competence, teamwork and the ability to deal with conflict.

The approaches derived from the situation analysis therefore aim, among other things, to ensure that all children from the age of 4 (in 2019: approx. 30,181 German and Polish children) take part in cross-border interactions lasting several days at least once until they start school. This includes formal offers from daycare centers as well as non-formal activities from external educational providers at weekends and during the vacation period. As an example of an instructive approach which directly promotes the later development of competencies, it was proposed that a foreign language should also be introduced in German kindergartens starting from the age of 4 similar to the Polish side. In order to implement the objectives formulated in this context, it will be necessary to overcome several inhibiting factors. In addition to the inclusion of relevant activities in the pedagogical concepts and continuing education programs of the more than 400 childcare institutions, it is required to secure the personnel **skills and capacities**, including financial resources, to cope with the additional effort of cross-border interactions. On the basis of the type and scope of the previous commitment and in the interest of reaching all children in the pre-school sector, it shall be necessary to expand the already existing cooperation into a **network of actors**. For the development and expansion of the network, a euroregional cross-border **coordination platform** is recommended here, which relieves and supports the pre-school institutions by taking on general tasks and tapping synergies from improved coordination and cooperation between the large number of responsible institutions. Approaches to this also include advice, e. g. on the involvement of seniors, students and pupils, in order to cushion the need for personnel in education and care. They also provide for a cross-border evaluation of measures to ensure that the foreseeably limited resources can be used effectively in the future. Furthermore, they suggest involving competent authorities on both sides to provide expert support for the process and to take greater account of the services offered by museums, for example, as places of learning for the regional natural and cultural heritage.

An analogous spectrum of tasks results for the **school sector** in the Euroregion with approx. 83,000 students in 307 schools. Based on **international school partnerships**, further contacts are to be established between schools within the Euroregion in order to enable multi-day cross-border interactions for all school students. With regard to foreign language acquisition, the approach is that English can be used for communication in cross-border contacts if there is no possibility of communication in the preferred and suggested languages German and Polish. The municipalities concerned should receive support on a case-by-case basis when setting up continuous language courses for German or Polish, depending on existing offers or interests. School students also benefit from participating in cross-border interactions to acquire **interdisciplinary skills**. In the pre-school sector, age-appropriate joint activities are mostly

playful in nature. In contrast, in the school sector, age-group-specific content from the curricula can certainly be taken up for activities in mixed groups, especially as the curricula in both countries overlap. If the content of the curricula is taken into account, several project days or weeks can be designed in addition to the existing flexibility in the schools on both sides. As a guide for the type and scope of such project days, the aim should be to enable all school students to actively participate in cross-border interactions lasting several days at least once in primary, secondary and high schools. It also makes sense to integrate the **natural and cultural heritage**, as well as other educational offers in the Euroregion, e. g. in museums and memorials, to an even greater extent. Thus, the necessary expansion of cooperation here also extends to the creation of multilingual teaching materials and teaching materials suitable for intercultural exchange. School students in higher grades can even be involved in the development of such offers.

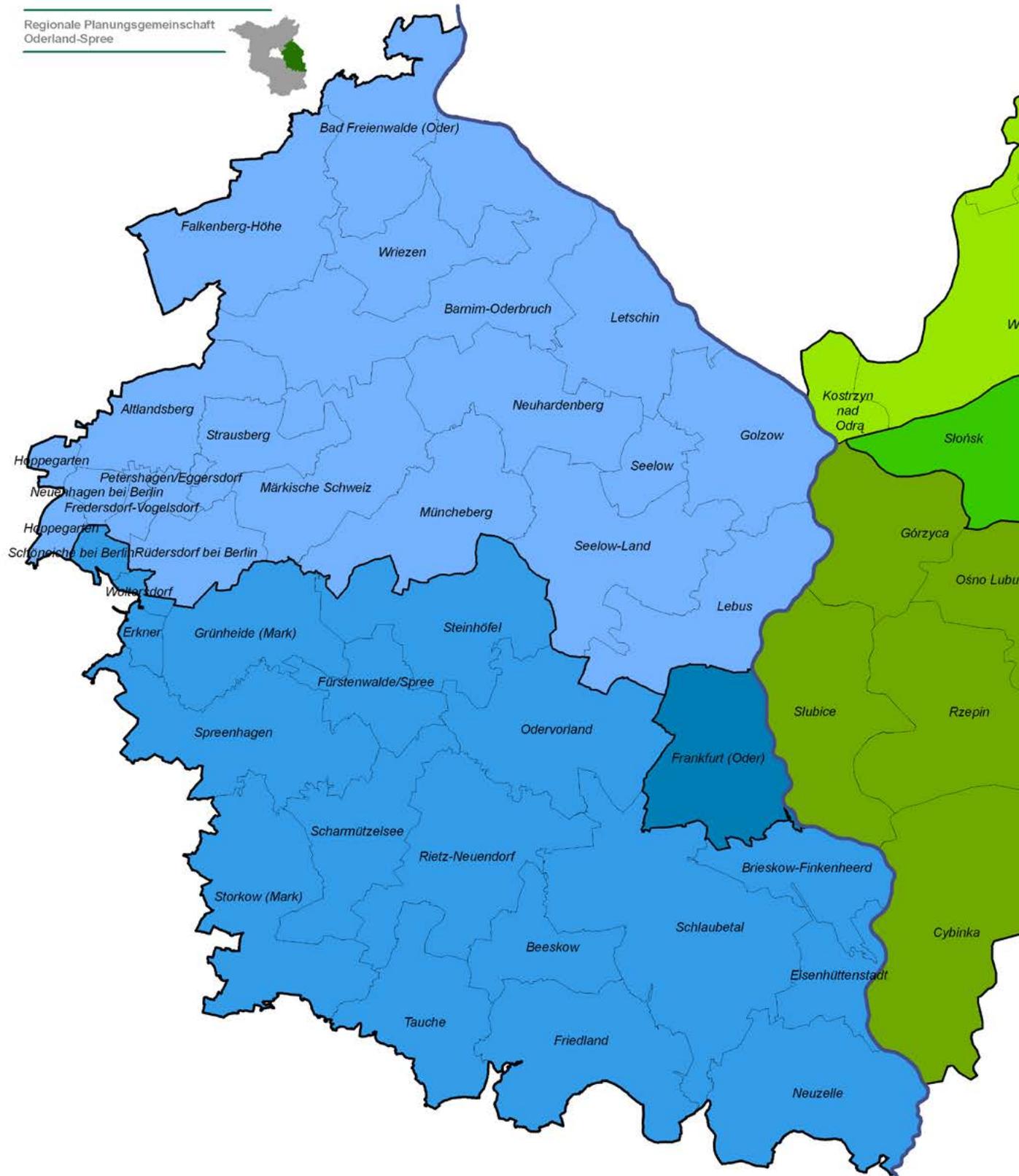
The areas of **vocational education** with approx. 18,600 trainees and **higher education** with approx. 9,300 students are characterized by the fact that subject-related points of contact (occupational groups or fields of study) only arise for a relatively small proportion of trainees or students. In addition, the curricula of occupational profiles and degree courses are comparatively diverse in terms of their theoretical and practical components. Thus, the potential for cross-border activities of a technical nature should be determined in more detail in future analyses. Cross-border activities should initially be primarily interdisciplinary in nature and be expanded so that all trainees and students can participate at least once during their training or studies and, in particular, acquire or further develop intercultural skills. For such **interdisciplinary interactions**, it is also recommendable to enable intercultural experiences by informal means through the joint examination of, for example, the natural and cultural heritage in the Euroregion. In these two educational pathways, there is also a corresponding organizational and conceptual effort both in the expansion of the offers and especially in their continuous implementation.

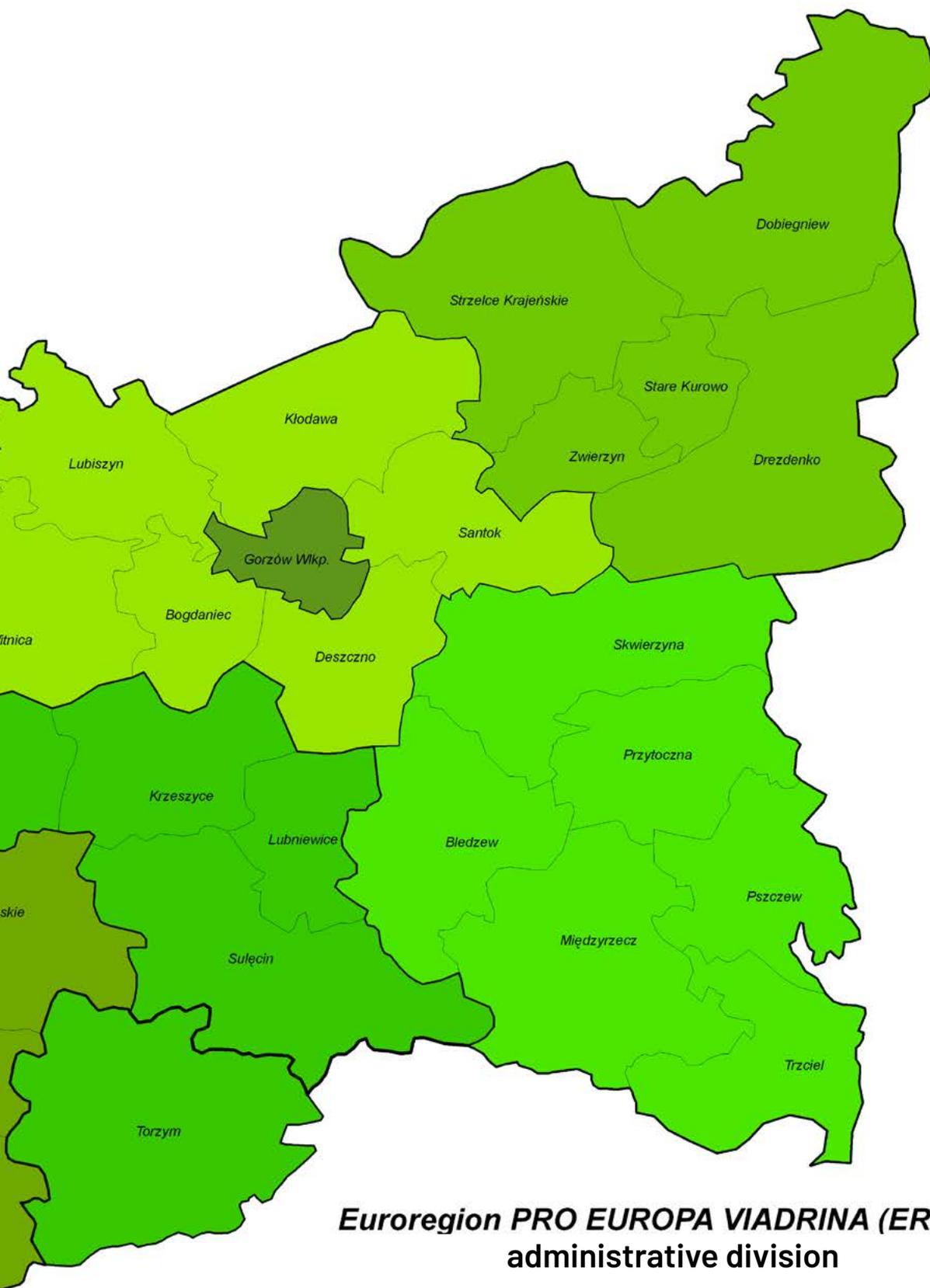
The **adult education** sector dominates in quantitative terms with over 659,000 inhabitants and also in terms of the great diversity of interests. People in employment are looking for further training in line with technical progress or better qualifications. People not in employment want to maintain their level of knowledge. Senior citizens want to participate fully in social life, remain healthy and active and keep pace with digitalization and the flood of information. It was not possible to differentiate these aspects in depth in this analysis. Based on the economic structure, it would be possible to filter out a wide range of different groups in the workforce alone for which there is a specific need for further training, e.g. for teachers, administrative staff, managers in the production sector and tourism service providers. However, there is already an extensive range of in-house training courses and external training courses on offer, which need to be examined for gaps. With regard to opportunities from cross-border activities, it became clear for adults on both sides of the Euroregion that they also extend to developing intercultural understanding, learning foreign languages and getting to know the natural and cultural heritage of the other side. Accordingly, the approaches are geared towards getting to know the natural and cultural heritage of the other side and are also informally linked to improving intercultural understanding through these German-Polish events. The expansion of cooperation and the networking of relevant actors and responsible authorities represent a further focus, which is initially geared towards identifying needs (e.g. regarding the type and scope of language courses) and developing offers, but also evaluating the measures. At this point, it should be emphasized that a **cross-generational approach** also has an advantageous effect on those involved in cross-border activities. Older people can, for example, pass on their experience to younger people or help to alleviate the shortage of skilled workers, while younger people can introduce older people to modern media and thus make it easier for them to participate in social life.

Suggestions for implementing the approaches listed here have been given in the individual chapters. Both sides have extensive opportunities to take advantage of education in the sense of lifelong learning. In addition to demand-oriented offers, there are a wide range of support options, e. g. through financial support (cf. chapter 4), further training measures during working hours, granting free time for further training. In a cross-border context, there remains great potential for the expansion of activities across all age groups with the aim of developing interdisciplinary skills, in particular intercultural and language skills, as well as raising awareness of cultural diversity in Europe. This is supported by the numerous events that have already been successfully held, but which have so far only reached a small proportion of the population. In order to tap into this potential and attract the relevant age groups to participate to an appropriate extent, the sponsoring institutions need to be supported in several ways in parallel. The necessary range of measures has been outlined in the chapters. It ranges from the networking of relevant actors, further training and the exchange of experience between teachers, through needs assessment and the development of offers, to evaluation. In detail, this also includes, for example, the mentoring of school students or trainees abroad, the opening up of events for the participation of third parties in order to provide them with experience via an „educational walk“, the development of **complete packages for cross-border interactions** similar to the package deals offered by „travel agencies“ in order to relieve the burden on educational institutions, the underpinning of this concept through in-depth data analyses or feasibility studies in order to find effective solutions for specific areas or to develop a basis for evaluation. Ultimately, the implementation of these approaches will also entail investments in teaching materials, building infrastructure or equipment. Regular financial support for the development of building infrastructure, teaching materials, equipment and facilities to improve the quality of education in the border region is also essential, as is the search for sources of funding for the measures listed in this analysis

A coordinating platform consisting of Polish and German institutions at all relevant levels would also be recommended for this development and expansion phase; the specific cooperation platforms for the relevant age groups should emerge from this network. Following this phase, the structures should be capable of acting, the procedures practiced and the educational success measurable. In any case, there is still a permanent effort to maintain contacts and to secure the financial and personnel resources for the activities, which usually goes beyond the current regular operations in the educational institutions and requires appropriate support. Based on the fact that **investment in education** is seen on both sides as an essential basis for the further development of the region, the implementation of the approaches identified here would make a concrete contribution, e. g. to mitigating the consequences of the shortage of skilled workers, and make use of a significant **opportunity arising from the situation in the border region**. The inclusion of the natural and cultural heritage in the Euroregion would also have a positive impact on its appreciation.

6. Euroregion PRO EUROPA VIADRINA





**Euroregion PRO EUROPA VIADRINA (ER PEV)
administrative division**

Border of the Euroregion
PRO EUROPA VIADRINA



Borders of administrative divisions

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miasto GORZÓW WLKP.

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powiat GORZOWSKI

Landkreis ODER-SPREE



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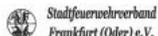
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