



Resituating the Local in Cohesion and Territorial Development



Case Study Report

The EPA Alzette-Belval

**A National Tool to Address Spatial Disparities at the
Lorraine-Luxembourg Border**

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Abbreviations

BE	Belgium
CCPHVA	<i>Communauté de communes du Pays-Haut Val d'Alzette</i> , Association of municipalities including Audun-le-Tiche, Aumetz, Boulange, Ottange, Rédange, Russange, Thil, Villerupt
DE	Germany
EC	European Commission
EFRD	European Fund for Regional Development
EGTC	European Grouping of Territorial Cooperation
EPA	<i>Etablissement public d'aménagement</i> , state planning agency
EPCI	<i>Etablissement public de coopération intercommunale</i> , public agency association
EPFL	<i>Etablissement public foncier de Lorraine</i> , Lorraine region public land management agency
ESF	European Social Fund
EU	European Union
FR	France
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
LAU	Local Administrative Unit
LU	Luxembourg
NUTS	Nomenclature of Territorial Units for Statistics
OIN	Operation of National Interest
ProSUD	Association of municipalities in the south-western part of Luxembourg (Bettembourg, Differdange, Dudelange, Esch-sur-Alzette, Käerjeng, Kayl, Mondercange, Pétange, Rumelange, Sanem, Schifflange), adjacent to CCPHVA
PSO	<i>Plan stratégique opérationnel</i> , strategic operational plan
R&D	Research and Development
SGI	Services of General Interest
SME	Small and Medium-Sized Enterprises

Executive Summary

Since 2012, the EPA Alzette-Belval has embedded the strategy developed by public actors from all levels to trigger development and regain strategic room for manoeuvre in the context of steady growth in Luxembourg. The 8 municipalities under scrutiny – the association of municipality “*Pays Haut Val d’Alzette*”, with 28,000 inhabitants – are marked by deindustrialisation and the attractiveness of Luxembourg’s economy, which overflows its national boundaries. The vast majority of the workforce is driven to Luxembourg, and pressure on public amenities is growing.

The EPA is a state-led agency with the capacity to “take back” planning responsibilities from other administrative levels to plan specific areas. This instrument is unique in the French planning system as all levels remain involved in the governance structure and as the EPA brings technical expertise and financial resources to the locality. This case study scrutinises on how the EPA can represent a leverage for greater spatial justice within and beyond the locality, in the context of growing cross-border interdependencies. What does spatial justice mean in a cross-border context? How equitable can a cross-border area be?

For a couple of years, a shared awareness of the locality’s needs has reached all levels of governance from the local to the national level. **The dedicated instrument**, the EPA, is equipped with the regulatory and financial capacity to act. It holds also legitimacy, know-how and expertise. It is well accepted by formal stakeholders in the locality and in the broader regional and cross-border context. The EPA appears as an appropriate tool to ensure **development in a coordinated manner**, considerate of **sustainability**, and **limited use of agricultural land**, thus avoiding urban sprawl and scattered urbanism.

Yet, the EPA is challenged to find appropriate means to 1) inform the public of its activities; 2) develop a participatory approach when using the diverging opinions as a resource for implementing its projects. Its action partly overlooks current social inequalities (as they are not part of its direct objectives), while CCPHVA and the municipalities are challenged to face them (e.g. financially).

In the long run, its capacity to **support the development of public services** for the local population in terms of **development of residential economy** and **public infrastructure is highly dependent on 1) CCPHVA’s and the municipalities’ effective room for manoeuvre** (politically, institutionally and financially); 2) the collaboration with public stakeholders in Luxembourg when it comes to cross-border public services (i.e. transport, economic attractiveness).

1. Introduction

Since 2012, the EPA Alzette-Belval has embedded the strategy developed by public actors from all levels to trigger development and regain strategic room for manoeuvre in the context of steady growth in Luxembourg in a periurban locality, the “*Pays Haut Val d’Alzette*”. The latter gathers together 8 peri-urban/rural municipalities. It borders Luxembourg, is close to *Sillon lorrain*¹ in the east and the border with Belgium in the west (Map 1).

In Lorraine, this locality is one of most affected by the attractiveness of Luxembourg. Its local economy has not really managed to recover from the deindustrialisation (mining and steel), so that it has long been suffering from outward migration, and a lack of investment both from public and private sectors. The progressive strengthening of Luxembourg’s financial centre slowly appeared as an opportunity for employment. The majority of the active population works there (Map 2). The locality is increasingly affected by the growth of this agile economy.

Launched in 2012 under the impetus of the French President, the EPA Alzette Belval (“the EPA”) is an operation of national interest (OIN). **Under planning law, such a structure is equipped with the capacity to take over planning responsibilities from the municipalities in order to fulfil a specific set of goals.** The EPA has three main objectives: 1) establishing a planning strategy with the capacity to reinforce the local economic and social attractiveness by improving local living conditions of the existing and future population and by developing public services in the fields of transport and housing in complementarity with other neighbouring territories; 2) establishing an exemplary sustainable eco-agglomeration; 3) contributing to the economic strength of northern-Lorraine by developing specific sectors (e.g. the green economy) in complementarity with Luxembourg’s economy (EPA Strategic Operational Plan).

Even though spatial justice is not explicit, the strategy is designed in such a way that it aims to tackle different forms of disparities and to increase spatial justice in the long run). The OIN is a planning law measure aiming at promoting “*sustainable planning and development in territories of national interest*” (Code de l’urbanisme, L. 321-14). Designed by all the public stakeholders involved, **the “strategic operational plan” (PSO) guides the implementation of the strategy** for 7 years. High-priority projects are defined and financially resourced from the latter, especially in terms of land use and support to create public services (e.g. housing, transport), thus referring to the distributive aspect of spatial justice. Such projects are designed to serve both the current population in all its diversity (e.g. from the elderly suffering from poor housing conditions to commuters affected by congested traffic) but also the future population, for whom housing is constructed. It therefore operates on both current disparities and to prevent the creation of future inequalities (temporal dimension of spatial justice). It formally links stakeholders from the local to the national level, while linking the municipalities only informally, thus questioning the procedural side of spatial justice.

From reconvertng former *cités minières* to planning Eco neighbourhoods, it engages in consultation processes with local inhabitants. At first sight, given the rapid raise in land prices, the EPA aims first to **ensure consistent management of land use, to avoid urban sprawl and poor-quality housing construction.**

In the medium term, the overall intention is to steer the development of a cross-border agglomeration, by initiating ambitious cross-border projects in the framework of the EGTC Alzette-Belval. The latter is very much in line with the EU regional policy. All in all, **plan-**

¹ Metropolitan association gathering the cities of Thionville, Metz, Nancy and Epinal

ning is de facto conceived as the paramount leverage to address temporal, distributive and procedural injustices.

Within the broader context of Lorraine, the EPA strategy is connected to several other strategies. The protection of mining bassins in northern Lorraine (Préfecture de Région Lorraine, 2005) involves predicting the conditions under which territorial development can be initiated in the context of polluted and sensitive areas. It is supported in this endeavour by EPFL, the Lorraine region's public land management agency, which buys land for future redevelopment projects. This is also congruent with the national policy aimed at decontaminating industrial brownfield sites. The EPA is one of the localities involved in the "EcoCité", the nationally-designed strategy which provides institutional support, financing urban integrated projects in the fields of environment and innovation. It aims to create resilient cities, preserving the environment, social cohesion and inhabitants' quality of life (Ministère de la cohésion des territoires et des relations avec les collectivités territoriales, 2017). Finally, this action is connected to the national strategy promoting the improvement of private housing (e.g. heat insulation) via financial support to private owners (National Housing Agency).

The action is convergent with that of others in Lorraine seeking to rebalance the Lorraine-Luxembourg cross-border interdependencies. Besides the fact that the creation of enterprises is much less favourable and simple in France than in Luxembourg (e.g. tax system, employer costs, paper work, lower salaries), localities close to the border are more dependent on Luxembourg's economy as their share of commuters can range between 50% and 80%. As tax is withheld at the source in Luxembourg, **French municipalities face the challenge of sustaining public services for which they have the main responsibility** (e.g. primary schools, facilities to host health care services, local transport infrastructure, support for facilities for sport and cultural activities). Bilateral agreements exist between some countries to organise a tax redistribution towards the municipalities that are the most affected (e.g. between France and Switzerland; Luxembourg and Belgium) but not between France and Luxembourg. While France has not officially commented on the matter of tax redistribution, some mayors from northern Lorraine have publicly expressed themselves in favour of such an agreement². Luxembourg has so far always opposed to it, but several Luxembourg policy makers have however expressed their willingness to co-finance infrastructure projects in the future (e.g. high-level service busses)³. Against this backdrop, the need to articulate a common Lorraine position towards Luxembourg has been paramount for about a decade (Evrard, 2017). Several initiatives have been taken up in this respect: the creation of a cross-border metropolitan centre under French law (since 01.01.19), and a ministerial initiative is ongoing to define a consistent Lorraine strategy based on a deep consultation process. In this particular context, the role of the EPA to sustainably plan the development of rather small periurban municipalities ensures that their interests – and those of similar types of municipalities – are echoed in the strategic decision-making planning for Lorraine. Would they have had been heard in these highly political discussions without the EPA? How far is the EPA able to address these municipalities' development challenges and to serve the inhabitants? We aim to offer responses to these questions in the following pages.

² For instance, a banner claiming for a "fair distribution of border taxation" hangs at the forefront of the city hall of Villerupt.

³ Public debate organised by IDEA foundation, 11.09.2018, www.fondation.idea.lu.

2. Methodological Reflection

In French, “*justice*” is firstly associated with the exercise of law, and the complementary power to legislate and implement. “*Justice spatiale*” often leaves interviewees doubtful, questioning themselves about whether it makes sense to consider how justice is exercised in space. Is justice expressed unevenly in space? In a country where equality is a common value-related part of the national motto, referring to “*justice spatiale*” leads to manifold questions. This notion makes sense to interviewees once it is mentioned, in the course of the interview, after they have described unequal access to public services, that there is a need to construct “shared governance”, to build a “win-win” relationship with Luxembourg, to “co-construct a cross-border agglomeration”. To tackle the RELOCAL questions, it therefore proved more effective to address issues such as **local development, inequalities and disparities** in the first instance.

The author of this report has coordinated and undertaken the empirical work. Cyril Blondel provided ad hoc support (detailed information in Table 4, p.37). She has benefited from her deep knowledge of this cross-border area, having been studying it for different projects since 2009, and being involved in other parallel projects (INTERREG A Uni.GR Center for Border Studies, external expert in INTERREG VA SDT-GR, ESPON Contact Point Luxembourg).

The empirical work was conducted in three phases (detailed information in annexes 8.1, 8.2, 8.3), every one of them involving documentation research (i.e. review of the academic literature, desktop research) and semi-structured expert interviews.

For the main field work, additional methods have been used:

1. **Exploratory field work: selection of the action** (September 2017).
2. **Pilot field work: testing the RELOCAL manual** (November 2017 – January 2018).
3. **Conducting the field work** (January – October 2018).
 - Walking interviews with inhabitants and civil servants to capture the interviewees’ relationship to space (e.g. emotions, knowledge, experience) (Jones et al., 2008) and to encourage spontaneous discussions (Kinney, 2017).
 - Cooperation with an artist to reconsider our understanding of the border, confront experiences of it and transcend the limits of academia and disciplinary anchorage. This particular cooperation was conducted both by Estelle Evrard and Cyril Blondel.

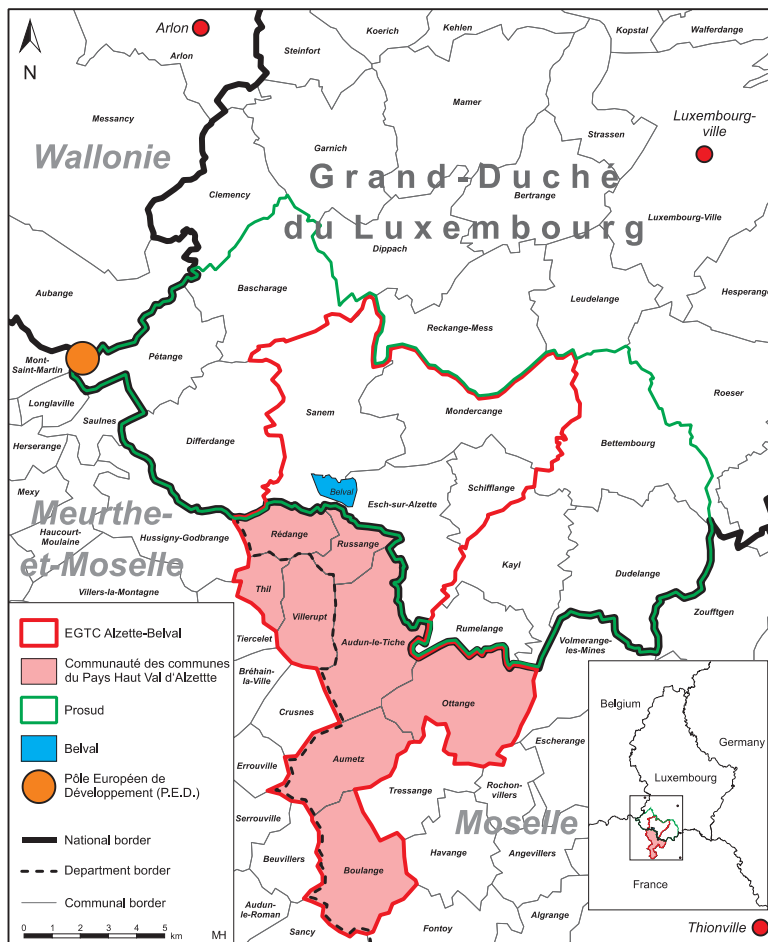
For all methods, notes were taken, recordings were made when possible, subject to ethical considerations, with no transcripts.

3. CCPHVA: from a past shaped by industry to a present shaped by the neighbour

3.1 A small European melting-pot

A: "I was born in Audun-(le-Tiche), in 1942. When I go to the town hall in Audun, my civil status is German... It was in Germany, that's the history. I'm not German, though.
B. No, you're Italian, it's different!" (field visit 19.07.2018)

The locality under scrutiny is composed of 8 periurban municipalities located in the northern part of Lorraine (FR), along the border with Luxembourg. It is located around 25 kilometres from the Belgium border on the west and around 35 kilometres from the main urban axis in Lorraine, the "Lorraine sillon" (Thionville-Metz-Nancy) (Map 1). It faces the second most populated city in Luxembourg, Esch-sur-Alzette and its main development area, Belval, a converted former steel industry site – part of which remains operated by Arcelor Mittal. Due to the presence of iron ore, the steel industry developed in this region, the south-western part of Luxembourg, which is nowadays the second growth centre in the country after the agglomeration of Luxembourg (area in green on Map 1).



Map 1: The locality (CCPHVA and EPA) in its national and cross-border administrative context. Cartography: Malte Helfer, University of Luxembourg.

Their incentive to amalgamate in 2004 was “pragmatic”. While French territorial administration reforms had pressed municipalities to cooperate since the 2000s, these municipalities wanted to avoid coming under the influence of bigger or of politically divergent municipalities (Longwy on one side and Thionville on the other side). “Pays-Haut Val d’Alzette” – this T-shaped cluster – is composed of three types of municipalities. Audun-le-Tiche, Rédange, Russange and Villerupt share landscape and urban commonalities: they are periurban, located in the Alzette Valley (“Val d’Alzette”) along the border with Luxembourg. The former steelworks of Micheville are located between them (Picture 4, p. 49). This brownfield site – one of the most iconic in the region given that it contributed to changing the identity of the locality – is the EPA’s leading redevelopment project (cover picture). Further to the east, also in the valley and bordering Luxembourg (i.e. Rumelange), Ottange was also marked by the steel industry (three blast furnaces), but is more rural and with a more steep-sided in the valley. The other municipalities, Aumetz and Boulange are located on the plateau (“Pays-Haut”). Iron mines were also situated there but as in most parts of Lorraine (Marochini, 2018), local authorities have dismantled the former industrial sites.

This locality is anchored in a broader region – Saarland, Lorraine, Luxembourg and Wallonia – also deeply marked by the legacy of the steel and coal industries which, for about a century until the mid-1960s contributed to the economic growth of these four countries⁴. The region’s name “Saar-Lor-Lux” (that is known since 1995 as the “Greater Region”) was first coined by a leading figure of Saarland’s mining industry, Hubertus Rolshoven. He used to associate it with the word “*Montandreieck*” (“steel and coal triangle”) to indicate the strong economic connectedness of the regions (Niedermeyer, 2010). This industrial past structured the economy, the society and the balance between social groups (Moine, 1990). In the locality more precisely, workers and their families mainly from Italy (e.g. Umbria, Marche) would settle up either on the French or Luxembourg side, workers would work one day on one side, one day on the other (interview H1).

Control over these resources and for the industry played a role in territorial conflicts. This northern part of the Lorraine region is one of those France and Germany fought for in 1870-71, in 1914-18 and in 1939-1945. Some of the municipalities have switched five times in the last 150 years. The former border between these two countries crosses the CCPHVA perimeter and retains some significance, as we will elaborate on later (Picture 1).

⁴ For the purpose of this report, we focus on the developments in Lorraine and Luxembourg as they are key to understand the current situation in the locality under scrutiny.



Picture 1: Urban continuity between Villerupt (Meurthe et Moselle département) and Audun-le-Tiche (Moselle département) (yellow boundary stone). At this junction, there used to be the border between France and Germany between 1870 and 1919 (June 2018, Estelle Evrard).

Name of Case Study Area	<i>Communauté de communes du Pays-Haut Val d'Alzette (CCPHVA)</i> , Association of municipalities including Audun-le-Tiche, Aumetz, Boulangé, Ottange, Rédange, Russange, Thil, Villerupt
Size	72.9 km ²
Total population (2016)	28,113 inhabitants, 2013
Population density (2016)	385.7 inhabitants/km ² , 2013
Level of development in relation to wider socioeconomic context <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Disadvantaged within a developed region/city? Disadvantaged within a wider underdeveloped region? 	Disadvantaged within a developed region/city
Type of the region (NUTS3-Eurostat) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Predominantly urban? Intermediate? Predominantly rural? 	NUTS 3-region Meurthe et Moselle (FR411) and NUTS 3-region Moselle (FR413) Intermediate
Name and Identification Code of the NUTS-3 area, in which the locality is situated (NUTS 3 Code(s) as of 2013)	Lorraine, FR41
Name and Identification Code of the NUTS-2 area, in which the locality is situated (NUTS 2 Code(s) as of 2013)	Intermediate

Table 1: Basic socio-economic characteristics of the area (Source: own research based on epa-alzette-belval.fr and annuaire.marie.fr).

3.2 A region shaped by industry

In Luxembourg, the steel industry allowed the country to shift from a mainly agricultural economy to an industrial economy in the second half of the 19th century. The economic

growth contributed to providing the country's independence⁵. In **Lorraine**, the industry used to produce 2/3 of the French steel production in the mid-1960s, France being the fourth European producer behind the USSR, Western Germany and the UK (Raggi, 2017). While this industry was operational, a number of cross-border economic and transport ties used to exist between the different companies operating in this cross-border area (Wittenbrock, 2010). Interdependencies were also social, since many families would be spread on different sides of the border, not to mention the high number of foreign workers, from Italy, Portugal, Poland and Maghreb who immigrated to Lorraine and Luxembourg to work in the industry (if necessary, workers would cross the border to change employer), (H 1). This social diversity and constant mobility between the action area and the neighbouring municipalities of ProSUD⁶ remain a key characteristic of this locality, contributing to its landscape, culture and heritage.

Following the economic crisis in the steel and coal industry which began in the late 1960s and became entrenched following the oil crises (mid-1970s), the locality faced the challenge of defining a new path for its economy. **The development of the southern part of Luxembourg was shaped by a service-driven economy.** This transition from industry towards service was initiated by the state in the 1980s. In about 30 years, the country has set up a **financial centre** that is now viewed as a 'global specialist' (Hesse, 2013: 616). "It is one of the leading private banking centres of the Eurozone, the second largest mutual fund centre in the world behind the US, and the leading captive reinsurance market in the European Union (EU)" (Hesse, 2013: 616, quoting Walther et al., 2011: 128). The financial centre drives the need for qualified labour from abroad, taking either the form of foreign residents (in 2018, 47.9% of residents were foreigners) and commuters from Belgium, Germany and Lorraine (46% of the workforce; LISER, 2018). In spatial terms, Hesse observes a metropolisation process (Hesse, 2013). One of the attempts of Luxembourg government to plan its development is embedded in its planning strategy under revision to deconcentrate Luxembourg city while revitalising the south of the country (Ministry of Spatial Development, 2003). The Belval project – located *vis-à-vis* the locality – was initiated in the early 2000s. It consists in the redevelopment of a brownfield site located at the periphery of Esch-sur-Alzette (second city in Luxembourg) into one large-scale urban project (Leick, 2015). It represents a symbol of the country's strategy to diversify its economy, as the government decided to locate there the leading public institutions involved in research and innovation there.

On the other side, the deindustrialisation of Lorraine went through several phases. This process was brutal, as the rationalisation of the main steel companies in the 1960s and early 1970s first contributed to production efficiencies, thus reinforcing the factories with cutting-edge equipment (Moine, 1990). Longwy, bordering on the locality under scrutiny, benefitted at first from this development (Raggi, 2017: 15). The 1972 and 1973 shocks to the world economy hit the Lorraine steel industry in 1974. Several state-led economic plans lead to the *de facto* nationalisation of the steel industry. Workers' despair was expressed in numerous demonstrations (1978 and 1979). Social consequences were only partially softened by the setting up of a social protection plan (1979). Between 1974 and 1980, employment decreased by more than 35%. From this period onwards the steady decline of both employment and value-added in industry unfolded (Le Blanc, 2011, p. 83). Since the industry moved partly towards northern France (i.e. Fos-sur-Mer) to reduce transportation costs, emigration to other (mainly French) regions started. During the

⁵ "Honour to those who through their work and their death in the mines, factories and workshops have built up the economic foundation to our independence" inscription on the front of the main museum in Esch-sur-Alzette.

⁶ Association of municipalities in the south-western part of Luxembourg (Bettembourg, Differdange, Dudelange, Esch-sur-Alzette, Käerjeng, Kayl, Mondercange, Pétange, Rumelange, Sanem, Schifflange). It is adjacent to CCPH-VA.

1980s, the government supported the deep restructuring of the industry with 5-years plans and nationalisation or privatisations. On the social dimension, successive social programmes attempted to accompany this deep societal transformation as discussion on the economic diversification of the region unfolded.

3.3 Metropolisation across borders & spatial disparities

Following deep restructuring and modernisation, the steel industry required far fewer employees. Local growth became more and more dependent on employment provided on the Luxembourg side. In 2016, Lorraine accounted for 88,779 commuters working in Luxembourg (CESER, 2016, Map 2). The metropolisation characterising the agglomeration of Luxembourg city goes beyond the borders of the country to create a cross-border region (ESPON/University of Luxembourg, 2010). One manifestation of this phenomenon is the fact that the economy in the municipalities of CCPHVA is mainly residential economy, depending to a large extent on growth from Luxembourg (Map 2: Urban settlement, growth poles and flows in the French region “Grand Est”. Source: INSEE, 2016:11 (authors’ own translation of the legend); INSEE, 2016: 9). Negative effects of these interdependencies are increasing. The most visible negative impacts are traffic congestion, overloaded public transports and pollution. The less visible impacts have a deeper impact on the locality’s room for manoeuvre: rising housing prices and the attractiveness of Luxembourg’s salaries that dry up the work force from the municipalities close to the border.

“The issue of territorial inequalities is very strong, it is palpable. When you go from France to Luxembourg, you are really in quite different worlds. This reality is reflected in socioeconomic trends. We face a colossal paradox: the population moves in this territory, which however loses employment in absolute value. Employment is being drained by Luxembourg, with all the disorders this can mean” (F2, Map 5, p.45).

The locality welcomes new population in search of cheaper prices on the real estate market than in Luxembourg (i.e. demographic growth is mostly driven by incoming population, Map 5, p. 45). Most of the municipalities have developed housing projects on agricultural land, leading to sprawl and diversification of the built environment. At the same time, stakeholders agree on the fact that many houses built under the auspices of the steel industry (mining areas) needs to be adapted to modern standards (e.g. size of the rooms, thermal insulation, sanitary equipment) and to daily needs (urban facilities). Within the last 10-15 years, newly created housing estates have added to the diversity of the settlement and to the diversity of the population (e.g. active population with families, mainly French in municipalities like Boulange and Ottange, commuters, with busy schedules and higher revenues, participant observation 31.05.2018, 14.11.2018, PI 26). Following the financial and economic crisis (2008) as well as the raising of housing prices in Luxembourg, families of Portuguese descent moved from Luxembourg to the city centre of Villerupt, creating also new needs in terms of social inclusion and languages skills in the municipality (PI 40).



Picture 2 (left): View of mining neighborhoods in the city of Villerupt. The EPA supports redevelopment works in some of them, March 2018, Estelle Evrard. **(Right):** Bassompierre neighbourhood, Boulangé. September 2018, Estelle Evrard.

As the locality is the second ‘entry point’ to Luxembourg, a large amount of the almost 100,000 commuters from France pass through the CCPHVA to work every day, creating pollution, congestion and pressure on roads. The investment in public transport services has been lagging behind for years on both sides (INTERREG VA MUSST project). Furthermore, the municipalities have not been able to adapt public transportation (i.e. footpaths and other soft mobility options, parking spaces), so that the car is the primary transport mode in the locality; nor have they been able to adapt public facilities (e.g. green space, public space). There is only one operational railway station (i.e. Audun-le-Tiche, operated and restored by the Luxembourg railway company since 1992, with poor connections, and with trains going only to the neighbouring city of Esch-sur-Alzette). There are three cross-border bus lines operated and financed under the Luxembourg bus system. Limited access to health care professionals (e.g. general practitioners, nurses, physiotherapists) is also problematic in the locality. The population is ageing (Observatoire régional de la santé et des affaires sociales en Lorraine, 2016). The locality faces the problem of attracting new professionals. French hospitals are located 30 minutes away, Luxembourg hospital is located 5-10 minutes away, but the administrative burden for non-cross-border workers and their families often prevents people from using this service, raising inequalities between inhabitants of the same locality.

3.4 The Locality with regards to Dimensions 1 & 2

Analytical Dimension 1: Perception of spatial (in-)justice within the locality

In the locality, the most commonly shared feeling of injustice is certainly, especially on the side of local formal stakeholders, that of **not being masters of their territory’s own fate**. This feeling reflects the challenges that have been faced by this territory for several decades. Formal and informal stakeholders were powerless in the face of the end of mining and steel industry:

“I experienced the period of the closure of the factories, I experienced the total collapse of a municipality like Thil with the number of inhabitants which fell sharply. There were 3,660 inhabitants at the height of industrial development, then we went down to 1,500 inhabitants. (...) We really suffered from the end of the mines and the steel industry. (...) I know what it is like to close classes, to see businesses close, to see people leave, I've experienced it” (PI 24).

Attempts to attract and/or maintain industries in the territory have been unsuccessful despite the mobilisation of local and regional decisionmakers.

“In the political struggles, there were struggles for reindustrialisation. What we wanted was to recreate industrial activity, that's what we had lived on, we couldn't bear the idea of no longer having these big factories that employed workers. It was this that we had to mourn.” (PI 24).

This feeling concurs with the current development of the locality more and more dependent on Luxembourg.

“The proximity of Luxembourg is an opportunity for the territory, it would be insane to deny it. However, you would be blind not to see the consequences of the mode of development on the border territory. (...) The Grand Duchy has developed like other major urban centres around the world. But unlike other metropolises, this metropolisation spills over into neighbouring countries, and does so without consultation with the territories on which it spills over. This phenomenon raises various issues: mobility, of course, but also health, vocational training.” (PI 4).

The consequences of Luxembourg's attractiveness are perceived by local and regional formal stakeholders as unfair in many ways (Evrard, 2018). Especially when it comes to health care, nurses and doctors are increasingly attracted to practising in Luxembourg, because of salaries and working conditions (PI 3, 4, 24). This is perceived as unfair, as this territory is lacking these professionals (e.g. ageing doctors and ageing population, Observatoire régional de la santé et des affaires sociales en Lorraine, 2016) and since their vocational and professional training has been financed by and within the region. The cooperation between Member States' social security services is considered operational but very inconvenient for several interviewees who reported having to obtain authorisation from the French social security system before visiting a doctor in Luxembourg and long waiting times to receive reimbursement. More broadly, the most common sense of injustice that is currently felt among formal stakeholders in Lorraine, is that of **supporting in two ways the costs of numerous infrastructures that partly benefit to Luxembourg's economy**. Firstly, for the municipalities whose active population is mostly working in Luxembourg, it supports the costs of local infrastructures (e.g. roads, school, water, electricity, telephone, internet networks, sport and cultural facilities). Secondly, Luxembourg's attractiveness impacts transport, planning, professional training but also retail. With regard to citizens' requests for improved public services:

“We will not be able to do as well as in Luxembourg, we will never be able to do so unless we can make progress on tax concessions. (...) When people want to buy a plot of land, they ask around. When they make this choice, they know that there is a school, day-care, they ask for broadband internet etc. We take all these risks, we give them the opportunity to live in a beautiful setting, close to the border, but on the other hand, Luxembourg does not take this into account, it does not care, how people will get to work, it does not care. So, this taxation would be fair and would give us the chance to no longer feel depressed and uncomfortable towards our fellow citizens” (PI 24).

Establishing a mechanism – that would be both institutional and financial – for Luxembourg to support funding of public services in Lorraine is therefore a priority for a majority of public stakeholders in northern Lorraine (PI 3, 4, 10, 13, 22, 24, 31).

Social cohesion between the current and future populations is another concern. Since the new inhabitants come from further away in France or other countries to live in the locality and work in Luxembourg, several local formal stakeholders fear it becoming a dormitory town.

"We suffer from being dormitory towns. I've been pretty upset lately. We organise lots of different events to attract the population to concerts and plays. We did a concert that cost us a little money, and we had 30 people in the room. People don't move." (PI 24).

Connected to this is the feeling that incoming inhabitants are joining the towns more by opportunity (i.e. that of being closer to the border) than by commitment. New inhabitants working in Luxembourg refer to their busy work and family schedules and the limited time to get better acquainted with other inhabitants, the locality and its heritage (field visit 22.09.2018). Local formal stakeholders are therefore aware of the need to both answer the specific needs of this population and to ensure cohesion with the current population (measures are detailed under section 2).

The locality is composed of rather heterogenous communities, whose paths do not necessarily cross in daily life. This situation relates to the topographical diversity that do not only creates diversity in the landscape; it impacts the way individuals come together or not. This situation is reinforced by the former border between France and Germany splitting the locality in two (two municipalities in Meurthe-et-Moselle, France; 6 municipalities in Moselle, formerly Germany). Even though this difference is viewed by formal and informal stakeholders as rather limited, it impacts people's habits, centres of gravity (e.g. shopping, cultural affinity).

"The people in Audun are not tempted by Longwy, the attraction is Thionville, whether for lawyers, doctors or school. The same goes for medical specialists and the hospital. In people's minds, 57, 54 (Moselle, Meurthe et Moselle departments) makes a difference. There is less of a border between Esch (in Luxembourg) and Rédange than between Audun and Villerupt (where the France-Germany border used to be). It is a virtual border, it is rooted in habits (...) and it continues from generation to generation because children are used to going to school in Thionville" (PI 23).

Besides differences between municipalities that both formal and informal stakeholders (those having grown-up in the locality) are aware of, there are also important differences within each municipality. Some neighbourhoods have been constructed aside municipalities to host industrial workers (e.g. Cantebonne in Villerupt, Bassompierre in Boulange, Picture 2, p. 10), characterised nowadays by a high proportion of elderly people compared to the Lorraine average and the national average, especially widows with limited income (Observatoire régional de la santé et des affaires sociales en Lorraine, 2016: 10).

Inhabitants who have known the mining and steel industry are rather proud of this heritage (field visits 19.07.2018), even if some other groups feel concerned about the pollution on several areas (participant observation 31.05.2018 and 14.11.2018). However, some individuals who have worked in industry fear that this heritage will disappear. This relates to the fact that most of the industrial heritage has not been maintained:

"History is being erased. Here, apart from the U4 in Uckange (renovated blast furnace), at least there is a heritage there. But local people said: 'Oh it's expensive, we should do something else'. When in fact, fortunately they did, otherwise there would really be nothing left this time'. (...) As heritage is not safeguarded in France (...), we turn our backs on our past, so the children born here do not know where they come from, they are already uprooted because 80% of them are foreigners and we remove their roots a second time by not keeping the heritage of where they are growing up" (PI 23).

Besides the villages' and cities' settlements, formal and informal stakeholders relate to the **approximately 35 hectares of brownfield land** (spread over the different municipalities in various ways). Most of them are currently being decontaminated before development or are under review by the EPA for future development. After the industry left, most of the industrial remnants have been removed, leaving only the land almost untouched for several decades. Vegetation has grown considerably, thus significantly changing deeply the appearance of the landscape (Picture 12, p. 54). The inhabitants we met during the field-work declare that they enjoy agreeable living conditions (e.g. quietness, proximity to Luxembourg). Some inhabitants (i.e. former workers in the Micheville factory) have however the feeling that part of the local heritage is not well maintained or promoted. The local population nowadays tends to use the site of Micheville (i.e. the largest brownfield area in the locality, Map 3) in a rather spontaneous, uncoordinated manner for leisure, sport, nature discovery, photography. Some of the interviewees view these areas with affection and admiration:

“Magnificent natural area that should be intended to be enhanced and preserved”.
“We have every possible and imaginable type of medicinal plant here.” (Field visit, 19.07.2018).

They feel bitter about the way this area is left “under-administrated”, not to say left to antisocial behaviour (e.g. motorbike and quad usage, considerable littering; (Picture 12, p. 54). Despite meetings with local and regional formal stakeholders, they feel that they have not been heard as no initiative has been taken to preserve the area.

Analytical Dimension 2: Tools and policies for development and cohesion

“Thinking beyond the municipal borders remains a challenge in many French localities. (...) Many mayors continue to think of urban planning on their own whereas at scales like this (cross-border interdependencies) it is not possible to lead an urban project. It is necessary to go up the scale – at the level of the agglomeration or that of the association of municipalities – to be strong enough.” (PI 28).

In the 2000s, the French state (under the auspices of the prefect) pushed for municipalities to group and share competences. Like many of rural, peri-urban municipalities, the locality under scrutiny was very reluctant, fearing a loss of autonomy (PI 27). **CCPHVA emerged partly from some municipalities' unwillingness to join larger associations of municipalities, with the fear of becoming peripheral** (e.g. to Thionville, some municipalities located in Moselle), because of political divergences (e.g. Fontoy, Audun) and from the fact that some were rejected from other groupings for being too poor (e.g. Thil for Longwy). Therefore, from the beginning, this association of municipalities received a limited set of competences. *“We had to form one (association), so we formed one, but we put the least possible competences in it, only doing what was mandatory”* (PI 27). Even though CCPHVA gained competencies over time (the latest being childcare), all local stakeholders recognise that political divergences are manifold, impeding the effectiveness of the association. These oppositions relate partly to history and to divergent views on the future of the locality.

“There are past rivalries that go back a century ago: Audun/Villerupt, France/Germany: Audun was German, Villerupt was French, the Micheville site remained French. This has created a reflex response in everyone individually at home, which some of the elected representatives still have. It is this reflex that is harmful today and that we must try to erase.” (PI 5).

Elected representatives in charge of CCPHVA face the paradox of needing to demonstrate the added value of the association (thus defining ambitious projects requiring resources) while avoiding budget increases (PI 6).

The CCPHVA attempts to contribute to social and territorial cohesion through two iconic projects that target the current and the future populations. The EcoCité national framework supports localities in the transformation of settlements towards energy efficiency and improved management of public services (we will elaborate on this in section 3). The construction of a major cultural centre (pôle culturel, Picture 6, p. 50) is the second most important project. In this locality where cultural activities mainly take place in very active yet old local municipal houses, this installation aims to become the main place for holding important cultural and public events as well as for cultural creativity. The CCPHVA action is regularly slowed down as some of its constituting municipalities (i.e. Ottange, Russange, Audun-le-Tiche) contest the cultural centre project in particular. The project is deemed unnecessary for the inhabitants, since several cultural facilities (e.g. two concert halls, one cinema) exist in Esch-sur-Alzette (LU). Instead, detractors of the project emphasise the need for health care services and a retirement home (PI 25, PI 33). They also emphasise that even though public funding from the national and regional levels will be provided for its construction, the association of municipalities will not be able to sustain the maintenance costs. Recently, two municipalities have expressed their willingness to join another association of municipalities. It is only because the prefect – who needs to approve such changes – has refused it that the CCPHVA continues to stand.

Current social disparities are therefore mainly faced by the municipalities individually. They retain responsibilities for local social support, public infrastructures and culture.

They attempt to address the need for doctors and specialists by supporting the construction of a health care centre (e.g. Boulange). The municipalities also chose to concentrate their efforts on the elderly population (e.g. opening of a retirement home in 2019, dedicated activities for elderly people to foster their mobility, access to the internet, culture, planning for healthy diets and bringing meals to people's homes). Local support for the unemployed population is for example undertaken in Villerupt in cooperation with the Meurthe-et-Moselle department, which has responsibility for welfare assistance (PI 40). Local dedicated associations also exist in some municipalities (i.e. Villerupt) to support reintegration through employment. Some municipalities also put emphasis on offering equal social services to all, without consideration of income. In Villerupt, the services offered by the dedicated service of the city (CCAS) *"is not reserved for people living in precarious situations so that to stigmatise so-called 'people in need'; we must stop putting people in boxes."* (PI 40). In Thil, child care is paid for by parents on the basis of their income: *"Not all commuters are wealthy people."* (PI 24).

Support for culture is also provided by each municipality individually. Representatives of towns like Aumetz, Boulange and Ottange also emphasise the dozens of associations their municipalities support in the field of sport, culture and music. Villerupt supports the yearly major cultural event, the Villerupt Italian film festival, which has taken place for more than 40 years. Based on a local initiative launched by industry workers of Italian descent, every year this festival attracts visitors from the whole region and welcomes key figures of the Italian cinema. Initiators have also contributed to documenting the end of steel working by producing documentaries and books (*'Des quetsch pour l'hiver'* and *'L'anniversaire de Thomas'* both as a film and a book) (H 1). Audun-le-Tiche will create an archaeology museum to protect the Merovingian necropolis; Picture 10, p. 53, field visit 18.07.2018). It is important to notice that the latter two have been initiated by groups of citizens.

These initiatives should however not hide a systematic lack of public services in the fields of health care and public transportation (as mentioned earlier). **Municipalities face the restructuring of national public services** (e.g. post office, police department, tax office),

which in order to limit costs, are increasingly operated through e-administration, and this affects inhabitants' lives, especially elderly people who are not acquainted with the internet and who rarely own a PC (Picture 3, p. 49, PI 40). **More generally, public infrastructures (e.g. clean water and sanitation, gymnasium, roads) in the locality is ageing.** Municipalities refer to sinking state endowments and to the specificity of mining municipalities:

“There was a lot of delay in investments, like all the mining municipalities, where networks that had been built rather randomly, neighbourhoods were being built quickly without much concern” (PI 24).

In the 2000s, these municipalities have benefited from the so-called “Fonds après mines” (“post-mining allowance”) to help the renovation and redevelopment of former steel and mining towns (PI 24 and PI 4). Yet, the Lorraine region has decided not to renew it in the late 2000s (PI 4). In France, municipalities have three main sorts of income: property tax, business tax and state endowments. Yet very few businesses are established in the locality given Luxembourg's attractiveness, state endowment is sinking (PI 4, 23) and property tax is collected 2 to 4 years after the arrival of new inhabitants, after the census has been conducted (PI 24). While these municipalities would need to modernise their facilities and prepare for the arrival of new inhabitants, they have limited financial room for manoeuvre. In this context, some favour the approach of mutualising at the level of the CCPHVA (i.e. Villerupt, Thil), while some favour keeping competence at the municipal level or even trying to join richer associations of municipalities (autumn 2018, Audun-le-Tiche, Ottange, Russange).

The CCPHVA is not the only locality in northern Lorraine whose development is dependent on Luxembourg. Finding the most adequate governance platform to define a common strategy for northern Lorraine has been on the agenda for at least 10 years (Evrard, 2017). Even though changes have recently occurred, they remain mostly political discussions with limited impact on the current disparities. A “**cross-border prefect**” was appointed in 2018 to liaise between the local needs and the different ministries in Paris. On 1st January 2019, associations of municipalities located along the border created the “**Pôle métropolitain frontalier du Nord Lorrain**”. Using a specific provision in French planning law, this association allows its members to act together in dedicated fields. This initiative was as much supported by associations of municipalities as by the state's services (PI 4). Yet its competencies remain rather vague: *“It should be able to deal with specific dossiers, such as mobility, health, higher education.”* (Thionville agglomeration website).

As to the cross-border cooperation directly, the main tool is the **EGTC Alzette-Belval**, where all levels of governance (from the municipal to the national level) on both sides of the border are represented (see Map 6, p. 46). Created in 2012, it seeks the emergence of a “**cross-border agglomeration**”. Despite its very ambitious objectives (i.e. cross-border health care, transport), the vast majority of formal stakeholders have emphasised that this platform is underused. Its financial capacities are relatively modest, relying to a large extent on INTERREG support. The implemented projects deal mainly with tourism, school exchange, culture and sports (interview N3).

4. The EPA Alzette-Belval: a top down planning agency to empower the local?

4.1 The EPA Alzette-Belval: a short history

“Micheville, 330-360 hectares, is a kind of steel monster that at one time must have employed more than 4,000 people, it is 150 years of steel and mining exploitation” (A 5, see Map 3, p. 43, Picture 4, p. 49).

In 1989, the Lorraine public land management agency (EPFL) purchased Micheville. This agency is in charge of treating degraded areas. After years of technical studies and land management relating to Micheville, while the Belval project started emerging on the Luxembourg side, the EPFL investigated ways of renovating this brownfield site (A 5). Since the early 2010s, however, planning law no longer allows land management agencies like EPFL to undertake planning. A legal study was commissioned to define the most appropriate legal framework, and the EPA tool (planning agency) was suggested. The EPFL put forward this tool towards the relevant ministry which agrees to define this area an “Operation of National Interest” (2009). The director of EPFL at that time was in charge of undertaking a territorial diagnosis to define more precisely the perimeter of OIN, its goals and its governance. The EPA Alzette Belval was created as the management tool to implement the OIN (Table 2, p.19).

OIN, EPA: the significance of two unique instruments in French urbanism law

“The OIN is very flexible in fact; it is an area in which the state regains control, either with the agreement of the municipalities or despite their disagreement” (PI 18).

Without a structure (i.e. EPA), the OIN is an “empty shell” (A5).

“The idea of the EPAs is to bring all these different parties together (relevant state ministries, local and regional authorities), to ensure that everyone will put their funding into the projects and to ensure that the other interventions are as consistent as possible.” (PI 18).

This platform has all legal powers to define and implement the planning strategy within the given perimeter. All other planning documents need to comply with the EPA strategic operational plan that is defined by all the formal stakeholders involved. It allows the state to determine the final usage of strategic areas.

As mentioned earlier, the **EPA Alzette-Belval’s *raison d’être* is anchored in the medium/long term, that of developing the locality in a sustainable, coordinated manner, to reduce the disparities with Luxembourg.** This aspect is embedded in its strategic operational plan (PSO) which has been under review since 2018. Given the EPA’s precise nature – that of planning agency with limited room for manoeuvre, due to the attractiveness of the Luxembourg economy – its action is currently **mainly oriented towards sustainable housing construction and redevelopment.** Its main actions are therefore naturally oriented **towards the future population.** The cohesive and more social part of the EPA action is embedded in two programmes. On the one hand, a landscape plan that aims to develop a shared vision of the locality and to define projects for enhancing the citizens’ appropriation of the territory (i.e. cultural trails). On the other hand, the EPA renovates mining neighbourhoods to increase the local population’s living standards (e.g. thermal insulation).

Some specificities (PI 18):

- The perimeter of the action is not metropolitan.
- It is located along a national border, in a peri-urban locality.
- Numerous portions of land have been classified as sensitive, partly due to the former industrial activities. Many areas therefore cannot be built on and/or require significant decontamination (Map 7, p. 47).
- The CCPHVA has joined the EcoCité approach, that is de facto implemented with EPA.
- The perimeters of the EPA and of the EcoCité have been in principle copied from that of the CCPHVA (Map 7, p. 47). Some areas have been left outside the EPA's perimeter following discussions with the respective municipalities.

EcoCité approach

“The EcoCité approach has been in place since 2008. (...) It is the state that provides engineering and support to local authorities that wish to develop territorial strategies independently of the various public policies in fairly large areas – beyond the neighbourhood level. The “City of Tomorrow” action programme was added to this programme, which made it possible to contract this conceptual and rather engineering-based approach and to operationalise these concepts in an action plan, with funded actions.” (A 5).

In Alzette-Belval, most of the development projects are at the first stage of the Eco-neighbourhood label (i.e. Micheville, Cantebonne, Rédange). Most of the projects deal with construction and use of buildings, urban development and environment, energy and networks, infrastructure and services to the public, and urban services.

The EPA Alzette-Belval in numbers:

- 8,600 houses are to be planned over 20 years, and 156 homes are to be renovated.
- 20,000 new inhabitants (28,113 inhabitants in 2016).
- 360 million euros investment (60 million euros’ investments from the state and the region, 300 million from selling to promoters), 1.8 billion euros in public and private investments over 20 years.

Date	EPA trajectory	Contextual information, Esch-Belval (Luxembourg)
19 th century – 1960s	Steel industry drives the economy in Northern Lorraine, Luxembourg (especially the south), and the wider regional environment (i.e. Saarland, Germany and Wallonia, Belgium).	
1960s – 1980s	Strong decline of the steel industry.	
1990s	The production of steel ends. Closure of the mines. A deep economic restructuring unfolds, leaving a strong societal imprint (e.g. unemployment, pollution, brownfield sites).	
1990s	Despite several attempts to limit the impact of the deindustrialisation, unemployment is high. Cross-border working raises. Interministerial council for spatial planning (CIADT) launch studies to adopt a	Luxembourg turns its economy towards services (i.e. mainly finance activities). The state of Luxembourg launches a strategy of renovating brownfield sites in 1996. The area “Belval-West”, located along the French border, is a priority.

	planning directive dedicated to northern Lorraine.	
2000	The Lorraine prefecture initiates a review of cross-border transport infrastructure. Several studies dealing with spatial planning are commissioned.	Together with ArcelorMittal, the state of Luxembourg initiates a public partnership by creating “Agora”. The latter is to renovate the brownfield land.
2002		The public body “Fonds Belval” is created by the Luxembourg state to manage the development of the area.
2003	The CIADT (interministerial committee for territorial planning and development) defines the principles and objectives of an EPA project: economic development, urban development and cooperation with Luxembourg	
2004	Creation of the CCPHVA (holds competence in the field of spatial planning). Several services directly targeting the population are implemented in the course of the next few years (e.g. fire station, childhood centre, commercial area, sports hall).	
2005	France and Luxembourg agree to redraw a small section of the border to facilitate the development of the Belval project	
2005	A planning directive dedicated to mining basins in northern Lorraine is adopted. CCPHVA area is defined at the national level as one of the priority areas of the mining area in northern-Lorraine. It deals mainly with transport infrastructure (roads, rivers and rail).	The Rockhal (the most important concert hall in Luxembourg) opens in Belval. It hosts cultural events during the European capital of culture (2007). The research centre “Gabriel Lippmann” moves to Belval.
2006		Dexia bank moves to Belval.
2008		Inauguration of Belvalplaza (shopping centre, housing, cinema, restaurants).
2009	CCPHVA is granted the national label “Eco-Cité” (together with 12 other cities in France) in the context of the national “sustainable cities” plan (the municipality of Esch supports the project). President Sarkozy announces the establishment of an “oper-	First inhabitants move to Belval.

	ation of national interest”.	
2010	Led by the director of the Lorraine public land institution, a territorial diagnosis is undertaken to define the priorities, an adequate governance structure and a perimeter.	Inauguration of the railway station “Belval University” (located a few metres away from the border).
2011	The French state supports the “EcoCité” strategy by setting up an “operation of national interest” (OIN) within the perimeter of the CCPHVA. It is created for 20 years.	Opening of the “House of Biomedicine”, first building of the campus; opening of the IBIS hotel, opening of Bel-Val high school
2012	The EPA Alzette Belval is created to lead the spatial development project embedded in the OIN.	
2013	The EGTC Alzette-Belval is created with the ambition to establish a “cross-border agglomeration”. It covers 4 municipalities in Luxembourg (Esch-sur-Alzette, Mondercange, Sanem, Schiffflange), and the 8 municipalities that are part of CCPHVA in France.	
2014	The EPA adopts its planning strategy (PSO “programme stratégique opérationnel”). It operationalises the priorities, budget and timeline.	Consolidation of the project. Promoters are invited to submit development projects to Fonds Belval (e.g. housing, business). The University of Luxembourg officially moves to Belval.
2016	Planning and development works are launched on the emblematic “Micheville” area (main brownfield site in the area).	
2018	Esch 2022 is approved to host the European capital of culture in 2022. The project is led by the city of Esch-sur-Alzette in partnership with ProSUD and CCPHVA.	
2018	The EPA updates its planning strategy, the first flats are rented in Micheville, running of consultation for the landscape strategy; other consultation processes are conducted for planning several neighbourhoods, redevelopment activities in <i>cités minières</i> .	
2019	The construction of the Cultural Centre in Micheville starts.	
2022	Esch 2022 capital of culture.	
2031	End of the EPA activities.	

Table 2: Milestones in the action trajectory from the perspective of the Belval project. Source: own empirical research.

The EPA is managed by a board of directors whose presidency rotates every two years and is held between regional authorities (see Table 3). Votes are allocated according to the budgetary contribution. The day-to-day technical work is undertaken by an operational team of 12 people (of which 7 are involved in the management of planning projects). It is directed by a managing director (nominated at national level).

Administrative level	Institutions involved in the decision-making process of the EPA	Votes
National	Ministries in charge of <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - urbanism - budget - housing - local authorities - spatial planning 	5
Regional	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Lorraine region - Meurthe-et-Moselle department - Moselle department 	5 3 3
Local	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - CCPHVA (Association of municipalities) 	1 + 1 (advisory)

Table 3: Composition of the EPA board of directors (decree no. 2012-327, 18.10.2013 - article 5).

4.2 Searching for equitable decision-making processes: the challenges of bringing together EPA’s leadership, democratic legitimacy and place-based knowledge

On the way to building equitable decision-making processes

Over the years, the EPA has become a central node in the strategic development of the locality. This situation is strongly related to the uniqueness of the EPA instrument in urbanism law. The OIN benefits from its own *regulatory* framework superseding other planning decisions to be taken in the locality. It also benefits from dedicated *financial* means from the state and all other administrative levels (from the municipalities to the region). It benefits from two forms of *knowledge*: the one gathered by the ministry (and other state services) in charge of conducting such planning strategies (materialised through reports, meetings, facilitation of exchanges within and between the state services) and the know-how and expertise of the operational team. The EPA Alzette-Belval also benefits from knowledge exchange by being part of the network of EPAs and of the EcoCité approach (F2). The EPA contributes to putting the locality on the map of decision-makers and planners outside the locality. In particular, the EPA is understood by the relevant ministry in Luxembourg as a strong signal: for once the so-called French administrative *millefeuille* (multi-level setting) is embedded into one entity directly, having not only financial means but also planning competencies (PI 9).

These expressions of power (e.g. financial, regulatory, knowledge, visibility) contribute to conferring on the EPA a high level of **leadership**, especially vis-à-vis the institutional stakeholders. The EPA Alzette-Belval is a means of leverage for the locality to be heard in the relevant policy-making circles. In this sense, it addresses directly the procedural aspect of spatial justice. As it brings public investment to the locality, it also acts directly on the distributive aspect of spatial justice. The following quotation summarises well how the EPA is perceived by the municipalities of the CCPHVA:

“When the OIN arrived, I took it very well, even if there were still concerns for the elected representatives: who will decide, will we lose our ability to decide, etc. Today, we realise that this is not the case. We think that what's going on, we wouldn't have

been able to do it on our own. If there had not been the OIN, development would still be take place, but in an uncontrolled manner.” (PI 24).

Yet, when considering the tremendous planning competencies conferred on the EPA (section 4.1.) and how decisive its activities will be for the municipalities and their inhabitants, one can question how the cooperation between the municipalities, the CCPHVA and the EPA works in practice.

Formally, municipalities are represented through the voice of the CCPHVA on the board of directors. It holds two seats (one full and one advisory seat) on the board of directors (Table 3, p. 20). When undertaking the field work, this situation was understood in different ways. On the one hand, it reflects the amount of financial contribution brought by each institution (PI 11). On the other hand, another stakeholder mentioned that one would certainly define this differently nowadays:

“They (the municipalities) are largely under-represented compared to other EPAs, this was done at the time of the territorial diagnosis study that must have been before the latest territorial reforms. For instance, nowadays, I would find it surprising to give such a prominent role to the department when they have fewer competences. That can be changed.” (PI 18).

This imbalance between *having an interest* (for municipalities and inhabitants) in the action and *having a say* in the decision-making process creates misunderstandings at different levels that hamper the effectiveness of the action, especially in terms of procedural justice. This formal imbalance is partly addressed informally. The field work demonstrates that the EPA has defined several informal structures of coordination to involve municipalities in the decision-making processes.

“I sit on the board of directors as a “window dressing”. But I think that cooperation works well. They (the EPA) didn’t go anywhere to impose anything. They work with the elected officials.” (PI 24).

The field work demonstrates that cooperation between EPA, CCPHVA and municipalities has been organised over the years incrementally, based on project needs:

- Monthly meetings involving EPA, CCPHVA and the 8 municipalities are organised to discuss the overall EPA strategy, the implementation of its projects, the coordination with CCPHVA activities (PI 3, 4, 13 and PI 14).
- Bilateral meetings are organised between the EPA and each individual municipality where planning project are implemented (PI 13 and PI 14).
- Discussions are conducted regularly with all municipalities and the CCPHVA to discuss the revision of the PSO (discussion in 2018, decision in 2019) (PI 21).

We qualify these structures of coordination as *informal* as their existence is not made accessible and visible to all interested stakeholders, and as their impact on formal decision-making processes is unsystematic. They mostly involve the president of CCPHVA, the mayors and the head of services and policy officers of CCPHVA. Deputy mayors as well as head of services in municipalities are involved in the majority of the cases when the EPA holds bilateral meetings with a municipality (PI 27, P I24). In parallel with this, the CCPHVA organises weekly meetings between the mayors. Heads of services of each municipality and the CCPHVA do not meet on a regular basis (PI 27).

This incremental development gives the impression that formal stakeholders are caught in the management of individual projects. Structures of coordination become blurred or non-thematised towards the outside; they lack transparency. This creates situation creates confusion and misunderstandings at two levels: towards the broader public (i.e. end beneficiaries) and higher levels of governance.

On the side of the end beneficiaries, the confusion on the room for manoeuvre left to the municipalities can create resentment both towards the municipality and the

EPA. In the case of Boulange for instance, the EPA team and the mayor faced opposition from the inhabitants that led to them spending a large proportion of the public consultation meeting explaining 1) the rationale for the action (i.e. how many houses were envisaged) and 2) on which aspects the public was able to influence the process (participant observation 31.05.2018 and 14.11.2018). Clearer structures of coordination, involvement of municipal services and of the public at an earlier stage could have helped in the rethinking of how to organise public consultation in this case. In fact, between May and November 2018, a group of citizens in favour of revising the number of houses to be built has organised itself (*Boulangeois solidaires* through flyers, petition and social media). Their action led to the organisation of meetings between their representatives, the municipality and the EPA, prior to the timetable of the consultation. This may demonstrate adaptability on the part of the municipality and of the EPA but also the need to inform and organise consultation at a much earlier phase.

On the side of the higher levels of governance, they do not realise that municipalities are involved formally with only two votes and through the CCPHVA. At first, during the interview, representatives of higher levels asked whether we were sure of this information (PI 8, 18). The EPA is perceived as having a strong **leadership** (e.g. guidance, oversight) and the municipalities as having very limited resources and different visions and not being able to think beyond the bounds of their respective municipality.

All in all, this situation relates to three aspects:

- 1) Municipalities in this locality are caught up in the management of daily routine. When conducting the field work, all mayors emphasised it would not be possible nowadays to hold such a mandate if one were not retired; they are overwhelmed with responsibilities. They emphasise their lack of know-how on the management of bigger planning projects and how limited were their technical and administrative support was. As mentioned earlier, this relates also to their limited financial resources.
- 2) The administrative culture in France remains characterised by the assumed legitimacy of state intervention. For instance, mayors do not request a seat on the managing board. As mentioned earlier, they all understand the OIN and the EPA as a tremendous opportunity for the locality. They emphasise the fact that the EPA is a tool that has the support and the ear of the diverse state bodies.
- 3) The difficulties faced by CCPHVA in embodying and implementing its own strategic vision encourages individual municipalities, other formal stakeholders (e.g. from Lorraine and Luxembourg) and the CCPHVA itself to veer towards the EPA. This is reinforced by congruent perimeters.

This situation shows also that the formal involvement of all municipalities is not something that comes to the fore immediately. They are not considered – and they do not consider themselves – as essential voices for taking part in the formal decision-making processes. Yet, in this context, they are the only ones to be directly elected (further development in a subsequent section).

This institutional setting is inscribed in other important settings (see Map 6, p. 46). The EPA's counterpart on the Luxembourg side is the Agora society (joint venture of the State of Luxembourg and Arcelor-Mittal) that was in charge of renovating the brownfield land on behalf of the state of Luxembourg. Although crucial issues arise in terms of transport infrastructure (e.g. bus routes, train connections) and planning (anticipating impacts on the other side of the border), no systematic consultation or even exchange of information has been organised. Cooperation unfolds mainly in the framework of the EGTC Alzette-Belval (see perimeter in see Map 6, p. 46). The cooperation is currently limited to non-strategic issues (e.g. culture, exchange of teachers, sports, cross-border bicycle lane). The

EGTC includes representatives from municipalities and of the states from both sides of the border, the presidency is rotating between the two states. In March 2019, the Prefect of Lorraine decided that the director of the EPA is going to chair the presidency of the EGTC following the Luxembourg presidency. This demonstrates how central the EPA has become in the locality.

Lastly, no structure of coordination exists between the EPA, the EGTC Alzette Belval and the broader specific coordination at the level of the entire Greater Region. This situation impedes the effectiveness of the cross-border decision-making capacity, and also addressing effectively cross-border disparities.

Participation: an under-exploited resource

Based on the territorial diagnosis conducted in 2010, the state holds the EPA *legitimate* and *accountable* for implementing the action (detailed objectives in introduction). The PSO – updated in consultation from all levels through formal and informal structures of coordination – operationalises these objectives in time and space (Map 7, p. 47).

The EPA is *accountable* – both as to the implementation of the action and financially – towards its management board. **In law, its legitimacy towards citizens proceeds from the fact that the overall project is deemed of national interest and insofar as intermediate and upper levels of governance participate in its supervision.** Yet, given the ways the EPA tool is conceived in French law, building effective participation and access to decision-making is almost counterintuitive. In fact, it requires the legitimacy of political representativeness to be brought back into the system.

“It’s the state that comes in a bit like a steamroller, without political leverage to deal with it (the whole vision). They have no way of mobilising the people on the ground. To mobilise, we need mayors, they must co-construct the project, so they have ownership of it. It is because they will carry something that they will mobilise (...). Otherwise we do workshops and it produces an off-site project.” (PI 38).

Yet as a planning structure, the EPA handles mostly a series of planning constraints:

- Housing for about 20,000 new inhabitants is to be planned while limiting the use of agricultural land. Therefore, planning on former brownfield sites and renewing old *cités minières* are must-haves.
- The latter is however costly. At the same time, the EPA’s mandate must keep a balanced financial situation.
- It aims to boost mostly residential economy given the competitiveness of Luxembourg economy.
- The overall project is anchored in the ambition to cope with sustainable urban development (EcoCité approach).

During the fieldwork, the ambition to almost double the population of the area in about 20-30 years was found to be the shared point of contestation among the interviewees we met. The EPA was perceived to focus mostly on this ambition while not fully measuring the financial impact on the municipalities and on the public services this project requires.

“It’s a real estate operation, that’s the problem with this project.” (PI 24).

“For me, the EPA is a necessary cooperation, but it also brings us constraints. It obliges us to create a second school in Micheville, a high school. And then, what about leisure (for the new inhabitants)? What about restaurants, hotels? It is up to the municipalities to do something, to attract investors.” (PI 23).

“We (Boulangeois solidaires) want the municipality to keep control of its own development and the decisions that relate to it. (...)

- *The EPA recognises that mobility within the village and across borders is a major concern. This issue has not yet been studied and the consequences are difficult and costly.*
- *The operating costs incurred by the increase in population remain on the municipality's shoulders. For example, the cost of hiring staff for day-care has not been financially estimated.*
- *2/3 of funding related to the new structures conceived for the new inhabitants is to be covered by the municipality while only 1/3 is to be covered by the EPA, which however creates the needs.*

We are in favour of a progressive, and reasonable development, steered by the municipality” (extract from a post the Facebook profile “Boulangeois solidaires”, published on 21.03.2019).

Accessibility is also at the core of the PSO and interviews with the stakeholders working at the EPA demonstrate that cooperation with the relevant ministry in Luxembourg in the field of transport is ongoing to construct a “mobility hub”. Awareness is also very present among state services and local and regional authorities when it comes to supporting municipalities to finance infrastructures. Discussions are conducted between different state services on the strategy to adopt (i.e. additional support from the French state and local/regional authorities, co-financing mechanism in cooperation with Luxembourg state). **This situation points out the limitations of structure like EPAs. Planning specialists are equipped with technical knowledge. Yet, they are challenged to plan “with the people”.**

The incomplete incorporation of place-based knowledge into decision-making processes

During our fieldwork in 2018, which covered just under one year, we have observed different forms of mobilisation of place-based knowledge. Firstly, **expert knowledge** is commonly used to conduct a wide range of technical studies required before conducting operations or to assess a specific issue concerning a dedicated area (e.g. pollution of specific areas, conditions of housing, mobility impact studies, landscape study). **These forms of expertise, concentrating on the specific sectorial aspects in the locality, are usually legal requirements and are outsourced to external experts.**

The EPA attempts to complement such technical expertise with place-based knowledge. As a regulated structure with specific planning aims, the consultation of the population is legally framed at different stages of the planning projects. **Consultation processes are therefore regularly held by the EPA within the framework of its activities.** The format is adapted to the moment and the project (e.g. on-site visit **Picture 9**, p.52, visits to other localities in the region or abroad, information meeting, work in small groups). Initiatives such as on-site visits with inhabitants in diverse spots of the locality in the framework of the study on landscape also proves useful for the project coordinator to better grasp the needs, everyday use, stories and history of the place. During one of the field visits (22.09.2018), we met inhabitants who had moved into the locality for a couple of years to be closer to the border. This visit was for them a way to get to know the project of the EPA and to discuss on the locality’s future with other inhabitants.

At the same time, other groups of inhabitants are sceptical about such participation processes:

“Our ideas are not at all what is currently done. We simply let it happen, we observe. We tried, we did believe in it. But, no, these meetings are illusory, that is to say, they are just ways to act out what has already been decided.” (Field visit 19.07.2018).

While they recognise the expertise of the team in charge of the conducting the landscape study – since it did work on the preservation of heritage in mining basin – they use their place-based knowledge of the locality to question the choices made for the Micheville project:

“(…) A magnificent natural area that is should be promoted. But who will take care of that, if not us? There is no one out there. The EPA? It's simple, they ask someone from Paris to come here to find out what we can do. I can't believe it. (...) The EPA team knew from the beginning. When they arrived, they organised meetings, they asked for our opinion. It was easy, as we have the example of what is done in the Grand Duchy, we wanted to promote points of interest in the same way, have walking paths.... (...) We told them about the mine galleries, we made visits, they know about it. (...) They didn't do anything (to protect and maintain them for the public to know about the locality.)” (Field visit 19.07.2018).

“They are making a dormitory town, that's all, there's nothing else. They are looking for justifications for what they are doing. (...) We're going to have a walking trail for the people to walk around? Every day for hours and hours, we have flows of cars that form a bottleneck in Aumetz and we will make roads to walk around in Micheville? Don't they have other solutions? The solution is the railway: it has existed since 1880. Industry built up a magnificent rail network everywhere that has been completely neglected and that we could reuse and adapt to our present-day needs (...). That's the solution, after that, they can do the hiking trails. First of all, it's the mobility problem.” (Field visit 19.07.2018).

Finally, the EPA has set-up a partnership with the University of Lorraine through which the team involved in processual innovation organises and moderates a **living lab** (participant observation 17.04.2018). The approach consists in developing workshops that are intended to help operationalise a vision for two projects (i.e. future urban park to be created in Micheville and smart city project) that they, in the medium term, could contribute to steering. This approach mobilises place-based knowledge and mayors' own expertise to create a sense of ownership of the project. The intention is that this co-construction can then help mayors to bring the projects towards the locality, leading ultimately to better involvement of the civil society and the inhabitants:

“Elected officials are the temporary representatives of citizens and can have a role of bringing people together. The network is to be built; it spreads on different scales. So this dynamic should ultimately go beyond individuals to spread over the locality.” (PI 38).

5. Final Assessment: Capacities for Change

Synthesising Dimension A: Assessment of promoters and inhibitors

Promoters

- **The action has reached maturity:** for a couple of years, a shared awareness of the locality's needs has reached all formal levels of governance from the local to the national level. There is also a general **acceptance that dedicated means should be allocated to the action.**
- The dedicated instrument, the EPA is equipped with the **regulatory and financial capacity to conduct the action.** It also holds **formal legitimacy, know-how and expertise.** It is well accepted by formal stakeholders in the locality and in the broader regional and cross-border context.
- **Some inhabitants are interested in the action and willing to be associated** with its implementation.
- **Some formal stakeholders in key ministries in Luxembourg (e.g. planning) understand the action as a genuine opportunity to develop and operationalise a cross-border agglomeration. The action needs to be consolidated in this respect.**
- **All institutional tools are available to set up appropriate governance within the locality** (e.g. CCPHVA, EPA), **in northern Lorraine** (pôle métropolitain), and **with Luxembourg** (i.e. EGTC Alzette-Belval). The proposal for a “regulation of the European Parliament and of the Council on a mechanism to resolve legal and administrative obstacles in a cross-border context” currently in negotiation can represent a genuine opportunity to ease the management of cross-border projects.
- There is currently **momentum:**
 - **to encourage the development of cross-border projects promoting both distributive and procedural justice** (e.g. current discussion on the creation of cross-border agglomeration) and Esch 2022 capital of culture project that is de facto cross-border, the creation of the cultural centre in Micheville.
 - **from the national level to support innovative and sustainable urban development projects** through know-how, financial support and visibility and exchange of experience.
- **New forms of involving the population and mobilisation from some groups of inhabitants** invite the locality to rethink participation and engagement on the part of a broader section of the population.
- Different forms of knowledge and expertise relating to the locality are available (including expert and place-based knowledge); it needs to be coordinated. The partnership with University of Lorraine (living lab) seems to be a good opportunity.

Inhibitors

- **The EPA, the CCPHVA and the municipalities are challenged to set-up appropriate structures of coordination** allowing them to capitalise on every actors' knowledge for improved coordination of the action.
- **Disagreement within Lorraine's local and regional institutional actors and among the state services on the best strategy and attitude to adopt towards Luxembourg** on the issue of how could/should Luxembourg contribute to northern Lorraine's local development is recurrent. Yet they agree on the diagnosis of

the situation and the need to support the development of cross-border public services (especially transport).

- **Rebalancing cross-border development is *per se* challenging since competition remains a constituent component of cross-border areas**, requiring hands-on governance mechanisms, trust and time to be set up.
- **The EPA is challenged to find appropriate means to 1) inform the public on its activities; 2) develop a participative approach that is able to use the diverging opinions as a resource for implementing its projects.**
- **The action partly overlooks current social inequalities** (as they are not part of its direct objectives), while CCPHVA and the municipalities are challenged to face them (e.g. financially and in terms of vision).

Synthesising Dimension B: Competences and capacities of stakeholders

General contextual considerations

- The locality is marked by industrial culture where **framings from top down organisation are accepted and to some extent expected** (it used to be from the industry; it is expected from public authorities). This state of mind might not facilitate the emergence of initiatives. At the same time, the field work also demonstrates the difficulty on the side of formal stakeholders at the local level to be receptive to local initiatives or other ideas.
- **Localised action from formal and informal stakeholders flourishes spontaneously and in a rather uncoordinated** and modest manner partly due to the legacy of industrial culture (e.g. culture, sports), partly relating to preservation of the local environment (e.g. preservation of industrial and local heritage, preservation of flora and fauna on former industrial sites, demonstrations against the quarry).
- Economic growth and need for labour in Luxembourg contribute to providing prospects to a wide range of the population, who might otherwise have taken various forms of initiatives in the locality.

Potential for localised action

- Even though it can face disagreement with local groups of stakeholders, the action is localised for all activities relating directly to the core competencies of the EPA (e.g. planning development, housing).
- The localisation of the action is however impeded as it relates to fields of competencies involving a wide range of stakeholders such as municipalities and departments (e.g. social, transport, economy, business), becoming even more complex when agreement across borders is necessary (e.g. transport, financial issues).

Synthesising Dimension C: Connecting the action to procedural and distributive justice

The main foreseeable durable impact of the action on the locality is its **development in a coordinated manner**, considerate of **sustainability, limited use of agricultural land**, thus avoiding urban sprawl and scattered urbanism. As the EPA is the landowner of the areas it develops, it will be able to partly **keep a grip on the level of housing prices in the locality**, possibly therefore avoiding speculation. The action thus has a considerable impact on the locality. Its development projects contribute to stimulating dynamism and to providing direction for development in the whole locality and potentially at the level of the cross-border agglomeration.

Its capacity to **support the development of public services** for the local population in terms of **development of residential economy and public infrastructures is highly**

dependent on 1) CCPHVA's and the municipalities' effective room for manoeuvre (politically, institutionally and financially); 2) the collaboration with public stakeholders in Luxembourg when it comes to cross-border public services (i.e. transport, economic attractiveness).

Over the years, **the EPA has become a stabilising institution, on which formal stakeholders from the locality count and to some extent rely.** The EPA also demonstrates the willingness to **give a better say to those having a direct interest in the action** by organising and promoting consultation with inhabitants, to facilitate exchange with and between CCPHVA municipalities and informally with stakeholders in Luxembourg. The question remains whether this informal association of municipalities is **equitable**, given their interest in the action and the fact that are directly elected by the population.

While forecasts predict a significant increase in the local population, there is a risk of diverging communities (e.g. different centres of life, heterogenous incomes, sociological background, histories, possibly also values and languages), thus putting pressure on municipal budgets. The action can mitigate these risks as development is prepared in a coordinated manner over the whole locality. As social cohesion remains however a responsibility of the municipalities which will be in charge of financing infrastructure development, the best strategy to cope with this remains strongly coordinated action between the municipalities, CCPHVA, the EPA and formal stakeholders in Luxembourg.

As the EPA's action is legitimised and evaluated by/at the national level, the action is conducted according to norms and standards established at the national level, "off-site". The labelling effect of several projects is accompanied by financial support of what is understood as abstract visions for the territory, to which the inhabitants do not necessarily adhere (i.e. "smart city", "Eco-neighbourhood"). Even though such projects can ultimately bring more convenience and services to the population, at first, they have been – and to some extent remain – symbols of a vision for the territory brought in from the outside. To this extent, participation is understood as a way for the EPA to legitimise its action. The effectiveness of the action in respect of participation depends to a large extent on the capacity for the EPA to 1) present the process (not only the project) to the population; 2) clearly set out on what aspects the population can contribute to the process; 3) adapt its consultation process in line with experience gained and decide upon the type of project; and 4) to ensure a transparent division of labour with CCPHVA and other relevant actors according to the issues.

The implementation of development projects can contribute to acting as a catalyst to facilitate the development of public services adapted to the new developments.

This requires close consultation with both CCPHVA, the municipalities and Luxembourg stakeholders. Already since late 2018-early 2019, their respective attitude towards the development of projects has been turning from doubt to a willingness to adapt infrastructures and services around them. An important governance challenge thus lies ahead in terms of mobilising structures of coordination able to allow consultation and steering. In formal terms, the EGTC Alzette-Belval appears to be the most natural institution in the context of which such a cooperation could emerge. As French and Luxembourg governments have, from the start, left aside the negotiation of a bilateral treaty dealing with fiscal concessions (intergovernmental meeting on 20.03.2018), this locality can be used as a forerunner – at the Lorraine and EU levels – for creating and managing coherent cross-border public infrastructures. Should this ambitious consultation between formal stakeholders not be effective, the action runs the risk of building projects almost isolated from each other with reduced impacts on existing disparities.

6. Conclusion

For a couple of years, a shared awareness of the locality's needs has reached all levels of governance from the local to the national level. **The dedicated instrument**, the EPA, is equipped with regulatory and financial capacity to conduct the action. It also holds legitimacy, know-how and expertise. It is well accepted by formal stakeholders in the locality and in the broader regional and cross-border context. The EPA appears as an appropriate tool to ensure **development in a coordinated manner**, considerate of **sustainability**, with **limited use of agricultural land**, thus avoiding urban sprawl and scattered urbanism.

Yet, the EPA is challenged to find appropriate means to 1) inform the public of its activities; 2) develop a participative approach that is able to use the diverging opinions as a resource for implementing its projects. Its action partly overlooks current social inequalities (as they are not part of its direct objectives), while CCPHVA and the municipalities are challenged to face them (e.g. financially).

In the long run, its capacity to **support the development of public services** for the local population in terms of **development of residential economy** and **public infrastructures is highly dependent on** 1) CCPHVA's and the municipalities' effective room for manoeuvre (politically, institutionally and financially); 2) the collaboration with public stakeholders in Luxembourg when it comes to cross-border public services (i.e. transport, economic attractiveness).

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Other useful links

Code de l'urbanisme :

https://www.legifrance.gouv.fr/affichCode.do;jsessionid=5F81CF322289E83DF0DFF74D4F0F5834.tplgfr28s_1?cidTexte=LEGITEXT000006074075&dateTexte=20190304

EcoCités strategy : <http://www.cohesion-territoires.gouv.fr/ecocites-et-ville-de-demain-31-territoires-soutenus-par-l-etat>

INTERREG VA MUSST project : <http://www.agape-lorrainenord.eu/mmust>

INTERREG VA SDT-GR project : <https://amenagement-territoire.public.lu/fr/grande-region-affaires-transfrontalieres/SDT-GR.html>

National Housing Agency <http://www.anah.fr>

8. Annexes

8.1 List of Interviewed Experts

	Organisation	Title	Place of the interview	Country	Date	Recording	Interviewer(s)
Exploratory interviews	A, regional (planning)	Director	Phone	FR	12.09.2017	A1	EE
	N, cross-border (admin)	Director	Esch-sur-Alzette	LU	18.09.2017	N1	EE+CB
	N, cross-border (admin)	Director	Esch-sur-Alzette	LU	18.09.2017	N2	EE+CB
	N, cross-border (admin)	Director	Audun-le-Tiche	FR	19.09.2017	N3	EE+CB
	A, agglomeration, (planning)	Policy officer culture	Esch-sur-Alzette	LU	19.09.2017	A2	EE+CB
	PI, university (planning)	Researcher	Esch-sur-Alzette	LU	20.09.2017	PI1	EE+CB
	PI, university (planning)	Professor	Phone	FR	22.09.2017	PI2	EE+CB
	F, cross-border (local development)	Manager	Belvaux	LU	26.09.2017	F1	EE
	1	PI, association of municipalities (planning)	Head of development	Villerupt	FR	16.11.2017	PI3
2	PI, municipality (politics)	Politician	Villerupt	FR	04.12.2017	PI4	CB
3	PI, association of municipalities (politics)	Politician	Audun-le-Tiche	FR	14.12.2017	PI5	EE
4	PI, association of municipalities (planning)	Head of services	Audun-le-Tiche	FR	11.01.2018	PI6	EE
5	PI, municipality (politics)	Politician	Dudelange	LU	17.01.2018	PI7	EE+CB
6	PI, department (planning)	Assistant Head of Development	Nancy	FR	24.01.2018	PI8	EE
7	PI, state (planning)	Assistant Head of Department	LU	LU	14.03.2018	PI9	EE+CB
8	PI, department (planning)	Politician	Nancy	FR	27.02.2018	PI10	EE+CB
9	PI, association of municipalities (planning)	Director	Villerupt	FR	01.03.2018	PI11	EE
10	A, association of municipalities (urbanism)	Urbanist	Villerupt	FR	04.04.2018	A3	EE

11	PI, municipality (urbanism)	Retired	Esch-sur-Alzette	LU	05.04.2018	PI10	EE
12	PI, association of municipalities (planning)	Policy officer	Villerupt	FR	17.04.2018	PI11	EE
13	PI, association of municipalities (planning)	Policy officer	Villerupt	FR	17.04.2018	PI12	EE
14	PI, region (admin)	Policy officer	Metz	FR	19.04.2018	PI13	EE
15	PI, agglomeration (admin)	Director	Thionville	FR	19.04.2018	PI14	EE
16	PI, agglomeration (local development)	Policy officer	Thionville	FR	19.04.2018	PI15	EE
17	PI, region (planning)	Policy officer	Metz	FR	19.04.2018	PI16	EE
18	PI, agglomeration (planning)	Head of local development services	Thionville	FR	19.04.2018	PI19	EE
19	PI, association of municipalities (planning)	Head of development	Audun le tiche	FR	17.04.2018	PI20	EE
20	PI, association of municipalities (planning)	Head of studies	Audun le tiche	FR	17.04.2018	PI21	EE
21	PI, agglomeration (admin)	Head of institutional matters	Metz	FR	05.06.2018	PI22	EE
22	A, agglomeration, (planning)	Head of mobility and planning projects	Metz	FR	11.07.2018	A4	EE
23	PI, municipality (urbanism)	Head of planning department	Villerupt	FR	23.05.2018	PI23	EE
24	A, state (planning)	Civil servant	Paris	FR	04.06.2018	PI17	CB
25	PI, state ministry (planning & environment)	Civil servant	Paris	FR	05.06.2018	PI18	EE+CB
26	PI, municipality (politics)	Politician	Russange	FR	23.05.2018	PI23	EE
27	PI, municipality (politics)	Politician	Thil	FR	24.05.2018	PI24	EE
28	PI, association of municipalities (culture)	Policy officer	Audun-le-Tiche	FR	31.05.2018	PI25	EE
29	PI, municipality	Politician	Ottange	FR	31.05.2018	PI26	EE

	(politics)						
30	PI, municipality (admin)	Director general of services	Ottange	FR	31.05.2018	PI27	EE
31	F, national	Associate	Paris	FR	04.06.2018	F2	EE
32	PI, state, (planning, housing, nature)	Policy officer sustainable city	Paris	FR	04.06.2018	PI28	EE
33	PI, state (legislative)	MP	Thionville	FR	20.07.2018	PI29	EE
34	PI, municipality (politics)	Politician	Aumetz	FR	13.06.2018	PI30	EE
35	PI, municipality (admin)	Director general of services	Aumetz	FR	13.06.2018	PI31	EE
36	PI, municipality (politics)	Politician	Boulangé	FR	30.06.2018	PI32	EE
37	PI, municipality (politics)	Politician	Audun-le-Tiche	FR	30.06.2018	PI33	EE
38	A, land management (planning)	Head of projects (direction studies and operations)	Pont-à-Mousson	FR	30.06.2018	A5	EE
39	A, land management (planning)	Head of projects (direction studies and operations)	Pont-à-Mousson	FR	30.05.2018	A5	EE
40	PI, state (legislative)	MP	Villers-la-Montagne	FR	01.10.2018	PI34	EE
41	PI, association of municipalities (planning)	Politician	Audun-le-Tiche	FR	07.06.2018	PI35	EE
42	A, national (planning-urbanism)	Head of sustainable cities and innovation	Nancy	FR	17.07.2018	A6	EE
43	H	Retired, steel industry	Esch-sur-Alzette	LU	27.06.2018	H1	EE
44	H	President of association	Audun-le-Tiche	FR	18.07.2018	H2	EE
45	H	Member of association	Audun-le-Tiche	FR	18.07.2018	H3	EE

46	PI, architecture school	Professor	Nancy	FR	12.07.2018	PI36	EE
47	PI, university (planning)	PhD student in geography	Nancy	FR	17.07.201	PI37	EE
48	PI, municipality (politics)	Politician	Rédange	FR	18.07.2018	PI38	EE
49	PI, department (admin)	Head of cross-border affairs	Metz	FR	11.07.2018	PI39	EE
50	PI, municipality (social affairs)	Head of social aid and social services	Villerupt	FR	19.07.2018	PI40	EE
51	PI, agglomeration (admin)	Director general of services	Thionville	FR	18.07.2018	PI41	EE
52	PI, association of municipalities (politics)	Politician (delegate for relations with LU and Thionville territory)	Phone	FR	30.07.2018	PI42	EE

Type of stakeholders

F = Firms, Private actors (100% private)

PI = Public Institutions (100% public)

N = NGO (no financial interest)- In France, most of the time, associations under the 1901 law.

A = Agencies (profit-oriented, at least partially public-funded)- In France, most of the times “syndicat mixte” or “société d’économie mixte”.

H = inHabitant

AR = ARtist

Interviewers

CB = Cyril Blondel

EE = Estelle Evrard

Except for three interviews conducted by phone as indicated in the table, all interviews were conducted face-to-face.

Other methodological considerations

	WP3 – governance	WP4 – perception	WP7 – autonomy
How does the EPA tackle spatial injustice in the locality?	EI & PO with mayors of CCPHVA, their respective Director of services, main civil servants of CCPHVA; PO strategic meetings; F with civil servants	EI & PO of sub-actions: landscape study, Boulange eco-neighbourhood, rehabilitation of former <i>cité minière</i> A: perception of the border	EI & F: Individual interviews with inhabitants and “local entrepreneurs”

How does the EPA tackle spatial injustice at the level of the Lorraine region?	PO to regional meetings, EI with civil servants working in Lorraine	EI with civil servants at regional and national level	P
Articulation EPA/ Lorraine region with LU for long-term co-development	PO INTERREG V A SDT-GT meetings and for consultation process of the revision process of Luxembourg spatial planning master plan	EI with LU civil servants and public officials	F with inhabitants and local experts

Table 4: Mobilised methodologies to operationalise the RELOCAL research questions in the analysis of the EPA Alzette-Belval.

EI: Expert interviews

PO: Participant observation

F: field visits with inhabitant, local expert etc.

A: cooperation with artist

The EPA Alzette-Belval addresses **spatial justice in manifold interconnected “sub-actions”** involving potentially a myriad of stakeholders and target groups, with their respective trajectory and timeline (e.g. brownfield management, redevelopment, planning, eco-housing, economic development, land use, citizen participation, governance, cross-border cooperation). It is also anchored in a multi-level cross-border context. For the purpose of the project, the empirical analysis was organised in three main parts.

Other empirical sources

8.2 Participatory observation (12)

Date, Organism, Place	Rationale for the meeting	Stakeholders (type, number)	What do we gain, what do they gain
14.03.2018, EPA, Villerupt, FR	Public consultation, Cantebonne Eco-neighbourhood	Representatives of EPA, municipality, architect in charge of the project + approx. 30 inhabitants	To grasp how the EPA and municipalities organise consultation processes, what are inhabitants' daily problems, informally discuss with them / information on the project
22.03.2018, MDDI, Esch-sur-Alzette, LU	Consultation on the reform of the national planning scheme, Group South	Consultancy in charge of the participation process, representatives of the LU ministry in charge, ca. 30-40 inhabitants from the south of Luxembourg	Grasp how LU implements consultation process, how the cross-border dimension is included, how citizens relate to planning issues / knowledge of cross-border interdependencies
17.04.2018, Institute of the Greater Region, Schengen,	Brunch with invited speaker, President of the association for	Approx. 30 people from the border region having responsibilities in business, banking sector,	Informal talks on how the business sector perceives and to some extent uses/suffers from cross-border interdependencies and

LU	business in Luxembourg	management, commerce and public administration, some journalists	competition / information on the project, contribution to talks about challenges of cross-border governance
17.04.2018, Living lab, organised by EPA, Aumetz, FR	Reflection of CCPHVA mayors on the use on the future park near Micheville	Moderated by University of Lorraine (in charge of the living lab), representatives of EPA and all mayors of the CCPHVA (in total approx. 20 people)	Better understand the vision of CCPHVA mayors for Micheville, how they cooperate with EPA and CCPHVA, how place-based knowledge is used by EPA / informal discussion with participants, information on the project
09.05.2018, MDDI, Luxembourg city, LU	Consultation on the reform of the national planning scheme, Group Centre	Consultancy in charge of the participation process, representatives of the LU ministry in charge, ca. 30-40 inhabitants from the centre of Luxembourg	Grasp how LU implements consultation process, how the cross-border dimension is included, how citizens relate to planning issues / knowledge on cross-border interdependencies
29.05.2018, EPA, Russange, FR	Review of EPA projects, on site visits	Representatives of EPA, municipalities, all public institutions involved in EPA board as well as other public and private stakeholders, approx 40 people	Grasp how the EPA presents its projects towards its support institutions, better grasp how the effects of the EcoCité label and how it is intertwined with services developed by CCPHVA, have informal talks with participants / inform about the project
31.05.2018, EPA, Boulange, FR	Public Concertation, Boulange	Representatives of EPA, municipality, representatives of the team of planners, architects, urbanist in charge of the project and its consortium + approx. 70 inhabitants	Grasp how LU implements consultation process, how the cross-border dimension is included, how citizens relate to planning issues / knowledge of cross-border interdependencies
21.06.2018, EPA, Villerupt, FR	EPA annual meeting of the board of directors	Representatives of EPA and of all public institutions involved in EPA board (CCPHVA, department, region, ministries)	Observe how discussion unfolds, informal talks after the meeting / only observation about 20 people
26.06.2018, Sillon lorrain, Metz, FR	Conference organised "At the edge of metropolitanisation"	about 130 people, mainly public decision makers (civil servants and politicians), also urbanism agency and some academics	observe current state of discussion as to rebalancing development between FR and LU, have informal discussions
28.06.2018, MDDI, Schengen, LU	Consultation on the reform of the national planning scheme, "Cross-border group"	Consultancy in charge of the participation process, representatives of the LU ministry in charge, "commuters group from France", approx. 30-40 people	Grasp how LU implements consultation process, how the cross-border dimension is included, how citizens relate to planning issues / knowledge of cross-border interdependencies
25.10.2018, City of Audun-le-Tiche, Audun-le-Tiche, FR	Citizen consultation on Europe	In the framework of national consultation on Europe, moderation by journalist and academic, about 20 personnes	Grasp how citizens perceive the role of the EU in the locality, whether their understanding of cross-border interdependencies is connected to the EU / personal contribution to the debate as citi-

			zen
14.11.2018, EPA, Boulange, FR	Public consultation, Boulange	representatives of EPA, municipality, representatives of the team of planners, architects, urbanist in charge of the project and its consortium + approx. 70 inhabitants	To grasp how the EPA and municipalities organise consultation processes, how the action is perceived, what are the inhabitants' daily problems and informally discuss with them / information on the project

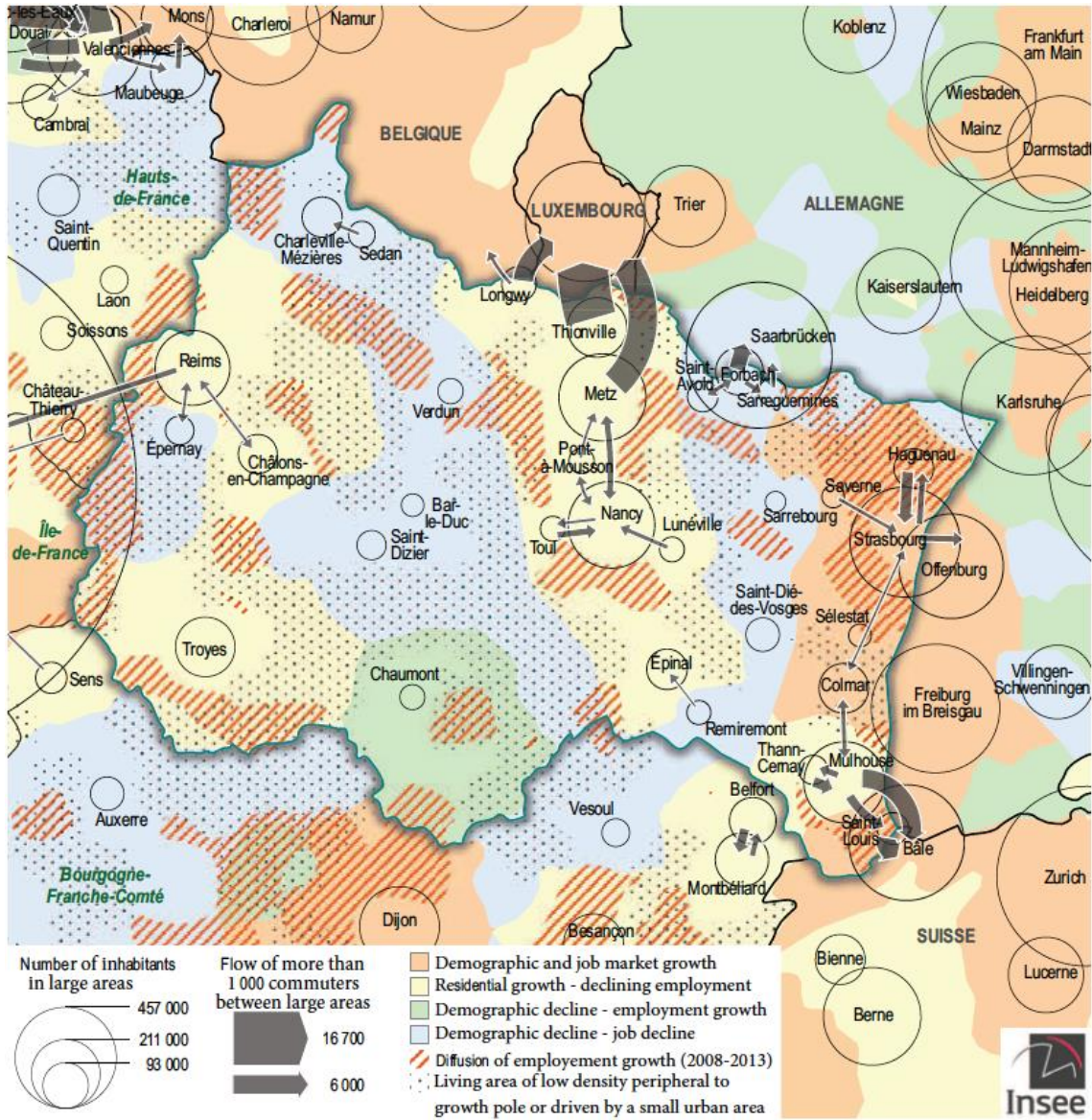
8.3 Field visits

Date and context	Places / Areas	What do we gain, what do they gain
12.06; 13.06; 21.06; 27.06; 28.06 Artistic performance, Clio Van Aerde	Discovering the border Esch-Belval LU /Villerupt-Audun FR, Bras BE/Doncols LU; Hosingen LU/Affler DE; Putscheid LU/Waldhof DE	To mix geography and art methodology in order to describe perceptions of the border and the territory / inform about the field work and project.
11.07.2018 Artistic performance, Clio Van Aerde	Presentation of the impressions/results of the artistic performance and our art-research collaboration to the public in local cafe, Villerupt	Discuss the difference perspectives and experiences that geographer, artist and inhabitants have on the border / inform about the field work and project.
26.04.2018 Visit with urbanist	Cité minières located Villerupt covered by the urban rehabilitation project managed by urbanism agency for the EPA	Discuss informally how inhabitants perceive the redevelopment project of EPA / inform about the field work and project.
01.06.2018 Visit with technical services, Villerupt	Visit to Cantebonne, Michville area, belvedere, cités ouvrières and neighbourhoods in Villerupt	Take the perspective of a planner and technician to discover different neighbourhood, planning issues, discuss informally on the role of the EPA and local politicians in planning development.
19.07.2018 Visit with former employee in industry, meeting with inhabitants	Visit to Micheville (site in construction, explanation of the functioning of the factory, and its direct environment)	Understand how the Micheville factory used to work, how the population currently uses the natural areas, perspective on landscape, local heritage.
18.07.2018 Visit with representatives of local association	Visit to historic and archaeological sites in Audun-le-tiche (Merovingian necropolis)	Gain understanding on local heritage preservation, how associations are supported in their activities / inform about the field work and project..
22.09.2018 Visit with architects in charge of Landscape framework agreement for the EPA, representatives of EPA, municipalities and inhabitants	Walk from Aumetz to Boulange	Understand the functioning of the Micheville area, how the population currently uses the natural areas, perspective on landscape, Grasp how the team of architects work on the landscape, talk with inhabitants on their daily life, their perception of the landscape, what needs to be preserved

8.4 Stakeholder Interaction Table

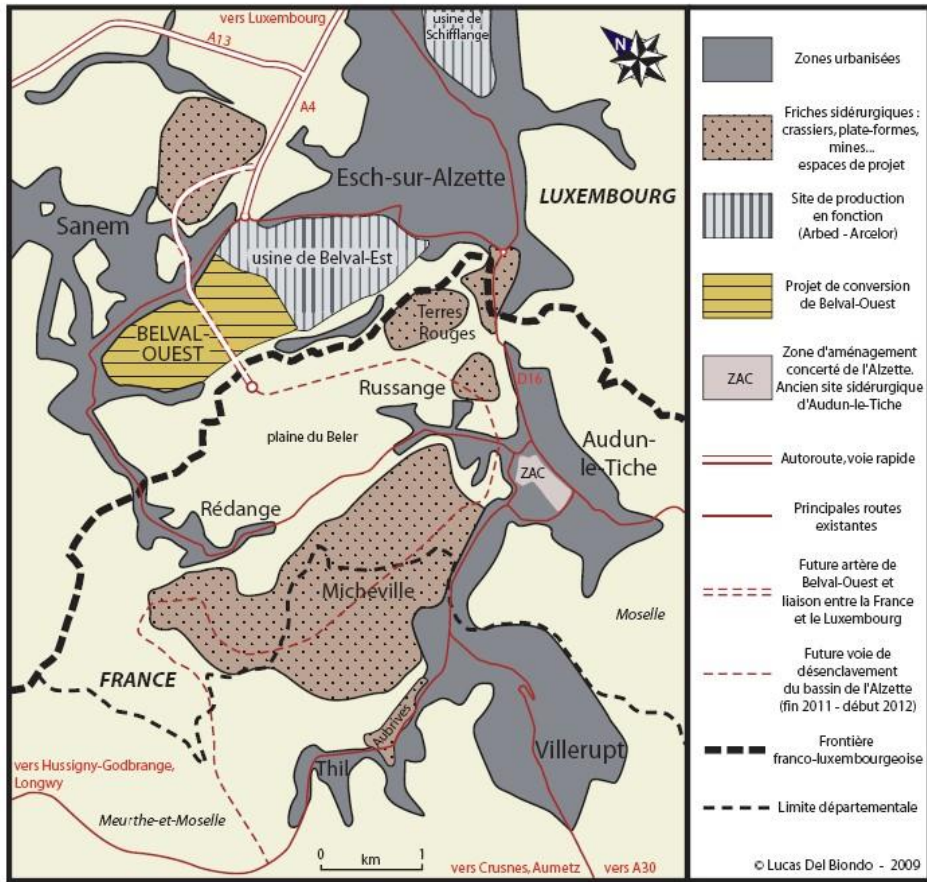
Type of Stakeholders	Most relevant 'territorial' level they operate at	Stakeholders' ways of involvement in the project (What do we gain, what do they gain)
Local politicians	12, municipal level	Expert interviews
Local administration	5, municipal level	Expert interviews
Associations representing private businesses	1, national level	Participant observation
Local development companies/agencies	3, municipal level	Expert interviews
Municipal associations	3, municipal level	Expert interviews
Non-profit/civil society organisations representing vulnerable groups	1, municipal level	Expert interviews
Other local community stakeholders	3, municipal level	Expert interviews, informal discussion during participant observation or field visits
Local state offices/representations	8, intermunicipal level	Expert interviews, informal discussion during participant observation or field visits
Regional state offices/representations	6 at department or regional level	Expert interviews, participant observation, informal discussion
Ministries involved in (national or EU) cohesion policy deployment	8, state agencies, ministries, MPs	Expert interviews
Cohesion policy think tanks (national/EU-level)	1 (cross-border level)	Expert interview
Primary and secondary educational institutions	0	
Colleges and universities	4	Expert interviews and participant observation
Social and health care institutions	1	Expert interview
Cultural institutions and associations	2, municipal or intermunicipal	Expert interview + on site visit
Media	3	Article in journal, Radio interview, informal exchange during participant observation

8.5 Map(s) and Photos



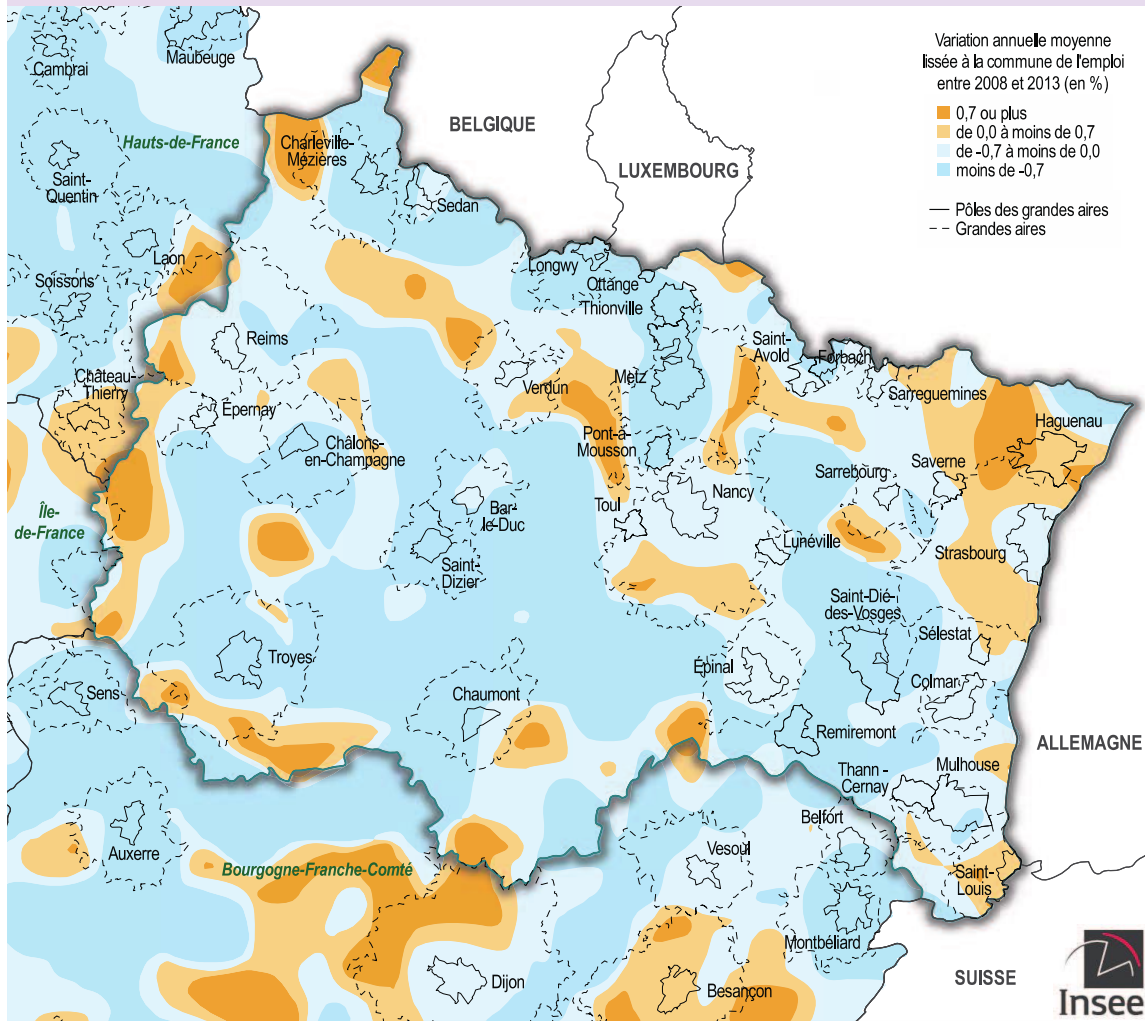
Map 2: Urban settlement, growth poles and flows in the French region “Grand Est”. Source: INSEE, 2016:11 (authors’ own translation of the legend)

NB: This map synthesises the results of a study conducted by the national statistical office (INSEE) on the newly created region “Grand Est” (comprising Lorraine, Champagne-Ardennes and Alsace). Data used is not rigorously comparable with data of the neighbouring countries.

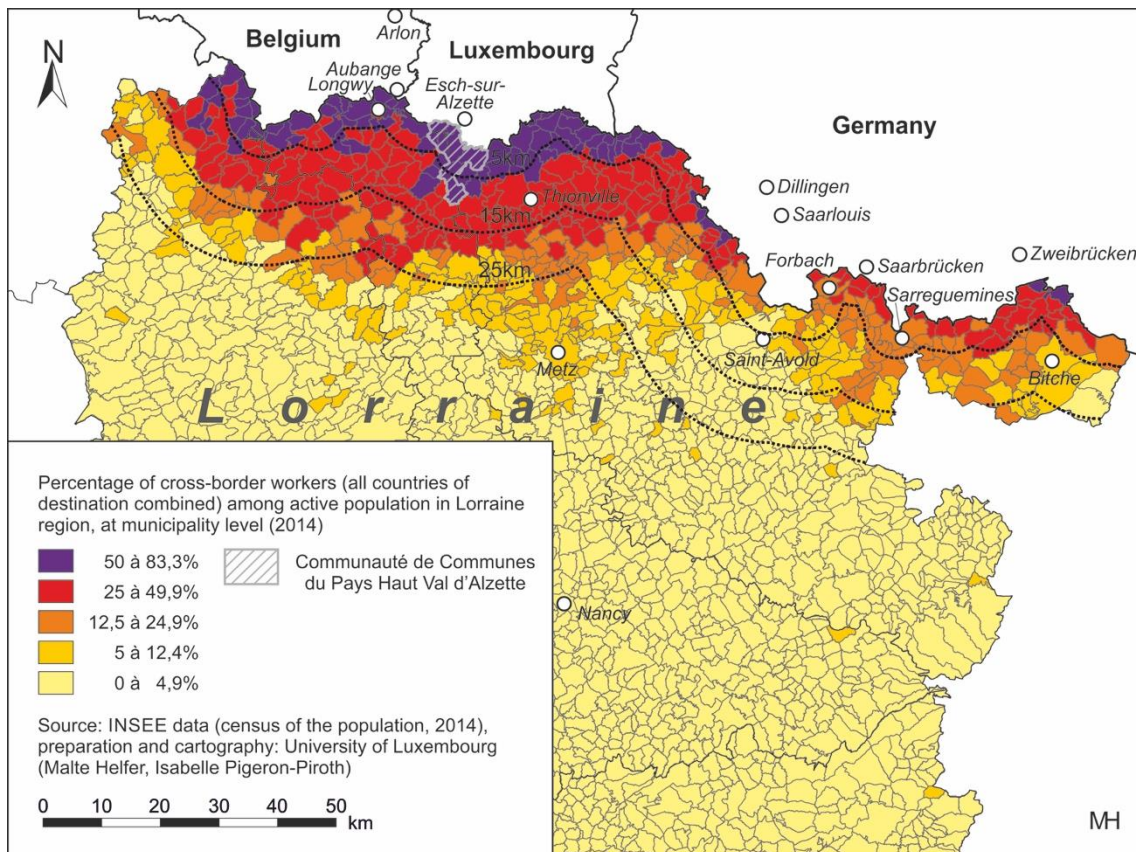


Map 3: Intertwined urban and industrial settings along the French-Luxembourg border. (Source: Del Biondo, 2009).

10 Évolution de l'emploi entre 2008 et 2013



Map 4: Evolution of employment between 2008 and 2013 (average annual variation smoothed at the municipality of employment, in %). Source: INSEE Dossier, 2016: 20.



Map 5: Percentage of cross-border workers among active population in Lorraine region, at municipality level (2014).

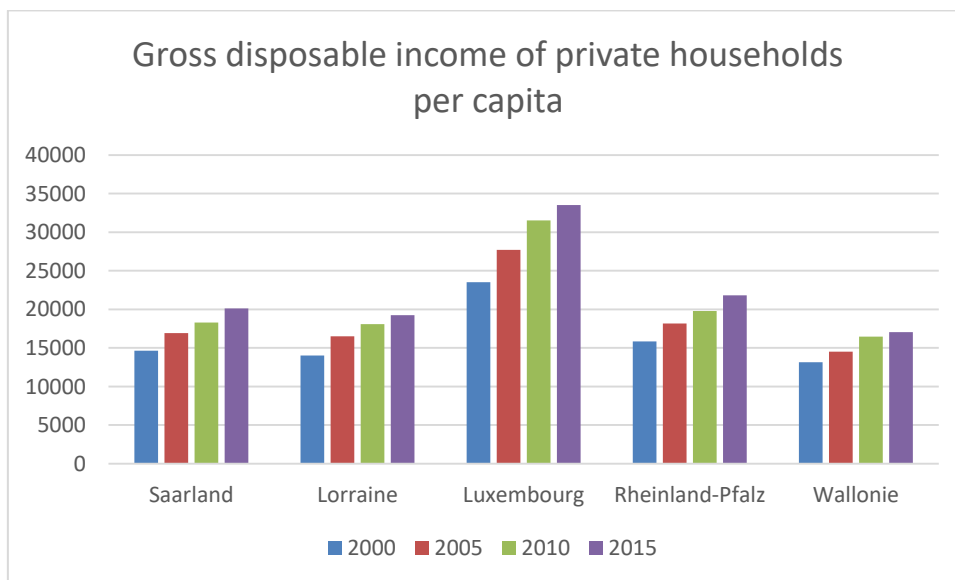


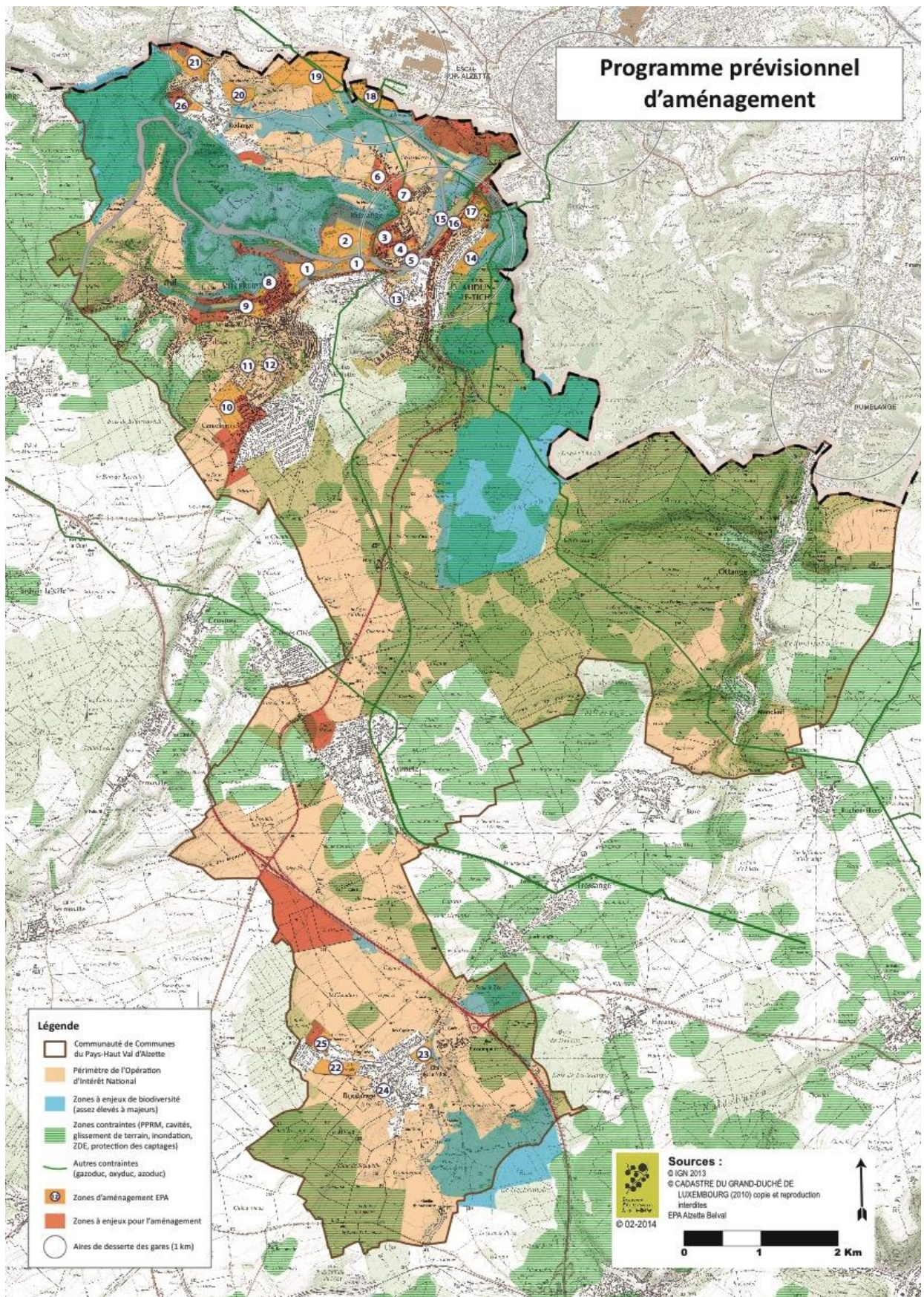
Table 5: Gross disposable income of private households per capita.

Note: Household disposable income includes activity income (net of social contributions), wealth income, transfers from other households, and social benefits (including pensions and old-age pensions), unemployment benefits, net of direct taxes. It corresponds to the amount of income that remains available to the household to consume or save. Calculations of disposable income are determined by the concept of the country or place of residence.

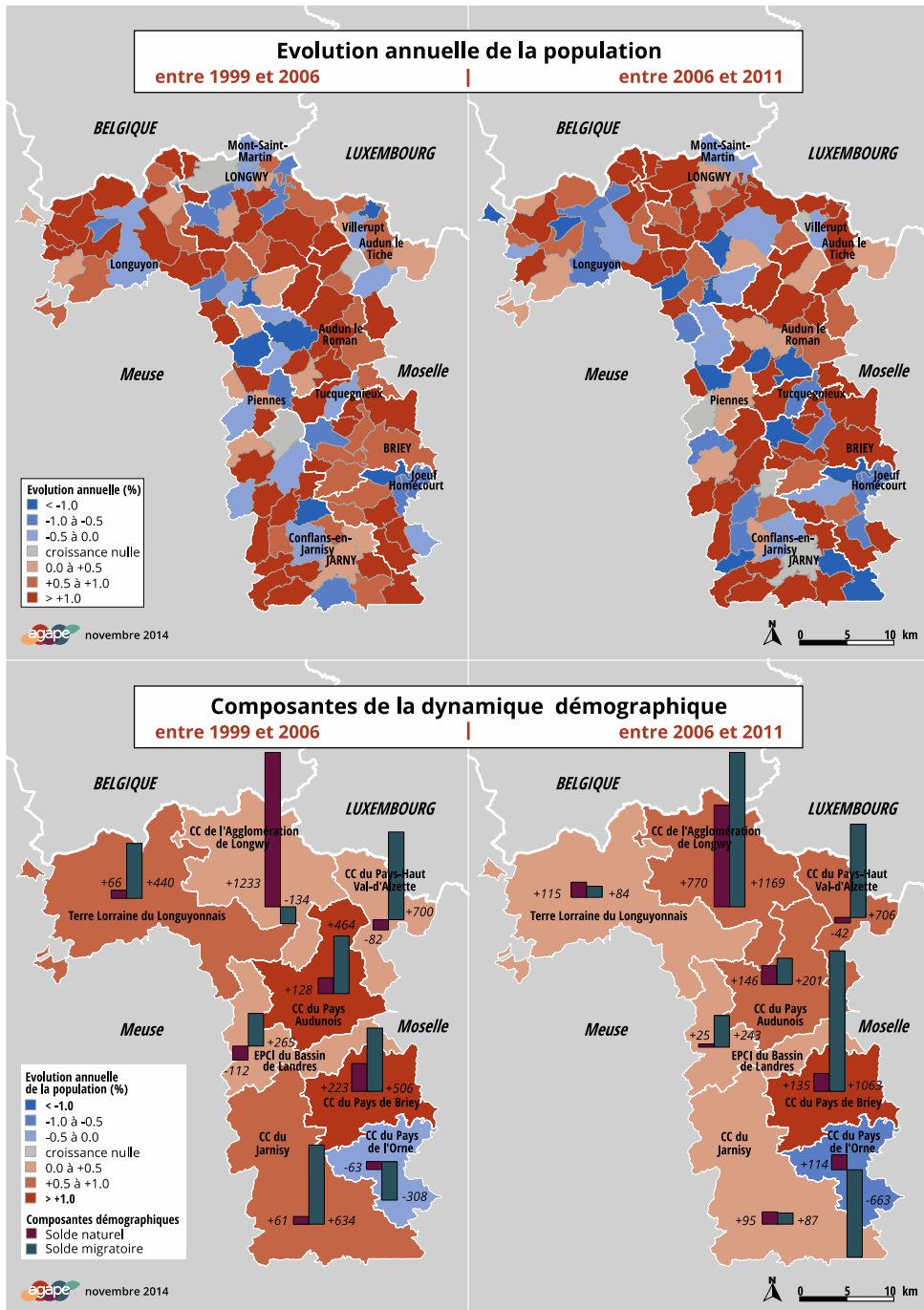
(Source: Saarland: Volkswirtschaftliche Gesamtrechnungen der Länder. Lorraine: INSEE, Comptes économiques régionaux des ménages, base 2010. Luxembourg: STATEC, Comptes nationaux. Rheinland-Pfalz: Volkswirtschaftliche Gesamtrechnungen der Länder. Wallonie: Institut des comptes nationaux (ICN) - (Comptes régionaux, BNB, Revenus disponibles des ménages, version février 2019).



Map 6: The EGTC Alzette-Belval and other cross-border cooperation areas in the Greater Region SaarLorLux. Source: MOT, 2015.



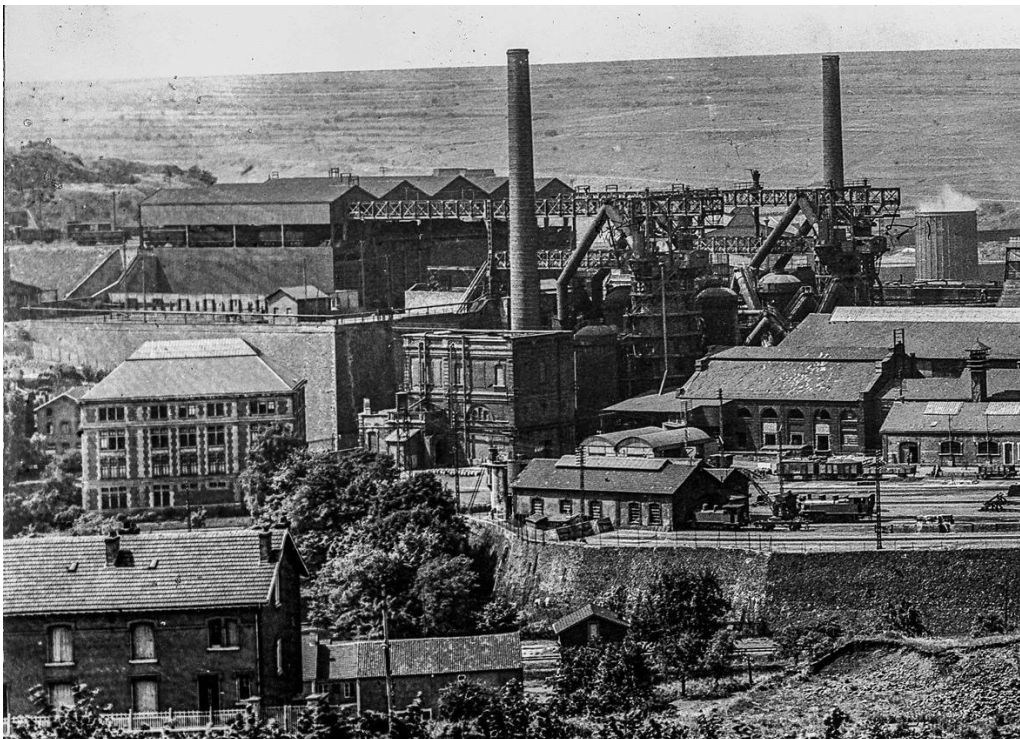
Map 7: Areas to be planned by the EPA Alzette Belval (26 zones in total, i.e. 217 ha within which 127 hectares of brownfield land), strategic operational plan. Source: EPA Alzette Belval.



Map 8: Yearly demographic evolution (between 1999 and 2006, and between 2006 and 2011) at top, drivers for demographic evolution (natural balance red bar and migratory balance green bar), map at the bottom.
Source: AGAPE, 2014:7.



Picture 3: "No to closure of our post office – Sign the petition". June 2018, Estelle Evrard.



Picture 4: Micheville factory, of which only the wall along the blast furnaces remains (credit: Daniel Bracchetti).



Picture 5: Wall, remaining from the Micheville factory (credit: Daniel Bracchetti).



Picture 6: Simulation of the future cultural centre to be built along the wall of the Micheville factory (credit: Daniel Bracchetti).



Picture 7: Remains of a work camp during WWII and memorial site, Thil. May 2018, Estelle Evrard.



Picture 8: Walk between Aumetz and Boulange, as part of EPA's citizen consultation on landscape, September 2018, Estelle Evrard



Picture 9 : Public consultation in Boulange, June 2018 (left): Consultation on the Luxembourg's spatial planning strategy, June 2018 (right), Estelle Evrard.



Picture 10: Merovingian necropolis, July 2018, Estelle Evrard



Picture 11: Decontamination and depollution work prior construction in Micheville, view from Belvedere, July 2018, Estelle Evrard



Picture 12: Sites where the Micheville factory used to operate, man-made landscape. June-July 2018, Estelle Evrard.



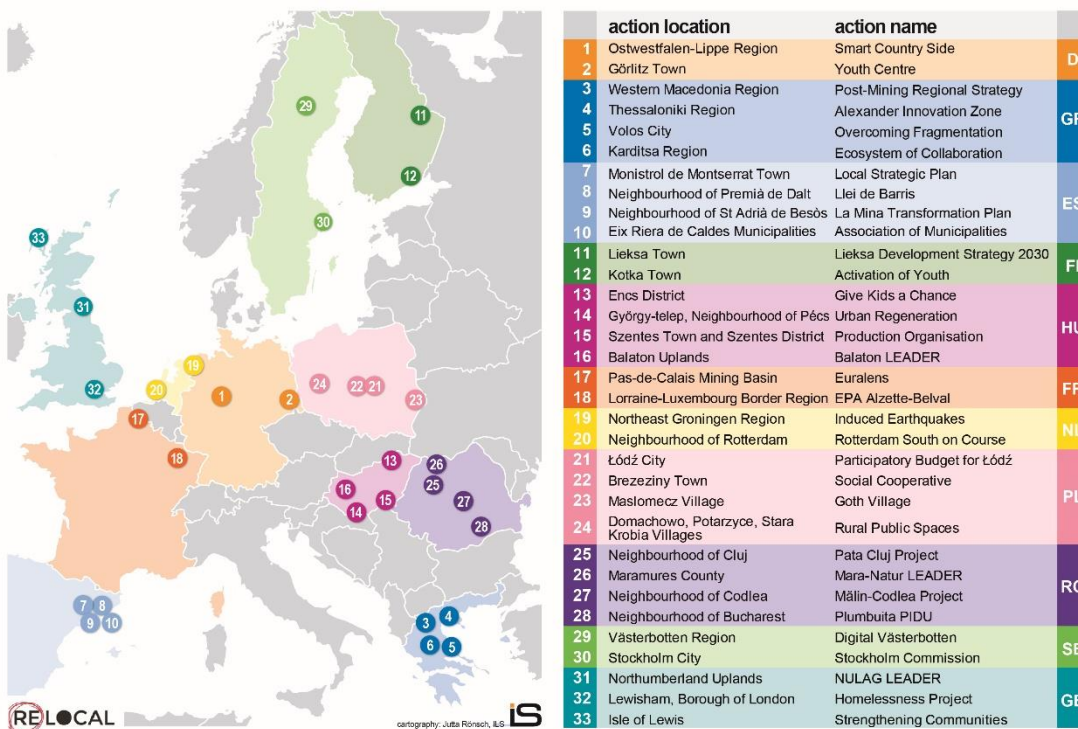
Picture 13: Views from the Pays Haut to the Alzette Valley, June-July 2018, Estelle Evrard.

The RELOCAL Project

EU Horizon 2020 research project ‘**Resituating the local in cohesion and territorial development**’ –RELOCAL aims to identify factors that condition local accessibility of European policies, local abilities to articulate needs and equality claims and local capacities for exploiting European opportunity structures.

In the past, especially since the economic and financial crisis, the European Social Model has proven to be challenged by the emergence of spatially unjust results. The RELOCAL hypothesis is that **processes of localisation and place-based public policy** can make a positive contribution to spatial justice and democratic empowerment.

The research is based on **33 case studies in 13 different European** countries that exemplify development challenges in terms of spatial justice. The cases were chosen to allow for a balanced representation of different institutional contexts. Based on case study findings, project partners will draw out the factors that influence the impact of place-based approaches or actions from a comparative perspective. The results are intended to facilitate a greater local orientation of cohesion, territorial development and other EU policies.



The RELOCAL project runs from October 2016 until September 2020.

Read more at <https://relocal.eu>

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