

Press release

Euregional civic involvement - 2008 results

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People make a region – many people make an Euregio: The enlargement and transposition of the current slogan of Cologne's city administration underlines the importance of the citizens' involvement in Euregional matters.

Of the 80 known associations and voluntary organisations involved in cross-border initiatives, 40 initiatives set up a programme featuring 22 activities and campaigns over the course of 10 days. They presented a broad spectrum of topics ranging from volunteering in the social sector to civic involvement in arts and culture, education and nature and sports and encounters through an artistic activity and the citizens' fair, though exhibitions, concerts, lectures and excursions at places in Germany, Belgium and the Netherlands.

It was only through the elaboration of such an impressive, joint programme in September 2008 that the broad spectrum of Euregional involvement, its potential and professionalism became visible. Likewise, the influence and meaning for our region became clear, because our region remains incomplete if we don't factor the neighbouring Dutch, German and Belgian regions into our thoughts and actions. This is practised in an exemplary manner by Euregional civic involvement:

- The intercultural dialogue possible through direct encounters between citizens of the Euregio Meuse-Rhine is an important field for learning and mediates a cross-border approach to our immediate European neighbours that is singular in the public sphere
- The common work is a contribution to the improvement of the quality of living in our region
- Lastly, civic involvement is vital for society as a whole, which also applies to our border region

Over the course of the organisation of the programme it became clear that Euregional thinking and action are far from self-evident. Linguistic and cultural borders continue to impede cooperation - even when working on topics related to the textile industry and mining that are part of our common history. Joint public relations are impeded by the narrow focus of the local media on both sides of the border.

That is why there is persistent need for a framework that stimulates exchange and encounters, acquaintance and cooperation while at the same time supporting its . The wish to establish such a forum was formulated in the Rolduc declaration by the organisers in October 2008 on the occasion of the three-country day. It is the goal of the joint forum to bring the accomplishments of cross-border involvement to the fore, to communicate the fun to be had in conjoint activities to the public, to make new contacts and to thereby durably enrich the region. The organisers call on political institutions throughout the Euregio Meuse-Rhine to reach a lasting strengthening of Euregional civic involvement in our region.

Further information: www.euregio-engagement.eu