Cross border knowledge for policy and practice
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**Annex 1 Project descriptions**

**Problems of employees, welfare agencies and public bodies**

1. Recognition of (partial) job qualifications
2. Cross border work mobility and contradictions in conflict law
3. Cross border chain liability and recipient's liability
4. Qualification problems: between social security and supplementary pension
5. The attraction of Limburg for international knowledge workers: the strong and weak points of the European and national immigration policy

**Linking immigrants to Limburg**

6. Work, living conditions and linking immigrants to Limburg
7. Cross border formal and informal social security
8. Limburg: experimental field for sustainable employment and new forms of working
9. Active youth, tied to the region

**Cross border cooperation of governments**

10. The effects of the administrative approach of capital crime in Limburg and the Meuse-Rhine Euregion
Management summary

Cross border cooperation
The countries of the European Union are confronted with great challenges following the increasing globalisation of the economy and the internationalisation of the current and future society. Cross border work mobility, the international provision of services and the improvement of the investment and business climate hence are high priorities of the European Union and within the Benelux in particular. To accept these challenges, international and regional cross border cooperation is crucial.

Solve problems
Public cross border cooperation is often difficult because of different rules and jurisdictions. Also employees and companies experience difficulties when they engage in international and cross border activities. The complaints of migrant workers which the European Commission receives on a yearly basis prove that there are still many obstacles that are at odds with the optimal use of cross border rights and possibilities. Differences in tax law and social security law, slow procedures in recognising professional qualifications, differences in the implementation of European guidelines, division of competences, and government structures result in additional administrative burdens and hence also hinder the economic growth. Furthermore, the demographic development in the Euregion requires good and inviting arrangements in order to attract international knowledge workers and their families. Also, the supply and demand in the work environment need to be brought together. A good exchange of information between the different governments, the business life and private persons hence is essential.

Coordinated approach
According to the Meuse–Rhine Euregion, a coordinated approach within the Euregion is needed to improve the connection of supply and demand on the labour market, to better utilise the available schooling and educational capacity, and to reduce and where possible abolish (EMR2020) the differences in fiscal and social security, and pension plans. In the fields of cross border health care, environment, penal law/crime, spatial planning, and culture big problems also often arise that urgently require solutions.

In the Euregion, already a variety of advisory bodies for cross border problems with a proven track-record exists. The Euregion, however, still lacks a supportive body to examine coordinating issues with regard to cross border mobility and cooperation; a body which can stimulate the debate and the discussion on cross border issues and which could bring practical solutions in consultation with the existing advisory bodies.

Tackling bottlenecks
To stimulate the economic growth in the Euregion, the aforementioned problems need to be examined, solutions need to be developed and bottlenecks need to be tackled quickly. Broad knowledge and provision of services need to be united in one expertise centre; an expertise centre where all partners learn from each other and where constantly new and relevant knowledge is acquired; a centre that shares its output with the advisory bodies that are in direct contact with citizens/employees and where the parties concerned are guided to the correct information in an effective manner.
The Institute for Transnational and Euregional cross border cooperation and Mobility (hereafter: ITEM or the Expertise Centre), founded in 2015, is the pivot of research, counselling, knowledge exchange, and training activities with regard to cross border mobility and cooperation.

**Support and stimulate**
ITEM was founded to support and stimulate the cross border and international functioning of the Euregional and transnational society. In the first place, this calls for the support of the development of a well-functioning cross border agglomeration. In addition, it concerns the reinforcement of the international functioning of the Euregion in a globalising economy.

**Reducing the barriers of borders**
ITEM, in view of the ambitions of the Meuse–Rhine Euregion, its partner regions, and the Benelux in cooperation with North Rhine-Westphalia (NRW), considerably contributes to the development of an international and cross border labour market. The development and further expansion of the Euregional cooperation call for a transparent and attractive Euregional labour market with as few border barriers as possible. Lowering these border barriers also plays a role at the European level and at the level of third countries outside of Europe. ITEM hence does not only approach the cross border issues from a Euregional perspective, but also from a transnational point of view.

**Activities**
The activities of ITEM concentrate on the simplification of cross border mobility and cooperation from a legal, economic, cultural, and administrative approach. ITEM’s strength is the scientific and interdisciplinary approach that allows to provide concrete and practical solutions to advisory bodies, politics, and interested parties.
To this end, ITEM will develop the following activities:

• conduct (fundamental and applied) research on current themes;
• execute test cases to make a concrete contribution to the abolishment of impediments caused by borders;
• stimulate the international scientific and political discussion on cross border issues by providing a factual context and solution propositions;
• (permanent) counselling and information exchange with existing border information points, expat desks, The Bureaus for Belgian and German Affairs of the Sociale Verzekeringbank (the organization that implements national insurance schemes in the Netherlands) and other institutions, companies and advisory bodies;
• organise conferences, training sessions and workshops to bring together the local, regional and international partners;
• create a database with information on regulations, jurisprudence and best practices;
• analyse border effects and the future development of the cross border labour market.

**Partners**

ITEM is an initiative of Maastricht University (UM), the Dutch Centre of Expertise and Innovation on Demographic Changes (NEIMED), Zuyd University of Applied Sciences, the City of Maastricht, the Meuse-Rhine Euregion (EMR), and the (Dutch) Province of Limburg.

Initially, the Expertise Centre ITEM is set up by the Faculty of Law of Maastricht University. In the field of research, the faculties of Arts and Social Sciences (FASoS), Science and Engineering (FSE; specifically the School of Governance/UNU-Merit) and the School of Business and Economics (SBE; specifically the Research Centre for Education and the Labour Market (ROA)) collaborate. This cooperation warrants the interdisciplinarity of ITEM.

Furthermore, the researchers of Maastricht University participate in large international research networks. They particularly collaborate within the framework of big EU research projects in the fields of migration, work mobility and social security, citizenship, and security. The partner institutions are universities, research institutes and think tanks within the Euregion and the EU as well as in Asia, Africa, Australia, Canada, and the United States. These international and regional contacts can be utilised in the set-up and development of ITEM as an expertise centre. Also, close collaboration with the Benelux and the German public bodies is crucial for the efficiency and future of ITEM.

Besides its partners, ITEM has a number of organisations with which it actively collaborates on the basis of specific knowledge and expertise. Among others, ITEM will be collaborating with the Centraal Bureau voor de Statistiek (CBS) (Statistics Netherlands).

**State of the art**

ITEM builds on the activities of MACIMIDE, the inter-faculty Maastricht Centre for Citizenship, Migration and Development of Maastricht University. Within the scope of MACIMIDE, researchers of various faculties collaborate closely in the research fields of migration and development issues, citizenship, nationality and integration, international family relationships, European and international immigration law and right of asylum, work mobility, social security, tax law, and pensions.

On the basis of the existing experience, built over the years in the various concerned faculties of Maastricht University and at NEIMED, the Expertise Centre has immediately taken off by setting up concrete topical research projects, by creating and filling the database, by strengthening the contacts with knowledge institutions in the Euregion and the public authorities in the Benelux and Germany/NRW as well as other interested parties such as companies, information points, expat centres and advisory bodies.

**Research topics**

On the basis of the dialogues with concerned parties, the next ten research topics are prioritized for the first four years (starting from 2015):

1. Recognition of (partial) job qualifications.
2. Cross border work and contradictions in conflict law.
3. Cross border chain liability and recipient’s liability.
4. Qualification problems: between social security and supplementary pension.
5. The attraction of Limburg for international knowledge workers: the strong and weak points of the European and national immigration policy for international knowledge workers.
6. Work, living conditions and linking immigrants to Limburg.
7. Cross border formal and informal social security.
8. Limburg: experimental field for sustainable employment and new forms of working.
9. Active youth, tied to the region.
10. The effects of the administrative approach of capital crime in Limburg and the Meuse-Rhine Euregion.

Impact without boundaries
ITEM does not only contribute to the solution of cross border issues on a Euregional level but also in the international arena. ITEM hence will also become a member of international networks in the field of border studies. The Expertise Centre initiates the creation of a ‘region without borders’ that will facilitate and attract private persons, companies, and authorities to invest in this region.

Solving cross border issues will lead to effects whereof not only the individual migrant worker will profit but also, and in particular, authorities, the business world, education and research institutions, and hence the economy and the society as a whole. This also has an effect on the Meuse-Rhine Euregion. The services of ITEM will furthermore have a beneficial impact on the Benelux and neighbouring countries. In short: the focus of the Expertise Centre is on regional problems and international solutions.

Financing
ITEM will be permanent and will continue on its own account after the provincial subsidy period has expired (2025). The sources of income will thereafter be: research subsidies (on the basis of various national and European programmes of among others NWO, FWO, Deutsche Forschungsgesellschaft, Interreg and Horizon 2020), subscriptions to the rendering of services and the underlying database, compensations for contract research and assessment studies/evaluations, and participation fees for training and dialogue activities.

For the next 10 years (starting from 2015), an investment volume of 20.6 million EUR is budgeted, of which in first instance Maastricht University and the Province of Limburg (NL) are the main sponsors with 43% and 33% respectively. Furthermore, Zuyd Hogeschool, the City of Maastricht and the EMR each contribute, whether in kind or not. The remaining funds have to be acquired through third parties.
1. Context ITEM

**Cross border mobility**
With economy and society becoming more and more international, within the Netherlands, and particularly in the border regions, the need for cross border mobility and cooperation grows, both with the neighbouring countries (Belgium, Luxemburg and Germany) and with countries further away within and outside of Europe. There are many forms of mobility: work mobility, student mobility, patient mobility and furthermore a lot of related themes such as trade relations and cross border settlement and business. Cross border mobility, however, still is far from obvious and still goes with many problems. The constantly increasing dynamics because of internationalisation causes tension between on the one hand the directly involved (like e.g. companies, employers, employees, students and patients) who want to be well and rapidly provided in their mobility needs and the ‘government’ on the other hand who is responsible for steering the mobility needs in the right direction in a socially responsible way by means of good regulations and their implementation.

**Persistent problems**
Although the cross border mobility and the cooperation grow, there still is a long way to go. Border impediments are stubborn, as is also attested by the large number of complaints of migrant workers that the European Commission receives on a yearly basis¹. They are not only caused by legal and administrative problems, but also by material-economic obstacles and by cultural factors (the so-called mental border impediments) such as language. The approach of these border impediments demands both a systematic long-term approach as well as finding pragmatic solutions in the short term. This requires a systemic gathering of (scientific) knowledge and information on cross border cooperation and mobility.

At this moment, there is a lack of accessible (scientific) knowledge of regulation and also of coordination between the various governments and the welfare agencies that are active in the region. International cooperation between governments, companies and authorities can support cross border issues in practice and solve any related problems in various fields (like e.g. economy, labour market, social security, sustainability, and security). At this moment, there is also a lack of knowledge on the actual situation on both sides of the borders (for instance concerning the surpluses and deficits on the labour market). There is a need for pragmatic and effective solutions that meet the needs of the practice.

¹ As shown by the Eurobarometer statistics.
If the four border regions (the South of Limburg (the Netherlands), the district of Tongeren and Liège (Belgium) and the Städteregion Aachen (Germany)) succeed in integrating their labour markets by cross-border cooperation, the number of available jobs for the population of the four regions will increase. For the inhabitants of the Euregion, this would mean that they get access to a lot of jobs elsewhere within the border region: the South of Limburg: 740,000, Tongeren 400,000, Aix-la-Chapelle 320,000 and Liège 270,000.

Atlas van Kansen (chances Atlas) for the South of Limburg, Tongeren, Liège and Aix-la-Chapelle, 2013

Operational support needed
In its strategy paper ‘Internationalisation in new perspective (2013)’, the Province of Limburg identifies the need for an expertise centre that joins research and knowledge in the field of mobility and cross border issues. Also bringing together several parties, companies and organisations for education and the exchange of relevant and actual information is considered highly important. This will improve the connection between supply and demand on the labour market, the schooling and educational capacities can be better exploited and the barriers which exist due to the differences in tax law and social security can be dealt with and where possible abolished.

Also the ‘Atlas van kansen’ (‘Chances Atlas’ 2012 and 2013) states that the removal of border impediments has positive effects on border regions. This manifests itself in a better business climate, a broader basis for social services and an enhancement of the attractiveness. This applies both in the long as well as in the short term.

Need of an information infrastructure
The Benelux emphasizes in its report Grensarbeid in het Benelux-gebied (Cross border work in the Benelux area) (2014) the need for the availability of an information infrastructure that enables the potential cross border worker to understand the consequences of cross border work with regard to pension, social security and taxes. Only then the decision to get a job on the other side of the border can be facilitated.

The Euregional action plan with regard to cross border labour mobility, which is currently (2015) being further elaborated in the implementation of EMR2020, explicitly identifies the establishment of the Expertise centre as a prior purpose. The focus lies on scientific analysis, training and lobbying activities with regard to labour mobility in general and labour migration, labour circumstances and violations of justice in particular.
2. Purpose and scope

**ITEM, the expertise centre**
Established in 2015, the Institute for Transnational and Euregional cross border cooperation and Mobility (hereafter: ITEM or the Expertise Centre) is the pivot of research, counselling, knowledge exchange and training activities with regard to cross border mobility and cooperation. ITEM is an expertise centre that focuses on two large areas of interest, being cross border cooperation and mobility. The notion ‘cross border’ needs to be understood in its broad sense.

ITEM is an expertise centre in which all partners learn from each other and where constantly new and relevant knowledge is acquired, a centre that shares its output with the advisory bodies that are in direct contact with the citizen/employee/company.

Through its cooperation with implementing bodies and its dialogue with parties concerned, ITEM will gather, categorise and prioritise the most pressing questions with regard to border impediments from the society. From an interdisciplinary angle, ITEM examines the causes on a systematic basis and advances practical solutions. Interdisciplinary, fundamental and applied research are combined. ITEM stands for knowledge for practice and knowledge for policy.

**Neighbouring countries, Euregions, Europe and beyond**
The expertise centre focuses both on the direct mobility across national borders (among which the traditional cross border commuting and mobility of patients and students) as well as on migration over a longer distance within or outside of Europe (of students, knowledge migrants and migrant workers and their families). Indeed, both forms of mobility become more and more intertwined because of the big dynamics of internationalisation. Migrant workers, entrepreneurs and service providers who stay in another country for a short period of time often are faced with European regulations and jurisdictions of several countries simultaneously.

The geographical core area of ITEM consists of the Benelux countries and their direct neighbouring countries, with special attention for the Euregions. The Expertise Centre furthermore focuses on mobility issues in relation to the rest of Europe and beyond.

**Broad knowledge basis**
The Expertise Centre has a broad knowledge basis because of the background of its partners. After its start-up, the Centre hence can also address other relevant ‘cross border’ research areas, depending on the relevant and acute problems of the moment. Examples of relevant themes are closer police cooperation and security issues, health care, sustainability and (sustainable) innovation possibilities, spatial planning, culture and tourism, transport and environment, housing market developments, and cross border financial facilities (such as the granting of mortgages).

ITEM also contributes to the strategic programme Kennis-As Limburg which in its turn is aimed at the reinforcement of the sustainable economic and social structure in Limburg. The Expertise Centre contributes to the objections of the Kennis-As, particularly through research and advice in the field of labour law, social security and tax law, but also in the field of family law. It also includes research for a better integration in the society of the international knowledge workers and for the development of the labour market in the Euregion. Thereby, ITEM also contributes to the development of other Kennis-As projects, provincial projects and campus developments.
Regional anchoring and embedment
In a border region such as Limburg – landlocked by Germany and Belgium – cross border cooperation and mobility are very important. Provided the cooperation is good, it offers the border region large structural and sustainable economic and social opportunities. Effective and efficient cross border cooperation and the removal of mobility barriers hence are very important.

ITEM actively contributes to:
- the strategy paper of the Province of Limburg which distinguishes two priorities: on the one hand the development of a cross border agglomeration/urban network in the Euregion and on the other hand the connection of the Limburg (knowledge) economy with Europe and the rest of the world. In its strategy paper, the Province of Limburg clearly states that it wants to increase the competitiveness of Limburg as a border region but also in a broader international context;
- the future strategy EMR2020 that was drafted by the five partners of the Meuse–Rhine Euregion. The strategy explicitly mentions the reinforcement of the economic structure and the labour market, the improvement of the cross border mobility and the improvement of the cross border cooperation (in health care and access to health care).

Manifesto
The ITEM activities also connect to the manifesto ‘Waar een wil is, is geen grens’ (Where there’s a will, there isn’t a border) that was written within the framework of 200 years Kingdom of the Netherlands. The manifesto is an urgent appeal to the national politicians to support the coexistence of inhabitants of the border area in the neighbouring countries. The manifesto initiates research on topics such as legal and sustainable residence of third-country citizens in the Netherlands, Belgium, Luxemburg or Germany and the improvement of the social position of migrating employees and cross border workers. ITEM can execute and/or support this research. The initiators of this manifesto are the Deutsch Niederländische Gesellschaft zu Aachen (DNG), the Algemeen Nederlands Verbond Limburg (ANV), the Eurode 2000+ Foundation, consuls and Europe Direct. These parties are important feedback parties and are incorporated in the ITEM network.

Cooperation partners
The Expertise centre brings together parties in the Euregion that work on cross border issues so they can reinforce one another.

Besides the Meuse-Rhine Euregion (EMR), the CBS, EIPA and various partners and institutions of the network of ITEM partners who have indicated to be willing to cooperate with ITEM (such as the Benelux, NRW and Limburg Economic Development (LED)), Maastricht University cooperates additionally with various other institutions.
Within the framework of European and international projects, Maastricht University already cooperates with various international scientific partner institutions (universities and research institutes), with think tanks within the EU, Asia, Africa, Australia, Canada and the United States, with various international organisations, and with national and European public bodies.

By involving these organisations and authorities as network and advisory partners in the project, the Expertise centre is able to operate and advise at a national, regional and international level and will get an international character. Because of the track record of these parties, this cooperation may furthermore increase the probability of future subsidy applications, which are essential for the sustainability of ITEM, to be granted more easily.

**Lectureships**

Also on specific subjects, ITEM intends to cooperate with various partners. The lectureship ‘International Business and Management in Euregional Perspective’ has its seat in Fontys. This lectureship particularly focuses on the developments, the research and the network with regard to the cross border European and Dutch-German cooperation. Zuyd Hogeschool also wants to establish a lectureship in a field that is related to ITEM: ‘Entrepreneurship in the Meuse-Rhine Euregion’. ITEM is actively approaching these lectureships and is exchanging as much knowledge as possible.

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*Figure 2: ITEM and its cooperation partners*
**Companies, service providers and authorities**

In the field of pensions and cross border labour, the Province of Limburg is a national hotspot. The intended cooperation partners in this framework are among others the Tax Office Foreign Countries in Heerlen, the Landelijk team Grensoverschrijdend Werken en Ondernemen (GWO) (National team Cross border Labour and Entrepreneurship) of the tax authorities in Maastricht, the Bureaus for Belgian and German Affairs of the Sociale Verzekeringsbank and institutions such as ABP, APG, AZL, DSM Pension Services, and PWC.

Also in the field of security, ITEM intends to cooperate with various partners. Within the Public Prosecutor Service, the Bureau for Euregional Cooperation (Bureau voor Euregionale Samenwerking or BES) already exists. The BES stimulates the judicial cooperation between Belgium, Germany and the Netherlands in general and between the Meuse-Rhine Euregion and the Euregion Rhine-Meuse North in particular. ITEM can support BES with its research and analyses and BES can be of service to ITEM with its expertise.

In Heerlen, in 2005, the Euregional Police Information Coordination Centre (EPICC) was founded. The centre clusters five earlier organised information junctions in a common centre, which has simplified and accelerated the information exchange between the Netherlands, Germany and Belgium. By means of its scientific knowledge, ITEM can provide an important added value to EPICC by giving advice on relevant information sources that need to be tapped, by making secondary analyses and by advising on judicial possibilities in the framework of international cooperation and data exchange.

In the field of specific practice-based (Eu)regional research, E,til can be cooperated with. E,til is a regional economic research bureau that works for authorities, institutions and the business world. E,til has a lot of knowledge and expertise on demographic developments, the functioning of the labour market and real estate (houses, companies, office premises, industrial areas) in the Netherlands, the Province of Limburg and the Euregion. The research bureau conducts practice-based research in a scientifically justified manner. In addition to the activities of ITEM, E,til could examine the applicability and effects of the suggested solutions.

The European Institute for Public Administration (EIPA) could employ its experience, expertise and network in the field of trainings and applied research concerning cross border issues (European development and ‘the debordering’ of the region) for the benefit of ITEM. EIPA can furthermore, on the basis of its experience with impact assessments for many years, help with the development and execution of an applied framework for the annual cross border assessment study.
3. Impact

**Output**
The establishment of this Expertise centre in the Province of Limburg has a clear added value. The activities of the Expertise centre contribute to the development of the economy in the Euregion. By lowering and, where possible, removing border barriers, also international knowledge workers and cross border workers can be more easily attracted and kept resulting in positive economic effects for the region. This will make it more attractive for knowledge workers, cross border workers and companies to invest in the Euregion, but also for the SME that to a considerable extent ensure the economic dynamics in the Euregion.

**Employment**
ITEM has direct and particularly indirect effects on the employment in the region. The Expertise centre does not only give young researchers the opportunity to work on various cross border issues and problems with regard to labour market mobility, it also has a stimulating effect on cross border labour in general. Young, talented researchers and academics enter the regional labour market, just like international knowledge workers do, because they are less hindered to cross borders.

Also the attraction of foreign investment projects for certain has positive consequences on the employment and the earning power in and of the Euregion. In this way, the labour force will get more possibilities thanks to a growth of the number of jobs. As yet, the exact economic value is difficult to assess. In any case, the Chances Atlas (2013) states that by removing border barriers, a fall in unemployment will occur.

**Social effects**
The decrease or disappearance of border barriers also generates profits whereof the citizen will take direct or indirect advantage. The advantages not only show in the field of employment, but also in other fields such as tourism, culture and security. By attracting and keeping knowledge workers and cross border workers, the diversity of cultures and languages will even expand more.

“The decrease or disappearance of border barriers also generates profits whereof the citizen will take direct or indirect advantage.”
4. Organisation

**ITEM**
The organisation of ITEM consists of a board, an executive committee, an academic office and various network and advisory groups.

**The management and the board**
The dean of the coordinating Faculty of Law is ultimately responsible for the institute ITEM. The institute is managed by a director that gives account to the dean. The dean and the director are supported by an academic office, an executive committee, an advisory board and about three advisory and network groups.

The main tasks of the academic office are:
- Conducting of fundamental research;
- Conducting of applied, practice-based research;
- Conducting of test procedures.
For the execution, young researchers are deployed, guided by senior researchers with expertise in the concerned fields.

Figure 3: Organisation of ITEM
The executive committee
Because of the large number of parties involved and the
diversity of the activities, an executive committee has
been established (approximately 3 FTE).
The main tasks of the executive committee are:
1. Drafting a long-term and a yearly activities
programme for:
   a. Fundamental research;
   b. Applied, practice-based research;
   c. Workshops, trainings and courses;
   d. Conferences and symposia;
   e. (Political) Debate;
   f. Knowledge sharing with a wide audience;
2. Setting up and maintaining a database with relevant
knowledge, information and best practices on
mobility issues;
3. Being in charge of continuous contacts with and the
coordination between international service providers
within and outside of Limburg and the Meuse-Rhine
Euregion with regard to the exchange of information
and knowledge;
4. Providing a link with comparable institutions and
networks in Europe;
5. Identifying ad hoc research needs on the basis of the
input of the various advisory groups and the
development of concrete research proposals for the
purpose of the applied research;
6. Controlling financial purposes/sustainability;
7. Positioning and steering the research projects at the
academic office of ITEM and possibly other know-
ledge institutions with the required knowledge and
expertise;
8. Communication on the activities of ITEM;
9. Drafting an annual cross border assessment study
(in cooperation with the Meuse-Rhine Euregion) and
an annual report on the activities of the centre.

Advisory board
The advisory board is to provide the dean with substan-
tive advice on the way in which the agreements that were
established in the business case and the grant decision of
the province of Limburg are realized. Progress reports and
annual plans serve as supporting instruments.
The board’s advices are provided to the dean and the
Regular Consultation; this is the consultation between
the Provincial Executive of the province of Limburg and
the Executive Board UM.

The province of Limburg, UM, Zuyd Hogeschool, EMR
and the City of Maastricht each appoint an independent
to take a seat on the advisory board. This person
may come from their own organisation provided that
he/she is independent and not related to the ITEM
project. The dean technically chairs the meetings of the
advisory board. The board itself decides on its meeting
frequency and the formalities thereof; but meets at least
twice a year, for the purpose of advising on the progress
report and the annual plan.

Advisory and network groups
Involvement and input from relevant partners (govern-
ment, business world and knowledge institutions) are
essential for the well-functioning of the Expertise
centre. There is a threefold structure of advisory and
network groups:
1. Advisory and Network group with academic partners
(such as Fontys, the Fachhochschule Aachen and the
universities of Hasselt, Leuven, Liège, Luxemburg,
Aachen, Bonn, Münster and Cologne);
2. Advisory and Network group with service providers
(such as various expat desks, border info points, the
business world and pension performers);
3. Advisory group with other stakeholders (such as
entrepreneurs, trade unions, cities, the Benelux and
the Meuse-Rhine Euregion and ministries).

The various advisory groups form a platform for the
exchange and the exploration of ideas. The groups
provide the Expertise centre with the required input
both with regard to the problems to be tackled as well
as their effective solutions. This platform also aims at
providing high-quality feedback that contributes to the
(future) activities and course of ITEM. Finally, these
groups have an important role in the promotion of the
centre.

The ITEM partners, their roles and tasks
The initiative for the establishment of ITEM stems from
the power of collective knowledge development and
exchange. The success of the Expertise centre also
depends on existing and to be developed cooperation
between national and international authorities, advisory
bodies and knowledge institutions. Furthermore are of
importance the exchange, the recording and the putting
at disposal of fast-changing information by service
providing authorities and the establishment of connections with foreign countries and international networks. For projects of the size of ITEM, problems may arise in this field. Considering the knowledge, the experience and the commitment of the various external parties, and the fact that they all understand the necessity and the added value of the centre, the ITEM partners, however, consider this risk to be rather low. To attend to possible problems, the organisation is set up according to a model whereby public bodies, knowledge institutions, the business world and parties involved jointly determine ITEM’s course.

**Maastricht University**

Maastricht University is responsible for the daily activities of ITEM. The added value of Maastricht University for ITEM lies mainly in the existing knowledge in various relevant fields, research and education skills, its experiences with knowledge exchange and valorisation and its international network.

To this end, various faculties of Maastricht University collaborate. Each faculty is, depending on its expertise, deployed in the various research projects of ITEM. Each faculty provides its contribution (in kind) for the guidance of (its own) junior researchers.

**Arts and Social Sciences**

The Faculty Arts and Social Sciences (FASoS) focuses in its research on a number of key themes such as ‘Politics and Culture in Europe’ and ‘Globalisation, Transnationalism and Development’. Within these themes, special attention is paid to the subjects: transnational migrant families, transnational migrant work and the transnational society.

*For the research projects that are planned for 2015-2019, FASoS will hire and coach three junior researchers.*

**Humanities and Sciences**

The faculty Science and Engineering (FSE; more particularly the School of Governance/UNU-Merit) has determined ‘Migration and Development’ as one of its research topics. Here, the emphasis is on the relations between receiving countries (immigration) as well as sending countries (emigration) and the dynamics of this relation.

*For 2015-2019, FSE will hire and coach one junior researcher.*

**Law**

The faculty of Law (FL) is specialized in various fields that relate to cross border mobility and cooperation, such as European law, comparative law, migration, labour law, social security, pension and health law, and international tax law.

*For 2015-2019, FL will hire and coach five junior researchers.*

**Business and Economics**

The School of Business and Economics (SBE; more particularly its research centre ROA) is aimed at the improvement of the understanding of the relation between education and the labour market. Its expertise is on the acquisition and appreciation of human capital during the life cycle in relation to the dynamics of the labour market.

*For 2015-2019, SBE will hire and coach one junior researcher.*

**Zuyd Hogeschool**

Zuyd Hogeschool and Maastricht University, together with MUMC+, play a leading role concerning the Kennis-As Limburg which in its turn is aimed at the reinforcement of the sustainable economic and social structure in Limburg. Due to their cooperation within ITEM, Zuyd Hogeschool and the involved UM-faculties will be able to share and complement their knowledge.
**NEIMED**

NEIMED is a research centre in the field of the demographic transition. The substantive expertise of NEIMED complements the expertise of Maastricht University (particularly from ROA and MACIMIDE) well and will form a good basis for the cooperation within ITEM.

Within ITEM, NEIMED will particularly focus on the examination of the various dimensions of the demographic transition in the Euregion, the Euregional (cultural) cooperation and into the comparison between the Dutch and the Flemish/Belgian welfare state. NEIMED concentrates on the ‘soft’ border impediments.

**City of Maastricht (municipality of Maastricht) and the Province of Limburg**

The City of Maastricht and the Province of Limburg think along and cooperate with the executive partners of ITEM. They fulfil an ambassador role and will offer specific support in raising interests and questions of the (international) partners ‘with and for’ ITEM. Where possible, also cooperation takes place with regard to the organisation of workshops/conferences and public relations. The City of Maastricht is willing to play a part in the housing of ITEM.

**Cooperation**

In addition to its partners, ITEM has a number of organisations it actively cooperates with.

**CBS**

As reputable statistical institute, CBS will explore the cooperation with ITEM in relation to the CBS project ‘Cross border Statistics’. In the field of (international) statistics, the CBS does pioneering work. The CBS for instance has taken the initiative to explore the possibilities for setting up an infrastructure for cross border data. Conversations with various authorities have meanwhile been held to record the need for information. Together with the statistical bureaus of Belgium and Germany, it is being examined how this need for information can be provided for. Jointly with the Dutch Consulate General and the German government, the CBS shows whether, and how, cross border statistics can be realised in a structural way. Furthermore, the CBS is in consultation with the Province about a follow-up of the Euregional Information System, which collects and makes accessible the available information on the Euregion.
For the research that ITEM will be conducting, qualitatively good and complete data are essential. Here, the CBS can play an important role. The CBS and ITEM will clearly assess how data and expertise of the CBS can be made available and cross border data can be gathered and disseminated.

**Meuse-Rhine Euregion**

The Meuse-Rhine Euregion, founded as a working group in 1976, is one of the oldest cross border forms of cooperation. The objective is to, irrespective of borders, enable people and visitors in the Euregion to increase their quality of life by means of information, communication and cooperation (in the five partner regions).

The Meuse-Rhine Euregion will support ITEM both financially as well as practically on the basis of knowledge and means. It, for instance, provides services for conferences and seminars. Also the translation services of their interpreters are available for the translation of the communications expressions of ITEM towards its various target groups.

**Other cooperation parties**

Besides the CBS and the Meuse-Rhine Euregion, some other parties have shown their willingness to cooperate with ITEM, like for instance the *Regioverband Aachen*, the University of Hasselt, the SVB and Sabic. The content of this cooperation is determined at a later stage.
5. **Approach and research**

**Basis**

At the beginning of 2014, MACIMIDE, the inter-faculty Maastricht Centre for Citizenship, Migration and Development was launched. Within this centre, which is financed by Maastricht University, researchers of the faculties FASoS, FSE, FoL and SBE collaborate in the following research fields: migration and development issues, citizenship, nationality and integration, international family relationships, European and international jurisdiction concerning cross border labour, work mobility, social security, tax law and pensions.

MACIMIDE participates in large international research networks and works within the scope of large (academic) EU research projects in the field of migration, work mobility, citizenship, security, and development. Although MACIMIDE offers a solid basis for ITEM, it is an initiative with a different focus. MACIMIDE has its seat in the Euregion but is aimed at global problems. Furthermore, not all for ITEM relevant partners are involved in MACIMIDE. Complementary to MACIMIDE, ITEM will conduct interdisciplinary research within the scope of cross border Euregional mobility and cooperation issues whereby special attention will be paid to practical solutions.
ITEM and its environment
Supported by various faculties of Maastricht University, FL having the leading role, ITEM will seek alliance with activities of the Benelux, the Meuse-Rhine Euregion and the Regioverband Aachen.

The outer layer: stakeholders
The stakeholders are situated in the outer layer. These are parties that depend on knowledge in the field of cross border problems for their (economic) activities and initiatives in the border regions. Examples are the entrepreneurs who want to cross the border, schools, hospitals and colleges that want to cooperate on an international level and knowledge workers who want to have their diploma recognised, or their pension and tax questions answered.

The second layer: cross border service providers
The second layer consists of advisory bodies and welfare agencies. These parties will keep on fulfilling their particular function in their own location, but will be able to fulfil their role much better because of the increased coordination and availability of information. The bodies are supported through access to a database with relevant knowledge, and experience on and solutions for various areas of special interest.

The third layer: activities of ITEM
The third layer covers the seven main activities of ITEM:

1. Coordination of services
By making and maintaining contacts with bodies in the Euregion that are engaged in cross border service provision, the foundation of the activities of ITEM is laid and the work of ITEM is best visible.

2. Research
From an interdisciplinary angle, ITEM examines the causes of border impediments on a systematic basis and advances practical and fundamental solutions. Interdisciplinary, fundamental and applied research is combined. Academic knowledge is by means of (small-scale) contract research valorised into practical solutions. This research is conducted demand-oriented.

Various policy papers of public bodies show that there is a high demand for such research. In the report ‘Cross border work in the Benelux area’ of the Benelux the need is emphasized for a smooth treatment of academic diplomas and professional qualifications enabling professions on both sides of the border to be practised and therewith stimulating the mobility on the labour market. ITEM is particularly suited to examine similar issues. In these cases, the Benelux could grant ITEM the assignment to examine the issue and give advice on how the desired outcome can be achieved.

Also, the bureaus for Belgian Affairs (BBZ) and German Affairs (BDZ) could profit from support on specific themes such as research and advice in the field of e.g. the mortgage interest tax relief.

3. Cross border impact assessments
The Expertise centre gathers information and will draft annual cross border impact assessments and assessments (impact analysis) of legislation, jurisdiction and policy. In this report, that is to be published on an annual basis, the new legislation is examined on its effects on border mobility. The objective is to offer an insight in the positive and negative effects of on the one hand (cross border) legislation, competences and means and on the other hand the effects of measures to stimulate the mobility and cooperation between various partners.

On the basis of these reports, advice is given and proposals are made to regional, national and European governments to improve the legislation and its implementation. Moreover, attention is in particular paid to a good and efficient enforcement of European legislation.

4. Test procedures
The Expertise centre furthermore wants to play an important role in the stimulation of pioneering jurisdiction in its field of activities, for instance by executing test cases and by filing complaints in case that EU law is violated. When it concerns disputes with an international character, cases of less wealthy citizens are only seldom taken to court whereas exactly those people are hit the hardest by financial hardship.
5. Conferences, seminars and education

By means of training and dialogue, ITEM wants to share knowledge and provide more insight in the underlying context of cross border issues. An annual Euregional and international training programme is drafted with courses, trainings and workshops for individual cross border workers, institutions and companies. The education (courses and trainings) will initially specialise on the understanding of the relevant legislation and jurisdiction of the neighbouring countries, enabling a better implementation and also a better enforcement of the regulations. Also, understanding the political background and the applicable EU legislation is of importance. Bringing operational parties together will enable an exchange of knowledge and experiences, and promote cooperation. Also, a conference agenda will be drafted with international and regional (academic) conferences and (Europe) debates. Furthermore, the Expertise centre will organize expert meetings with regional and international partners (like e.g. the Limburg Economic Development (LED), Grensinfopt (GIP), (Border info point), Mission Opérationnelle Transfrontalière (MOT), EURO Institut and the Maasdaloverleg (the cooperation between APG, AZL, DSM Pension Services and Maastricht University)). The Expertise centre offers a platform for debate and acts as international discussion partner.

Research topics on the basis of ‘Cross border labour in the Benelux area’:

- Cross border labour market, data analysis and trends.
- Cross border professional qualification. Drafting an overview which provides for the (30) most relevant professions a clear presentation of how per profession (and per country: Belgium, the Netherlands, NRW) the cross border recognition takes place in practice (procedure, bottlenecks, additional requirements etc.) and how this can be speeded up and/or improved, but also which material effects may arise for the involved parties (in some cases, foreign qualifications do receive recognition in the end, but you get less paid or you are not insured and the like).
- Pilot cross border labour market policy (e.g. Meuse-Rhine Euregion or Flanders-the Netherlands).
- ‘Euregionalisation’ of the secondary education and vocational training in for instance Limburg or Limburg/Aachen. With a concrete plan for cross border apprenticeships.
- A regularly recurring cross border labour mobility monitor (which legislation has changed in the three countries, changes in the mobility streams etc.).

Benelux, 2014
6. Exchange of knowledge, information and questioning

Through its academic and interdisciplinary approach, ITEM can provide concrete and practical solutions. This information will be disseminated via scientific publications and reports. The scientific findings are further explained and disseminated by ITEM through knowledge sharing, dialogue activities, at information sessions (dissemination), workshops, and trainings.

By means of publications on the activities of ITEM and its accomplishments, the activities of ITEM will get a social reputation and ITEM can show its added value.

The lack of information on the consequences of cross border labour, the absence or insufficient presence of coordination between all the institutes and bureaus, and the lack of statistical data in the field of cross border workers lead to the fact that there still is insufficient knowledge and insight in the problems of cross border living and working. The importance of giving advice, geared to individual situations, is also emphasized.

7. Setting up and maintaining database

A database is set up with relevant information (legislation, jurisdiction, policy, knowledge partners, concrete problems and casuistry), and for instance practical manuals - all which relate to cross border casuistry. Research of the ‘Association of European Border Regions’ (AEBR) also shows that there is an actual need for a such database.
The fourth layer: academic research

On the basis of current cross border impact assessments/impact analyses and information from the market, the current and most urgent research issues are directed to the fourth layer, the interdisciplinary academic core of the centre. Relevant new academic knowledge is produced (particularly by PhD research) that will continuously be fed to the centre and its networks from the inside. The research is conducted under the supervision of expert professors with the aim to come up with coherent solutions and to stimulate the political decision-making.

ITEM works with a multidisciplinary approach. In legal, fiscal, economic, cultural, and administrative field, attention is paid to the research topics. The academic and applied research is conducted at Maastricht University, Zuyd Hogeschool and NEIMED through a cooperation of researchers from different disciplines and faculties. The research concentrates on the identification of the causes of problems and offering solutions.

Research projects

The research topics for the academic research are defined on the basis of the at that moment occurring problems. Due to the comprehensive network of the ITEM partners in the field of mobility issues, the most pressing problems are known and the academic research within ITEM has been initiated from the launch of the centre.

Ten themes, three main groups

On the basis of the dialogues with stakeholders, the following ten research topics (subdivided in the related main themes ‘Problems of employees, welfare agencies and public bodies’, ‘Linking immigrants to Limburg’ and ‘Cross border cooperation of governments’) are prioritized for the first four years. Descriptions of the projects can be found in the annexes.

Depending on the problems that are predominant at any time and which require academic research, there may be a shift between these themes. After a positive evaluation of the centre in year four, the research topics for the period thereafter are set on the basis of present knowledge issues that present themselves at that time.

Problems of employees, welfare agencies and public bodies

1. Recognition of (partial) job qualifications.
2. Cross border work and contradictions in conflict law
3. Cross border chain liability and recipient’s liability
4. Qualification problems: between social security and supplementary pension
5. The attraction of Limburg for international knowledge workers: the strong and weak points of the European and national immigration policy for international knowledge workers.

Linking immigrants to Limburg

6. Work, living conditions and linking immigrants to Limburg.
7. Cross border formal and informal social security.
8. Limburg: experimental field for sustainable employment and new forms of working.
9. Active youth, tied to the region.

Cross border cooperation of governments

10. The effects of the administrative approach of capital crime in Limburg and the Meuse-Rhine Euregion.

ITEM represents knowledge for policy and knowledge for practice
6. Financing

Financial resources
ITEM is a sustainable initiative which has as goal to continue on its own account after the subsidy period has expired.

For the period 2015 – 2024 Maastricht University and the Province of Limburg (NL) will be the main sponsors with contributions of respectively 43% and 33%. Furthermore, Zuyd Hogeschool, the City of Maastricht and the EMR each contribute financially and/or in kind. Moreover, the activities of ITEM are partially paid out of the proceeds of subscriptions to the provision of services and the underlying database, compensations for contract research and assessment studies/evaluations, and participation fees for training, knowledge sharing and dialogue activities.

The expectation is that the cross border problems will not have disappeared by the end of the financing period. They will probably have shifted topic-wise, but ITEM will still be able to provide its added value and to further specialise in the then current topics.

Long term participation
All parties involved dedicate themselves to acquire additional subsidies from subsidising organisations such as NWO, FWO, the Deutsche Forschungsgesellschaft and the EU, and to acquire government funds provided by NRW, Belgian Limburg and the Benelux to finance e.g. the research projects and the set-up and maintenance of the database. Via close cooperation in numerous networks and alliances there are various possibilities and ways to inform the regional and European authorities of the activities of the Expertise centre in order to receive additional funding. Consider, for example, European subsidies via the Interreg programmes and Horizon 2020.

The mentioned sources of income, particularly the subsidies and the compensations for the provision of services (such as subscriptions) and trainings, will still contribute to the financing of the activities of the centre after the financing period has expired. Furthermore, the Kennis-As partners will provide the personnel for the centre. Future (structural) financing by third parties will continuously be sought for, both for the research as well as the other activities of ITEM. The expectation, moreover, is that the cooperation with neighbouring countries will have been set up and expanded sufficiently during the financing period that both from the public bodies as well as from private organisations financial contributions will be probable. Furthermore, also financing possibilities for PhD research in neighbouring countries will be looked into.

The joint investment by Maastricht University, the province of Limburg, the (other) ITEM partners and the involved third parties does not only provide direct output of the described activities. The establishment of the centre also leads to additional projects that contribute to the cross border mobility and cooperation. These projects extend the centre’s spin-off.

Costs
The costs for the centre mainly relate to ‘personnel costs’. During the financing period, ITEM will create at least 85 FTE-year new workplaces. In order to give the Expertise centre enough body, a continuing inflow of 3-4 junior researchers on a yearly basis is provided, who will be paid by external means as of 2017 (when the centre is ‘established’).

Furthermore, 50 to 60 FTE-years from the Kennis-As partners will be structurally deployed at ITEM.
Depending on their expertise, academics will be involved in the activities of ITEM. In order to have them contribute, other researchers will have to be hired to take over the other duties.

**Phasing**

ITEM officially started at the beginning of January 2015. The activities mentioned cover a period of ten years.

In order to reach the desired output and to join in the wishes of politics and practice, a number of evaluation moments are planned for. The first (interim) evaluation takes place after two years. The bottlenecks in the set-up and the current activities of the centre will be assessed. It is furthermore to be assessed whether any adjustment to, or another approach of, the activities is necessary.

After the first four years, a more extensive evaluation takes place in cooperation with the involved parties, with the focus on the role and the positioning of the centre, the provision of services (research, advice, test procedures), the use and the added value of the database and the intended dialogue with the various partners, info points, expat desks and other advisory bodies.

In case of positive evaluation, the activities will be pursued on the basis of the then known problems and requests. In case of a negative evaluation, adjustment will take place and an action plan will be drafted in consultation with the partners (among which the Province).
Problems of employees, welfare agencies and public bodies

1. Recognition of (partial) job qualifications
Foreign knowledge workers who want to work in Limburg are often confronted with all type of problems in the field of diploma recognition. Although there is European regulation stipulating in detail the recognition of professional qualifications, there are many uncertainties and difficulties with regard to the practical implementation. This discourages knowledge workers from settling in Limburg or other regions. The first cause of this problem is that the European legislation only foresees in a crystal-clear system for a restricted number of professions (like architects, veterinary surgeons, certain nurses). Most of the other knowledge workers struggle with the uncertainty whether their qualifications will be recognized at all, how long this will take etc. A second cause is the fact that countries can decide for themselves whether and how they will regulate certain professions.

The Member States of the EU hence in principle decide for themselves what one is to know and to be able to apply in order to carry on a certain profession. For knowledge workers, specialisations very often play an important role. The new Directive 2013/55/EU amending Directive 2005/36/EC on the recognition of professional qualifications and Regulation (EU) No. 1024/2012 on administrative cooperation through the Internal Market Information System (‘the IMI Regulation’) will play a particular important role in a border region. This Directive also establishes rules concerning partial access to a regulated profession and recognition of professional traineeships pursued in another Member State. The question arises how this should be dealt with best in practice.

2. Cross border work and contradictions in conflict law
EU citizens who exercise their right of free movement are confronted with many questions about their legal position. There are at least four legal areas that regulate their socio-economic position: tax law, social security, labour law and pension law. For each of these fields, the key question is which legislation applies. The Member States traditionally apply different lead factors or principles when determining the scope of their legislation. This may be the principle of country of work but also the principle of country of residence or e.g. the principle of source country. The consequence may be that an EU citizen exercising the right of free movement either falls within the legislation of various Member States (positive conflict of laws) or on the contrary within no legislation at all (negative conflict of laws). This type of conflicts of law may significantly influence the income position of the mobile EU citizen. The EU and/or the Member States hence have designed conflict rules or techniques in the different areas. The ideal situation, whereby for one person at any given moment or during a certain period only one legislation applies, has, however, not been reached yet.

In the first place, the conflict rules that are designed for various jurisdictions differ enormously from one another. For instance for the social security a ‘single state rule’ applies. In the area of tax law, however, the enforcement of multiple tax legislations in combination with the possibility of exemption or deduction is opted for. In the field of labour law, freedom of choice forms the basis and for the pension law there is no actual international conflict law yet.

In the second place, the conflict rules that are designed for different jurisdictions are not aligned to one another. Different points of departure are employed. The consequence is that a cross border worker may fall within the system of Member State A for his social security, for his tax law within the system of Member
State B and for labour law within the system of Member State A, B or possibly C. This may result in multiple financial burdens or the absence of any right to an allowance, tax benefit or work. This does not only present legal insecurity, but it may also hinder the exercise of the right of free movement, particularly when it concerns temporary migrant workers.

Against this background, this research pursues a threefold aim: determine when and in which situations employees, as a consequence of the simultaneous enforcement of divergent conflict rules in the fields of tax law, social security, labour law and pension law, are confronted with multiple financial burdens; examine to what extent the related problems can be qualified as an unjustified impediment of the right of free movement and examine whether, and if yes, how, these problems can be solved.

3. Cross border chain liability and recipient’s liability
Working projects, like e.g. building projects, make frequent use of foreign personnel. The other way around, Dutch personnel performing activities abroad also occurs. The question arises where these employees and/or their employers need to pay c.q. deduct taxes and social security premiums for these activities. In Dutch situations, the chain and recipient’s liability is one of the instruments that is being used to prevent possible abuse situations. For instance: the hirer is held responsible for the tax on salaries and premiums of social and employees’ insurance that is due by the lender. This project centres on the chain and recipient’s liability and the question whether persons and/or companies can be held responsible across borders. At present, a number of measures in the field of cross border labour are being taken to fight abuse. Besides the abuse that may arise from the use of applicable rules, also a lot of use is made of fake constructions. For instance: self-employed workers who in practice do not appear to be self-employed at all but are employees. Also here, the question arises who can be held responsible. The question is whether abroad instruments exist that are similar to the chain and recipient’s liability. If this is the case, the question arises whether the liability can also get a cross border character. The research focuses on making recommendations.

4. Qualification problems: between social security and supplementary pension
The European Commission aims at the specification and stimulation of an adequate pension. European countries have initiated reforms of pension systems not only to provide an adequate pension but also a financially sustainable pension system. These reforms, however, all have a national focus. The pension systems of the European countries show a wide variety. Also the tax treatment of the pension is not the same in every country (not every country e.g. allows premium deduction or provides exemptions during the accumulation phase). Furthermore, it can be confirmed that the one and the same pension can be characterized differently. The character, for instance, of a state pension in one country is not necessarily recognized and acknowledged in another country, as it may have the characteristics of a supplementary pension in another country. Consider for instance the German Renteverwirtschaftung. When a mobile employee builds up a pension in cross border situations, he will be confronted with the problems of this pension qualification. Depending upon the qualification, he may or may not qualify for tax relief concerning the pension accumulation, but he may also encounter favourable or less favourable tax consequences if the pension is paid out. The aim of this research is to reach common criteria that from a European perspective can be applied in cross border pension situations, resulting in an equal tax treatment guaranteeing the free movement of workers.

5. The attraction of Limburg for international knowledge workers: the strong and weak points of the European and national immigration policy
Ever since the European summit in Tampere in 1999, the European Union has been making progress towards a common immigration policy. Since then, a number of Directives at EU level have been adopted in the field of family reunification (Directive 2003/86) and the status of long-term residents (Directive 2003/109). Furthermore, there is a set of three Directives that specifically contain the conditions for so-called third-country nationals, particularly potential knowledge workers/highly-skilled workers, to be admitted to a Member State of the EU: to study (Directive 2004/114), to conduct research (Directive 2005/71) or to start working as an highly-skilled worker for an employer in the EU (Directive...
This is not without reason: the European Union as a whole, just like the Province of Limburg, has to cope with an impending shortage of highly-skilled workers in numerous sectors as a consequence of demographic developments. An immigration policy which attracts the necessary skills and knowledge, in the form of knowledge migrants, is hence of great importance for the economy.

Nevertheless, the competition for international talent is tough. Particularly the United States, Canada and Australia are traditionally popular destinations of highly-skilled migrants. Also the United Kingdom, which does not participate in the common European immigration policy, traditionally does much better in this field than continental Europe. Why? The literature shows that the relevant (im)migration legislation and the related national policy play a crucial role: how easy or difficult is it for a knowledge migrant to get access to and residence in the country of choice for himself and his family members? Does a knowledge migrant have enough perspective on a good salary and promotional opportunities? This research will hence make a comparative study on the relevant legislation and the underlying policy considerations of Australia, Canada, the United States and the United Kingdom. This subsequently forms the basis to be able to judge whether the legislation, on a European and a national level in the Benelux and Germany, indeed offers migrants the necessary possibilities and perspectives. Furthermore, through this research, innovative policy ideas from abroad may be signalled. The knowledge thus amassed may in its turn serve as input for a possible revision of existing legislation on a European and a national level. Problems in the current jurisdiction can be identified and solutions from abroad can be applied in the EU and in a national and a regional context. All in all, this research will contribute to a better understanding of the push and pull factors that are contained in the immigration legislation of the largest players concerning the attraction of knowledge migrants. Also the problems of third-country nationals in the Euregion who live in one of the Member States but want to work in another Member State will be further examined within this research.

The linking of immigrants to Limburg

6. Work, living conditions and linking immigrants to Limburg

This project focuses on the living conditions of immigrants in Limburg. As far as it concerns highly-skilled workers, the region needs to ensure that this group has good career prospects, can find an attractive home and that there are sufficient educational and cultural provisions for them and their families. As far as it concerns low-skilled migrants, also enough attention needs to be paid to integration and training. The central research question is: which circumstances link immigrants to the region so they will keep on living and working here, and what personal characteristics (for instance type of education, professional group) make them either move within the Netherlands or leave the Netherlands again? When examining this question, we will, on the basis of statistical analyses of CBS data and ROA graduate data, examine the relevance of factors such as education, professional group, living conditions, and legal status (e.g. Dutch nationality, nationality of another EU Member State) for the linking of immigrants with economic potential to the Province of Limburg. What are the most important moments of decision when considering to keep on living and working here? Can, for instance, the stimulation of naturalisation be a way to link economically active migrants to the region? Or can other binding factors be identified (for instance membership of associations)? Which strategies do companies use to link young immigrants to the region? Which clever connections may arise to maximise the return on the investments in immigrants on a regional level? Where and how do regional governments steer, which responsibilities do companies take concerning the further development and growth of immigrants, and how can educational establishments contribute optimally to the investments in the human capital of immigrants? The research focuses on making policy recommendations by identifying and specifying potentially binding factors.

7. Cross border formal and informal social security

One of the most important reasons for people to migrate for work and study is to guarantee a better life for themselves and their families. The care for welfare of themselves and their families is central to them. Employees hence have to organise their family lives –
and particularly the care functions – across borders. Ranging from the care for their elderly parents and children who do not live in Limburg up to and including securing their own health and pension, ranging from providing quality education for their children up to and including ensuring a good income and making investments in Limburg and elsewhere. Yet, little is known about the impediments these employees encounter when organising their family lives across the borders and about the solutions they find to guarantee their social security. This study wants to examine the challenges that mobile workers experience. It intends to answer two questions. Firstly: what are the challenges that mobile workers perceive when guaranteeing their social security across the borders? And secondly: which formal and informal solutions do they find for these challenges? This research intends to find the methods through which the social security systems can be made more attractive to be able to link mobile employees to Limburg. We will examine both highly-skilled as well as low-skilled employees from both within as without the European Union.

8. Limburg: experimental field for sustainable employment and new forms of working

One of ITEM’s objectives is the conduct of interdisciplinary research that contributes to the reinforcement of the economic structure, the improvement of the business climate and the increase of the workforce c.q. the earning power of the region. This proposal will address these strands by developing an interdisciplinary research project that focuses on the key question: How can the employment in the (Eu)region be reinforced permanently?

By building expertise on this topic through an interdisciplinary approach, Limburg could be the experimental field for the exploration of innovative possibilities which could permanently increase the workforce and the earning power of the region. The pooling of the expertise of four faculties of Maastricht University (SBE/ROA, FPN, FHML and FL) offers a unique opportunity to assess the various possibilities from different angles and to adopt ‘good practices’ of the countries adjoining us. The experimental field can hence provide (research) results of an interdisciplinary, Euregional and comparative character.

The key question is to what extent new methods to organise work may contribute to the creation and the preservation of sustainable employment in the Euregion. We deliberately place this question in a Euregional framework against the background of the ageing Limburg working population. Cross border cooperation offers opportunities to increase the workforce and in that way to fill the labour shortages that have arisen because of the ageing population. Opening the doors to workers from the Euregion, however, does not guarantee yet that sustainable solutions will be created. The question arises to what extent new forms of the organisation of work can offer a solution.

New forms of the organisation of work may take different shapes. Mercedes, for example, chooses to have certain activities performed at a location in Maastricht. They have the option to offer the employees a greater degree of flexibility in the choice where and when they want to work. This is also called Het Nieuwe Werken (HNW) (The New World of Work). ‘Time’ and ‘place’ become less important. An employee who works at a company that is based in Brussels, for instance, works a few days from home in Maastricht. There is also the possibility to work from special ‘network offices’ where also others have their workplace. This form of working is for instance popular among the growing group of self-employed workers. Questions in this respect that require further research are how these new forms of working develop in the various regions within the Euregion, which obstacles occur and what the ‘best practices’ are. It will also be examined to what extent the new working offers opportunities for new forms of cross border labour and international labour mobility based on working regardless of location and it will be examined to what extent the problem of inconsistent legislation and jurisdiction can be solved.

New forms of working in principle offer the possibility, by means of information technology, to attract and employ staff over a larger distance. Sustainable employment, however, requires more than that. It is also important to guarantee a good fit between the employee and the organisation. The subject of research hence also is the effect of working regardless of location on human and organisation. A consequence for instance is that traditional labour structures (working hours, task
structure, separation between work and private) disappear. People will have to adopt these structures themselves. This on the one hand gives them more autonomy but on the other hand also asks a lot of self-discipline and the ability to ‘self-regulation’. This raises issues like e.g. for what kind of people is this new form of working an appropriate method to get a permanent job and to keep it; for what forms of work is it useful and how do organisational principles such as managers have to be adjusted?

9. Active youth, tied to the region

Globalisation, in close relation to the crisis in Europe, creates new and often unpredictable migration streams of young people within and between the Member States with profound consequences on processes of identity-building for newcomers and stragglers. Young people leave the countryside of Limburg for big cities in the Randstad for the purpose of employment and career perspectives. This migration has serious consequences on those left behind. Brain draining, population ageing, growing unemployment, decline of the voluntary sector, closure of schools; it are just a few characterisations of Limburg as a shrinkage area in the Netherlands. At the same time, young people from particularly Central and Eastern Europe (CEE) come to the very same countryside in Limburg; first as a seasonal worker but later more and more with the intention to stay longer in the depopulated countryside or to settle more or less semi-permanently.

In this project, we will examine Horst aan de Maas, a municipality that is characterised by the highest number of Polish migrants in Limburg, approximately 3,000 out of the 41,750 in Limburg (CBS 2011). We examine young people in a qualitative way for their linguistic and cultural practices and different forms of trust and social and political participation (and the lack thereof) (ethnographical; Cornips/Thissen). The research is in line with the large Woon-onderzoek (Housing research) of the CBS which includes detailed information on the moving behaviour and the moving inclination in Limburg (of 78,000 persons in 2009, 69,000 in 2012 and 70,000 in 2015 with the focus on young people). We will relate these data to the features of the labour market (profession, employed, unemployed), education, social contacts and (the perception of) the living environment.

This will be complemented by data of the large-scale, since 2009 running, investigations into the social cohesion and the welfare, and with the research into the perceptions among young people that will be conducted in 2015. The project concentrates on how policy can be employed to keep those people, whose participation in the daily living environment is greatest, at home. Policy may be created in the field of participation in the labour market (by means of trainings), social-cultural activities and other leisure activities (for instance organisation of the social life).

Cross border cooperation of governments

10. The effects of the administrative approach of capital crime in Limburg and the Meuse-Rhine Euregion

Over the last two decades, the Netherlands have developed a set of instruments for the administrative approach of organised crime. Under this title, various local intervention strategies are developed whereby cooperating government parties fight local crime problems under supervision of the mayor, who is in consultation with other security partners. Limburg, in particular the southern part of the province, has, together with Amsterdam, played a leading role in the Netherlands in the development of the administrative approach and is still leading the way in this respect. At the moment, it is being explored how this approach can also be deployed in the Meuse-Rhine Euregion. A pilot is being prepared to, together with the German and the Belgian partners in the detection, the taxation and the public administration, show the added value of an approach that is not only based on police and judicial information.

Although the administrative approach is generally held to be an important complement to punitive intervention and similar interventions (such as the fiscal approach), it so far has not been scientifically assessed what the output and the outcome of the by subordinate public bodies shown efforts exactly are. This research project meets the need to identify the effects of the administrative approach in a scientifically responsible manner.
Colophon

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