

DIRECTION GÉNÉRALE DE LA COOPÉRATION INTERNATIONALE ET DU DÉVELOPPEMENT

**SPATIAL PLANNING AND
SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT
POLICY IN FRANCE**

MINISTÈRE DES AFFAIRES ÉTRANGÈRES

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Foreword

Most countries around the world are promoting various forms of decentralisation, but better coordination of policies carried out by different levels of government has now become critical. France's central government is changing to facilitate the necessary modernization of its methods. It is refocusing its action on sovereign functions and localizing its staff. It is also striving to stimulate and coordinate various public policies at the national and local levels. Spatial planning is central to these changes. Our partners are aware of this and they are familiar with our experience in this field.

Therefore, it is not surprising that France's spatial planning policy is a matter of much interest for our international partners. Our country often appears to be a pioneer in the field. Admittedly, central and local government have been closely involved in spatial planning for some fifty years, but the origins of their action date back to the building of the major road, canal, telegraph and, most importantly, railway networks in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries.

However, in view of the diverse situations occurring around the world, we felt it was necessary to explain what the term spatial planning covers in France. But what exactly does spatial planning mean in France? What sort of action does it cover? For what purpose? Who are the players? These questions are not always easy to answer, because the policy is constantly growing richer and more diversified to meet increasingly complex challenges, such as economic globalisation, the enlargement of the European Union and the shift from centralised administration in France to decentralisation. Consequently, spatial planning is still poorly understood.

Therefore, the Interministerial Agency for Spatial Planning and Competitiveness (DIACT) and the Directorate of Development Policies at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs wanted to produce this brochure to provide some of the key information required to understand the ongoing discussions and actions.

This brochure is intended to be both descriptive and instructive. It starts by presenting the main spatial planning players and describes their action within the context of the new objectives that were set at the end of 2002. France must strive to make itself economically attractive and competitive in order to develop its economy and create more jobs. But it must also ensure genuine national solidarity for the benefit of its disadvantaged regions.

This brochure then goes on to describe the policies aimed at achieving these objectives. Some of them focus on a particular sector, such as transportation, information and communication technology development, Competitiveness Clusters, etc., while other policies focus on particular types of environments, such as rural areas, cities, mountainous areas or coastal regions. The final section deals with the crosscutting priority of sustainable development and two emblematic tools of spatial planning in France: the contractual approach and the planning process.

This is primarily a matter of highlighting our original experience, as France's central government departments and local governments forge cooperative relationships and exchanges with their international counterparts. We hope that this experience can make a helpful contribution to these relationships and be a source of mutual benefits.

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The **Interministerial Agency for Spatial Planning and Competitiveness (DIACT)** is the successor to the Agency for Spatial Planning and Regional Action (DATAR). It prepares, promotes and coordinates the French government's spatial planning policies and it facilitates economic change by taking an aggressive approach to competitiveness.

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The **General Directorate of International Cooperation and Development at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs** plays two roles. Along with the ministry's other directorates, it coordinates all the international cooperation actions carried out by the French government and civil society. It also acts directly through France's diplomatic missions to manage development assistance involving transfers of know-how, support for cooperation between universities and scientists, cultural cooperation and action to promote the French language, support for media distribution and exchanges.

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I		FRANCE TODAY	<u>7</u>
	1	France's Political and Administrative Structure	9
	2	France's Population and Geography	12
	3	Spatial Planning Policy Objectives in France	14
II		THE LEADING PLAYERS IN FRANCE'S ADMINISTRATION AND SPATIAL PLANNING POLICY	<u>17</u>
	4	Interministerial Agency for Spatial Planning and Competitiveness (DIACT)	18
	5	Central Government Structures at the Regional and Sub-Regional Level	21
	6	Local Governments	24
	7	Cooperation between <i>Communes</i>	28
	8	Civil Society	33
III		FRANCE'S LOCAL AREAS AND EUROPE	<u>39</u>
	9	European Economic and Social Cohesion Policy in France	40
	10	Cooperation with France's European Neighbours	44
IV		THE MAIN STRANDS OF SPATIAL PLANNING POLICY	<u>49</u>
		<i>Procedures Used for All Types of Areas</i>	<i>50</i>
	11	Spatial Planning	50
	12	Contractual Approach	53
	13	Sustainable Development is a Cross-Cutting Priority	58
		<i>Specific Policies for Different Types of Local Area</i>	<i>60</i>
	14	Urban Policies	60
	15	The <i>Pays</i> : Where Town and Country Intersect	67
	16	Policies for Rural Areas	69
	17	Specific Policies for Mountain and Coastal Areas	73
		<i>Sectoral Policies</i>	<i>76</i>
	18	France's Economic Attractiveness and Competitiveness	76
	19	Transportation	82
	20	Local Digital Development	85
	21	Public Services	87
	22	Higher Education and Research	90
		FINDING FURTHER INFORMATION ON THE INTERNET...	<u>92</u>
		GLOSSARY	<u>97</u>

France today



The Senate © MAE/DCI-Labo4



The National Assembly © MAE/DCI-Labo4

1 France's Political and Administrative Structure

France's written constitution, which was adopted in 1958, governs the operation of the Fifth Republic's institutions. Several amendments have been made to the constitution, including changes to :

- ◆ introduce direct universal suffrage to elect the President of the Republic (1962) and to reduce the President's term of office from seven years to five years (2000) – see below -,
- ◆ endorse France's acceptance of Economic and Monetary Union,
- ◆ give men and women equal access to elected office,
- ◆ recognise the jurisdiction of the International Criminal Court (1999),
- ◆ endorse France's decentralised structure (2004).

The President of the Republic

The Head of State (President of the Republic) is elected by direct universal suffrage for a five-year term. This term was shortened from seven years by the referendum of 24 September 2000. The President appoints the Prime Minister and names the members of the government on the Prime Minister's recommendation. He presides over the meetings of the Council of Ministers and promulgates Acts of Parliament. The President may dissolve the National Assembly and exercise special powers in times of crisis. He is also Commander-in-Chief of the armed forces.

The Prime Minister and the Government

The Government defines national policy and carries it out under the direction of the Prime Minister. The Government is accountable to Parliament. The Prime Minister directs the Government's actions and ensures that legislation is implemented.

Parliament

Parliament is made up of two chambers :

- ◆ **The Senate** is elected by indirect universal suffrage. Senators are elected for a six-year term (formerly a nine-year term) and half of them are replaced every three years. The most recent senatorial election was in September 2004. The number of Senators will be raised gradually to reach 346 in 2010.
- ◆ **The National Assembly** is made up of Deputies, who are elected by direct universal suffrage for a five-year term. The most recent election was held in June 2002. The National Assembly is made up of 577 Deputies.
In addition to acting as a check on the Government, the two chambers draft and pass legislation. In the event of a disagreement over legislation, the National Assembly has the final say.

Constitutional Council (*Conseil constitutionnel*)

The nine members of the Constitutional Council ensure that elections are conducted properly and that organic laws regarding government powers are constitutional. They also rule on the constitutionality of other laws referred to the Council.

Justice System

France's justice system safeguards individual rights. Its structure is based on a fundamental distinction between judicial courts, which hear disputes between individuals, and administrative courts, which hear disputes between citizens and public authorities.

◆ *Judicial Courts*

Civiles :

ordinary courts (Court of First Instance) or specialised courts, such as local courts, commercial courts or labour tribunals, which hear disputes between employees and employers.

Criminal courts, which deal with three types of offence :

- petty offences, heard by police courts,
- misdemeanours, heard by criminal courts,
- felonies, heard by assize courts.

There is also a special youth court that hears both civil and criminal cases.

The highest court is the *Cour de Cassation*, which hears appeals to overturn appeal court rulings.

◆ *Administrative courts*

The highest administrative court is the *Conseil d'Etat*, which is the final court of appeal concerning the legality of administrative acts. The Government also consults with the *Conseil d'Etat* about draft legislation and proposed decrees.

◆ *Financial Courts*

The court of auditors and the regional courts of auditors

Administrative Structures

Covering nearly 550,000 square kilometres, France is the largest country in Western Europe, with slightly more than one-seventh of the land in the European Union. France is made up of:

- ◆ Metropolitan France, which is divided into 22 *Régions* and 96 *Départements*,
- ◆ four overseas *Départements* (DOM) :
 - two islands in the West Indies, Guadeloupe and Martinique,
 - an island in the Indian Ocean, Réunion,
 - and French Guyana in South America.

Even though these *Départements* are usually called "DOMs", in institutional terms, they actually have the bodies and powers of a *Département*, as well as those of a *Région* (see section 6),

- ◆ five overseas territories : French Polynesia, Wallis and Futuna, Mayotte, Saint-Pierre et Miquelon, and French Southern and Antarctic territories,
- ◆ and one territory with special status : New Caledonia. ■



Régions
and Départements

KEY
CENTRE : région
Loiret :
département

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2 France's Population and Geography

France's population stood at nearly 63 million at 1 January 2006, making it one of the most populous European countries alongside Germany (population 82.5 million) and Great Britain (population 60 million). But the average population density in Metropolitan France is only 110.7 inhabitants per square kilometre, which is half that of the other two countries.

For a long time, France's population was massively concentrated in the greater Paris area. Spatial planning policies were aimed at reversing this trend and developing dynamic regional capitals.

In fact, the latest census results show that metropolitan France is changing and it is less polarised around Paris and the Ile de France region. The population is more evenly spread, even though density still varies greatly between Régions. In Ile de France the density is 937 inhabitants per square kilometre, whereas in Limousin and Corsica it is under 50.

Censuses in France

France used to carry out a comprehensive population census every eight or nine years. The latest census was conducted in 1999. France now conducts a continuous census based on a five-year cycle in order to ensure more frequent updates of population data.

Each cycle includes:

- ◆ *A comprehensive population survey of municipalities with fewer than 10,000 inhabitants (20% of such municipalities are surveyed each year),*
- ◆ *a survey of 40% of the population in municipalities with more than 10,000 inhabitants (based on annual surveys of a sample of 8% of the population in each of the municipalities concerned).*

The first cycle started in 2004.

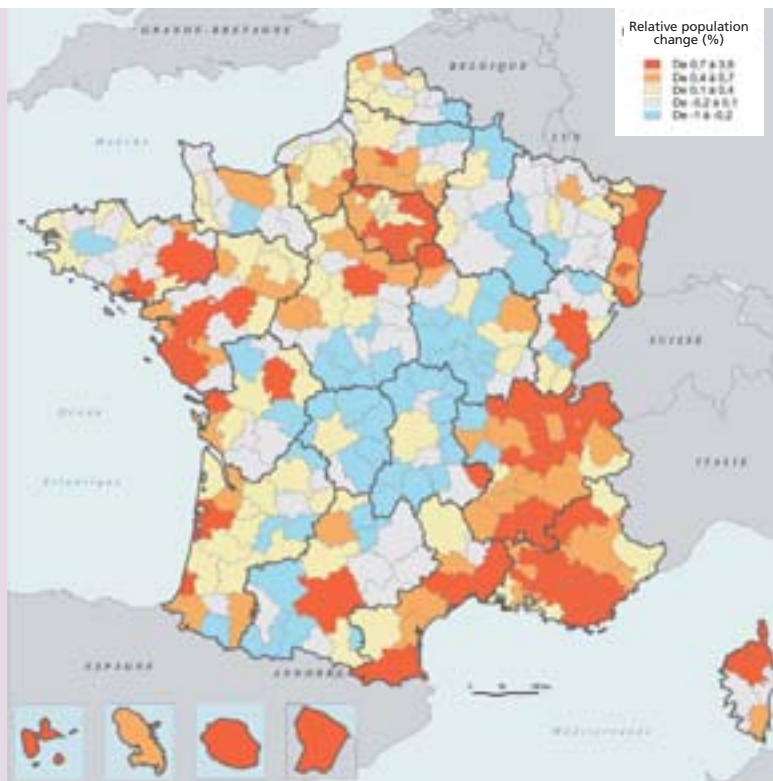
Sustained population growth

From 2000 to 2004, the average annual population growth rate in France was 0.60%, which was much higher than in previous years (0.40% from 1990 to 1998, and 0.55% from 1982 to 1990).

In metropolitan France, population growth was particularly noticeable in the West and the South. The population of Ile de France was growing at the same average rate as that of metropolitan France (0.58%), whereas the rates were substantially lower in the surrounding areas. Population growth patterns in the overseas *Départements* are very contrasted.

The latest results are in line with those from 1990 to 1999. A survey of the 50 largest urban areas showed that most of the population growth during the period under review took place in cities far from Paris, and primarily in Rennes and Nantes in the West and in Toulouse and Montpellier in the South.

Generally speaking, France's regional capitals and major cities are enjoying strong population and economic growth (see section 14). Another striking pattern is the concentration of population along the coast (see section 17) and in the major river basins.



Population changes by employment zone from 1990 to 1999

Production : DIACT – Observatoire des territoires
 Source : INSEE
 Fonds cartographiques : Francièmes
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Births are concentrated in the North

Two-thirds of this growth is due to the natural increase of the population. The national fertility rate, which had fallen during the nineteen-eighties, rose steadily over ten years to reach 1.94 in 2005. France stands out from its European neighbours in this respect. The regions with the highest fertility rates are still in the North. But the differences between regions have narrowed and Ile de France's share of births has increased steadily for 50 years now.

Increasing impact of mobility, especially in the West and South

Even though mobility explains only a third of population growth, it is still a key factor for understanding recent population changes. After decreasing from 1975 on, with the end of rural flight, mobility seems to be increasing again. Between 1990 and 1999, 6.8 persons out of each 100 changed municipalities each year, while 2.9 changed *Départements* and 1.7 changed *Régions*.

This means that the *Régions* in the South and West with the highest population growth rates, owe their ranking primarily to the net inflow of migrants. *Régions* in the Southeast had long attracted migrants, but the attraction of *Régions* in the Southwest and West was the most striking development in the period from 1990 to 1999.

Another significant change seen between 1999 and 2005 occurred in Auvergne and Limousin, the only *Régions* in France where deaths outweigh births. Their populations increased once again as a result of a net inflow of migrants. These predominantly rural *Régions* benefited from the countryside's renewed appeal throughout France in recent years (see section 16).

On the other hand, *Régions* in the North and East (except for Alsace) have seen net outflows of migrants to varying degrees.

The population is ageing more rapidly

The fertility rate has increased in recent years, but not enough to prevent France's population from ageing, especially as life expectancy increases. The ageing of the population will become more rapid in 2006, and the proportion aged over 60 should increase from 21% now to 31% in 2030. However, the general trend will have vastly different impacts on different *Régions*. The youngest *Régions* are in the North and the oldest are in the Centre and the South. ■

3 Spatial Planning Policy Objectives in France

France's spatial planning policy was developed by the central government some 45 years ago to meet the challenges raised by economic, social and cultural change in post-war France and to strike a better balance of population, industry, culture, etc. between France's regions and to cope with the predominance of Paris.

How has this policy changed in the meantime? Some of the actions were emblematic of another day and age : such as the facilitation of urbanisation in the nineteen-sixties or modernisation of French industry in the nineteen-seventies. However, it is clear that the main objectives of spatial planning policy have remained fundamentally the same:

- > action to promote the development of cities, rural areas, coastal areas and mountainous regions,
- > the need to assist all parts of France in obtaining competitive infrastructures that are critical for their future development. In the past, this meant motorways and, today, it means information and communication technology.
- > support for vulnerable areas and the use of zoning to determine where support should be provided.

France's spatial planning policy is also based on a few enduring principles, such as :

- > forecasting and observation,
- > equalisation, which means redistributing jobs and infrastructures throughout France to ensure balanced development,
- > planning and building from scratch, as in the example of the new towns and resort developments on some of France's coastlines,
- > equalisation means taking action in areas suffering from economic and social crises,
- > environmental protection,
- > compensation, which underlies the action taken in favour of underprivileged areas to compensate for their handicaps.

Even though these principles are enduring, the way they are implemented and the players involved have evolved to adapt to sweeping changes in French society and the international environment. Four developments have been particularly important :

- > European construction, which gave rise to the policy of economic and social cohesion,
- > decentralisation in France starting the nineteen-eighties, which has made local governments full participants in the spatial planning process,
- > the emergence of the notion of sustainable development,
- > economic internationalisation starting in the nineteen-nineties.

This is the context in which the Interministerial Spatial Planning and Development Committee meeting of 13 December 2002 defined new objectives for spatial planning policy. As part of the drive to modernise the central government, the policy is based on two pillars :

- ◆ making France more economically attractive and competitive, by facilitating the emergence of Competitiveness Clusters, and anticipating economic change by supporting local players dealing with such change in order to develop business activity and create jobs;
- ◆ ensuring cohesion and equity throughout France, by preserving genuine national solidarity

in favour of disadvantaged areas through the completion of major projects, the creation of transportation and digital communication infrastructures, and the modernisation of public services.

Following the Committee meeting in October 2005, the Agency for Spatial Planning and Regional Action (DATAR), which had been tasked with drafting and implementing the national spatial planning policy, was given the additional task of overseeing facilitation of economic change. This new responsibility was reflected in the name of the Agency, which became the Interministerial Agency for Spatial Planning and Competitiveness (DIACT). Under its new name, the Agency now performs all of the tasks of DATAR, including regional action (see section 4).

National Spatial Planning and Development Council (CNADT)

The CNADT is an advisory body that contributes to the drafting of spatial planning and sustainable development policies. For this purpose, it provides the Government with opinions and suggestions, and it takes part in nation-wide consultative processes dealing with all issues relating to spatial planning. It may also take up any matter relating to these issues. Its members are local or national elected officials and civil society representatives. The Council's general secretariat is provided by the Interministerial Agency for Spatial Planning and Competitiveness. ■

*The leading players
in France's administration
and spatial planning policy*

4 From the Agency for Spatial Planning and Regional Action (DATAR) ...

As part of the Prime Minister's office, the Interministerial Agency for Spatial Planning and Competitiveness (DIACT) is the successor to the Agency for Spatial Planning and Regional Action (DATAR). Its task is to prepare and implement the guidelines for the national spatial planning policies. It has a staff of 170 from various backgrounds, most of whom come from various central government departments.

Better Facilitation of Economic Change

In the autumn of 2005, the French Government decided to expand the tasks of DATAR, building on its recognised competence in development work to give it a more ambitious approach to facilitating economic change. DIACT was set up for this purpose. It is the result of incorporating the tasks previously performed by the Interministerial Task Force on Economic Change (MIME) into DATAR.

DIACT works primarily on facilitating such changes at the local and regional level, while a unit led by the Ministry of the Economy and Finance maintains an economic change watch. DIACT has an interministerial team that works specifically on economic change, providing methodological and project design support for elected officials and local units of central government departments, by adapting its action to the circumstances and to the scale and the nature of economic crises. Its task is to facilitate adaptation in order to rebuild economic activity and job markets in areas in crisis and to contribute to the expression of national solidarity on behalf of such areas.

Performing DATAR's Tasks

The new agency has taken on all of DATAR's tasks relating to national cohesion, balanced development of rural and urban areas, and implementation of European policies and contractual arrangements between the central and local government. For this purpose, DIACT :

- ◆ works to achieve cohesion and balanced and sustainable development in France, especially in vulnerable areas, such as rural areas or areas undergoing economic change, as well as in major cities (see section 14) or Competitiveness Clusters (see section 19),
- ◆ prepares and implements government decisions relating to spatial planning, by providing the secretariat for the Interministerial Committee on Spatial Planning and Competitiveness (CIACT).

Decision-Making Body

The Interministerial Committee on Spatial Planning and Competitiveness (CIACT) was set up in the autumn of 2005 to take over the tasks of the Interministerial Committee on Spatial Planning and Development (CIADT). The Committee, which is chaired by the Prime Minister, makes major decisions relating to spatial planning. DIACT prepares the Committee meetings.

... to the Interministerial Agency for Spatial Planning and Competitiveness (DIACT)

- ◆ carries out surveys and makes projections about change in order to foresee which government policies should be implemented,
- ◆ provides general coordination for the implementation of major regional programmes in liaison with the local units of central government departments and local government,
- ◆ contributes to the definition and implementation of the central government's contractual policies and, more specifically, contracts between the central government and France's regional governments (CPER) (see section 12),
- ◆ coordinates, implements and monitors European regional policies for economic and social cohesion (see section 9),
- ◆ coordinates the assessment of Programming Papers (DOCUP –Europeans structural funds 2000-2006) and contractual policies (planning contracts between central and regional governments, *Pays* Contracts, Urban Area Contracts, etc.)

DIACT works in close collaboration with the Prefects (see section 5) and maintains regular contacts with elected officials either directly or through their representative bodies.

Main Ongoing Projects

- ◆ *Economic attraction and Competitiveness Clusters*
- ◆ *Facilitating economic change*
- ◆ *European influence of French metropolises*
- ◆ *Access to new information and communication technologies*
- ◆ *Major transportation infrastructure projects*
- ◆ *Rural development and rural centres of excellence*
- ◆ *Public services and services of general interest*
- ◆ *Balanced development of coastal areas*



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Financial Tools for Spatial Planning Policy

DIACT has its own tools to finance its action :

- ◆ the local development bonus (PAT) for business and job creation. In 2005, the bonus supported the creation of 6,758 jobs. The 2006 budget act has set aside some 38 million euros for the bonus.
- ◆ The National Spatial Planning and Development Fund (FNADT), which has an endowment of some 300 million euros.

Spatial planning policy is also funded by European resources and contributions from other ministries. For example, DIACT oversees :

- ◆ coordination of the allocation of funds relating to planning contracts (see section 12), 19 billion euros for the period from 2000 to 2006),
- ◆ negotiating and coordinating the allocation of European structural funds (16 billion euros for the period from 2000 to 2006).

DIACT's International Action

In consultation with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, DIACT engages in a great deal of international cooperation with other countries' national and local governments :

- ◆ *as part of the institutional twinning that the European Union has set up with applicant countries under the PHARE Programme.* The idea is to help these countries to build up their administrations, to transpose European legislation into their national legislation and to prepare for management and monitoring of structural funds, with a view to their accession to the European Union
- ◆ *through bilateral cooperation with European Union countries, Balkan countries and the new neighbours on spatial planning and regional development :* converting the economy of mining areas, implementing decentralisation and regionalisation, particularly in Poland, Hungary, the Ukraine and Croatia. Bilateral cooperation on Competitiveness Clusters got under way with Germany and Hungary in 2004.
- ◆ *in the countries in the Priority Solidarity Area, and especially in Morocco, with the support of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs through the Priority Solidarity Fund (FSP) and in Algeria, through training and action programmes.*

DIACT also makes its spatial planning expertise and know-how available on an occasional basis to Central European countries and countries on other continents, such as Brazil, China, and South Korea. It also hosts some 60 delegations of foreign visitors on study missions to Paris each year. ■

5 Central Government Structures at the Regional and Sub-Regional Level

The central government is represented by a senior civil servant called a Prefect (*préfet*) at the level of the *Départements* and the *Régions*. The Prefects are key figures in local administration. They are appointed by the President of the Republic on the recommendation of the Prime Minister and the Minister of the Interior. The Regional Prefects are located in the regional capitals. They also perform the duties of the Departmental Prefect for the *Département* where they are located.

Deconcentration/Decentralisation

Deconcentration is a movement within the central government administration. It involves the transfer of functions that had formerly been performed at ministries in Paris to the regional, departmental, interregional or interdepartmental levels. Thus, the term central administration refers to the ministerial directorates located in Paris and the term local units of central government departments refers to central government units located in the *Régions* or in the *Départements*. Deconcentration has been one of the guiding principles of central government modernisation and reform.

Decentralisation refers to the transfer of powers from the central government to a local government.

The Prefects' Tasks

The Prefect's job carries strong symbolic values. The Prefects are the incarnation of the Republic. They are vested with the authority of the central government. They represent the Prime Minister and each of the other ministers in the *Région* or *Département*. The position of Prefect was instituted at the beginning of the nineteenth century as part of a highly centralised government structure. The tasks of the Prefects evolved in 1982, as the first phase of decentralisation was implemented and the central government staff was reorganised in consequence. Their tasks were reviewed again in 2004, in the second phase of decentralisation.

The Regional Prefect implements the central government's policy with regard to spatial planning and economic development, rural development, the environment and sustainable development, culture, employment, housing, urban renewal and even public health, as well as the European Community policies that come under the authority of the central government. The 2004 reforms upheld the interministerial nature of the Regional Prefects' tasks and broadened their powers. Consequently, they are now responsible for coordinating and leading the Departmental Prefects, who have more specific responsibilities for the national interest, law enforcement and law and order.

In the performance of their tasks, the Prefects manage the local units of the central government at the regional and departmental levels, even though some administrations, such as the courts, schools, and tax authorities, operate separately because of the nature of their tasks.

The Prefects are also in close contact with local governments, supervising their acts after the fact (see section 6). Regional Prefects have the sole power to negotiate and sign agreements with regional governments and their public corporations on behalf of the central government, but this power may be delegated to a Departmental Prefect in certain cases. Departmental Prefects have the sole authority to deal with the *Départements*, the municipalities and their public corporations.

The Central Government at the Regional Level

A Strategic Level

For the central government, the regional governments, which have traditionally been responsible for spatial planning, are a key level for strategic planning. The regional government is where interministerial policies, such as planning contracts between regional governments and the central government are implemented (see section 12), where all the major policies affecting development in Pays, urban areas, cities, Competitiveness Clusters, etc. are coordinated (see sections 14, 15, and 18), and where European structural funds are managed (see section 9).

Following the 2004 reforms, the Regional Prefect sets the central government's strategic guidelines for the *Région* in order to ensure the coherence of the action taken by the local central government units. The Prefect works out these guidelines with the help of the Regional Administration Committee (CAR), which is made up of the Departmental Prefects, the Secretary General for Regional Affairs (SGAR) and the Heads of the eight sections covering the regional central government units.

The strategic guidelines are officially set for three years in a Central Government Plan of Strategic Action for the *Région* (PASER). This Plan of Action is based on the characteristics of the *Région* and a review of the central government's policy priorities. It represents the central government's "point of view" with regard to local governments in the contracting process (see section 12). The Plan contains four or five major priorities that are broken down into a maximum of fifteen actions, primarily in areas where action cuts across several ministries. Central Government Plans of Strategic Action for the *Départements* are also drawn up. They must be in line with the Plans for the *Région*.

The Regional Prefect is backed up a streamlined structure that is fairly unusual for the French administration called the General Secretariat for Regional Affairs (SGAR). It is managed by a senior civil servant called the Secretary General for Regional Affairs and its tasks include :

- coordinating the action of regional government staff and ensuring coordination with the action of departmental government staff,
- leading the Regional Administration Committee and coordinating the drafting of the Central Government Plan of Action for the *Région*,
- conducting regional forecasting work and surveys,
- taking part in the drafting of planning or contractual documents, such as the Planning Contracts between Central Government and Regional Governments (see section 12).
- programming central government investment and organising development projects,
- participating in the management of European structural funds (see section 9),
- carrying out public policy assessments commissioned by the central government or the European Union with regard to spatial planning, urban development policies and economic development policies.

Consequently, the General Secretariats for Regional Affairs work very closely with the Regional Councils, civil society and with DIACT.

Interregional and Interdepartmental Levels

If spatial planning policy concerns several *Régions*, as in the case of managing a river or developing a mountainous area, for example, a Regional Prefect may be given interregional powers to implement it. This Prefect then coordinates the action of the Departmental Prefects and the Regional Prefects concerned. Similarly, a Departmental Prefect may be appointed to coordinate spatial planning policies that affect several *Départements*.

Financial Modernisation

As part of its modernisation of central government, France undertook a major financial reform that came into effect on 1 January 2006.

The purpose of this reform was to optimise management of the central government budget, increase its transparency and make its implementation more efficient. The reform involved a shift from reasoning in terms of resources to reasoning in terms of results. It gives greater responsibilities to the managers of the local central government units. This reform is commonly referred to as the OLF, the French acronym for the organic act of 1 August 2001 on the budget, which sets out the main provisions. ■

6 Local Governments

France has three levels of local government : *Communes, Départements and Régions*. This structure is relatively new.

Decentralisation, which transfers powers from the central government to local governments, did not really start producing its effects until the beginning of the nineteen-eighties. The Act of 2 March 1982 on the rights and freedoms of *Communes, Départements and Régions* is a key piece of legislation in this area.

A further step in the decentralisation process came with the amendment to the French Constitution of 28 March 2003 and the Act of 13 August 2004 on local rights and responsibilities. The decentralised structure of the French Republic has now been enshrined in the Constitution. In addition, more powers were transferred to local governments and their role received greater recognition as the principle of local governments' financial autonomy was upheld.

The Constitution now specifically refers to local governments.

Some of the Main Operating Principles of Decentralisation

- ◆ **Principle of free administration of local governments :**
elected councils freely administer local governments with regulatory powers to perform their tasks.
- ◆ **The principle of no oversight of one local government over another follows on from the previous principle :**
since local governments are free to administer their affairs, none may have the power to tell another what to do.
- ◆ **Principle of financial autonomy for local governments :**
local governments have resources that they are free to use. Tax revenues and the local governments' own resources from other sources must represent a decisive share of these resources. This means that local governments must not depend on the central government for the majority of their resources (see below).
- ◆ **Principle of central government supervision after the fact :**
the central government supervises local governments' actions, but this supervision takes place after the fact. A distinction is made between :
 - legal supervision to ensure the lawfulness of local governments' actions that are automatically enforceable (local government decisions, regulatory acts, agreements relating to public procurement, etc.) The Regional Prefects supervise the regional governments and their public corporations, as well as interregional public corporations that have their registered office in the *Région*. The Departmental Prefects supervise the departmental governments and the *Communes*, along with local and interdepartmental public corporations with their registered office in the *Département*.



- > the regional courts of auditors conduct the financial audits and legal audits of local governments' budgets, financial statements and financial management.

Experimentation

Recent legislation on decentralisation introduced the principle of experimentation, which allows local government to conduct temporary experiments involving the exercise of central government powers. If an experiment is a success, the power may be transferred to the local government permanently.

Communes

A *Commune* is the smallest administrative division in France, but it is also the oldest, since it is the successor to the medieval towns and parishes. *Communes* were instituted in 1789. They gained a measure of autonomy under the terms of the Act of 5 April 1884, which was then enhanced by the decentralisation legislation passed in the early nineteen-eighties.

France has 36,778 *Communes*. The *Communes* exercise local community powers over :

- ◆ education building and maintaining schools, managing and recruiting non-teaching staff,
- ◆ urban planning : drafting urban planning documents, issuing building permits,
- ◆ social services : managing crèches, day-care centres, old-age homes, services for the poor (medical assistance) to supplement the services provided by the *Départements*,
- ◆ maintaining communal roads,
- ◆ waste collection, sanitation,
- ◆ transportation : organising urban transport, building, developing and managing yacht harbours,
- ◆ economic services : developing industry areas, subsidising businesses (subject to certain conditions),
- ◆ culture : building and managing lending libraries, music schools, museums, etc

Communes are managed by Municipal Councils (*Conseil municipal*) that are elected every six years through direct universal suffrage by the inhabitants of the *Commune* who are either citizens of France or of another Member State of the European Union. The Municipal Councillors then elect one of their own number to be the Mayor. The Mayor holds the executive power in the *Commune*. In some cases, he also acts on behalf of the central government. The Mayor's central government tasks include maintaining the registry of births, marriages and deaths, maintaining law and order, organising elections and issuing official documents, such as passports.

Special provisions apply to France's three largest cities: Paris, Lyons and Marseilles.

Furthermore, *Communes* may form groups to fulfil some of their tasks jointly. This cooperation between *Communes* is referred to as intercommunality (see section 7).



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Départements

Départements were created under the French Revolution. They were not recognised as autonomous local governments with governing bodies and elected executives until 1871. But they did not become totally free of the central government's oversight until 1982, when *Départements* became local government units with full powers.

Départements are run by a General Council (*Conseil général*). The members, called General Councillors, are elected by universal suffrage to a 6-year term of office. The General Councillors then elect one of their number to be the departmental executive, called the President of the General Council. The President prepares the Council's decisions and carries them out. The President also manages the budget and the staff.

France has 100 *Départements*, including 4 overseas *Départements*. The *Départements* have three main responsibilities, relating to :

- ◆ health and welfare : care for the elderly, the disabled and children, and social and professional insertion for vulnerable people. This is the main budget item. Social welfare accounts for 60% of the *Départements*' budgets and occupies 80% of their personnel,
- ◆ infrastructures and transportation : maintenance and development of part of the road network (departmental roads and part of national highways), organising non-urban public transport, including school buses, development and operation of commercial and fishing ports,
- ◆ education : building and maintaining middle schools, recruitment and management of non-teaching staff.

Départements also have responsibilities relating to :

- ◆ economic development : support for small and medium-sized enterprises, for craft industries, farmers, etc., with some action being coordinated by the regional governments,
- ◆ the environment : conservation and management of endangered natural sites, development and use of waterways, etc.
- ◆ cofinancing cultural and tourist events.

Départements also provide subsidies to *Communes*, especially in rural areas, for road maintenance, sanitation, electrification, building infrastructures, environmental protection and land development.

Région

Régions are the most recent local government unit in France. They were instituted by the decentralisation legislation of the nineteen-eighties. *Régions* were enshrined in the Constitution by the amendment of 28 March 2003 and they are now mentioned in the French Constitution, along with *Communes* and *Départements*.

The Regional Councils (*Conseil régional*) were first elected by universal suffrage in March 1986. Councillors serve a 6-year term of office. The Councillors then elect the President of the Regional Council. As the regional executive, the President manages the budget and the staff, and conducts the *Région's* policy.

France has 26 *Régions*, including 4 overseas *Régions*. Corsica has a special status among the *Régions*.

The primary tasks of *Régions* are coordination and planning. The *Régions'* main responsibilities concern :

- ◆ education and vocational training : building and maintaining high schools, recruiting and managing their non-teaching staff, defining and implementing regional policies for apprenticeships and vocational training for youth and adults.
- ◆ economic development : defining and allocating economic support schemes for businesses, coordinating joint actions by local governments and cooperation between *Communes* in this area, drafting the Regional Economic Development Plan (see section 18).
- ◆ spatial planning : drafting the Regional Spatial Planning and Development Blueprint (SRADT), which sets the broad guidelines in this area (see section 11), drafting and signing contracts between central and regional government, which set out the regional development programme for several years (see section 12), organising regional rail transportation, etc.

Regional governments also have more or less broad powers with regard to : culture (management of museums and heritage sites), health, sport, housing, higher education, etc.

Local Government Finances

Local government financing comes from four sources :

- ◆ local taxes, which constitute their main source of revenue
 - > direct taxes paid by individuals and businesses (land tax, occupancy tax, business taxes),
 - > indirect taxes (stamp duties);
- ◆ central government grants to local government;
- ◆ borrowing;
- ◆ revenue from services provided by local governments and from public property (e.g. fees for municipal art courses, rents from buildings, etc.)

Tax revenues and the local governments' own resources from other sources must represent a decisive share of these resources. Local governments do not have the power to create new taxes, but they are allowed to adjust the tax base and tax rates for those they already collect, within certain limits. Finally, any transfer of powers from the central government to local governments must be backed up by a transfer of the equivalent resources. ■

7 Cooperation between Communes

At 36,778, the number of Communes in France may seem high at first glance. But the French have a strong sense of belonging to their Commune and would like to preserve them. Yet, the scale of the Communes limits their possibilities to implement genuine development projects, so a substitute for mergers and the disappearance of Communes has been found: voluntary cooperation between Communes. The Communes continue to exist and retain some of their powers, but they opt to work together under special structures in certain areas. This type of cooperation between Communes, or intercommunality, has become widespread in recent years.

The earliest form of cooperation, for which some of the founding principles date back to the end of the nineteenth century, was a form of “management cooperation” for managing waste, infrastructures, streetlights, etc. This type of cooperation continues today. But at the same time, more in-depth cooperation has developed called “project cooperation”. The purpose is to elaborate plans of action covering several Communes to deal with economic, social and environmental issues.

However, the expansion of cooperation between Communes has run into some obstacles. There are many complex intercommunal structures and their development has been uneven. They are more common in rural areas than in urban areas, and more common in Western and Northern France than in Central and Southeast France. The Act of 12 July 1999 on enhancing and simplifying intercommunal affairs and the more recent Act of 13 August 2004 on local rights and responsibilities have simplified the legal framework for cooperation between Communes to foster more harmonious development of such cooperation. The reform has been a major success.

Different Structures for Cooperation between Communes

The legal structures for cooperation between Communes are called Public Corporations for Cooperation between Communes (EPCI). Another term heard is “groups”. A distinction is made between :

- ◆ *Public Corporations for Cooperation between Communes financed by contributions from the member Communes.*

These structures are primarily Single-Purpose Intercommunal Syndicates (SIVU) and Multi-Purpose Intercommunal Syndicates (SIVOM). These are “management cooperation” structures. There are nearly 15,000 SIVUs and more than 2,000 SIVOMs.

There are also mixed-form syndicates that provide broader possibilities for partnerships. There are two categories of mixed syndicates :

- closed mixed syndicates, where the partners are the Communes and their groups (syndicates or Public Corporations for Cooperation between Communes (EPCI)),
- open mixed syndicates, where the partners are the Communes, their groups, other levels of local government (Départements and Régions) other public bodies (chambers of commerce and industry, chambers of trade, chambers of agriculture, etc.)

The mixed syndicate structure is most frequently used for large-scale projects, such as tourist developments, building and managing major infrastructures, implementing land-use policies, coordination of *Pays* projects (see section I5) or drafting planning documents (see section II).

- ◆ *Public Corporations for Cooperation between Communes (EPCI) with their own tax revenues, which receive some of the local taxes paid by residents and businesses.*

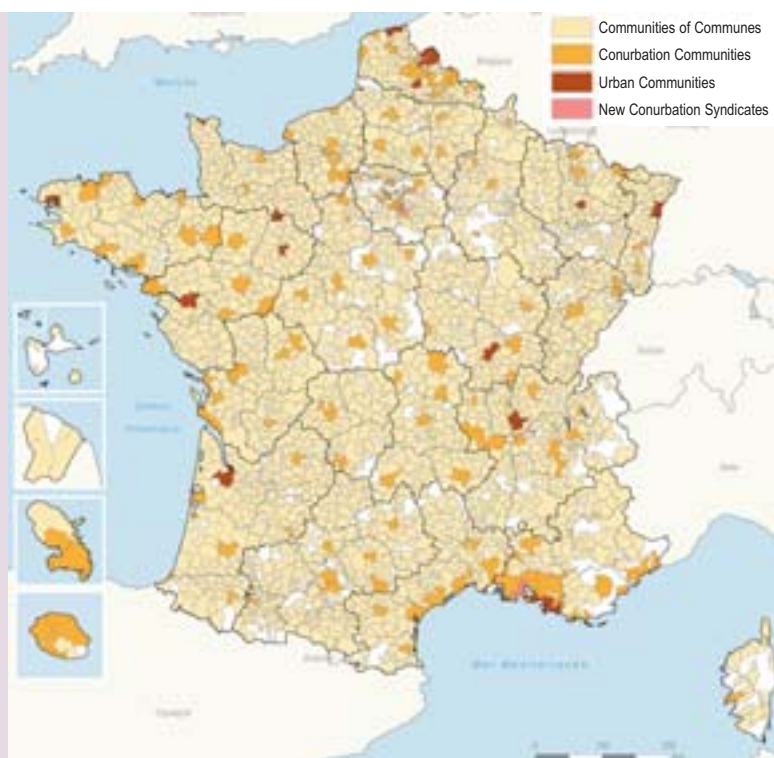
These structures are called "communities". Depending on the size of their population, such communities are subject to very different legal rules. The local elected officials who run a community (Community Delegates) are Municipal Councillors from the member Communes of the EPCI, who are appointed by their peers. These communities are the intercommunal links for the projects. In view of the important role they play, the types of communities are described below.

The Special Case of Intercommunal Structures with their Own Tax Revenues

There are 4 types of EPCI with their own tax revenues :

- ◆ *Communities of Communes (Communauté de communes - CC)*

Communities of *Communes* were instituted by the Act of 6 February 1992 and reinforced by the Act of 12 July 1999. They are the simplest and most flexible form of Public Corporations for Cooperation between *Communes*. They are especially common in rural areas. *Communes* form a partnership for a joint project that should address economic development and land use. In



Public Corporations
for Cooperation between
Communes with their own
tax revenues,
As of 1 January 2006

Production : DIACT –
Observatoire des territoires,
2006
Source : DGCL
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addition to these two obligatory areas of competence, a Community of *Communes* must choose at least one of the four following areas of competence : the environment, roads, housing and living conditions, infrastructures for sports, social services, culture and education. Other areas of competence may be transferred to the Community if the member *Communes* so desire.

◆ **Conurbation Communities (Communautés d'agglomération - CA)**

This type of Public Corporation for Cooperation between *Communes* was instituted by the Act of 12 July 1999 specifically for urban areas. Such structures cover several *Communes* that form a contiguous and continuous zone with a population of more than 50,000 around one or more central *Communes* with a population of more than 15,000 and/or around a departmental capital (to ensure a certain population density). Through this partnership, the *Communes* undertake to put together a joint urban development project that can be supported by the central government and set out in a contract (see section 12). A conurbation community must have competence for economic development, land use, housing and urban development policies. It must also choose at least three of the five following areas of competence : roads, sanitation, water, the environment and living conditions, and cultural and sports facilities.

◆ **Urban Communities (Communautés urbaines - CU)**

Such entities cover several *Communes* in a contiguous and continuous zone with a population of more than 500,000. The obligatory areas of competence are broader and go beyond economic development, land use planning, social balance, housing and urban policies to include social welfare, culture, management of public services and the environment.

◆ **New Conurbation Syndicates (Syndicat d'agglomération nouvelle - SAN)**

These Public Corporations for Cooperation between *Communes* (EPCI) manage the new towns that the central government created in the nineteen-seventies to cope with soaring population growth in the Paris area and around some of the regional capitals. These conurbations were built from scratch in greenfield sites so that the population would settle along the main routes for development near Paris. They were originally under the central government's supervision, but they now have fully-fledged local governments, represented by New Conurbation Syndicates. These Public Corporations for Cooperation between *Communes* (EPCI) were instituted in 1983 and there are now six of them : four in the Ile-de-France, one in the Provence-Alpes-Côte d'Azur *Région* and one in the Rhône-Alpes *Région*. Eventually, they should all be turned into Conurbation Communities or Urban Communities.

Facts and Figures about Intercommunal Structures with their Own Tax Revenues

As of 1 January 2006, there were 2,573 intercommunal structures with their own tax revenues set up as Public Corporations for Cooperation between *Communes*. Approximately 90% of France's metropolitan and overseas *Communes* belong to such structures, which cover 85% of the population. Such structures are well on their way to covering all of France's territory.

The differences between geographical regions are much smaller. Ile de France is the only *Région* that is truly lagging behind, since only 43% of its population is covered by Public Corporations for Cooperation between *Communes* with their own tax revenues. But cooperation between *Communes* is now developing rapidly in the *Région*.

Distribution of Public Corporations for Cooperation between Communes (EPCI) with their own tax revenues as of 1 January 2006

Type of EPCI	Number of EPCIs	Number of Communes concerned	Number of residents concerned
Urban Communities	14	356	6,219,688
Conurbation Communities	164	2,788	20,679,874
New Conurbation Syndicates	6	34	357,216
Communities of Communes	2,389	29,735	26,078,155
Total	2,573	32,913	53,334,933

(Source : Local Government Directorate General - DGCL)

Special Tax Arrangements

Public Corporations for Cooperation between *Communes* with their own tax revenues are financially autonomous, since they levy and collect a portion of local taxes (see section 6) in the *Communes*' stead. There are three types of arrangement :

- ◆ *Uniform Business Tax (Taxe professionnelle unique - TPU)*

This is the mandatory system for Conurbation Communities and Urban Communities set up after the Act of 12 July 1999 was passed. It is optional for Urban Communities set up before the Act was passed and for Communities of *Communes*.

In order to promote cooperation and solidarity between *Communes*, the Communities are required to pool the business tax paid by companies located within them. The Community acts in the place of the *Communes* to set the business tax rate and receives all of the revenue it generates. Under this arrangement, the same tax rate applies throughout the Community and the uniform business tax becomes the sole source of tax revenue for the Community, hence the name.

The business tax revenue is divided into two parts, using a procedure chosen by all of the member *Communes*. One part is paid to the Community to fulfil its tasks. The other part, called the "compensation payment" is paid to the *Communes* for the tasks that they are still responsible for in order to ensure a balanced budget.

The *Communes* continue to receive all of the revenue from other local taxes, such as the occupancy tax and land taxes.

As of 1 January 2006, nearly 50% of the *Communes* belonging to Public Corporations for Cooperation between *Communes* with their own tax revenues were covered by the uniform business tax system. This arrangement prevents *Communes* from competing to attract businesses and promotes solidarity between *Communes*.

- ◆ *Additional Taxation*

Urban Communities that were in existence before the Act of 12 July 1999 was passed and Communities of *Communes* are allowed to raise "additional taxes". Urban Communities and Communities of *Communes* may set the rates for four local taxes and receive a share of the revenue from each of them. This share is added to the share set by the *Communes*, *Départements* and *Régions*, which is why it is called additional taxation.

◆ *Mixed Tax System*

This system applies to Communities that opted for the uniform business tax system and also apply the additional tax system. They vote on the business tax rate and a portion of the rates for the three other local taxes.

Recently Expanded Powers

The Act of 13 August 2004 on local rights and responsibilities strengthened the role of Public Corporations for Cooperation between *Communes* with their own tax revenues, allowing them to contract to perform some of the tasks incumbent on *Départements* and *Régions*. Their role in housing policy was also expanded. They are now able to manage some of the funds for promoting building and renovation of housing stock on behalf of the central government. The Community Presidents may now be given some policing powers in order to perform the tasks assigned to them more effectively. Finally, the internal structures of the Communities and their financial relationships with the member *Communes* are substantially more flexible now.

Since practically all of France is now covered by Public Corporations for Cooperation between *Communes* with their own tax revenues, a new phase of work is now opening up aimed at improving the quality of the existing Corporations. The Act of 13 August 2004 opened the way by facilitating transformations and mergers between such Corporations. The purpose of the reform was to ensure that their membership structure is more relevant in order to give new impetus to intercommunal projects. ■

8 Civil Society

Regional Economic and Social Councils (*Conseils économiques et sociaux régionaux - CESR*)

Regional Economic and Social Councils act as advisory bodies for the Regional Councils. Their tasks include providing opinions, proposals and advice on a number of subjects relating to the Regional Councils' tasks or relating to economic, social and cultural development in the *Régions*.

These Councils were instituted by the Act of 5 July 1972 and their tasks grew gradually as the first phase of decentralisation progressed. The Council members are business leaders, trade union representatives and representatives of non-profit associations. They are appointed for a six-year term by the organisations concerned.

The Regional Economic and Social Councils must be consulted on the budget reports drafted by the Regional Councils and on the documents, plans and guidelines relating to the Regional Councils' responsibilities (planning, vocational training, high schools and regional passenger rail services). These consultations must take place before the Regional Councils' deliberations.

The Presidents of Regional Councils may also consult their Regional Economic and Social Councils for opinions and may commission reports from them on any issue that they or their Regional Councils choose. The Regional Economic and Social Councils also have the right to conduct research work relating to regional issues at their own initiative.

The Regional Economic and Social Councils are the second pillar of the regional institutional structure, alongside the Regional Councils. This structure is sometimes referred to as a "bicameral regional government".

There is also a National Economic and Social Council (CES) that acts as an advisory body representing social and business interests at the national level.

Business Representation Chambers (*chambres consulaires*)

The chambers are the organisations representing various sectors of the economy :

- > industrial, commercial and service enterprises are represented by the Chambers of Commerce and Industry (CCI),
- > craft industries are represented by the Chambers of Trade (CT),
- > and the farming industry is represented by the Chambers of Agriculture (CA).

These public establishments play three roles :

- > They are the official industry representatives to central and local government.
- > They provide services to the industries that they represent, such as technical advice, training, legal advice, support for creating new enterprises or taking over existing enterprises, international actions and action to promote innovation and modernisation.
- > They manage public facilities (e.g. warehouses, logistical facilities, convention centres, in the case of Chambers of Commerce and Industry) and schools.

The Chambers are run by representatives of the industries concerned, such as business leaders, craftspeople or farmers, as the case may be, who are elected by their peers.

The Chambers are important players in local development and they take part in projects in *Pays* and in urban areas (see sections 14 and 15).

	Chambers of Commerce and Industry (CCI)	Chambers of Trade	Chambers of Agriculture
Date of Establishment	Origins date back to to the end of the sixteenth century and they took off in the nineteenth century	1925	1851 (take-off started in 1927)
Number of Chambers	175 in France 110 abroad	106	115
Types of Chambers	Local departmental regional and international	Departmental and regional	Departmental and regional
Number of elected representatives	4,500	Approx. 3,700	4,200



Economic Development Agencies (*Agences de développement économique*)

Local governments set up Economic Development Agencies and Expansion Committees to promote economic development. They propose and implement strategies and actions that are suitable for their local area. In 2006, there were 122 such bodies, including 3 interregional bodies, 22 regional bodies, 63 departmental bodies and 34 local bodies.

Economic Development Agencies and Expansion Committees carry out actions in four main areas :

- > support for existing businesses or start-ups, prospecting and hosting of external enterprises, etc.
- > advice for local governments on locations for industry areas, business real estate issues, drafting development plans, etc.
- > European action, including involvement in the implementation of programmes financed by the European Union, such as Leader or Interreg (see section 9),
- > research and communication, including economic research and reviews and actions to promote the local area, etc.

The decision-making bodies of the Economic Development Agencies and Expansion Committees are partnerships. Their members are elected officials, representatives of the Chambers, employers' federations, trade unions and qualified figures such as business leaders and academics.

The average annual budget for such Agencies and Committees is one million euros and they employ an average of eight to twelve persons, including engineers, economists and geographers. The network as a whole has more than 1,300 employees, including 800 management-level employees.

Some twenty regional and interregional agencies focus more particularly on attracting international investment. They are correspondents of the Invest in France Agency (AFII) (see section 18), and they conduct joint prospecting drives with it. They may also undertake such drives on their own or in partnership with local development agencies. This type of action may account vastly different proportions of their activity, ranging from less than 10% to more than 60%. In 2005, ten agencies received support from DIACT and officialised their partnership with the central government and the regional governments by signing goals-based contracts.

The network of regional and interregional agencies has undergone a great deal of change in recent years. Originally, the central government set up nine of them as "Industrialisation Commissions" to conduct active policies for development in regions facing acute unemployment problems. With decentralisation, the Regional Councils have gradually taken over the role of driving regional economic development. This task had formerly been performed by the central government, which still works in partnership with the new structures.

Urban Planning Agencies (*Agences d'urbanisme*)

The Urban Planning Agencies were set up under the 1967 Land Use Planning Act and are now found in most large urban areas in metropolitan France. There are 50 such Agencies employing some 1,200 people.

Their role is to provide local governments with technical support for planning and carrying out their urban projects. The Agencies originally focused on producing planning studies and urban planning documents. They gradually extended their scope of action to encompass spatial planning, economic development, transportation issues, the environment and urban policies. Thus, they play a large part in drafting the conurbation contracts, which officially set out the overall plan for development in a conurbation (see section 14).

The central government and local governments set these Agencies up as non-profit entities. The flexible legal status of these structures means that they are partnerships. The Agencies are made up of representatives of the *Communes* and structures for cooperation between *Communes* in the conurbation, *Région* and *Département* concerned, as well as the Chambers, the academic community, etc.

The member local governments and central government provide most of the funding for the Agencies.



Employment Area Committees (*Comités de bassin d'emploi*)

The task of the Employment Area Committees is to improve the job market in a given area by enabling local players to work together. There are currently ninety such Committees, which have mostly been set up as non-profit organisations. Their distinguishing characteristic is that their action covers one travel-to-work area or catchment area in order to meet local needs more effectively.

Employment Area Committees first appeared in the nineteen-eighties as certain areas underwent the difficult process of industrial restructuring. They were meant to serve as a social forum to make the implementation of policies to support job creation and training more effective. Consequently, their members included local elected officials, business representatives and employees' representatives right from the start. The recent inclusion of representatives from the non-profit sector and the social welfare economy reflects the changes in their tasks. The Employment Area Committees are now more deeply involved in local development projects, especially in *Pays* (see section I5). ■

France's local areas and Europe

9 European Economic And Social Cohesion Policy in France

The European Union's action is still poorly understood. This is especially true of its economic and social cohesion policy, which is the second largest expenditure item in the EU budget after the Common Agricultural Policy (CAP).

It is aimed at cofinancing action on behalf of vulnerable populations and European regions encountering development problems. It includes :

- the cohesion policy, funded by the cohesion fund, which is only for the countries facing the greatest hardships,
- regional policies funded by European Structural Funds and applying to all of the countries in the Union.

Regional policy programmes run for several years. The current programmes cover the period from 2000 to 2006. Under these programmes, France will receive 16 billion euros over that period.

Current Cohesion Policy: 2000-2006

- ◆ **Objective 1** provides help for regions where development is lagging behind, meaning regions where the per capita gross domestic product is less than 75% of the European average. In France, this programme concerns the overseas *Départements*, or 3% of the population. Hainaut, in the North of France, and Corsica were eligible as Objective 1 areas in the period from 1994 to 1999, but were no longer eligible in the period from 2000 to 2006. However, they still receive "transitional support". This support ensures that such areas are not suddenly cut off from European support, but it is less than they would have received as Objective 1 areas. France has received 3.9 billion euros out of the total European Union allocation of 136 billion euros for Objective 1 support, including transitional support.
- ◆ **Objective 2** is to support the economic and social conversion of areas experiencing structural difficulties, meaning areas where industry and services are undergoing change, declining rural areas, vulnerable urban areas and areas that rely on fisheries. This is the main programme to benefit France, since it concerns some 32% of the French population or nearly 19 million people. In addition, 14% of the French population is eligible for transitional support. As is the case of Objective 1, transitional support is available for areas that are not eligible for Objective 2, but were eligible for similar programmes between 1994 and 1999. France has received 6.2 billion euros under Objective 2 out of the total European Community allocation of 22 billion euros, including transitional support.
- ◆ **Objective 3** is to support the adaptation and modernisation of education, training and employment policies. All of the areas that are not eligible for Objective 1 are eligible for Objective 3, which means virtually all of metropolitan France. France has received 4.7 billion euros out of the total European Union allocation of 24 billion euros.

These programmes may cofinance a wide range of projects for economic development, training, transportation, the environment and culture, regardless of whether these projects are carried out by local governments, non-profit organisations or businesses.

In addition to these large general-purpose programmes, "Community Initiatives" use a small proportion of the structural funds for more narrowly targeted experimental and innovative programmes. There have been four such programmes in the period from 2000 to 2006 :

- > *Urban II* for urban areas in crisis,
- > *Leader+* for local development in rural areas,
- > *Interreg III* for cooperation with other countries in the Union (see section 10)
- > *Equal* to fight all forms of discrimination in the labour market.

Urban

Urban II focuses on some fifty urban sites in crisis in Europe, including nine in France. The European Commission selected the sites on the basis of economic and social criteria, including long-term unemployment rates and poverty rates. The actions receiving support may concern buildings (reclamation of derelict sites and public spaces, etc.), businesses and employment, fighting exclusion, the environment and transportation. France has received 102 million euros out of the total European Community allocation of 700 million euros.

There are four structural funds that cofinance these programmes by supplementing domestic funding :

- > the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF), which supports business investment in plant and machinery, and infrastructures for transportation, energy and telecommunications, and grants for small and medium-sized enterprises,



European Structural Funds in France (2000-2006)

Production : DIACT –
Observatoire des territoires,
2005
Source : DIACT
Fonds cartographiques :
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- > the European Social Fund, which supports training, vocational skills development, and employment promotion,
- > the Guidance Section of the European Agricultural Guidance and Guarantee Fund (EAGGF), which cofinances rural development operations,
- > the Financial Instrument for Fisheries Guidance (FIFG) for the fisheries and aquaculture industries.

In France, structural funds are primarily managed by the central government. But, as part of the new phase in the decentralisation process, the involvement of local governments has been increased and some regional governments have been given the authority to manage the programmes on an experimental basis.

A New Generation of Policies for 2007 to 2013

The next generation of cohesion policies for the period from 2007 to 2013 is now being drafted. It will be in line with the two major objectives of the European Union :

- > promoting competitiveness and creating jobs,
- > making Europe the most competitive and dynamic knowledge-driven economy in the world by 2010, while maintaining a sustainable development model (Lisbon/Goteborg Strategy).

The European Commission proposed organising the new generation of policies around three major objectives :

- > "convergence" to support growth and employment in the less developed Member States and regions. In France, this objective will concern the four overseas *Départements*.
- > the "regional competitiveness and employment" objective is aimed at areas outside of the less developed regions to enhance their competitiveness and attractions and to boost employment. This objective will concern all of metropolitan France.
- > the "European territorial cooperation" objective aims to enhance cooperation across both land and sea borders, transnational cooperation in regions encompassing territory in several countries and interregional cooperation, as well as promoting exchanges of experience at the appropriate territorial level.

After the Heads of State and Government agreed on the 2007-2013 budget for the European Union in mid-December 2005, the cohesion policy budget is expected to be 307.6 billion euros. This sum will be distributed as follows :

- > 251.3 billion euros, or 81.7% for "convergence",
- > 48.8 billion euros, or 15.9% for "regional competitiveness and employment",
- > 7.5 billion euros, or 2.4% for "European territorial cooperation".

France has been allocated 12.688 billion euros from this budget, including :

- > 2.838 billion euros for its four overseas *Départements* under the "convergence" item,
- > 9.1 billion euros for metropolitan France under the "regional competitiveness and employment" item, including supplementary allocations of 30 million euros for Corsica and 70 million euros for Hainaut,
- > 0.749 billion euros under the "territorial cooperation" item.

The allocations will come out of three funds :

- > the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF),

- > the European Social Fund (ESF),
- > the European Agriculture Rural Development Fund (EARDF).

In order to ensure that the new cohesion policy is aligned with the Lisbon/Goteborg Strategy, each Member State has been asked to draft a National Strategic Reference Framework (NSRF) to guide the use of the ERDF and the ESF in the various programmes. Each NSRF should then be aligned with the Community Strategic Guidelines (CSG). The European Commission presented a draft of these Guidelines in July 2005, which apply the broad guidelines of the Lisbon/Goteborg strategy to cohesion policy.

France's NSRF was drafted in 2005 following broad-based consultations with regional and local partners, as well as the ministries concerned. The Framework sets out several priorities that bring the Lisbon/Goteborg strategy and support for vulnerable areas, especially urban areas in crisis, into perspective :

- > the economic environment and support for businesses,
- > training, employment, human resources management and social inclusion,
- > the environment and risk prevention.

Developing information and communication technology is a critical issue for the framework. Particular emphasis will be laid on interregional strategies covering mountain ranges and river valleys. The NSRF also sets out priorities and recommendations for the implementation of the "territorial cooperation" objective.

A parallel approach is used for the EARDF under the National Strategic Plan (NSP). This plan sets out three priorities for action :

- > improving the competitiveness of the agricultural and forestry sector,
- > conservation of diverse and high-quality agricultural and forested areas,
- > maintaining and developing the attractiveness of rural areas to make them centres for development. ■

10 *Developing Cooperation with our European Neighbours*

Spatial planning does not fall within the competence of the European Union, but it is still a major concern for the Member States. The European Union’s “economic and social cohesion policy” and most of its sectoral policies have a major impact at the local level.

France is very attached to this approach, which it helped to bring about. The first informal meeting of the EU Ministers for spatial planning took place in 1989, under the French Presidency and as a joint initiative with the European Commission, and its President at that time, Jacques Delors. The meeting led to the European Spatial Development Perspective (ESDP), which is the reference document for European cooperation on spatial planning.

The European Union shows a strong concentration of economic activity and population in a large geographical area covering London, Paris, Milan, Munich and Hamburg, which some geographers refer to as the “blue banana”. Therefore, the ESDP recommends :

- developing a balanced urban and economic system evenly spread throughout Europe so that no areas are left out, and backed up by a complementary relationship between town and country,
- parity of access to infrastructure and knowledge,
- wise management of natural and cultural heritage as part of sustainable development.

However, the ESDP is not binding on the Member States. But its principles and methods could be deemed consistent with the Lisbon/Goteborg strategy that inspired the new cohesion policy for 2007 to 2013 based on growth, employment and sustainable development (see section 9).

The ESDP also gave rise to the ESPON (European Spatial Planning Observatory Network), which has been cofinanced by the European Union and the Member States. Its work started in 1998, as teams of researchers and scientists helped to draft a new strategy paper on the current state of and outlook for Europe’s territory.

France intends to work within the framework of the economic and social cohesion policy and the European cohesion strategy to promote cooperation between Europe’s regions.

These regions can be seen a cross-border catchment areas, where geographical, cultural and linguistic proximity, as well as everyday activities, make historical borders irrelevant. Examples include : cross-border cooperation between Strasbourg in France and Kehl in Germany, between Lorraine in France, the Sarreland in Germany and Luxembourg, or the “Basque Euro-city”, which is the conurbation that extends from Bayonne in France to San Sebastian in Spain.

But cooperation may also cover vast sea and land areas in Europe, such as the Atlantic Arc, the Mediterranean Arc, and the Alpine Arc. Local players in these areas work together in networks of regions or towns (e.g. Barcelona, Lyons, Genoa, Marseilles, Malaga and Seville worked on the Mediterranean Cities Cooperation project.

This cooperation is a means of optimising the capacities of the organisers so that they can achieve a critical mass and thereby raise their international profile in terms of business, higher education, culture and tourism. Many centres of development could take off in all areas of the European Union, acting as effective counterweights to the overdeveloped heart of Europe. The variable geometry of these regions is also suited to action to protect the environment, since

they make it possible to act with regard to an entire mountain range or an ocean.

A specific cohesion policy programme called Interreg was established to promote cooperation between Europe's regions, which have become key players in the European spatial planning process. The third generation of the programme will end in 2006.

Plans call for a new "European territorial cooperation" programme that incorporates the achievements of Interreg III to carry the new cohesion policy forward from 2007 to 2013 (see section 9).

See page 46 : Interreg III (2000-2006)

In addition to incorporating European Union territorial cohesion policies, the regions for cooperation are also appropriate regions for local implementation of "European strategies", such as :

- > the strategy for employment, economic reform and social cohesion adopted by the Lisbon European Council in 2000,
- > the strategy for sustainable development adopted by the Goteborg European Council in 2001,
- > and strategies for access to regions, especially for information and communications technology or for risk prevention.

These regions also constitute an appropriate framework for supporting innovative regional networks to enhance the knowledge society, which is one of the major priorities of the European Union. ■

Interreg III (2000-2006)

The third generation of the programme called Interreg III has a budget of 5.5 billion euros (including 422 million euros for France) to cover the period from 2000 to 2006. It supports the following actions :

- ◆ cross-border cooperation (Strand A),
- ◆ transnational cooperation (Strand B) in 13 large areas covering several European regions (e.g. Northwest Europe, Alpine region, etc.),
- ◆ interregional cooperation on priorities, such as employment, research, information society and culture.



- Areas eligible for INTERREG III A
- Cooperation areas INTERREG III B

European Union
Programme
(2000-2006)
INTERREG III
Strands A and B
(excluding peripheral
areas)

Production : DIACT –
Observatoire des territoires,
2001
Source :
Union européenne

The main strands of spatial planning policy

1 1 Spatial Planning

France has a longstanding tradition of spatial planning for regional and urban development. The planning is carried out by the central government or by local governments. It may focus on a specific sector, such as transportation planning, or cover several sectors in a given area, such as a *Région*.

Regional Development Planning

France's central government has been very active in spatial planning. National economic planning and major infrastructure projects emerged at the end of the Second World War, as France was undergoing reconstruction. The planning took the form of five-year national plans and, occasionally, supplementary plans for specific sectors, such as a national blueprint for highways (several generations of plans from the nineteen-seventies to the nineteen-nineties, a national blueprint for high-speed rail service (1992), and a blueprint for inland waterways. This planning process was then extended to university locations, with the University 2000 Plan and the Universities for the Third Millennium Plan (see section 21).

As France's society, economy and institutions evolved and the reconstruction process was completed and decentralisation got under way, the principle of a five-year national plan was dropped at the beginning of the nineteen-nineties. The central government then sought a more flexible national planning process more suited to the country's needs. This gave rise to two new planning tools in the last ten years, which are provided for under the terms of the Spatial Planning and Development Acts of 1995 and 1999.

- ◆ *Public Service Plans (Schémas de services collectifs - SSC)*

The Public Service Plans were instituted by the 1999 Regional Planning Act and adopted in 2002. They set the guidelines up until 2020 for policies on higher education and research, culture, health, information and communication, energy, conservation of natural and rural areas, and sports.

The Interministerial Spatial Planning and Development Committee meeting of 18 December 2003 adopted the new guidelines for national transportation policy, along with the maps showing the major infrastructure projects up to 2025. The two freight and passenger multi-modal transportation plans adopted in 2002 had become obsolete and they were eliminated. The other plans were maintained, but the procedures for adopting and amending them were streamlined in 2005 for the sake of greater efficiency.

- ◆ *Regional Spatial Planning and Development Blueprints (Schémas régionaux d'aménagement et de développement du territoire - SRADT)*

Regional Spatial Planning and Development Blueprints were instituted under the terms of the 1995 Spatial planning and Development Act. These plans set the basic guidelines for sustainable regional development in the medium term. They are not intended to be normative; instead they are meant to shape the content of contracts between the central government and the regional governments (see section 12).

The regional governments draft the Regional Spatial Planning and Development Blueprints in partnership with the Regional Economic and Social Councils, certain local governments and intercommunal structures, Pays, regional nature parks (see section 16) and civil society.

Each Regional Spatial Planning and Development Blueprint must include a review and outlook document, a sustainable regional development charter that sets out the actions and programmes to be implemented, and maps. The Plan deals with :

- > the locations of the major facilities, infrastructures and services of general interest,
- > the development of economic projects,
- > harmonious development of urban, suburban and rural areas,
- > protection and conservation of the environment, sites, landscapes and natural heritage,
- > rehabilitation of derelict areas,
- > incorporation of the interregional or cross-border dimension of planning.

The Regional Spatial Planning and Development Blueprint also includes a specific section on transportation (Regional Transportation Infrastructure Plan) that sets out the infrastructure programme, as well as the organisation of regional transportation, and, more specifically, rail transportation.

Regional Economic Development Plans

The Decentralisation Act of 13 August 2004 enabled regional governments to experiment for five years with setting strategic guidelines for promoting balanced development under a Regional Development Plan (SDRE). The plans are drawn up in consultation with local governments and representatives of civil society. The plans enable regional governments to allocate certain grants to businesses on behalf of the central government. These grants had formerly been allocated by the central government. The Regional Development Plans set the objectives for these experiments and define the financial resources used. As of 1 January 2006, nine Régions had approved their plans.

Urban Planning

◆ Spatial Planning Directives (Directives territoriales d'aménagement - DTA)

Spatial Planning Directives were instituted at the fringes of spatial planning and urban planning by the 1995 Spatial Planning and Development Act.

They are local planning documents drafted by the central government on its own initiative or at the initiative of the regional government. They are intended to cover certain strategic areas

- > where there are problems choosing suitable locations for major transportation infrastructures, community facilities, etc. This is the case in major urban areas or transportation corridors that are subject to geographical constraints,
- > where there are strong population pressures, shortages of land or ecological risks (coastal regions, mountains, fringes of urban areas).

Spatial Planning Directives are supposed to summarise the central government's spatial planning objectives and guidelines for the area concerned, with the aim of striking a balance between development and conservation. The Directives are drafted by central government staff and coordinated by the Prefectures in consultation with local partners.

The guidelines set out in a Spatial Planning Directive apply to other less authoritative urban planning documents, such as Territorial Cohesion Blueprints (SCOT) or Local Urban Planning Maps (PLU) (see below).

Three Spatial Planning Directives have already been approved :

- the Spatial Planning Directive for the Alpes Maritimes area
Strong urban pressure in this area has had harmful effects on its development, with transportation congestion and risks for the environment. The guidelines set out in the Spatial Planning Directive should help overcome these problems.
- The Spatial Planning Directive for the mining country in the North and Lorraine, which needs to convert its industrial sector
- The Spatial Planning Directive for the Loire estuary.

Four other Spatial Planning Directives are being finalised.

◆ *Territorial Cohesion Blueprints (Schémas de cohérence territoriale - SCOT)*

The Territorial Cohesion Blueprints were instituted by the Urban Solidarity and Renewal Act of 13 December 2000 (as amended by the Urban Planning and Housing Act of 2 July 2003). They are strategic planning documents used at the level of conurbations to align sectoral policies relating to urban planning, housing, transportation and commercial facilities.

The Blueprints set out the general guidelines for spatial planning, and, more specifically, for maintaining a balance between areas to be built up and natural, farming or forested areas. It also sets out the objectives for balancing housing, the social mix, public transport, as well as commercial and business facilities. It may be more specific on certain topics, for example, defining major projects (by-pass roads, sewage treatment plants, etc.) and services.

Before drawing up the Blueprint, a development strategy needs to be set out in Spatial Planning and Sustainable Development Proposal for the area concerned.

Public Corporations for Cooperation between *Communes* or a mixed syndicate supported by Conurbation Communities draft the Territorial Cohesion Blueprints, which are then subjected to public inquiries before being approved. The Blueprints are then reviewed at least every ten years.

As of 1 January 2005, there were 331 Territorial Cohesion Blueprints at various stages of completion, including 207 involving Pays approaches (see section 15).

◆ *Local Urban Planning Maps (Plan local d'urbanisme - PLU)*

The Local Urban Planning Maps must be compatible with the Territorial Cohesion Blueprints. They are more comprehensive than the previous zoning maps, which they replaced in 2000. They set the zoning rules for building and land use for a *Commune* or a group of *Communes*, defining urban zones, facilities zones, agricultural zones, etc. As is the case for the Territorial Cohesion Blueprints, the Local Urban Planning Maps are based on a Spatial Planning and Sustainable Development Proposal. ■

12 Contractual Approach

The “contractual approach” or “contractual policy” is a critical tool for implementing spatial planning policy. It was established more than thirty years ago and has proven to be an effective means of implementing projects involving different levels of government. The project partners sign a contract setting out the objectives, actions and financing terms. These contracts are signed between central and local government, or between local governments. This means that regional and local development can often be summed up as, “an area, a strategy, a contract”.

Planning Contracts between Central and Regional Government (*Contrats Etat-Régions - CPER*)

Planning Contracts between Central and Regional Government were instituted by the Act of 29 July 1982 as part of the regional planning process, which gradually established its independence from the national planning process as the latter was phased out in the early nineteen-nineties.

These contracts outline the strategic priorities for each *Région* and are a focal point for discussions between the central government and the regional government. The two parties to the contract agree on a plan of action for spatial planning and development in the *Région*, covering:

- > major infrastructures for transportation or higher education,



- as well as actions to advance the regional strategy, such as support for regional industry or agriculture, and policies for research, health, culture, etc.

The drafting of the contract between the central and regional government is also an opportunity to agree on the financing for the programme. Central government financing varies from one *Région* to the next. It is determined by social and economic criteria in order to help the least well-off *Régions*.

The General Councils and other local government structures (towns or intercommunal cooperation structures) also provide financing and are involved in the contract negotiations. However, only the central and regional government sign the actual contract.

◆ *Contracts from 2000 to 2006 (Contrats de plan État-Régions)*

The current fourth generation of contracts covers the period from 2000 to 2006. The contracts ran for seven-year term to coincide with the term of the current generation of European Structural Funds. The parallel terms enhanced the complementarity of the planning contracts and the Programming Papers (see section 9).

Without including European financing, which may cover some of the actions set out in the planning contracts, or the financing provided by *Départements* and *Communes*, the 2000-2006 Planning Contracts between Central and Regional Government were worth more than 33.6 billion euros, with a fairly even split between the central government and the regional governments.

The fourth generation of contracts featured a new structure. Each contract had :

- a regional section covering regional projects per se, which was the main section of the contract,
- a local area section dealing with local projects within the *Région* (see below),
- an interregional section, for projects that covered more than one *Région*, such as river management projects or projects relating to mountain ranges.

◆ *A New Generation of Contracts for 2007 to 2013 (Contrats de projets État-Régions)*

The current generation of contracts between central and regional government expires at the end of 2006. Consequently, the central government has launched broad-based consultations on the future of the contractual approach with its main institutional partners, such as associations of elected officials. The findings are in line with the central government's own conclusions, namely that the contractual policy should be continued, but in a renewed form.

The contractual approach creates productive discussions between central and local governments to define priorities and set aside the financial resources required, as well as incorporating transfers of powers relating to the various steps in the decentralisation process. However, the approach has shown its limitations too, with the increase in the number of areas for action and lengthening delays in performing the contracts.

Therefore, the central government decided at the 6 March 2006 meeting of the Interministerial Committee on Spatial Planning and Competitiveness to start negotiating a new generation of contracts based on the following principles :

- entry into force on 1 January 2007 and a seven-year term,

- incorporation of the strategic guidelines set at the Lisbon and Goteborg European Councils to promote innovation, competitiveness and sustainable development,
- narrowing the focus to a limited number of priorities and large-scale investment projects,
- enhancing the partnership between central and regional government, while involving the other levels of local government as well,
- maintaining the three-part structure of the contracts with regional, interregional and local-area sections.

The new contracts will be called Project Contracts between Central and Regional Government. They will focus on three priorities :

- local competitiveness and attractiveness : support for Competitiveness Clusters, enhanced research efforts and modernisation of higher education structures, building major urban facilities, support for agriculture, expanding and renovating transportation networks, including passenger and freight rail services, inland waterways and shipping,
- the environmental dimension of sustainable development, including the fight against climate change, comprehensive and balanced management of water resources, greater awareness of natural and technological risks, and conserving and enhancing biodiversity,
- social and territorial cohesion : employment and vocational training, predicting and facilitating economic change, urban renewal, consideration of the specific problems of overseas *Départements*, development of mountain areas.

The new generation of contracts will no longer deal with major road projects or high-speed or high-capacity rail transportation projects, other than those being completed under the terms of the contracts for the period from 2000 to 2006.



Local Project Contracts

The Planning Contracts between Central and Regional Government for the period 2000 to 2006 included a “local” section. This meant that they provided for financing to support projects carried out in local areas within the *Région*, which were primarily conurbations, *Pays*, regional nature parks and networks of towns. These local areas are also referred to as “project areas”.

The Example of Conurbation Contracts

This type of contract sets out the overall development project for a conurbation with a population over 50,000. The contracts must take a long-term view, with a 20-year time frame. They must take a strategic approach and deal with the relationships with neighbouring conurbations. In addition to dealing with the “usual” issues of transportation, education, economic development, etc., the conurbation contract may also include a town contract, which shall constitute the “social and territorial cohesion” section (see section 14).

In order to sign a contract, the Communes in the conurbation must join structures for intercommunal cooperation in urban areas, meaning a Conurbation Community or an Urban Community (see section 14). These structures have the task of drafting the development project and then signing the contract with the central government, the regional government, or even the departmental government concerned.

As of 30 June 2005, out of a total of 162 Conurbation Communities and 14 Urban Communities, 120 had signed a Conurbation Contracts.

The local section of the contract receives central government financing in the form of allocations contracted from the various ministries and special budgets from the National Spatial Planning and Development Fund. These budgets are used to finance the preparation of the local project, before the contract is signed. This means financing research and the hiring of qualified personnel within the local governments or non-profit organisations concerned to run the project area (*Pays*, conurbation, etc.) Other financing comes from the regional or even departmental governments.

The local section has been maintained for future Project Contracts between Central and Regional Governments covering the period from 2007 to 2013. This section could deal with :

- > sustainable development policies for conurbations,
- > developing local digital networks to enhance economic competitiveness,
- > local strategies for coping with climate change,
- > balanced water management,
- > preventing natural risks,
- > adapting public services and facilitating innovative personal services initiatives.

The Diversity of the Contractual Approach

The contractual approach is very flexible and diverse. It would be pointless to list all of the different types of contracts in existence. Each regional or departmental government can implement one or more types of contracts relating to specific areas within the *Région* or *Département*.

The central government has also signed a very wide range of contracts. In addition to plan-

ning contracts, and the local sections of such contracts, the central government has also started negotiating site contracts. The latter contracts were introduced in 2003 to help areas that have been hit particularly hard by industrial restructuring, particularly in the textile and weapons industries, to revive their economies and create new jobs. Twelve such contracts had been signed by the middle of 2005.

In addition to these contracts dealing with local areas, the central government has also signed contracts with large state-owned enterprises, such as the Post Office, the electricity company EDF and the gas company GDF. These contracts set out spatial planning and development objectives for these enterprises. ■

13 Sustainable Development is a Cross-Cutting Priority

Since the concept first emerged in the early nineteen-nineties, sustainable development has gradually been incorporated into the spatial planning process. At first glance, this may seem paradoxical. The founding principles of sustainable development emerged in a context that was far removed from local concerns; they dealt primarily with global ecological risks and inequity between development in the northern and southern hemispheres. Furthermore, these principles may seem out of step with the current economic globalisation process. Yet, the link between spatial planning and sustainable development has grown stronger, since it is at the local level that the concept can be applied practically and effectively.

Sustainable development strives to “meet the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet theirs” and the corollary requirement to this is to prepare for the future by reconciling economic development, social cohesion and environmental protection.

In France, spatial planning has been closely linked to environmental concerns since the nineteen-sixties. The DATAR contributed to the creation of the Ministry of the Environment, as well as the Water Agencies, which manage river basins, or the Coastal Conservancy, another government agency that works to conserve natural areas along the coast and lake-shores.

But sustainable development truly became incorporated into spatial planning at the end of the nineteen-nineties, as the international context grew more favourable following conferences on developing sustainable cities (Habitat II in Istanbul and Lisbon). The Spatial Planning and Sustainable Development Act of 25 June 1999 calls for “balanced development of the entire national territory, combining social progress, economic efficiency and environmental protection.” This is why *Pays* (see section 15) or conurbations (see section 14) are asked to implement sustainable development projects that are consistent with the local Agenda 21 recommendations. These United Nations programmes for local initiatives to implement sustainable development policies at the local level have now become a part of the process in France, with the establishment of local, intercommunal, departmental and even regional agendas.

The Interministerial Spatial Planning and Development Committee meeting of 13 December 2002 adopted new guidelines for spatial planning and restated the objective of sustainable development. These guidelines were upheld by the National Sustainable Development Strategy (SNDD) adopted in June 2003. This strategy pointed out that “local areas constitute the human heritage”, but some of them “present a combination of social, environmental and economic inequalities”. Consequently, “they must be managed in partnership and consultation with grassroots players, starting with local government, if we are to meet the challenge of conserving, enhancing and rebalancing local areas”.

In March 2005, the Interministerial Agency for Spatial Planning and Competitiveness (DIACT) was a directly participant in a government seminar on sustainable development that aimed to make the central government strategy in the *Régions* and contracts between central and local governments (see section 12) instruments for achieving sustainable development. The local development contracts must be consistent with the National Sustainable Development Strategy, the Climate Plan and national and international sustainable development issues. This concern will be given practical expression in the decisions to be made about the future of the contractual approach after 2006.

This means that government policies for sustainable local development will lead to finding solutions for problems relating to :

- > urban sprawl,
- > the negative effects of mobility, which causes pollution and congestion,
- > the combination of social and ecological inequalities that contribute to the poor image of many urban and rural areas.

Various measures taken the last two years testify to this determination :

- > the policy for rural areas adopted at the Interministerial Spatial Planning and Development Committee meeting of 3 September 2003, which aims to conserve and enhance rural areas around cities, to enhance the leisure and production potential of forests and to protect wetlands (see section 16),
- > the transportation policy set out at the Interministerial Spatial Planning and Development Committee meeting of 18 December 2003, based in part on the need to strike a new balance between different modes of transport. It aims to avoid excessive predominance of road transportation by promoting the development of alternative modes (see section 19),
- > the policy for coastal areas set out at the Interministerial Spatial Planning and Development Committee meeting of 14 September 2004, which aims to ensure balanced development in these attractive areas that are subject to enormous population pressure (see section 17),
- > “equitable and sustainable development of mountain areas is now deemed to be an “objective in the national interest” under the terms of the Rural Development Act of 23 February 2005.

Sustainable development is also one of the themes for discussion by the long-term planning groups run by the Interministerial Agency for Spatial Planning and Competitiveness (DIACT). These groups identify economic, social and environmental problems that will come up locally as a result of global warming and the foreseeable increase in prices for non-renewable energy and commodities.

They also need to look at the content of a new form of economic growth that builds on all local assets (positive externalities) and minimises the short-term and long-term harm (negative externalities) that unsustainable development could cause. The Competitiveness Clusters policy (see section 18) is part of this approach. ■

14 Urban Policies

In France, 80% of the population lives in urban areas. However, with the exception of Paris, French cities are generally smaller than most European cities. The central government and local government urban policies can be broken down into two categories :

- ◆ policies that address urban areas as a whole,
- ◆ policies that address needy neighbourhoods within cities, which are called “city policies”.

Metropolises, Conurbations, Medium-Sized Cities, etc.

◆ Metropolises

France’s metropolises are the locomotives of the national economy. Yet, they do have their shortcomings, compared to their European neighbours. Therefore, the government adopted a national strategy at the end of 2003 aimed at helping them to enhance their profile in Europe.

In June 2004, for example, the government launched a “call for metropolis cooperation” aimed at promoting cooperation projects in France’s metropolitan areas, supporting existing projects and encouraging original strategies for cooperation between the public-sector and private-sector players concerned. This call for projects was for areas outside of the Ile de



Results of the call for metropolitan cooperation

Winning Metropolises

- 1 Espace métropolitain Loire-Bretagne
- 2 Métropole Normande
- 3 Côte d'Opale - Flandre occidentale belge
- 4 Aire métropolitaine de Lille
- 5 Sillon lorrain
- 6 Sarrebrück - Moselle Est
- 7 Eurodistrict Strasbourg - Ortenau
- 8 Réseau métropolitain Rhin-Rhône
- 9 Métropole franco-valdo-genevoise
- 10 Sillon alpin
- 11 Région urbaine lyonnaise
- 12 Conférence des villes et agglomérations de Rhône-Alpes
- 13 Réseau Clermont Auvergne Métropole
- 14 Métropole Côte d'Azur
- 15 Aire toulonnaise
- 16 Marseille Provence Métropole Pays d'Aix
- 17 Aire métropolitaine toulousaine

Production : DIACT –
Observatoire des territoires, 2005
Source : DIACT
Fonds cartographiques : Francièmes
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France *Région* with populations over 500,000, including at least one urban area with more than 200,000 inhabitants, and encompassing several medium-sized towns. Fifteen project proposals were selected in two stages in the first half of 2005.

Urban Areas

France's urban policies often refer to urban areas. This means a set of *Communes* made up of an urban centre, a ring of suburbs made up of rural *Communes* or urban units where at least 40% of the employed population works within the urban area.

Cooperation projects in such urban areas have identified a number of issues and topics that could enhance their profile and increase solidarity in France's metropolises. These discussions are intended to inform the content of future contractual projects and European projects.

The metropolis programme also aims to promote the growth of urban centres, through greater population density by building on urban networks and promoting the development of strategic functions and avoiding the harmful effects of metropolitan growth, such as urban sprawl, pollution and economic and social segregation.

◆ *Conurbations*

Until recently, cooperation between *Communes* in the same urban area was relatively unusual in France. Even though economic and social relationships lead to many exchanges within the urban area, each *Commune* used to follow its own policies, which may have exacerbated economic and social imbalances and failed to meet the inhabitants' expectations. Therefore, at the end of the nineteen-nineties, the central government sought to encourage political cooperation to ensure more balanced and coherent development of urban areas.

In spatial terms, the territory structured around an urban area became commonly known as a conurbation.

In institutional terms, the Act of 12 July 1999 on enhancing and simplifying intercommunal cooperation encouraged *Communes* to join intercommunal cooperation structures (see section 7):

- either as part of a conurbation community (CA) made up of several *Communes* that form a contiguous and continuous zone with a population of more than 50,000 around one or more central *Communes* with a population of more than 15,000 and/or around a departmental capital
- or as part of an Urban Community (CU), which is the structure for the largest conurbations with populations of 500,000 or more.

Each Conurbation Community or Urban Community received substantial central government funding to promote intercommunal cooperation. However, there was one condition. They had to institute a uniform business tax, meaning the same tax rate for all of the businesses in the Conurbation Community or the Urban Community (see section 7). This system was intended to reduce the disparities between rich and poor *Communes* and between *Communes* with substantial economic activity and bedroom *Communes*.

In addition to the institutional organisation, the objective is for the Conurbation or Urban

Community to define a development strategy or a "conurbation project". This project sets out the guidelines for the Conurbation or Urban Community with regard to economic development and social cohesion, spatial and urban planning, transportation and housing, city policies, environmental policies and resource management. The project must run to 2015 and be validated by a group of local players, including elected officials, inhabitants, civil society representatives, etc. (see 1999 Spatial Planning and Sustainable Development Act). These areas are referred to as "project areas".

Between 2000 and 2006, such projects could be set out in a contract between the central government and the Conurbation or Urban Community concerned, with the central government providing financial support for the project. The contract was then written into the Planning Contracts between Central and Regional Government for 2000 to 2006 (see section 12). But extra funding from other sources may also be awarded to or channelled to a conurbation for such projects.

This approach has been very successful in recent years. As of 1 July 2005, there were 14 Urban Communities and 162 Conurbation Communities.

Spatial planning policy also strives to forge links between town and country. For example, more than sixty Conurbation and Urban Communities are engaged in a recognised or planned *Pays* approach (see section 15).



◆ *Medium-Sized Towns*

The French Government is aware of the critical role that medium-sized towns (urban areas with populations of 30,000 to 200,000) play as an interface between the metropolises and rural areas and as centres for jobs and services. It is currently discussing their development in partnership with the representatives of such towns. These discussions focus on the dynamics of economic activity, access by rail and air, public services, healthcare and hospital systems, higher education, tourism and culture. The recommendations resulting from these discussions will inform future government decision-making. Medium-sized towns are also affected by policies for cooperation with the large cities in urban areas (see below).

City Policies for Needy Neighbourhoods (*politique de la ville*)

City policies were launched in the late nineteen-seventies, but really took off in France in the early nineteen-eighties. These policies can be defined as a set of actions undertaken by the central government in conjunction with local governments and non-profit organisations on behalf of the neediest urban neighbourhoods that are home to 5 million people. The policies are based on improving housing (urban renewal), but they also cover economic stimulation, employment and improving public services (social cohesion).

They are primarily intended to play a remedial role. They aim to compensate for the handicaps that these neighbourhoods endure by providing extra human and financial resources for schools and tax incentives for businesses and private services located in the neighbourhoods. These measures apply only to areas marked out on a detailed map.

◆ *Central Government Agencies Responsible for City Policies*

The Interministerial Cities Agency (*Délégation interministérielle à la ville - DIV*) was set up in 1988 to mobilise the various city policy players (central government staff, local governments, non-profit organisations) for the sake of coherence and efficiency. The Agency's role was redefined in early 2006 to encompass long-term planning, assessment and coordination of the urban dimension (housing renovation) and the social dimension of city policies.

The National Urban Renewal Agency (*Agence nationale pour la rénovation urbaine - ANRU*) was created in 2005 for the implementation of the urban dimension of the policies under the "Urban Cohesion Plan" (see below). The Agency funds the housing renovation projects in needy neighbourhoods. It has become a "one-stop service" for existing schemes of the same type, such as Major City Projects (*Grands projets urbains - GPU*) and Urban Renewal Operations (*Opération de renouvellement urbain - ORU*).

The National Agency for Social Cohesion and Equal Opportunities was set up in early 2006 under the Equal Opportunities Act. This agency will be the sole contracting agency for the implementation of central government's social action for the neediest areas and will take over the existing social cohesion budgets concerned. It will use them to fund social development operations under the future social cohesion contracts (see below).

The Interministerial Agency for Spatial Planning and Competitiveness (*DIACT*) is to take part in the discussions on developments in city policy, especially with regard to public services, economic development, urban renewal and housing.

◆ *City Policy Zoning*

Urban renewal and social cohesion are the main thrust of city policy. They serve as the guidelines for mapping of priority zones where enhanced public policies are applied.

The guidelines were introduced in 1995 and 1996 and they have been reapplied and developed in recent legislation on city policy, including the City Policy and Urban Renewal Guidance and Programme Act of 1 August 2003, the Social Cohesion Programme Act of 18 January 2005 and the Equal Opportunity Act of 31 March 2006. The following zones have been distinguished :

- **Vulnerable Urban Zones** (*Zones urbaines sensibles - ZUS*) made up of derelict housing and where there is an imbalance between housing and employment. There were 750 such zones with a combined population of 4.67 million. These zones were reactivated in 2003 and there are now five-year action plans to reduce inequality in six specific areas : employment and economic development, housing and urban environment, healthcare, successful schools, security and public order. The action plans are based on cooperation between central and local government and intercommunal structures. Businesses in Vulnerable Urban Zones enjoy tax and social benefits. A national observatory of these zones was set up as part of the Interministerial Cities Agency (DIV) in 2004.
- **Urban Revitalisation Zones** (*Zones de revitalisation urbaine - ZRU*), which are located inside Vulnerable Urban Zones. There are 416 such zones with a combined population of 3.2 million. The problems in these zones are even more acute, as measured by their economic and commercial characteristics and an indicator that summarises their social and financial situation. This indicator is calculated from the local unemployment rate, the proportion of the population under the age of 25 and the potential tax revenue for the Communes. Businesses located in these zones enjoy special tax and social benefits.
- **Urban Empowerment Zones** (*Zones franches urbaines - ZFU*), which are located inside Urban Revitalization Zones. They are located in the neediest neighbourhoods with populations over 10,000, where there is high unemployment and urban exclusion. The Urban Empowerment Zones were reactivated in 2003. There are now 85 such zones with a combined population of 1.4 million. The objective is to create 100,000 new jobs in these zones over five years, while expanding public policies for renovating housing, restructuring business districts and improving public services. Small businesses located or setting up in Vulnerable Urban Zones enjoy substantial tax breaks, provided at least one third of their new hires or their existing employees are residents of the Zone. The system was being reviewed at the beginning of 2006 to create 15 new Urban Empowerment Zones, and to extend the ones already in existence, as well as enhancing the tax incentives for businesses.

◆ *Recent Legislative Developments*

A *Social Cohesion Plan* came into force in early 2005 under the terms of the Act of 18 January 2005. Its purpose is to help needy populations living in Zones covered by city policies or any other needy area. With a budget of 12.8 billion euros over five years, the plan addresses three fundamental issues : jobs, housing and equal opportunities. The objective is to break down the divisions between sectoral policies and to deal comprehensively with the major problems threatening social cohesion in a given neighbourhood.

Without going into all the details of the plan, we should mention three measures that are specifically linked to spatial planning :

- > with regard to housing, the Social Cohesion Plan picks up where the National Urban Renewal Plan (Act of 1 August 2003) left off, with the objective of financing 500,000 new and renovated public housing units, while demolishing derelict housing stock. The plan is aimed at 750 neighbourhoods in Vulnerable Urban Zones, including 162 that have been identified as priority neighbourhoods. Exceptionally, other neighbourhoods with similar characteristics have also been included.
- > Plans call for the Urban Solidarity Allocation (*Dotation de solidarité urbaine* - DSU), which the central government grants to poor urban Communes, to be increased by 600 million euros over five years in order to enhance equality between local areas.
- > Local players may draft local projects that take up the three main thrusts of this plan (jobs, housing, equal opportunities) at the local level.

In keeping with the 2005 Social Cohesion Plan, the Equal Opportunity Act of 31 March 2006 includes various measures to promote access to jobs and housing and to ensure equal opportunities by fighting job discrimination, reforming apprenticeships, creating the National Agency for Social Cohesion and Equal Opportunities, creating new Empowerment Zones (see below), etc.

◆ *From City Contracts (Contrats de ville) to Urban Social Cohesion Contracts (Contrats urbains de cohésion sociale)*

City Contracts between central and local government require each partner to implement actions to improve the daily life of the inhabitants of needy neighbourhoods and to prevent social and urban exclusion in neighbourhoods inside and outside of Vulnerable Urban Zones. The current generation of City Contracts covers the period from 2000 to 2006.

They aim to :

- > promote diversity of housing stock and functions in neighbourhoods where public housing predominates,
- > coordinate the action of players engaged in preventing and fighting exclusion,
- > develop jobs and the local economy,
- > improve access to these neighbourhoods, etc.

These actions are carried out on behalf of the residents of needy neighbourhoods, but are part of a development plan for the city as a whole, or even several cities. Some 70% of the 247 contracts signed for the period from 2000 to 2006 covered more than one *Commune*.

New *Urban Social Cohesion Contracts* will be introduced in January 2007. For the sake of greater effectiveness, they will differ from City Contracts in two ways :

- > they will be signed for a three-year term, instead of a six-year term, and they can be renewed after an assessment,
- > they will cover multi-year action plans, unlike City Contracts, which finance one-year programmes.

The new contracts will focus on five priorities :

- > access to jobs and economic development,
- > improving housing and the environment,
- > educational success and equal opportunities,

The main strands of spatial planning policy

Specific policies for different types of local area

- > good citizenship and crime prevention,
- > access to healthcare

These programmes may be communal or intercommunal in scope, depending on their location. They will be drafted jointly by central and local government, and the President of the intercommunal structure concerned, in partnership with other local governments. They will be based on a social cohesion project for needy neighbourhoods within the *Commune* or the conurbation. The list of areas eligible for such contracts should be drawn up in the first half of 2006. ■

15 *The Pays : Where Town and Country Intersect*

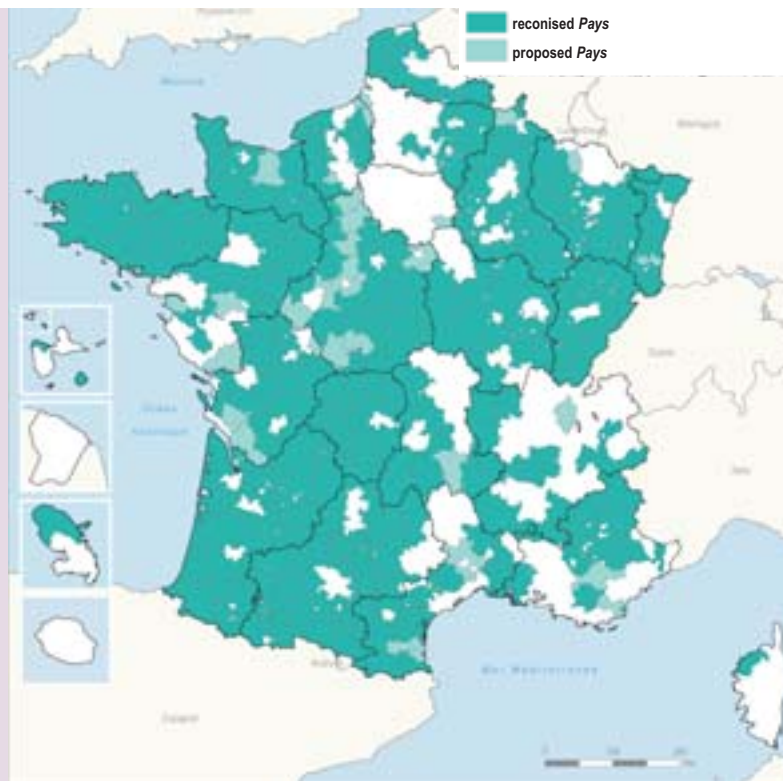
In the nineteen-nineties, spatial planning policies reflected a determination to give more consideration to “living areas”, that correspond to the daily lives of the inhabitants and that are sometimes unrelated to administrative boundaries. This is the context in which the old notion of the “*Pays*” resurfaced. The Spatial Planning and Development Acts of 1995 and 1999, and the Urban Planning and Housing Act of 2 July 2003 define a *Pays* as an area where the inhabitants share common geographical, cultural, economic or social interests within the same catchment area for work and leisure. A *Pays* is not an administrative division. It is an area where local players can grasp the social and economic issues on a sufficiently large scale to come up with a sustainable development plan that meets the needs of the population.

One of the main tasks in a *Pays* is to set up an area of solidarity between town and country. Changing lifestyles have led to an increase in exchanges between urban, suburban and rural areas, which make the old dichotomy of town and country that used to dominate French thinking obsolete. Of the 352 proposed or recognised *Pays* at 1 January 2006, 70 encompassed one or more Conurbation Communities or Urban Communities. The organisational structures for *Pays* were recently made more flexible. They are no longer required to set up special legal entities to represent them.

The overall sustainable development project for a *Pays* is drafted by :

- > the *Communes* or intercommunal structures located within the *Pays*.
- > The *Pays* is clearly part of the intercommunal approach. Old intercommunal habits helped to foster the creation of *Pays*. In return, the *Pays* fostered the development of cooperation between *Communes* where there had previously been little or none.
- > the Development Council, whose members are representatives of social, economic, cultural and sports groups. The involvement of civil society in local development is one of the main strengths of the *Pays* approach. Each *Pays* is required to set up a Development Council, but they are free to organise them as they wish. This means that including local elected officials is an option.

The development plan is officialised by a charter. This charter must contain a diagnosis of the local area to understand likely developments, and strategic guidelines to deal with the issues identified. The central government, represented by the Regional Prefect, uses this charter to decide whether or not to recognise the *Pays* and its boundaries, after consulting the Regional Council(s) and General Council(s) concerned.



Pays
As of 1 January 2006

Production : DIACT – Observatoire des territoires, 2006
Source : ETD, DIACT
Fonds cartographiques : Francièmes © Tous droits réservés

Pays : Facts and Figures

As of 1 January 2006, there were 358 *Pays*, of which 321 were recognised and 37 were at the proposal stage. Together, they are home to some 45% of the French population. The average recognised *Pays* had a population of 73,000 and covered 78 *Communes* and 1,187 square kilometres. However, the average figures relate to very different situations. The *Pays* with the smallest population has just over 5,000 inhabitants, as opposed to the largest *Pays*, which has a population of approximately 420,000. The surface area of the *Pays* ranges from 85 to 4,469 square kilometres. Nearly one third of the *Pays* encompass fewer than 50 *Communes*. Another third cover between 50 and 80 *Communes* and slightly more than one third encompass from 80 to more than 200 *Communes*. Fully 90% of the *Communes* in the *Pays* belong to a Public Corporation for Cooperation between *Communes* (*EPCI*) with its own tax revenues.

The *Pays* act in various areas. More specifically, they are the appropriate entity for discussing personal services, in order to come up with a supply of services that matches the social and economic characteristics of the populations being served. The *Pays* charters often deal with public transportation, services for the elderly or preschoolers, healthcare facilities, or medical and social services. Policies for jobs and economic development are also discussed at this level, along with environmental and cultural issues.

The development plan and the related actions may be covered by a *Pays* contract (as part of the local section of Contracts between Central and Regional Government (see section 12)). This arrangement enables the *Pays* to receive financing from its main partners. A *Pays* Contract is signed with the central or regional government and, where appropriate, with the *Département(s)* concerned. They cover a great variety of situations. Some regional governments did not wish to co-sign contracts between the central government and the *Pays*. Others did sign, but also maintained their pre-existing contracts at the same time. As of 30 June 2005, the central government had signed some 290 *Pays* contracts. If a *Pays* includes a conurbation that is eligible for a Conurbation Contract, then an agreement must set out how the two contracts are complementary, in order to enhance synergy between town and country.

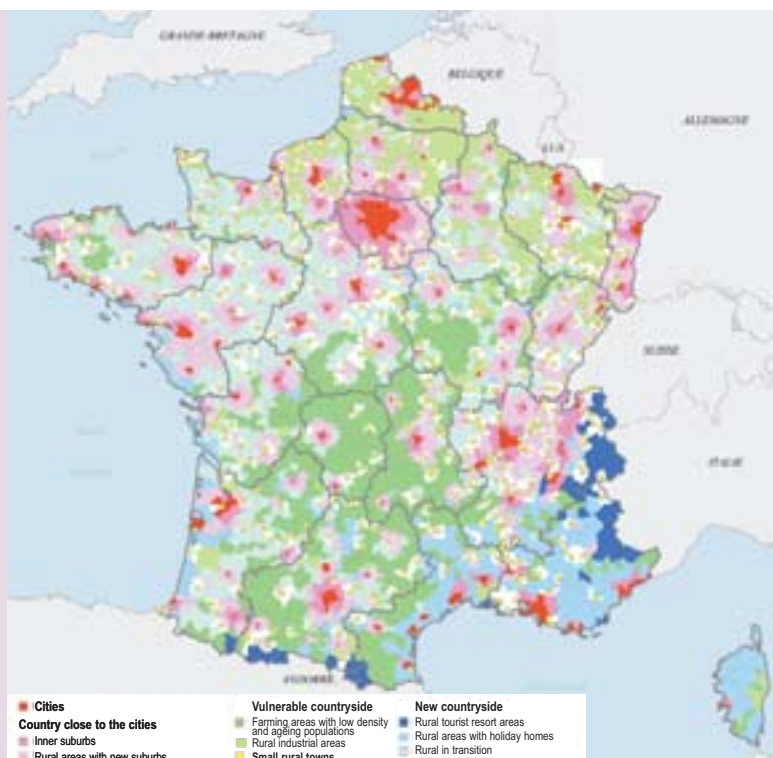
Finally, some 180 recognised or proposed *Pays* are also involved in the European rural development programme, LEADER + (see section 9). ■

16 Policies for Rural Areas

There have been sweeping changes in the French countryside in recent decades. After massive rural flight that lasted until the mid-nineteen-seventies, the countryside enjoys a new image and holds new appeal for city dwellers. These social changes mean that a new type of rural France has emerged, giving the French countryside three faces. France has three distinct types of rural areas :

- ◆ **"countryside close to the cities"** (suburban), where there are large residential zones. Agriculture may still have a large role in this type of countryside, but it faces stiff competition for land.
- ◆ **"new countryside"**, featuring residential, tourist and "natural" functions (watershed, biodiversity reserves, etc.) These rural areas have the highest net inflows of migrants and enjoy very strong job growth.
- ◆ **"vulnerable countryside"** is made up of ageing areas with low population density. These rural areas are where farming or declining manufacturing industries are dominant. Their handicaps are low incomes and a shrinking population.

There are many challenges for government action in this new rural landscape. In the "countryside near cities", it is critical to preserve local sites and restrict pressure on land. But it is also necessary to facilitate the growth of "new countryside" and to create a development dynamic in the most vulnerable countryside, applying the principles of national solidarity in the case of the most remote areas.



The three faces of the French countryside (by Cantons – 1999 data)

Production : DIACT – Observatoire des territoires, 2005
Source : DIACT
Fonds cartographiques : Francièmes
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All rural areas in France must be guaranteed access to high-quality public services that can be adapted to the specific characteristics of each locality. Access to the most recent information and communication technology, including broadband Internet and cell telephone networks, is also an integral part of this policy for rural areas.

Therefore, the French government adopted new measures to support rural communities at the 13 September 2003 meeting of the Interministerial Spatial Planning and Development Committee. Many of these measures are spelled out in the Rural Development Act of 23 February 2005. French rural policy is based on a set of comprehensive and sector arrangements aimed at meeting the whole diverse range of challenges of rural living.

The economic measures address :

- the preservation of farming, which plays a critical role in the economy, as well as in landscape management (active policy to support young farmers' taking over farms, multiple jobholding by farmers, forms of extensive farming, etc.)
- support for small craft and manufacturing enterprises (measures aimed at facilitating start-ups in appropriate premises and skills training through "start-up and training" contracts for distributive trades and craft industries, support for transfers of businesses after retirement, etc.)
- support for commercial real estate,
- extension of tax incentives for growth industries, such as tourism, or innovation transfers, etc.



Rural Centres of Excellence (*Pôles d'excellence rurale - PER*)

At the end of 2005, the French government decided to provide financial support for the development of rural centres of excellence in order to promote economic development of the countryside. This approach, which runs alongside the Competitiveness Clusters approach, is aimed at supporting innovative projects that create rural jobs in four priority areas :

- ◆ promoting natural, cultural and tourist heritage,
- ◆ exploiting and managing bio-resources,
- ◆ services to accommodate new populations,
- ◆ technological innovation in farming, manufacturing, craft industries and services.

A call for projects will result in the approval of 300 centres in 2006.

In addition to these economic measures, a series of measures were also adopted to promote the improvement of living conditions in rural areas :

- > improved access to high-quality housing through partnership policies including central and local government (renovation of existing housing stock, increasing rental housing stock),
- > modernising public services to improve access and make them more efficient,
- > reducing the "digital divide" (facilitating access to information and communication technology) by developing broadband Internet access and continuing to improve cell telephone coverage.

Rural Revitalisation Zones (*Zones de revitalisation rurale -ZRR*)

Rural Revitalisation Zones were created by the Spatial Planning and Development Act of 4 February 1995. They encompass rural areas encountering specific problems, such as low population density, and structural social and economic handicaps. Businesses in Rural Revitalisation Zones enjoy substantial tax benefits, which apply to start-ups in such varied activities as craft industries, distributive trades, manufacturing, research, design or engineering.

New measures for Rural Revitalisation Zones were introduced in 2005. The purpose of the changes was to increase tax incentives and encourage cooperation between Communes to make their actions in the Zones more effective. At the same time, the list of Communes in Rural Revitalisation Zones was reviewed to take account of social and economic changes. The Zones cover about one third of France's territory.

Many of the national policies for rural areas include conservation of natural areas :

- > policy for national parks and regional nature parks,
- > conservation and use of wetlands,
- > conservation and use of mountain pastures and, more generally, preservation of mountain agriculture,
- > conservation of agricultural and natural areas located near cities through the modernisation of land management tools.

Regional Nature Parks (*Parcs naturels régionaux – PNR*)

Regional Nature Parks are areas with a rich natural and cultural heritage, but with a vulnerable equilibrium. Local government (Régions, Départements and Communes) draw up sustainable development plans for these areas. The plan is set out in a charter that specifies the objectives and the resources for the conservation and enhancement of the Park's natural and cultural heritage. The Park boundaries correspond to the limits of the Communes that sign the charter. Charters are drawn up for a ten-year term and need to be approved by the central government. When the Charter is renewed, the area may lose its status as a Nature Park, if it fails to comply with the commitments made. Today, there are 44 Parks covering 12% of France's territory (7 million hectares). They cover 3,690 Communes that are home to more than 3 million people. However, the size and population density of the Parks vary greatly. There are 36 Parks that are overlapped by one or more Pays, which means that the two approaches need to be coordinated. ■

17 *Specific Policies for Mountain and Coastal Areas*

France established specific policies for coastal and mountain areas. All of these policies share some characteristics :

- ◆ an Act of Parliament sets out the main principles of action,
- ◆ they rely on advisory bodies,
- ◆ they deal with issues in these areas in a global manner, while taking local specificities into account.

Coastal Areas

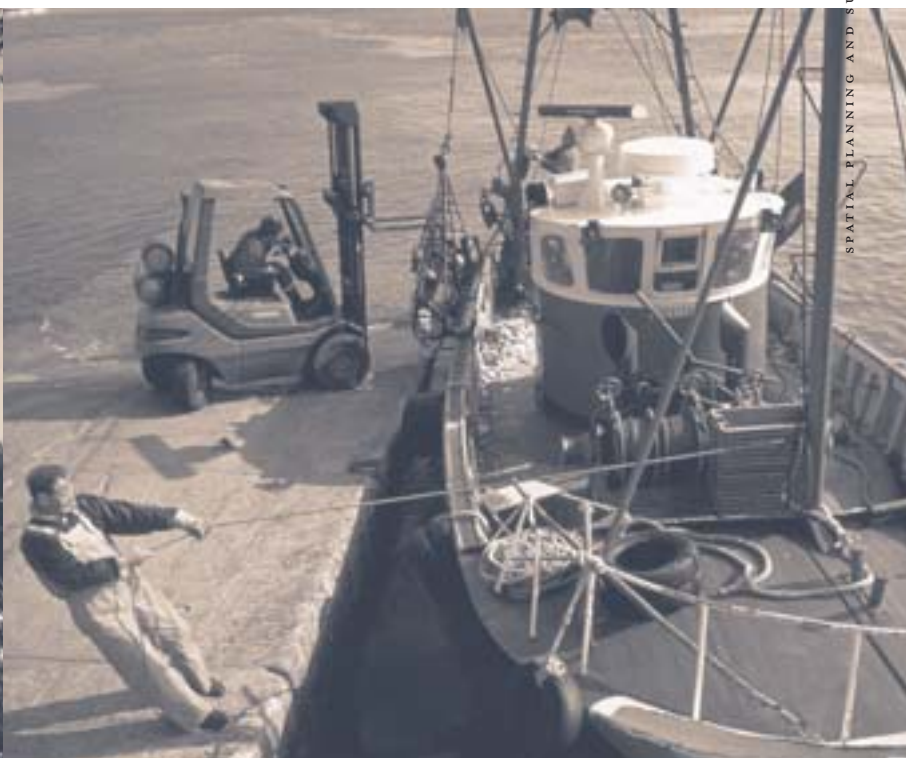
France has 7,200 kilometres of coastline, of which 5,500 kilometres are in metropolitan France and 1,700 are in its overseas Départements and possessions. The coasts are very attractive and their population density of 272 inhabitants per square kilometre is practically three times higher than the national average of 108. This gives rise to strong urban growth and pressure on land that constitute an environmental threat. Coastal areas are also experiencing strong economic growth, especially with tourism, but such growth may be vulnerable.

French policy aims to move beyond the false debate that pits conservation of natural areas against local development to achieve balanced and sustainable development of coastal areas based on controlled urban growth and a diversified economy.

The Coastal Act of 3 January 1986 set out the principles for reconciling conservation of



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natural areas and development of coastal areas.

In September 2004, France instituted a number of measures to reactivate its policy for coastal areas. The objective was to move beyond the normative approach of the Coastal Act to develop partnerships between central and local government and civil society for more relevant approach worked out at the local level.

This is a move towards a new type of action : integrated coastal zone management (ICZM). This approach has been encouraged by the European Union. It aims to address the coastal zone as a whole, seeking better coordination of sectoral policies (environmental policy, urban planning, port development, etc.), which have been too compartmentalised up until now. Integrated management should also make it possible to use land-and-sea reasoning to encompass coasts and their hinterlands, which often overlook the many interactions that bring them together. In August 2005, 25 coastal sites were selected through a central government call for projects for experimental operations involving integrated coastal zone management.

A national advisory board made up of various coastal players, called the National Coastal Council was also set up at the end of 2005.

Mountain Areas

Metropolitan France has 6 mountain ranges : the Alps, the Massif Central, the Vosges, the Jura, Corsica and the Pyrenees. There are also three mountain ranges in the overseas *Départements* of Martinique, Guadeloupe and Réunion. Mountain ranges cover 29% of France's territory and are home to nearly 8 million people. The original policies for mountain areas were primarily sectoral policies that were independent from each other. They aimed to offset the natural drawbacks of mountain areas, with mountain agriculture being the top priority.

Since the Mountain Act of 9 January 1985 was passed, the central government has encouraged comprehensive sustainable development, striking a balance between economic development (favouring retention and development of economic activity) and conservation of natural areas. The measures taken may, for example, link agriculture and the environment or development, especially tourist development, and the environment. The main themes of policy for mountain areas include : tourist development, support for mountain agriculture and forestry, prevention of natural risks, development of multiple jobholding for farmers and opening up French mountain ranges to Europe. This policy is organised and implemented by the coordinating mountain range Prefects, with the assistance of the mountain range Commissioners.

There is also a discussion at the level of each mountain range to take account of their specificities and improve them. The role of the mountain range is recognised and symbolised by the Mountain Range Committee (*Comités de massifs*). There is a Committee for each mountain range in metropolitan France. It is an advisory body that includes representatives of local government and civil society. In order to move the policy for mountains towards greater decentralisation, each Committee is co-chaired by the coordinating mountain range Prefect and by an elected official from the mountain range (the chair of the Committee's standing committee).

The Rural Development Act of 23 February 2005 gave the Mountain Range Committee the

task of defining objectives and specifying the actions that its deems desirable for development in the mountain range. It draws up an interregional blueprint for the mountain range. This document is now mandatory and it sets out the broad strategic guidelines for the medium term and long term. The Committee also gives its opinion on tourist facilities and is informed of measures take to protect the environment.

Mountain area stakeholders have an advisory body at the national level too. It is the National Mountain Council, set up under the terms of the Mountain Act and chaired by the Prime Minister. It meets once a year and acts as a watchdog and a source of proposals for policies relating to mountain areas.

The government is also striving to raise the awareness of the European Union and the relevant international bodies of sustainable development in mountain areas as a major challenge. For this purpose, it may propose any action or initiative likely to contribute to this objective and it may involve the relevant organisations representing mountain populations. ■



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18 *France's economic attractiveness and competitiveness*

One of the major objectives of French spatial planning policy is to enhance the economic attractiveness and competitiveness of France. This means both facilitating the expansion of the fastest growing areas (through industrial policy to support competitiveness centres or business networks), as well as helping the most vulnerable acquire the means to grow (see Local Development Bonus).

Competitiveness Clusters

France's industry is powerful and competitive. It ranks fifth in the world. It shapes and drives the national economy as a whole. Industry accounts for 80% of France's foreign trade and continues to attract international investors.

But in an increasingly competitive world where everything is changing all the time, the strengthening of France's technological know-how is a critical issue for the country's future. Industry can only benefit from the fruits of innovation and innovation can only find industrial markets by pooling resources and skills, as well as introducing close collaboration between all the players aiming at the same end market.

Therefore, in September 2004, the French government adopted a new industrial strategy based on the establishment of "Competitiveness Clusters". These centres should help rein-



force France's industrial potential, set the stage for new activities with high international visibility and, thus enhance the attractiveness of local areas for investors and entrepreneurs.

A Competitiveness Cluster is defined as a combination of businesses, training centres and research units in a given area :

- > that are engaged in a partnership effort to create synergy around innovative joint projects.
- > with the critical mass required to achieve international visibility.

The partnership may be built up around a market or an area of technology. But, in all cases, innovation and international visibility are still the critical factors for recognising Competitiveness Clusters.

A call for projects resulted in the selection of 66 centres in July 2005. These included 6 world centres and 10 world-oriented centres that were identified in accordance with their importance for the international visibility of French industry and with their clout in worldwide economic competition. The clusters relate to sectors as varied as healthcare, nanotechnology, electronics and computers, agricultural resources, or oceanography and shipbuilding.

They have received 1.5 billion euros in financing for a three-year period, including :

- > 700 million euros from the central government.
- > 500 million euros from government agencies specialising in innovation and research, and from a government financial institution,
- > 300 million euros in tax breaks and reductions in social security charges.

This assistance is intended to finance research and development work by businesses in partnership with research centres, as well as other work that it is not related to technological innovation per se, but still necessary for the continued development of the centres. This work includes business watches and intelligence, developing the international dimension of the centres, improving human resources management (support for employers' groups), access to new information and communications technology, and improving living conditions for the employees of the companies concerned.

The allocations may be replenished by European funds and subsidies from local governments that want to get involved. Regional governments, in particular, are invited to take part in the arrangement. The central government intends to work with regional governments to come up with the means to coordinate this industrial strategy with the strategies for regional economic development, following the transfer of powers in this area under the terms of the decentralisation legislation adopted in 2003 and 2004.

Business Clusters

In addition to its support for Competitiveness Clusters, France's central government will continue its policy to promote business clusters. Even though these clusters are smaller than Competitiveness Clusters, they are still critical for the attractiveness of local areas. A substantial budget of 4 million euros per year has been set aside for them over three years.

In France, the term business clusters refers to local production systems. These are groups of businesses and institutions (teaching establishments, local government, etc.), located close to each other and working together in the same activity sector.

DATAR initiated this policy in 1998 and DIACT has continued it. Approximately 100 projects have been approved and have received 5 million euros in financial support. An assessment of the policy has shown :

- > that companies' participation in such networks has positive effects on job creation,
- > that joint structures have been set up to manage resources (employers' associations, joint ventures for facilities management),
- > that steps have been taken to develop new markets.

The National Business Cluster Commission was set up in 2001 to gather experience, oversee the policies for business clusters and decide on financing for innovative projects and transnational partnerships between business clusters. This policy will now be continued in closer liaison with regional governments.

The development of business clusters is not a uniquely French phenomenon. The process has been observed in both developed and emerging economies in recent years. There are some 470 business clusters in Europe alone, with nearly half engaged in high-tech activities, such as biotechnology, information and communication technology and the environment. In France all industries and all types of local areas are represented, but the dominant model involves manufacturing activities, such as textiles, mechanical subcontracting and food processing. Conversely, the Competitiveness Clusters carry out high tech projects.

Invest in France Agency

France has set up a special organisation to promote France to foreign investors : the Invest in France Agency. The government agency was set up in 2001 under the dual oversight of the minister in charge of the economy and finance and the minister responsible for spatial planning, whose ministries supply the bulk of the agency's funding. For example, the 2005 budget of 15 million euros included 7.4 million from the spatial planning ministry and 4.9 million euros from the finance ministry.

The tasks of the agency are :

- > to promote France and prospect for investors and internationally mobile projects,
- > to coordinate the players and decision-makers who are active in prospecting and accommodating investors,
- > to monitor and research international investment,
- > to be the benchmark organisation for policies to enhance the attractiveness of France,
- > to enhance France's image abroad.

The agency employs some 140 people, who work at the head office in Paris or in the 22 field offices called Invest in France Agencies in other countries, including 12 offices in Europe, 7 in Asia and 3 in North America. The Invest in France Agency is represented in a further thirty countries by correspondents in some of the Directorates of Foreign Economic Relations at the Ministry of the Economy and Finance.

The President of the Agency is a Special Ambassador for International Investment. The Agency is run by a board of directors with 18 members, including the President. The board members include seven central government representatives, four representatives of local government, four experts and two representatives of the agency's personnel. The membership of the board testifies to the central government's intention to work in partnership with local government, especially regional governments.

In 2005, action by the Agency and its network of regional development agencies in France (see section 8) resulted in 33,296 jobs being created or saved through foreign investment. The geographical structure of foreign investment varies little from one year to the next. The United States is still the leading source, accounting for about one quarter of the projects, followed by Germany. All in all, 58% of inward foreign investment is from Europe.

The leading destination *Régions* are Ile-de-France and Rhône-Alpes, with 40.8% of the jobs created in 2005. The growth of service jobs is a major trend that was confirmed in 2005, with large investment projects in the distribution and logistics sectors and at points of sale. Two other trends were noteworthy in 2005 : the surge in high-tech industries and growing number of establishments being expanded.

Local Development Bonus (*Prime à l'aménagement du territoire - PAT*)

◆ *Current System*

The Local Development Bonus (PAT) is intended to remedy development disparities by inciting job creating investment projects in the most vulnerable areas. This central government subsidy may be granted to manufacturing or industrial services firms that are being set up or that are expanding their activities in vulnerable areas. It is part of the Regional Aid that is governed by European Regulations.

The decision to grant the Bonus is up to the Minister in charge of spatial planning, after consultation with the Interministerial Committee on Business Location Support (CIALA), for which DIACT provides the secretariat. Projects must involve a minimum level of investment and job creation to be eligible for the Bonus.

The Bonus varies from area to area, ranging from 11.5% to 23% subsidies, in compliance with the European competition rules. The amount is capped at 8,000 or 11,000 euros per new job created. The Local Development Bonus is part of the "Regional Aid" that the EU Member States may exceptionally grant for business investment in order to develop vulnerable areas.

A government decree draws up a map for manufacturing projects, which the European Commission validates every six years. The map sets the limits on government subsidies for investment by large firms, on central government intervention, on tax breaks, and on aid from local government and from other government bodies.



The map is a determining factor for regional economic development.

The Local Development Bonus may also be used to subsidise research and development projects by firms nearly anywhere in France.

In the last ten years, nearly 850 million euros in Local Development Bonuses were used to support some 1,600 projects that involved the announced creation of nearly 160,000 jobs and nearly 24 billion euros in investment. The Bonus is used to attract internationally mobile projects (e.g. the Toyota factory in Valenciennes). Five *Régions* have been the main beneficiaries of the Local Development Bonus : Nord-Pas de Calais, Lorraine, Provence-Alpes-Côte d'Azur, Pays de la Loire and Bretagne.

◆ *New System for 2007-2013*

In December 2005, the European Commission adopted its new guidelines on regional aid, which will come into force on 1 January 2007 for a term of seven years. The terms and conditions for Local Development Bonuses that are covered by the regional aid rules are therefore being redrafted.

France's overseas *Départements* are fully covered, but in metropolitan France the percentage of the population eligible for the Local Development Bonus will be 15.5%, or 9,329,000 people. This represents a 55% decrease in the coverage ratio in metropolitan France compared to the period from 2000 to 2006. In early 2006, the French government broke down the eligible population by *Région* according to social and economic criteria, such as the unemployment rate or vulnerability to economic crises.

France also has a further 6.9% of its population or 4,152,000 people who are classified as eligible during a transitional phase lasting until 31 December 2008, when some of the areas will cease to be eligible for the Local Development Bonus. The breakdown by *Région* of the population eligible in the transitional phase is a function of each *Région*'s percentage of loss compared to the total national loss.

Once the eligible population has been broken down by *Région*, the Local Development Bonus map will be drawn up according to the Regional Prefect's proposals, following consultations with regional partners during 2006.

The government will then set aside a national eligible population reserve of 400,000 people for future use in order to classify areas suffering from particularly serious economic problems as part of the Local Development Bonus areas. ■

19 *Transportation*

In the nineteen-fifties and nineteen-sixties, France suffered from a lack of transportation infrastructure. Massive construction efforts over the last forty years have enabled it to catch up. With 11,000 kilometres of motorways and 48% of Europe's high-speed rail network, France's infrastructure matches that of its European neighbours. Furthermore, its roads are less congested than those in Northern Europe.

As the twenty-first century starts, the context has shifted. Transportation growth is likely to be less rapid than it was over the last twenty years, but it shall continue nonetheless. The "removal" of borders brought about by European integration and growing numbers of business travellers and tourists, along with the opening up of European economies, are all factors for traffic growth.

France needs a sustainable transportation policy to meet these challenges. This means its policy must reconcile three equally important objectives: economic development, national and local attractiveness for business, and due consideration of environmental concerns.

Economic development and attractiveness require good access to all of France's territory. In addition to good national networks, which have now been built, all of France's territory needs easy access to the rest of Europe. Access to remote regions also needs to be improved and the quality of access to France's internationally important metropolises needs to be ensured. This



calls for multimodal hubs to be created around airports with connections to high-speed rail services and public transport.

Consideration of environmental concerns calls for striking a new balance between the various modes of transportation and shifting some of the road traffic to modes that cause less pollution, such as rail, inland waterways or sea transportation. Inland waterway transportation is expanding rapidly in Europe. Efforts must be made to optimise the use of existing infrastructure to improve ecological and financial performances.

At the end of 2003, the French government announced a new transportation policy to meet these objectives. The policy is based on an ambitious infrastructure building programme to be completed or started by 2012, supplemented by project plans that run up to 2025. These include :

- > continued development of the high-speed rail network with eight projects for new lines, including four cross-border lines to Germany, Italy and Spain,

Road transport infrastructure in 2025

Rail, port, river and coastal infrastructure in 2025



— Autoroutes ou axes asphaltes en service, en travaux ou complétés
 — Autoroutes en projet
 ● Centres urbains
 — Grands Liaisons d'Aménagement du Territoire (GLAT) en cours d'aménagement (?)
 — Projets à étudier
 ☆ Problématique des transports dans la carte de l'Etat et du Territoire

La représentation des liaisons sur cette carte ne préjuge pas des tracés futurs, en particulier pour l'ensemble des liaisons autoroutières nouvelles.



— Ligne à grande vitesse en service ou en construction
 — Améliorations de grands axes existants
 — Ligne à grande vitesse en projet
 — Projets à étudier
 — Grands itinéraires de fret
 — Seine-Nord Europe
 — Ports maritimes
 — Autoroutes de la mer

La représentation des liaisons sur cette carte ne préjuge pas des tracés futurs.

GLAT correspondent à des itinéraires à fort trafic international ou intercontinental, soit à des axes entre les principales métropoles régionales et les principaux ports ou aéroports français.

- expanding rail freight traffic on five main routes,
- developing inland waterways, with the completion of a large capacity canal linking the Seine and Oise river basins to Northern Europe (Seine Nord canal),
- building port facilities for world trade and expanding coastal navigation to reduce road traffic along the coast.
- six new road and rail links to improve access to remote areas,
- nine motorway projects,
- two new airports and improvements to existing airports.

At the end of 2004, the government created the French Transportation Infrastructure Financing Agency (*Agence de financement des infrastructures de transport de France - AFITF*), which will allocate 7.5 billion euros to carry out the programme. Its financial resources were increased at the end of 2005 for this purpose and public/private partnerships, which are still relatively undeveloped in France, will be sought.

The Agency's scope of action has been extended to the infrastructure section of Planning Contracts between Central and Regional Government so as to accelerate the completion of the projects stipulated in such contracts. ■



20 *Local Digital Development*

Access to information and communication technology is a critical element for the attractiveness of an area and for business competitiveness. These technologies are also critical for social cohesion, since online administration promotes access to public services from anywhere in the country.

Government intervention is necessary...

The physical characteristics of a country like France do not make it easy to deploy information and communications technology. Vast mountainous areas and thinly populated rural areas hinder the development of economically viable projects by private operators. Government intervention is necessary in such areas. In November 2002, France's central government adopted a support programme for expanding infrastructures and use called the RE/SO/2007 Plan. Various measures introduced at meetings of the Interministerial Spatial Planning and Development Committee in 2003 and 2004 have supplemented this Plan.

The Plan has three main objectives :

- > connecting all Communes to broadband networks and having 10 million broadband subscribers by 2007,
- > expanding very high speed networks (more than 100 Mb/s) in industry areas, Competitiveness Clusters and certain conurbations, as needed,
- > making cell telephone networks available to 99% to 100% of the population by the end of 2006.

Various ministries and organisations are involved in the implementation of this policy. The central government agencies involved include DIACT, the Internet Usage Agency and the Agency for Developing Online Administration. Local central government units ensure that private and government initiatives are complementary and provide expertise for the growing number of local governments investing in information and communication technology.

... to promote broadband Internet...

The objective with regard to infrastructure development is to promote the use of different technologies that each present specific advantages, depending on where they are used. ADSL, cable and powerline communication networks that use low and medium voltage distribution networks are well suited to urban areas, while WIFI, WIMAX or satellite networks are better suited to suburban and rural areas. DIACT worked with other ministries to draft the various administrative and tax measures, as well as the calls for projects, aimed at promoting the development of these technologies.

From the stakeholders' point of view, the main problem involved clearing up the legal uncertainties surrounding local government intervention. The Digital Confidence Act of 21 June 2004 allows local government to own or install networks in situations where private initiatives fail to meet needs and then make these networks available to telecommunications operators under non-discriminatory conditions.

The central government lays a great deal of emphasis on making information and communi-

cation technology familiar to the entire population and to businesses. DIACT has overseen various calls for projects in this regard to support local government initiatives, to help small and medium-sized enterprises make use of information and communication technology and to promote the development of telecentres, which are offices with broadband Internet access made available to employees of different companies or self-employed workers.

Internet : France closes the gap

In the middle of 2005, France had :

- ◆ 25 million Internet users, representing nearly 50% of the population over the age of 11 years,
- ◆ 7.9 million broadband subscribers, up from 3.6 million at the end of 2003.

...and cell telephone coverage.

Broad-based consultations between public and private sector players led to the “white zone” programme of action to improve cell telephone network coverage in France. The programme was made official in July 2003 and stepped up in July 2004. It involves the central government, the French Mayors’ association, the French *Départements* assembly, the telecommunications regulator and the three cell telephony operators doing business in France.

The objective is to cover central towns in more than 3,000 *Communes* (primarily in rural areas), priority transportation routes and busy tourist sites that are not currently covered by any of the operators. When the programme is completed at the end of 2006, 99% of the French population will have access to second-generation cell telephone services (GSM), using two techniques :

- > local roaming : a single operator installs telecommunication transmitters and equipment and uses them to serve customers of the other operators,
- > infrastructure pooling : several operators share the same pylons, with each of them installing their own equipment.

By the middle of 2005, France had 45.4 million cell telephone users, representing a market penetration rate of 75.2%. ■

21 *Public Services*

Public services are a recurring theme in spatial planning policies. The French are very attached to the presence of these services in rural and urban areas, where they are symbols of the Republic.

The French term “*services publics*” does not really have any equivalent in other European countries. The European Union prefers to speak of Services of General Interest (SGI) and Services of General Economic Interest (SGEI). What does the term public services cover? It is difficult to come up with an exact definition, since each French citizen has his or her own vision. Public services include the Post Office, schools, gas and water supplies and public transport. The central government provides some and local government provides others. Still other public services are provided by government or paragonovernmental corporations, while others are provided by private firms. Gradually, the term “services for the public” is being added to the term “public services”. This notion encompasses healthcare services outside of hospitals and childcare services, for example.

As is the case in other European countries, public services in France must now strike a balance between their presence, which enhances local attractiveness and boosts development, and the need to ensure that the cost that society pays for such services is affordable. This balance is particularly difficult to achieve in view of recent demographic changes in rural, urban and suburban areas. The structure of some systems, which date back to the nineteenth century in some cases, is now obsolete.

The objective of the government’s current public service policies is to reform and modernise



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these services in ways that are acceptable to the users. To this end, a consensus is sought between the various stakeholders (central government, local government, users, private enterprises, etc.)

The Interministerial Spatial Planning and Development Committee meetings of 13 December 2002 and 4 September 2003 decided on a sweeping review of consultation and coordination arrangements for the organisation of public services at the local level. The Rural Development Act of 23 February 2005 introduced several measures.

It upheld the role of the Departmental Prefect as the keystone of the system. The Prefect must be informed of likely changes in the organisation of public services and can conduct local consultations about all reorganisation proposals. The Prefect may call on two bodies for this purpose :

- > the Departmental Commissions on Public Services Organisation and Modernisation, which were set up in 1995 to bring together central government representatives, local government officials and the public services concerned. The Commissions' operating procedures have just been made more flexible.
- > the Departmental Local Postal Service Commission, which is also a consultative body, but one that deals exclusively with postal services.

Except in exceptional cases, no more than 10% of the population of a Département must be more than five kilometres or a twenty-minute drive from the nearest postal service outlet. A "national postal service equalization fund" was set up to finance any new outlets that had to be opened as a result of this provision of the Postal Regulation Act of 20 May 2005.

- > the departmental education commissions deal with all matters relating to school districts.

In addition to these changes in the form of consultative processes, changes also had to be made to the content by having the various stakeholders adopt a comprehensive approach that considers all of the services provided in a given area. The service-by-service approach used for so long had proven to be too restrictive. The best local level for such consultations is likely to be that of the *Département* in most cases, but smaller areas, such as *Pays*, should also be considered. This comprehensive approach to services goes hand in hand with the determination to make analysis of local needs a priority, rather than local supply, so as to give new expectations due consideration. Changes in French society, such as the arrival of new populations in rural areas, have given rise to new needs that must not be overlooked.

Pilot programmes have been introduced in several *Départements* since July 2003 to seek new forms of access to public services. Then, in the second half of 2005, very broad-based consultations of local government players and rural users were organised, with consultations conducted via the Prefects and a national conference on public services in rural areas.

One of the ideas that has been tested over the last few years is the pooling a number of services :

- > either by providing several public services from the same site.

Pooling relies on the development of Public Service Centres (*Maisons de services publics* - MSP), which are primarily located in rural towns and suburbs. These centres provide premises where several central government, local government and public agencies can receive the public. The centres are the result of experiments that started in the early nineteen-nineties. The Rural Development Act of February 2005 made the legal framework for Public Services Centres more flexible so that private-sector services could be represented at them as well.

- > or by having one service provide other services. In several rural *Départements*, agreements have been reached that enable the Post Office to sell train tickets on behalf of France's National Railways (SNCF), a government corporation.

As part of the reform of government employment services, the central government wanted to create a new type of Public Services Centre called Employment Centres, in order to improve services for the unemployed and businesses. The Employment Centres are supposed to coordinate the action of the various government employment services in a given travel-to-work area and around the local governments concerned. This measure was included in the Social Cohesion Programme Act of 18 January 2005.

One-stop service helps to simplify formalities for users and saves them the confusion of having to deal with a multitude of different contacts. One of the major challenges for public services in the coming years will be to develop a user-centred system.

Central and local government place special emphasis on deploying information and communication technology (see section 20) so as to develop "online administration". Internet users now have access to 90% of the administration's official forms and more than 7,000 government websites. French citizens are showing a growing interest in this new form of administration, as can be seen in the number of personal income tax returns filed online, which rose from 150,000 in 2002 to more than 1.2 million in 2004. ■

22 Higher Education and Research

Producing and disseminating knowledge have become critical factors for local attractiveness and growth. Therefore, the European Union has set itself the goal of becoming the world's leading "knowledge-driven economy".

As part of this movement, France must make sure that it has a high quality and competitive higher education and research system, as international competition in these areas increases. At the same time, it must make sure that the spatial distribution of its system is balanced. This means that the appropriate supply of services and facilities must be defined for each local area.

In the early nineteen-nineties, France undertook a plan of action for higher education and research called "University 2000", in order to meet two main challenges :

- accommodating the rapidly growing number of students at the time,
- achieving a better distribution throughout France of higher education establishments, which had been too concentrated in Paris.

University branches were opened in France's Régions. Technology Institutes (IUT) and Vocational Sections (STS) providing post secondary education were opened in medium-sized towns and new universities were created on the outskirts of the greater Paris region to relieve overcrowding within the Paris city limits. In line with the notion of making access to higher education more democratic, sites with university facilities are never much more than thirty kilometres from the other nearest sites.

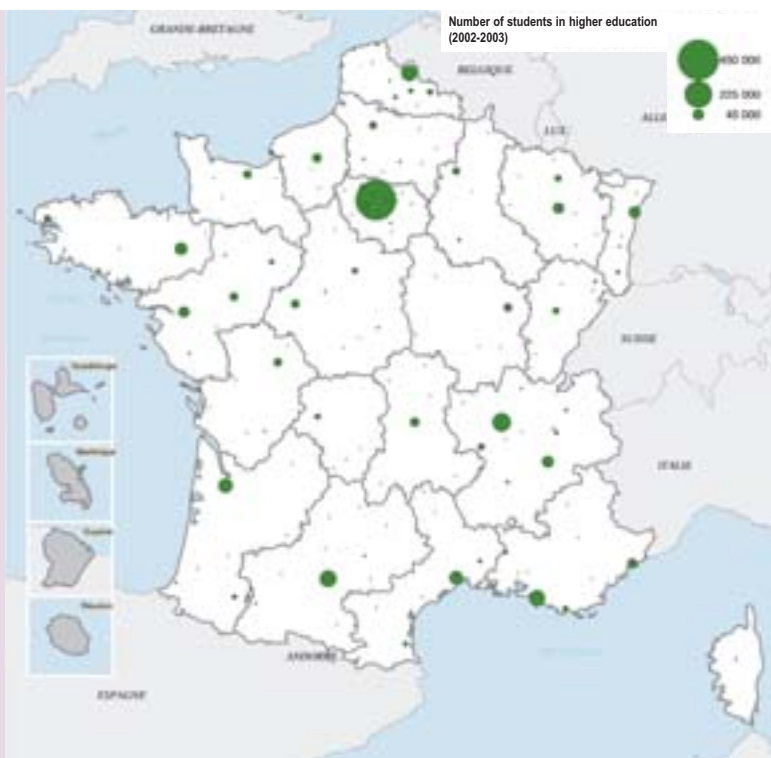
A new plan called "Universities for the Third Millennium" or U3M" was launched in 1998 to improve the quality of facilities and to enhance the action of universities with regard to economic and technological development. This programme is now being completed and its actions have been incorporated into the Planning Contracts between Central and Regional Governments for 2000-2006, which cover renovation of universities, improvements to student housing, development of technological facilities, as well as raising the European and worldwide profile of French research :

- by building on the work of top-quality local teams,
- by networking centres of excellence, human sciences centres, national technological research centres, medical training and research institutes, etc.
- by discerning regional priorities,
- by expanding collaboration and partnerships with European and international teams.

France is already making preparations for after "U3M". Interministerial discussions are under way on the future of the higher education and research system focusing on both the location of facilities and their role. The context has changed as the number of students declines. The harmonised European system of degrees (Bachelor's, Master's, Doctorate) is being phased in as the need to ensure the internationalisation and excellence of research continues to increase.

One of the keys to the future of France's higher education and research system will be its ability to make use of research findings and transfer technology to business. French universities and research establishments still give too little consideration to this aspect. The technology transfer policy initiated in the nineteen-eighties, with the establishment of Regional Innova-

tion and Technology Transfer Centres (CRITT) and technology dissemination networks, should be continued with closer cooperation between public-sector and private-sector players. The other challenge will be to continue the work of French centres of excellence within the framework of European research policy. The approach is in line with France's new policies on Competitiveness Clusters and support for major cities. ■



Types of university sites

Production : DIACT –
Observatoire des territoires,
2004
Source : CNRS
Fonds cartographiques :
Francièmes © Tous droits
réservés

Finding further information on the Internet...

General Purpose Sites

DIACT

1 avenue Charles Floquet, 75007 Paris

Tél. : 00.33.1.40.65.12.34

- > www.diact.gouv.fr

Observatoire des territoires

- > www.territoires.gouv.fr

French government information portal (administration, legislation...)

- > www.vie-publique.fr
-

I France's political and administrative structure

- > www.conseil-constitutionnel.fr
- > www.elysee.fr
- > www.premier-ministre.gouv.fr
- > www.senat.fr
- > www.assemblee-nationale.fr
- > www.justice.gouv.fr
- > www.conseil-etat.fr
- > www.ccomptes.fr

Laws and Regulations

- > www.legifrance.gouv.fr
-

2 Population Trends

Institut national de la statistique et des études économiques

- > www.insee.fr
-

3 Spatial Planning Policy Objectives

See the DIACT website.

4 From DATAR to DIACT

See the DIACT website.

5 The Central Government at the Regional Level

Ministère de l'Intérieur

- > www.interieur.gouv.fr/rubriques/c/c4_les_prefectures

6 Local Government

Assemblée des Départements de France (ADF)

- > www.departement.org

Association des maires de France (AMF)

- > www.amf.asso.fr

Association des Régions de France (ARF)

- > www.arf.asso.fr

Ministère de l'Intérieur

(Direction générale des collectivités locales - Local Government Directorate General)

- > www.dgcl.interieur.gouv.fr
-

7 Cooperation between *Communes*

Assemblée des communautés de France (ADCF)

- > www.intercommunalites.com
-

8 Civil Society

Conseil économique et social (National Economic and Social Council)

- > www.conseil-economique-et-social.fr

Business Representation Chambers :

Assemblée des chambres françaises de commerce et d'industrie (ACFCI)

- > www.acfci.cci.fr

Chambers of Trade :

Assemblée permanente des chambres de métiers (APCM)

- > www.apcm.com

Chambers of Agriculture :

Assemblée permanente des chambres d'agriculture (APCA)

- > www.apca.chambragri.fr

Economic Development Agencies :

Conseil national pour les économies régionales (CNER)

- > www.cner-france.com

Urban Planning Agencies :

Fédération nationale des agences d'urbanisme (FNAU)

- > www.fnau.org

9 European Economic And Social Cohesion Policy in France

The European Union's Web Portal

- > www.europa.eu.int

French websites

- > www.projetsdeurope.gouv.fr
- > www.una-leader.org (*Leader +*)

I0 Cooperation with France's European neighbours

European Spatial Planning Observatory Network (ESPON)

- > www.espon.eu

ESPON contact in France : Interdisciplinary Network for European Spatial Planning (RIATE)

- > www.ums-riate.com

Cross-Border Cooperation Task Force

Mission opérationnelle transfrontalière (MOT)

- > www.espaces-transfrontaliers.org

Association française du Conseil des Communes et Régions d'Europe (AFCCRE)

- > www.afccre.asso.fr

II Spatial Planning

See the DIACT website.

I2 Contractual Approach

See the DIACT website.

I3 Sustainable Development as a Crosscutting Priority

Ministère de l'écologie et du développement durable

- > www.ecologie.gouv.fr

Comité français pour l'environnement et le développement durable (Comité 21)

- > www.comite21.org
- > www.agenda21france.org

I4 Urban Policies

On conurbation policy and major cities policy :

Entreprises Territoires et Développement (business and local development association)

- > www.projetdeterritoire.com
Association des maires des grandes villes de France (AMGVF)
- > www.grandesvilles.org
Fédération des maires des villes moyennes (FMVM)
- > www.villesmoyennes.asso.fr
Ministère de l'emploi, de la cohésion sociale et du logement
Délégation interministérielle à la ville
- > www.ville.gouv.fr

I5 The *Pays* : Where Town and Country Intersect

- Entreprises Territoires et Développement (business and local development association)**
- > www.projetdeterritoire.com
Association pour la fondation des pays (APFP)
- > www.pays.asso.fr
Union nationale des acteurs et des structures du développement local (UNADEL)
- > www.unadel.asso.fr

I6 Policies for Rural Areas

- Association des petites villes de France (APVF)**
- > www.apvf.asso.fr
Association des maires ruraux de France (AMRF)
- > www.amrf.asso.fr
Regional Nature Parks :
Fédération nationale des parcs naturels régionaux de France (FNPNR)
- > www.parcs-naturels-regionaux.fr

I7 Specific Policies for Mountain and Coastal Areas

Mountains

- Association nationale des élus de la montagne (ANEM)**
- > www.anem.org

Coasts

- Association nationale des élus du littoral (ANEL)**
- > www.anel.asso.fr
Conservatoire national du littoral

- > www.conservatoire-du-littoral.fr

18 France's Economic Attractiveness

Competitiveness Clusters

- > www.competitivite.gouv.fr

Invest in France Agency (Agence française pour les investissements internationaux - AFII)

- > www.afii.fr

19 Transportation

Ministère des transports, de l'équipement, du tourisme et de la mer

- > www.equipement.gouv.fr

20 Local Digital Development

Information about telecommunications access infrastructure and services are available on the Local Development Observatory website : www.territoires.gouv.fr. Some of the information is from the telecommunications observatory (ORTEL), which was set up with the support of DIACT.

Geographically referenced database for local digital development :

- > ortel.alkante.com

Central government action to promote the information society :

- > www.internet.gouv.fr

21 Public Services

See the DIACT website.

22 Higher Education and Research

Ministère délégué à l'enseignement supérieur et à la recherche

- > www.recherche.gouv.fr

Glossary

AFII	Agence française pour les investissements internationaux (Invest in France Agency)
AFITF	Agence pour le financement des infrastructures de transport de France (French Transportation Infrastructure Financing Agency)
ANRU	Agence nationale de rénovation urbaine (National Urban Renewal Agency)
CA	Communauté d'agglomération (Conurbation Community)
CC	Communauté de communes (Community of Communes)
CU	Communauté urbaine (Urban Community)
CDOMSP	Commission départementale d'organisation et de modernisation des services publics (Departmental Commission on Public Services Organisation and Modernisation)
CIACT	Comité interministériel d'aménagement et de compétitivité des territoires (Interministerial Committee on Spatial Planning and Competitiveness)
CIALA	Comité interministériel d'aide à la localisation des activités (Interministerial Committee on Business Location Support)
CPER	Contrat de plan Etat-Régions, Contrats de projets Etat-Régions (Planning Contracts between Central and Regional Government)
DIACT	Délégation interministérielle à l'aménagement et à la compétitivité des territoires (Interministerial Agency for Spatial Planning and Competitiveness)
DIV	Délégation interministérielle à la ville (Interministerial Cities Agency)
DOCUP	Document unique de programmation (Programming Paper)
DTA	Directive territoriale d'aménagement (Spatial Planning Directives)
EPCI	Etablissement public de coopération intercommunale (Public Corporations for Cooperation between Communes)
FNADT	Fonds national d'aménagement et de développement du territoire (National Spatial Planning and Development Fund)
GIZC	Gestion intégrée des zones côtières (Integrated Coastal Zone Management (ICZM))
LOADT	Loi d'orientation pour l'aménagement et le développement du territoire du 4 février 1995 (Spatial Planning and Development Act of 4 February 1995)
LOADDT	Loi d'orientation pour l'aménagement et le développement durable du territoire du 25 juin 1999 (Spatial Planning and Sustainable Development Act of 25 June 1999)
MSP	Maison des services publics (Public Services Centre)
PAT	Prime d'aménagement du territoire (Local Development Bonus)
PNR	Parcs naturels régionaux (Regional Nature Parks)
SAN	Syndicat d'agglomération nouvelle (New Conurbation Syndicate)
SCOT	Schéma de cohérence territoriale (Territorial Cohesion Blueprint)
SDEC	Schéma de développement de l'espace communautaire (European Spatial Development Perspective (ESDP))
SGAR	Secrétaire général pour les affaires régionales (General Secretariat for Regional Affairs)
SIG	Services d'intérêt général (Services of General Interest (SGI))
SIEG	Services économiques d'intérêt général (Services of General Economic Interest (SGEI))
SPL	Systèmes productifs locaux (Business Clusters)
SNDD	Stratégie nationale de développement durable (National Sustainable Development Strategy)
SRADT	Schéma régional d'aménagement et de développement du territoire (Regional Spatial Planning and Development Blueprint)
SSC	Schémas de services collectifs (Public Service Plans)
TIC	Technologies de l'information et de la communication (Information and Communications Technology)
TP(U)	Taxe professionnelle (unique) ((Uniform) business tax)
ZFU	Zones franches urbaines (Urban Empowerment Zones)
ZRR	Zones de revitalisation rurale (Rural Revitalisation Zones)
ZUS	Zones urbaines sensibles (Vulnerable Urban Zones)