



# Has the construction of the Channel tunnel been a factor of rapprochement of the cities of Calais and Dover and of their respective regions?

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# **Vingt années sous la Manche, et au-delà : Géographie et économie des transports**

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## **Has the construction of the Channel tunnel been a factor of rapprochement of the cities of Calais and Dover and of their respective regions?**

### **Abstract**

This article examines the possibility of two towns separated by a national border and a physical border as the English Channel to become closer following the construction of a specific transport infrastructure joining them. Does the creation of the Eurotunnel lead to the transformation of Calais and Dover in binational cities? The links between the two cities and behaviours of people crossing the English Channel are analysed. We note that if these two cities cannot be classified binational their regions that were twinned on this occasion and then extended to the “Euroregion of five regions” Kent , Nord-Pas-de-Calais , Flanders, Wallonia , Brussels Capital represented a new area of cooperation.

**Key words :** Channel tunnel, Calais,Douvres, binational cities, Transmanche region, Euroregion Kent, Nord-Pas-de-Calais, Flanders, Wallonia and Brussels-City.

### **Résumé**

Cet article examine la possibilité pour deux villes séparées par une frontière nationale et une frontière physique comme la Manche de se rapprocher suite à la construction d’une infrastructure de transport les reliant. La création de l’Eurotunnel peut-elle conduire à la transformation de Calais et Douvres en villes binationales ? L’analyse des liens entre ces deux villes et les comportements des personnes traversant la Manche est effectuée. Nous constatons que si ces deux villes ne peuvent être classées binationales, leurs régions jumelées à cette occasion puis étendues à l’Eurorégion des cinq régions Kent, Nord-Pas-de-Calais, Flandres, Wallonie, Bruxelles Capitale constituaient un nouvel espace de coopération.

**Mots Clés :** Tunnel sous la Manche, Calais, Douvres, villes binationales, Région Transmanche, Eurorégion Kent, Nord-Pas-de-Calais, Flandres, Wallonie, Bruxelles capitale.

# 1 Introduction

This paper is based on work done in 2001 as part of research conducted by the University of Nijmegen on binational cities (Buursink et al., 2000) and the case of Calais and Dover has been studied (Heddebaut, 2001b) and as well as research on cross border governance in the European Union and particularly in the “transmanche region” and later in the Euroregion (Heddebaut, 2001a, 2004). We have updated the data in order to illustrate the paper, and to demonstrate the evolution of these questions.

Under the concept of binational cities, the paper analyses the question of cities that are localised at each part of an international border. We take as an example the two cities of Dover and Calais and wonder if they can be considered as binational cities because they have been connected by a tunnel in 1994, the “fixed link”, and because since 1993, the inner state borders of the European Union have disappeared. The main issue is to understand the nature of this new link created between the two sides of the Straits of Dover. Does the Channel Tunnel have managed to erase the physical barrier between the French and British coasts? We examine if Dover and Calais are actually brought closer by the construction of the Channel tunnel. We examine the question of the difference between land-border and sea-borders and determine if it could be applied to our example (Van Geenhuizen, Rietveld, 1999). Since these two cities are twinned cities since 1973, do they really act as binational cities?

Probably, if the construction of the Channel tunnel has not led to turn Calais and Dover into real binational cities, we see that this event has obliged the regions to take accompanying measures (Heddebaut, Laudren, 1998). It has led the two regions that host the Channel tunnel terminals on both sides of the Channel to tackle nearly the same problems (Vickerman, 1997) and to cooperate to resolve them (Heddebaut, 1998). This joint action has persuaded the two regional Authorities of the need to twin two sea-border regions. The Kent County Council and the Nord-Pas-de-Calais Regional Council were twinned on the 27<sup>th</sup> of February 1987. Therefore, this Kent/Nord-Pas-de-Calais Euroregion named “Transmanche Region” can really be considered, as said by Luchaire (1992), as “the natural child” of the materialisation of the Channel tunnel. They also intended to present joint dossiers to be financed by the European Union under INTERREG Funds (Church, Reid, 1996, 1999).

Since it exists, did the “Transmanche Region” lead to cross-border activity? We scrutinize different joint actions this new entity has undertaken since it has been twinned. We see that it is mainly in tourism and commercial domains that this cooperation was more efficient. Are cross-border movements important and cross-border labour markets increasing or do obstacles still remain (Gijssels de, Janssen, 1999)? Do we witness an increase in flow between these two countries and between the two regions on either side of the fixed link? What is the share evolution generated by Eurotunnel for both the “Shuttles” and the Eurostar traffic?

We compare economic networking over the French-Belgian border and the French-English border to determine the importance of for example foreign companies in the French part of the twinned EUROREGION (Houtum Van, 1999). We focus on passenger flows and especially tourism flows because, this new EUROREGION “of five regions of Europe” area created in 1991, seemed to attract more and more tourists and day-trippers (Heddebaut, 1999; CRT, 2000). Is it already the case in the years 2005-2006 and nowadays?

We conclude that if we cannot really consider that the Channel tunnel has led to Calais and Dover becoming binational cities, their regions were twinned because of its construction. They are experiencing a new way of working together. We observe at that time a strong willingness to create new “cross-border” activities but probably in a wider context. The EUROREGION “of five regions of Europe” constituted one step of this widening but joint cooperating activity

but was more likely to develop in another dimension. Effectively this scale of decision and planning failed to impose this new dimension for cooperation actions.

## **2 Have Dover and Calais been brought closer or become binational cities with the realisation of the Channel tunnel?**

When questioning the concept of twin cities or binational cities we consider two different cities close together and separated either by a physical barrier or a national border that limit their relationships. To be considered possible binational cities these obstacles must disappear by the removal of barrier function of the frontier or by the construction of a new infrastructure that ease the exchanges between the two cities.

The construction of the Channel tunnel was decided by the two states of France and Great Britain at national level in order to, among other reasons, facilitate the growing flows between the two countries. Its function was to connect networks (rail with the High Speed Train Northern network and the European motorway network) between capitals Paris, London, Brussels and Amsterdam.

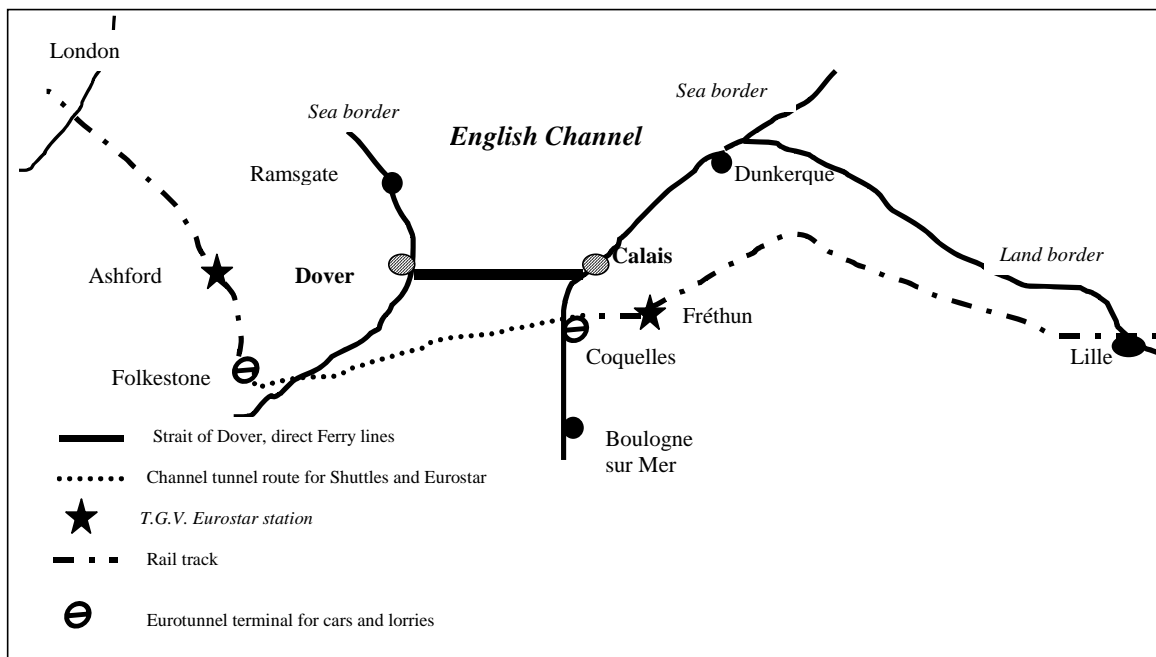
We can question the effective role at a local level of the construction this new direct infrastructure link between the main cities of the two coastal areas offering the removal of the previous unique sea barrier.

Before the construction of the Channel tunnel Dover and Calais were already well linked by numerous ferries and hovercraft links. Since the building of the Channel tunnel, the daily services between these two towns have increased as a result of fierce competition with the Channel tunnel. At the opening of the Channel tunnel, every day car ferries, hovercraft and catamarans provided around 60 services on the Dover-Calais route. P&O Stena Line and Seafrance were equipped with a fleet of 'Jumbo' car ferries with crossing times of 80 minutes. The crossing travel time however remained long and can be considered as a barrier for activities which would develop in a Binational city context. Hovercraft and catamaran services offered by Hoverspeed made the crossing in 35-45 minutes. Since the 1<sup>st</sup> of October 2000 the two hovercraft Princess Ann and Princess Margaret have ceased operating because of the age of the ships (launched in 1968), increase of the petrol prices and the end of the duty free activities. Two other catamarans offering an increase of 25% of capacity will then operate on this fastest route with a loss of only five to ten minutes for the crossing travel time. The building of the Channel tunnel has led to a concentration of the ferry traffic on the direct route between Dover and Calais, and at the same time to a disappearance of ferry links between other towns such as Boulogne sur Mer and Folkestone or Dunkerque and Ramsgate for passenger traffics that were previously linked together (Joan, 1998). Travel time has been shortened and the barrier, which it constituted between the two cities, reduced.

In 2015, three ferry companies are operating on the English Channel, DFDS Seaways with 10 crossings per day, P&O Ferries with 23 crossing per day and MyFerryLink with 8 crossing per day. They all cross the English Channel in 90 minutes.

In fact, the construction of the Channel tunnel and the opening of Eurotunnel in 1994, has not directly linked the two towns of Calais and Dover. Indeed it has brought (by car and lorries) the two towns of Coquelles on the French side and Folkestone on the English side closer as this is where the two Eurotunnel terminals for cars and lorries are sited (see figure 1).

**Figure 1: Ferries route versus Eurotunnel Shuttles route and Eurostar route**



Source: Heddebaut, 2001

Folkestone is located in the coastal area on the old M20 motorway. Its direct accessibility to London and to Dover has been enhanced because of the accompanying policy linked to the building of the Channel tunnel particularly applied to road transport infrastructure inscribed in the Hybrid Bill of 1987 as described by Vickerman (1997) and Heddebaut (1998). On the other side of the English Channel, Calais is directly connected to the European motorway network by means of two motorways. The A26 (Calais-Dijon) serves the centre of France and provides access to Southern Europe avoiding Paris. For its part the A16, built because of the Channel tunnel, feeds into the Benelux and Northern Europe motorway systems. This can explain why the traffic flows between the two towns of Dover and Calais are mainly composed of “through traffic” of ferry passengers and freight.

Moreover the Channel tunnel representing this “direct cross Channel new fixed link” is available for road traffic only (cars and lorries) for developing linked activities on the coastal area. Effectively, the rail connections of the tunnel are made between the towns of Fréthun with the “Calais-Fréthun” T.G.V. station on the French side and Ashford on the English side (see the stars that are T.G.V. Eurostar Stations on the broken line on figure 1). But, at the beginning of the operation, it was not possible to go by rail from the T.G.V. station at Ashford to the T.G.V. station of “Calais-Fréthun” in the town of Fréthun. There was 6 Eurostar T.G.V.s stopping every day in Calais-Fréthun (3 in each way), but it still made the possibility of travelling between these two stations of “Calais-Fréthun” and Ashford difficult.

Indeed, passengers could join the Eurostar trains at Ashford but in this case, their next stop then would be either Lille or Paris because the trains will not stop in the “Calais-Fréthun” T.G.V. station. People who wish to stop at “Calais-Fréthun” had to go to the Waterloo London station and take the Eurostar trains with the Paris final destination because only these trains made a stop in this French coastal station.

Furthermore, there were also no special prices for short trips and passengers will pay the same price for the trip between London and Paris or London and Calais-Fréthun. This level of fares also maintained a kind of barrier to travel. The complete achievement of the new high speed railway line on the English side in November 2007 has introduced changes. A new terminus

railway station was created at Saint Pancras in London and a new railway station was implemented in Ebbsfleet representing the servicing of a new town in Kent. High Speed trains put Calais Fréthun 1 hour from Brussels, 1 hour 30 from Paris and 50 minutes from London.

In 2015, it is still difficult to travel by train between the two cities of Ashford and Calais since only one train per day is scheduled early in the morning but no train exists in the other direction. Two trains are daily offered between Ebbsfleet and Calais Fréthun on weekdays and give the opportunity to work as it is possible to return to Ebbsfleet late in the evening. Unfortunately even if the prices are lower for these two destinations than for the entire journey to Paris, the price remains very high 161€ each direction means a return trip at 322€

Nevertheless the idea of implementing a cross border metro was ever suggested when constructing the Channel tunnel in order to link the two coastal areas for developing economic and social activities, and favour cross border workers trips. This idea is supported by the chairman of Eurotunnel and the chairman of the Nord Pas de-Calais regional council but it has not yet been applied (Mallet, 2015)

### **3 Can we consider other links to give Calais and Dover a status of binational cities?**

We question the concept of Binational city and analyse the idea of “double cities “ and “twin cities”. Ehlers and Buursink (2000) described the concept of ‘twin cities’ based on the similar characteristics of two towns like “twin children who are very identical in appearance” supposing that there are almost no differences between these two cities. Nevertheless we can no more adopt their other concept of ‘double cities’ defined as “a spatial phenomenon being a pairing of two cities of similar size that are spatially very close to each other” with the idea that they “have coalesced into one urban agglomeration”. In the case of Calais and Dover, we cannot say that they have coalesced because the English Channel sea border remains an actual physical border (Gijssels de, Jansen, 1999). This can explain the weak cross-labour market between these two cities which is described later.

The links between these two cities have developed on the basis of their differences and for tourism and leisure purposes as will be shown later. Visitors to these two cities are mainly “non-resident” of these two cities themselves and travel for different purposes such as the different atmosphere, food and shopping.

Does the twinning between two cities conduct them to be more alike? The entrance of Great Britain in the Common Market in 1973 and the opening of the European Union have led cities and towns to seek bilateral links. Objectives can be different for the twinning of towns, based on friendship relationships and the twinning of Counties and Regions, where common actions are planned in economic and commercial fields (Buléon, Shurmer-Smith, 1997a).

Since 1973, the two towns of Calais and Dover have been twinned by a twinning agreement named a “civic link”. This paper does not consider elements of similarity such as demography, urban shape or history between these two towns. The twinning activities are more seen as social and cultural ones. Twinning actions were firstly endorsed by elected members and appeared in formal and official meetings. Exchanges are made in each city for instance joint participation in the fanfares on the occasion of official celebrations such as the First and Second World War ceremonies and for the two cities annual festivals.

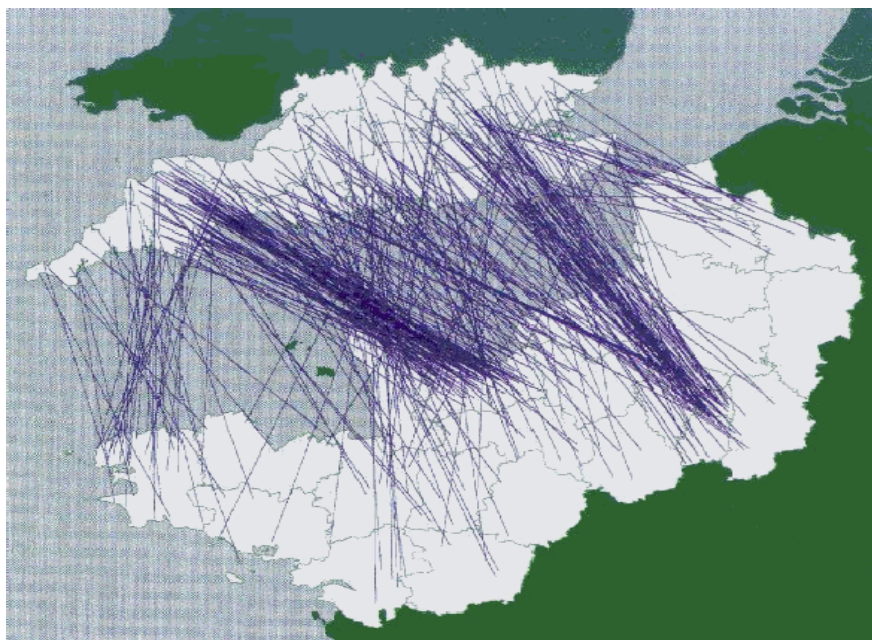
As described in the twinning agreement, the main aims of twinning have been to favour “exchanges by the townspeople and between clubs and other organisations with common interests.” These kinds of exchanges are made, for example, by the organisation of an annual concert for children playing piano in schools and colleges belonging to the two towns.

Exchanges are also made between classes in different schools in order to enhance their mutual cultural knowledge and to improve their language practise faced to the obligation of speaking several languages (Buléon, Shurmer-Smith, 1997a). Friends and relatives links are also developed in the two cities as illustrated through the study on excursionist visits in their nearby regions.

These activities lead to fulfil the role given to the twinning of Calais and Dover according to the twinning agreement text that consists “to strengthen and thereafter maintain permanents bonds of friendship and to encourage exchanges meetings and functions with a view of developing mutual understanding and a sense of brotherhood between the inhabitants of those towns.” Furthermore, these two towns have been particularly involved in and partly destroyed during the Second World War. This can explain the importance of developing links, referring to the text of these two towns twinning agreement, “also between the people of those two nations which would contribute inevitably to better international relationships and to the peace of the world”. A further part shows that it has led to mutual actions under INTERREG funds for a specific tourism based on war activities such as the historic fortifications or the 20<sup>th</sup> century military defences.

Is the twinning of Calais and Dover specific for the region? Since the Second World War there have been numerous twinings between other towns and different public authorities with some 350 towns twinned in the South of England and the North and Western regions of France (see figure 2).

**Figure 2: Twinning links between the South East of England and the Western French regions and towns**



Source: Buléon, 1999, Atlas Electronique transmanche <http://infodoc.unicaen.fr/transmanche>.

These twinned cities are more like cities that have a special link between them but this does not mean they look alike. Dover and Calais appear to belong to this category.

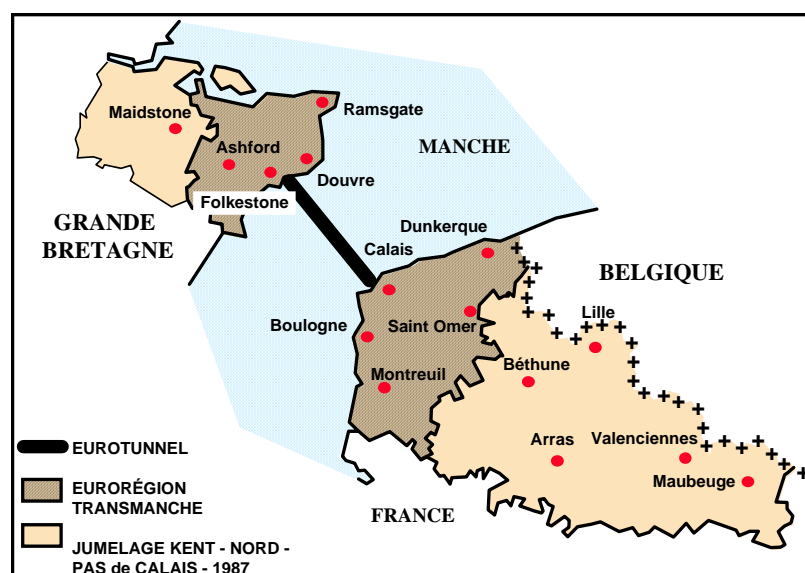
## 4 From the twinning of the two sea-borders regions of Calais and Dover to the creation of a Euroregion of five regions

The decision made by the state levels of France and Great Britain to study and realize a fixed link across the English Channel has led the two regions hosting the project to meet each other and to develop links at regional levels. The cross-border co-operation with Nord-Pas-de-Calais, officially launched in 1986 after the announcement of the tunnel project choice, constitutes an official framework to consider and determine the programming of economic development initiatives in Kent. It was supposed to develop new governance between these two areas and further between the EUROREGION of five regions (Heddebaut, 2001a, 2004). Does the construction of a new infrastructure lead to better integration of a cross border area like it is the case with the creation of the Øresund Bridge and the agreements between Copenhagen and Malmö areas on medical specialisation and biotech research leading to the emergence of the Øresund region as an actual new cross-border region. (Collinge and Gibney, 2010, Nauwelaers et al., 2013)

### 4.1 Does the creation of the “Transmanche Region” lead to a new territorial binational area?

The planning experiences on both sides of the Channel met through exchanges conducted within the scope of cross-border co-operation between the two regions. Under these exchanges, joint operations or studies were programmed to adapt the territory to the new context introduced by the Channel tunnel and the High Speed rail network. The objective given to this co-operation was to create a EUROREGION. The co-operation led to the twinning of the two regions, Kent and Nord-Pas-de-Calais, in February 1987 under the name of «*Eurorégion transmanche*», which initially concerned their coastal areas (see figure 3) and the main towns including Calais and Dover. Therefore, the Kent/Nord-Pas-de-Calais Euroregion can be considered as suggested by Luchaire, (1992) as «the natural child» of the materialisation of the tunnel.

Figure 3: The «transmanche» EUROREGION



Source : Nord-Pas-de-Calais Regional Council, INRETS

Beyond sorting out the problems associated with the building of the tunnel, such as housing and training work-site personnel as well as organising contracts with subcontractors, the two regions compiled a cross-border co-operation programme, for which they wished to obtain



European financing. Co-operation was mainly designed to allow both areas to maximise the advantages of the Tunnel and to reduce the barriers caused by national boundaries. In this sense, co-operation was influenced to a considerable degree by the changing nature of economic space due to the Tunnel and was not simply a device to obtain E.C. funds. By September 1990, the Transmanche Region had developed the Transfrontier Development Program, which received funding from INTERREG 1 between 1992 and 1994. Kent and Nord-Pas-de-Calais argued that the fixed link of the Channel tunnel meant they should no longer be viewed as being divided by a maritime border (Church, Reid, 1996). The Channel tunnel has changed the nature of the border from the sea border to the line nature of the land border. For this reason, Kent was the only location in Great Britain to receive funds under INTERREG 1.

This cross-border development programme in particular concerned the employment basins of Boulogne-Montreuil sur Mer, Calais, Dunkerque and Saint Omer on the French side, and the districts of Dover and Thanet, extended to those of Shepway, Ashford and Canterbury on the English side (see figure 3). In referring to the regional changes caused by the tunnel, this programme highlighted five key strategic areas, the first of which was the building of appropriate transport and telecommunication infrastructures to properly serve the different parts of this “transmanche EUROREGION”. The second area was to create co-operation to promote economic development thereby encouraging expansion of local businesses. The third area concerned teaching and training programmes, the fourth area recommended financial aid for promoting tourism and culture throughout the EUROREGION’s territory. The last area was essentially to increase exchanges of experiences between the two regions relating to planning and to pool work on environmental protection measures (Heddebaut, 1999a). The “Transmanche region” has been in existence for over a decade and, by comparison to other initiatives, it has developed a relative degree of stability. The trans frontier initiatives across the Channel have managed to establish co-operation at both the strategic and more latterly, the operational scale, with authorities reconciling certain competitive differences, such as over tourism (Church, Reid, 1999).

#### **4.2 Does the use of the INTERREG funds tool in the general framework of the “transmanche region” lead to more integrated activity for the two cities of Calais and Dover?**

This section questions the concept of a binational city on the basis of institutional proximity that could be developed between two towns. The first co-operation document prefigures the cross-border action programme presented jointly by France, the United Kingdom and these two regions to the General Directorate for Regional Policy of the European Commission in order to benefit from the European Regional Development Fund for community programmes under INTERREG I covering the period 1991-1994. The cross-border co-operation structure also created new sites for dialogue between the partners. The first INTERREG cross-channel co-operation programmes related mainly to initiatives listed for each region. That is to say that programs were made in different places of this Transmanche Region with the use of INTERREG fund but without an actual cooperation above the English Channel border.

Albeit the second INTERREG programme document (1997-1999) was directed on the basis of closer and joint co-operation between the two institutions and integrated actions on both territories. One of its first manifestations was the creation of a joint website for presenting land and commercial opportunities on both sides of the English Channel and tourism and leisure activities in the different towns of the area of which Dover and Calais. Around 40% of INTERREG II funding has been allocated to tourism and cultural projects. If we examine the leading tourism INTERREG II projects developed in this transmanche region, we can see that

they are involving not only the Regional Authorities and the Districts but also the towns into more integrated actions. According to the Regional Committee of Tourism Nord-Pas-de-Calais (CRT NPdC) and the Kent County Council (KCC) that are leading a great part of the INTERREG II projects, the most important project, considering the total amount involved (£ 8 million) and the number of cooperating cities, is the Historic Fortifications Network. It represents a network of 17 fortified towns of which Calais and Dover and consists in capital investment and sister marketing programme. But if we consider projects where cities are direct partners and are acting together at an institutional city level, there are no projects between the two cities of Calais and Dover.

On the contrary, we can point out projects between cities that are no more linked by a direct and/or regular maritime link such as Folkestone and Boulogne sur Mer or Dunkerque and Ramsgate because of the concentration due to the competition on the Straight of Dover route between Eurotunnel and ferries. Effectively, for instance, Boulogne and Folkestone have their most important project devoted to environmental enhancements of pedestrian links in their own town centres for a total amount of £ 2.5 million for the 1998-2001 periods. Another project is named “côte à côte” with a play on word on the idea of proximity of the two towns being very close and belonging to a coastal resort. This program of £ 400,000 aims at the development of a joint marketing of the two resorts. Dunkerque and Ramsgate have also presented a joint and integrated project of leisure boating for a total amount of £ 2.5 million for the development of marina facilities and the organisation of joint event for the 1999 to 2001 period. Proximity and similarity are present in another project with a total amount of £ 275,000 less important linking Dover and Boulogne sur Mer. Effectively this project is based on the idea the two coasts of these towns are sharing the same geological white cliffs. It consists of developing White Cliffs and “Deux Caps” site Transmanche Green Tourism by offering guided walks and cycle rides to encourage people to explore the countryside.

This shows an attempt of cities which were previously tied by historic and economic links to plan together over the border to maintain these ties even if they have lost their direct maritime access and links.

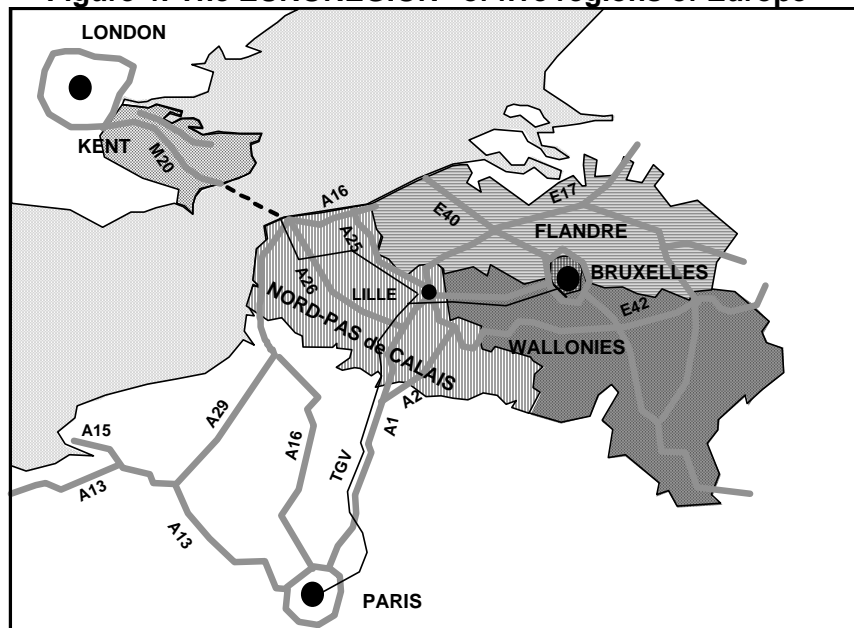
#### **4.3 Does the extension of the Transmanche Region towards a larger EUROREGION lead to better cross-border integration?**

The links between the two regions of Kent and Nord-Pas-de-Calais were extended to the three neighbouring regions of Belgium (Flanders, Wallonia and Brussels-City) on 21 June 1991 in a larger EUROREGION (see figure 4 below). The three Belgian regions had also been in co-operation for some considerable time with the Nord-Pas-de-Calais region, but this new entity aimed at pooling ideas for territorial planning and economic development. The five representatives of this EUROREGION issued a joint declaration of their “concern to strengthen their links of friendship and to favour European integration, to take full advantage of the positive repercussions from the building of the Channel Tunnel and the major North-European rail, road and river port infrastructures (...)”.

This EUROREGION, which was the first to adopt the status of a European Economic Interest Grouping (EEIG), seeks to strengthen economic and social development throughout its territory that, as we have seen, has benefited from many large transport infrastructure investments. As a result of its geographic location, the Nord-Pas-de-Calais region acts as the pivot in this EUROREGION of five. The working groups, set up by the EEIG to deal jointly with questions linked to territorial planning, economic development, the environment and the general promotion of the EUROREGION, brought together the members of each of the regional administrations and were presided over by its five regions (Heddebaut, 1999b). The first forum of the EUROREGION was held in December 1996 bringing together 650

technicians and managers from the different regions allowing ideas to be pooled and actions implemented in these fields within this new territorial framework.

**Figure 4: The EUROREGION “of five regions of Europe”**



Source : Nord-Pas-de-Calais Regional Council

More than 720 delegates attended the second EUROREGION Forum held in September 14, 1999 during the Kent presidency. During this Forum, 10 different workshops were organised to discuss possible joint actions. They covered a lot of fields such as Trans-regional cooperation in innovation and regional development, Trade development, The EUROREGION, a communicative environment, Combating social exclusion, Spatial planning and transport, Tourism in the EUROREGION: building on partnerships, Culture, Assessment and perspectives of EUROREGION and cross-border co-operation, Modernisation of local government, Regional implementation and co-operation on sustainable development, Lifelong learning. The number of workshops and a lack of information of their objectives gave some lukewarm results (Vandermotten and al., 1999). It has revealed the necessity to develop transversal projects in these different fields and to search a common “Euroregional vision” shared by its inhabitants.

The third Forum of December 7, 2000 was organised with a new objective that consisted in bringing the idea of EUROREGION into the civil society. It can be noticed that it was no more organised by the Regional Council institutional levels but by the five Social and Economic Regional Committees (CESR) that represent the social and economic life of the five regions. More than 500 persons attended this meeting and young people of the five regions were invited to present their vision of the Euroregion and their ideas to stimulate or enhance the feeling of the membership of such an area seen as essential element by Ricq (1992) to obtain integration at each institutional levels.

Transfrontier initiatives may have many questionable features but their legacy may be that, along with other international networks, they have further enhanced the capacity and abilities of local government to develop a flexible approach to the construction of co-operative alliances and political spaces (Church, Reid, 1999). A part of the EUROREGION programme aimed to achieve economic development like for instance the completion of a protocol for inward investment as the basis for joint promotion in shared markets, or tourism marketing,

including a EUROREGION Pass, linking tourism and transport operators in a short break/day visit promotion.

The SPACE programme (1999-2001) was another interesting measure, which was a major two-year initiative with a value of €1.5 million, for which 50% EU funding had been secured. SPACE had two main aims: to develop a strategic planning overview of the EUROREGION and to encourage inter-regional working through a series of concrete actions and projects. With regard to concrete actions, the SPACE programme will fund projects clearly identified.

Work was achieved to develop the Strategic Overview Scheme (SOS) giving a vision for the EUROREGION. It presented the different frameworks and the contexts of planning in its five regions. The SOS shown that planning procedures are complex and different but it identified the common fields where action can be undertaken in order to enhance the EUROREGION territory integration, especially in transports and mobility, economic activity development, jobs and natural space development and preservation (Vandermotten and al., 1999).

The idea was that cross-border formal co-operation leads to a new way of setting up local policies, which gives a greater role to local governance institution or specific transnational levels such as EUROREGION shaped bodies (Perkmann, 1999). Some cross-border problems like environmental ones can be tackled at a transnational level but also by the regional and local governance institutions. Based on the EUROREGION experience developed between the five regions of Kent, Nord-Pas-de-Calais, Flanders, Wallonia and Brussels, one can say that working in partnership through the EUROREGION gives a greater voice in Europe, both in representing the interests of its people and as part of a truly international region. As the European Union expands into central and Eastern Europe and works to achieve greater integration, it will become increasingly important to develop cross-border co-operation and address issues on an inter-regional basis. "The variable social complexity existing in European borderlands necessitates a deep examination of individual borderlands and rules out a unified explanation" (Häkli, Kaplan, 2000). Effectively, each region had to retain its local identity and work within its own local and national legal and political frameworks but has the added benefit of cross-border and euroregional co-operation.

Nevertheless this idea of EUROREGION of five regions failed to expand and to develop economic and social programs within this particular scale. Effectively in 2003, a decision was taken to validate the dissolution of the GEIE EUROREGION (Conseil Régional Nord Pas-de-Calais, 2014). Even if this experience can be considered as "an ephemeral stamp" (Heddebaut, 2004) it can be asked the role it could have on the rapprochement of Calais and Dover and their inhabitants.

## **5 DID THE TRANSMANCHE REGION OR THE EUROREGION LEAD TO CROSS-BORDER ACTIVITY?**

This section questions the binational city concept analysing the mobility and flows between two cities. In 1998, the President of the Regional Council of Nord-Pas-de-Calais repeated one of the fundamental principles of this EUROREGION. "The drastic changes to transport availability with the effective opening of the tunnel and T.G.V. service (Ashford is nearer to Lille than to London, Brussels will soon be nearer to Lille than Versailles is to Paris) has reduced the distance, in terms of travelling time, that separates the five regions. It has made the EUROREGION today, a place of easy travel, more frequently used and shared by our inhabitants, where almost all its urban centres can be reached in less than three hours" (Delebarre, 1998). Lille is now only 38 minutes from Brussels and the impact of the completion of the section of the T.G.V. network between Brussels and the French border

remains to be assessed. According to the European Commission, the market share for rail traffic between Paris and Brussels should have increased from 25% (figure at the beginning of 1996) to approximately 40% by the end of 1997 (The European Commission, 1999). The SNCF, the French railways company, after a deep reorganisation confirms a 40% market share for the Thalys trains between Paris and Belgium in 1997 (Pepy, 1998).

Since 1992, the vision of a zone of easy communication allowing intermingling of the local populace has been enticing. “Better mutual understanding between people can be considered as a way of making close links. In this way, greater contact and discovery of the habits and way of life of one’s neighbours can contribute to drawing together people separated by political and linguistic frontiers” (Luchaire, 1992). Would the people of this EUROREGION really bother to travel and make use of this new cross-border region?

### **5.1 What were the effects of the EUROREGION on cross-border workers?**

One of the assumptions of the Binational city concept lies in the main exchanges between two cities sharing one common workforce basin. In this case, the idea as developed by Ratti (1991), is that the frontier represents a “contact zone” or that it represents an actual barrier or “filter”. Interestingly there is no data for cross-border workers bilateral exchanges between Calais and Dover available. However, we can estimate the flow using to the last census made in France in 1999. According to the French National Institute of Economic Studies and Statistics (INSEE), 241 Nord-Pas-de-Calais residents have been identified as working in the United Kingdom, of which 103 are from the Nord Département and 138 from Pas-de-Calais Département in which Calais is located. These figures are very low and they do not support the suggestion that Calais and Dover are binational cities if based on the movement of the cross-border labour force.

By comparison border control statistics released by INAMI (National Health / Disability Institute) in Brussels reveal, at 30 June 2000, an increasing flow of 18,242 (against 13,931 in 1998) salaried and non-salaried workers resident in France and employed in Belgium against a relative stable flow of 6,039 (in 1998) Belgian residents travelling to France for work. These figures include part of total numbers travelling to work across the borders of the three Belgian regions and the Nord-Pas-de-Calais region. According to INSEE in the 1999 census 13,807 Nord Département and 585 Pas-de-Calais Département residents worked in Belgium.

In 2005, the number of Nord-pas-de-Calais residents working in Belgium increased and was estimated up to 22,550. Even if these figures rapidly increased they show only a relatively low level of integration for work-associated reasons compared, for example, with the 70,000 cross-border commuters travelling to work in Alsace from Luxembourg and Germany according to the 1999 census INSEE data. The movement of workers from Belgium to France have been reversed compared to the 1960s where the Belgians were more numerous to cross the border towards the Nord Pas de Calais employment basins before the coal mining, steel and textile industry crisis in France.

It is interesting to see that in 2010, the report of the parliament mission on the transfrontier policy (Blanc et al, 2010) never evoke the Euroregion and when studying the cross border working movements they do not consider the relationships between France and Great Britain as significant.

The phenomenon of cross-border working force is not only linked to the bilateral relationship “unemployment versus jobs” but also working conditions, job qualification and employment being more secured are obvious reasons to travel to work over the border. Other factors enter into the “navetteur” or cross-border worker decision. As described by Soutif (1997) family links, marriage, the proximity of the foreign country (accessibility, language), housing and the

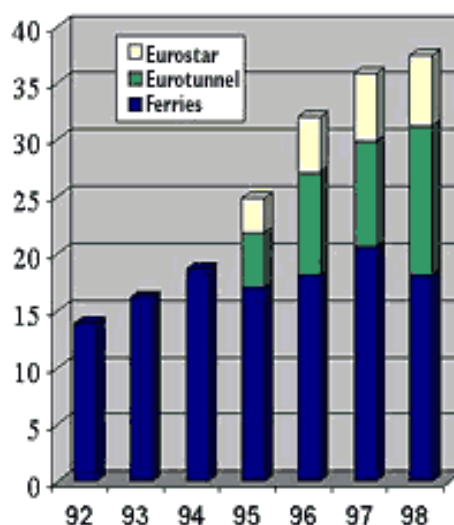
cost of living are factors influencing these choices. Cultural differences (mentality, habits and language) are also playing a role of attraction or rejection of cross-border work. Research which Soutif conducted in the “Euroregion Meuse Rhin” showed the importance of the working country in “mental space” but also revealed discrepancies induced by the international borders particularly the different systems for social insurances and income tax policies.

According to the “*Permanent Conference*” of the French and Belgian Chambers of Commerce and Industry, the number of companies in the area will determine integration at a EUROREGION level. In 1998, there were 237 Belgian companies with 16,000 employees and 241 British companies with 26,000 employees located in the Nord-Pas-de-Calais.

## 5.2 What are the effects of the EUROREGION on tourist flows and particularly between Dover and Calais?

The real effects of the EUROREGION can also be measured from the flow of visitors. The Nord-Pas-de-Calais region has always been a region of «transit». More than 48 million people travel across its border with Belgium every year (according to CETE figures from vehicle numbers each carrying an average of 2.7 persons). With respect to the cross-channel border, we have seen that the Channel tunnel has brought the two areas of Calais and Dover closer together with the construction of new road infrastructures. There was, however, considerable traffic across the channel even before the construction of the Tunnel representing mainly “through traffic” (see Graph 1).

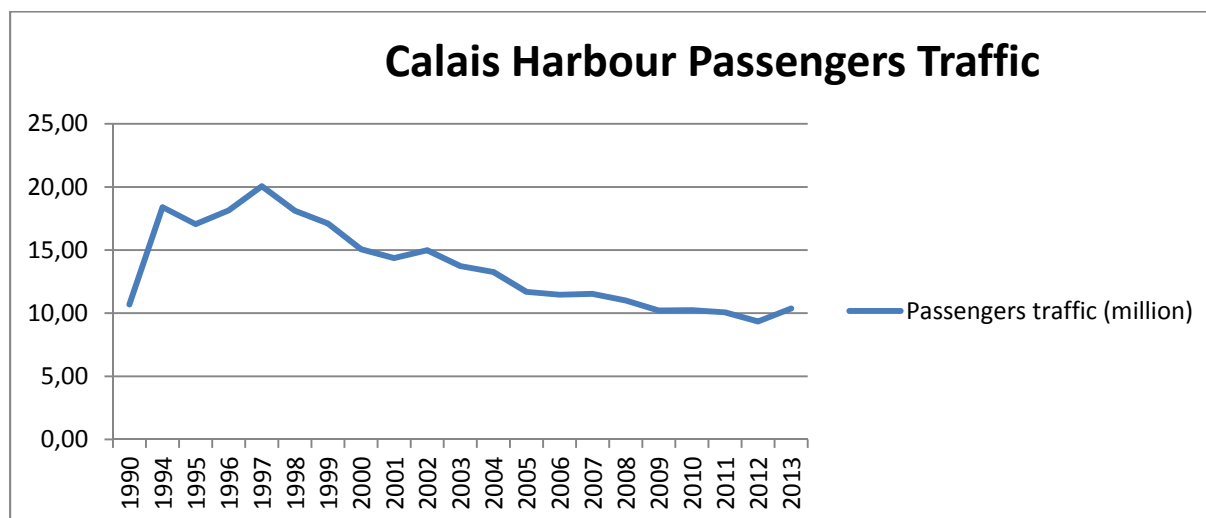
**Graph 1: Passenger traffic between Calais and Dover and in the Eurotunnel from 1992 to 1998**



Source: website of the “region transmanche” (1999), [www.regiontransmanche.com](http://www.regiontransmanche.com)

A total of 36.5 million passengers crossed the English Channel in 1999 against 38.8 million passengers in 1998 counting ferries, Eurostar and Eurotunnel shuttles (CRT NPdC, K.C.C., 2000). Since the opening of the Channel tunnel, and the operation of Eurostar, the overall traffic of the harbours of Dover-Calais has decreased after a record year in 1997 with 21.5 million of passengers. However, the traffic remains high with more than 17 million passengers (1999) through the direct maritime route between Calais and Dover and Buléon, Rocher and Lefevre (2000) were predicting an increase in the number of passengers. But the cross channel traffic registered by the Calais harbour is nevertheless constantly decreasing since 1998 as noticed on graph 2.

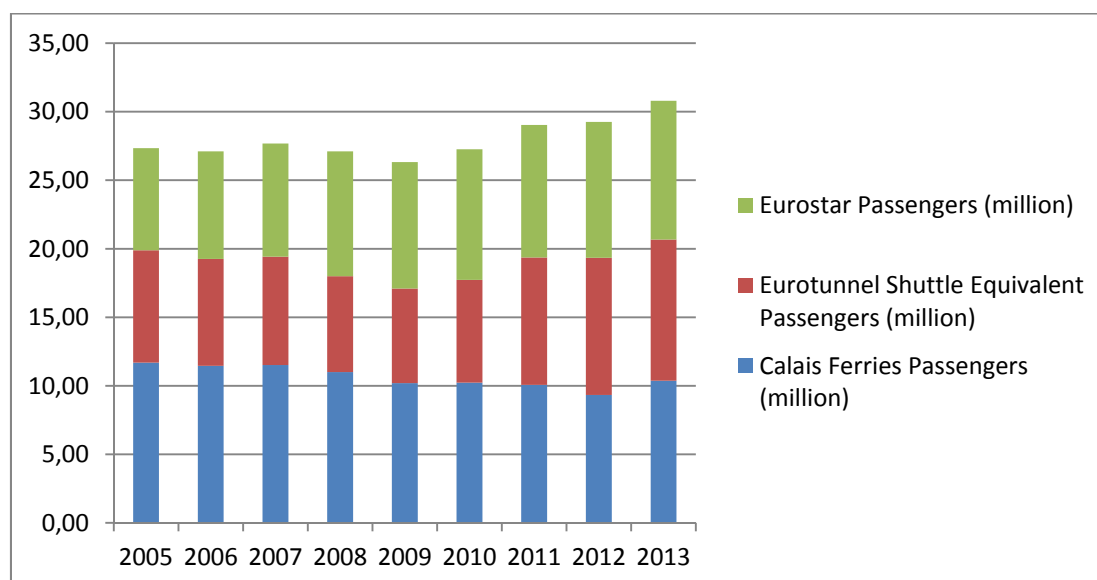
**Graph 2: Calais Harbour passenger traffic from 1990 to 2011**



Source: Calais Harbour, Conseil régional Nord-Pas-de-Calais,

The analysis made by the new study conducted in 2005/2006 by the CRT Nord Pas de Calais and Kent County Council under Interreg IIIa European funding (CRT NPdC, K.C.C., 2006) shows this decrease in the total number of people crossing the Channel. Effectively, in 2006 only 27.11 million passengers were registered. This figure is increasing with the augmentation of the number of passengers in the Eurotunnel shuttles and Eurostar and since 2009 the traffic is growing again. In 2013, 30.80 million passengers were registered compared to the 38.8 million in 1998. It can be partly explained by the end of duty-free possibilities in 1999.

**Graph 3: Passenger traffic between Calais and Dover and in the Eurotunnel from 2005 to 2013**

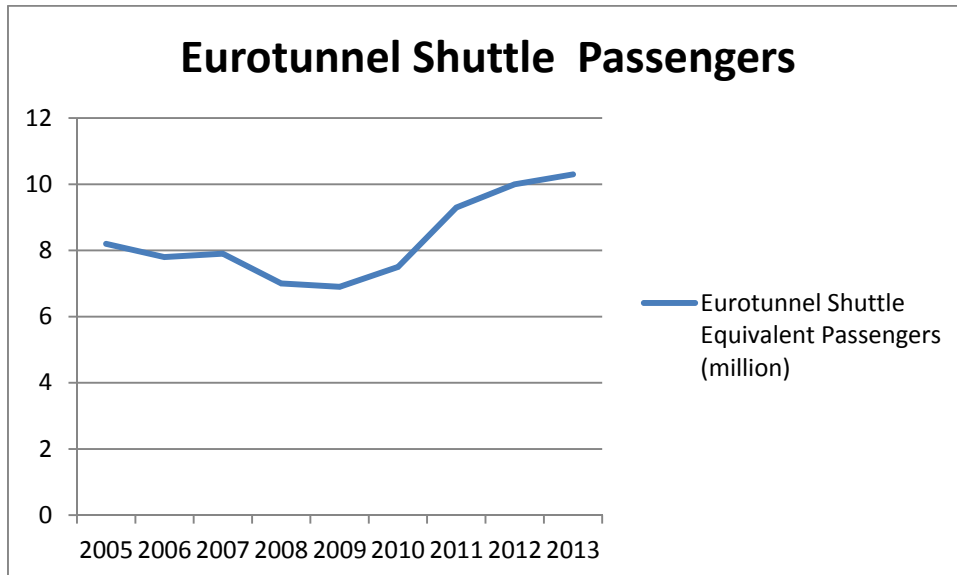


Source: Eurotunnel, Calais Harbour, Conseil régional Nord-Pas-de-Calais

Eurostar with 6.5 million of passengers (18%) and the Channel Tunnel with its shuttle system (33%) account for half the cross-channel market on the Calais/Dover or Coquelles/Folkestone route (51% of the market share in 1999). In 2000, Eurotunnel accounted 12.3 million of passengers and 54% of private cars market compared with the ferries according to the Regional Economic Cellule of Transports (CERT, 2000). Since 2010, after a decrease during

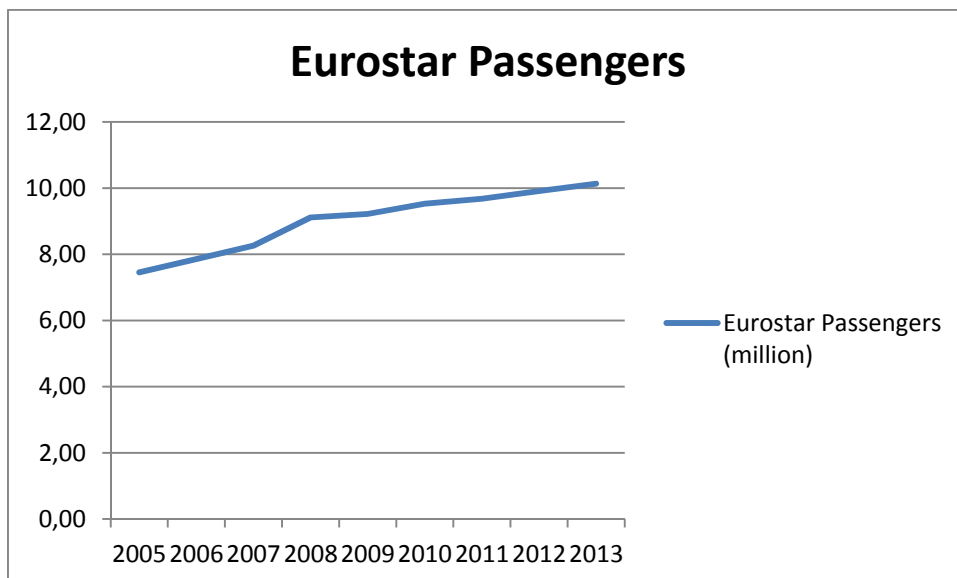
2007 to 2009, the number of passengers using the shuttles is increasing see graph 3 and graph 4. For the high speed train passenger traffic we observe a constant increase up to more than 10,000 passengers see graph 5. In 2013, the market share is balanced between the ferries (33.6%), Eurotunnel (33.4%) and Eurostar (32.8%) signifying that the “fixed link” totalise two third of the Channel crossing market share.

**Graph 4: Evolution of Eurotunnel shuttle traffic from 2005 to 2013**



Source: Eurotunnel

**Graph 5: Eurostar passenger traffic from 2005 to 2013**



Source: Eurotunnel

The tourist figures for the Nord-Pas-de-Calais region, that is to say persons who are spending at least a night out of their home, show a net increase of tourists from neighbouring countries. The last Border traffic survey conducted by the Tourism Department reveals a large growth in visits to the Nord-Pas-de-Calais region by foreigners from 3.3 million visits in 1996 compared with 1.5 million visits in 1991. In these figures, Belgian tourists accounted for 4.7 million overnight stays in 1996 against 2.4 million overnight stays in 1994. Visitors from Great



Britain accounted for 2.2 million overnight stays in 1996 only slightly down on 2.6 million overnight stays in 1994 (Heddebaut, 1999a).

In 2012, 48% of foreign arrivals nights in hotels and open air hotels spent in the Nord Pas de Calais region were British even if there is a decrease of this share in 2013, and 18% from Belgium increasing in 2013 (CRT Nord-Pas-de-Calais, 2014)

According to CRT NPdC (1999a), the town of Calais is one of the main destinations for tourists and its occupancy rate for accommodation is the highest of the region. The share of foreign tourism is also the highest with 61% on the seafront of Calais and 73% in the city and its rural outskirts. The British represent 70% of foreign tourists in this region.

### **5.3 What are the effects of the EUROREGION on excursionist flows and what are their incidence for the two cities of Calais and Dover?**

However, the most interesting phenomenon relates to short stays and excursions within the EUROREGION. On the cross-channel border, this traffic increased from 6.5 million passengers in 1985 to 19 million passengers in 1997 and their market share advance from 20% in 1980 to 53% in 1997 (Joan, 1998). Visits by excursion travellers for less than 24 hours are for purposes not linked to daily travel for work reasons. According to sources of the International Passenger Survey of 1997, 44% of cross-channel visitors from Great Britain are on excursions (94% of them travelling to France). Studies have been engaged by the Nord-Pas-de-Calais Regional Tourism Committee (CRT) in order to better understand travel behaviour relating firstly to persons crossing the Channel and, secondly, to those persons solely on day-trips. The first results show that most people travel on short visits within the EUROREGION – it represents a potential area of 157 million excursion visits per year primarily by its own residents. Relating to cross-border movements, the border of the Nord-Pas-de-Calais is the most used. In actual fact, residents of the Nord-Pas-de-Calais visit Belgium more often than Kent, and likewise Belgians visit the neighbouring French region more than Kent (CRT NPdC, 1999b). Calais is arguing in its advertisement the idea of ‘mini cruises’ to England and the fact of crossing the Channel is already considered as an excursion. In this case the border itself is attractive. The Nord-Pas-de-Calais region people say their excursions to Kent are the best way to have a change of environment. On the other side, Kent excursionists coming to Nord-Pas-de-Calais give comments such as the friendly atmosphere but also the differences they find in France. People coming from Kent have their main destination for excursion in the city of Calais where they do shopping, taste the French gastronomy for lunch and do a city tour (CRT NPdC, 1999b). Tourism and excursionist movements are mainly based on the difference between two cultures, two environments that could be interpreted for the French part by the “so close, so French” idea as described by Flament (1997).

On the contrary, on the French-Belgian border, movements are most often made on the basis of similar motivation. On each side of the border the Belgians and the French regional excursionists mention shopping activities, especially border Sunday shopping on the Belgian side, walking in the nature environment with numerous areas of open land. Also they both point out the entertainment opportunities and the conviviality of the inhabitants. This can be partly explained by an absence of customs formalities between Belgium and France, as these two countries belong to the Shengen agreement (unlike Great Britain), almost no language barriers and historic links between the three Belgian regions and Nord-Pas-de-Calais.

In this part we can see that people’s behaviour in the EUROREGION is setting up better links between cities over national borders. But if binational cities do appear it is more likely to be on the French-Belgian border rather on the French-British one. Despite important flows of

tourists and excursionists they generate for the two towns of Calais and Dover they cannot yet be considered as binational cities if viewed using Ehlers and Buursnik (2000) concept.

However, we can detect some changes in the type of traffic may have altered. Increasingly people are choosing to go to Calais or Dover for commodities that they previously would only have purchased in their own countries. These include car servicing, fuel and food. The advertising of stores such as Auchan or Sainsburys in Calais appears in newspapers in South East England. There are close ties between the Local Authorities in Calais and Dover and they have adopted the idea of producing publications on tourism commercial activities in both languages. A number of business links across the Channel servicing Calais and Dover have been recently created. Effectively, there is also an increasing movement of “very short term” visitors between these two towns (late afternoon and evening) who visit restaurants or spend the evening in France. These types of links and movements are similar to the ones that might be expected in normal cities and binational cities with land borders. They represent new relationships that could prove the rapprochement of Calais and Dover.

## 6 Conclusion

The building of the Channel Tunnel and the implementation of its support policies have transformed the accessibility of the main towns on each side of the English Channel border of Calais and Dover. We have seen that the two towns of Calais and Dover have been twinned since 1973, but they cannot be considered as binational city despite the border abolition within the European Union and despite being brought closer because of the construction of a new infrastructure link across the Channel. These two events have not yet created a greater integration of these two cities.

The relationships between the regional institutions on either side of the Channel have also been enhanced with their twinning and the creation of the “transmanche region”. New ways of co-operation have been developed both between these two «cross-channel» regions and within an enlarged EUROREGION of 5 integrating the three Belgian regions. These have led to certain matters concerning territorial planning, the economy, the environment and tourism being dealt with at the level of this EUROREGION. The sustained growth of travel/communication in this EUROREGION by its different regional peoples should lead to better reciprocal understanding helped by the disappearance of frontiers inside the European Union and by the improvement of the infrastructure system, thereby contributing greater regional territorial integration. The concept of a “binational region” is then more suitable both economically and particularly formally, and likely to be used and developed.

However, there exists a real need to develop in-depth research to better understand the concepts of cross-border spaces, activity and behaviour. These specific “not yet well-defined” spaces are important for the European Integration as they represent the inner “seams” of Europe (using the Buléon and Shurmer-Smith term, 1997b) and must be recognised, studied and strengthened to avoid problems of “breakout”. Moreover, they should be considered as spaces “which accept a dynamic and unresolvable tension between forms of rationality as they “unfurl” within the evolving geographical trajectories of discrepant cross-border settings” (Kramsch, 2000). This would open up the concept of cross-border activity towards philosophical developments for understanding the specificity of these particular undefined spaces. It needs to overcome the contradiction of the willingness to create or favour a single territory led by the same rules but able to keep its own identity which makes the “attractive difference”. This could be probably applied to the concept of binational cities with the idea of two cities being sufficiently integrated and having coalesced in order to favour their resident daily life but being capable of preserving their own specificity to provide mutual enrichment.

However, a change in culture and the enhancement of cross border links would take a long time to develop.

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