

Report of the Federal State Government
Evaluation of the Internationalisation Strategy for the State of Brandenburg

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Initial situation

The Internationalisation Strategy for the State of Brandenburg was adopted in 2014. The State Government has acted in accordance with the resolution passed at the time to investigate whether the strategy has proved its worth despite the profound changes that have taken place in general global political conditions and to evaluate how it has been implemented thus far.

Numerous crises, including disputes in Syria which have often escalated into war, increased tensions between Russia, NATO and the EU and a whole host of other uncertainties, have called many of the fundamental principles underlying worldwide politics into question and have led to considerable insecurity in international relations. The decision of the United Kingdom to leave the European Union has made it clear that membership of such a body and even its very existence cannot be taken for granted and that work needs to be done to secure cohesion. Populism, nationalism and protectionism is on the rise in many countries, and Germany is no exception in this regard.

Such developments are also creating major challenges for the State of Brandenburg. When large numbers of refugees began to arrive in Brandenburg in the year 2015 in particular, an impressive majority of the people living here displayed a considerable willingness to help. Once initial inhibitions had been overcome, these new arrivals were also greeted with openness and curiosity. Unexpectedly, this resulted in intercultural and indeed international encounters all across the state. The way in which cosmopolitanism and tolerance on the part of the state's inhabitants and public institutions has become a major topic is virtually unprecedented. Brandenburg is adjusting to the new situation. The activities of the Federal State Government are focused on issues relating to the creation of structures which will provide the best possible accommodation and facilitate the integration of refugees. These measures form part of the recently revised State Integration Concept, to which the present report makes selective reference.

Nevertheless, as has been the case in many parts of the world, refugee movements and the new complexity of international relationships combined with a high degree of unease have triggered worries and fears amongst many of Brandenburg's residents. Some harbour a wish to live in their own town, city, region or state, shut off from the rest of the world. Populists and nationalists have converted desires of this nature into political demands which seem to provide simple solutions. However, although the answers on offer may appear to be easy, they only create new difficulties instead of resolving the actual problems.

The growing complexity of international affairs, some of which are conducted in far-away places whilst others are played out in people's immediate neighbourhoods, in fact requires a higher awareness of global

processes and a greater ability to act and react on the part of the Federal State Government. This is not, therefore, the time to ease up. The emphasis needs to be very much on ensuring that the internationalisation endeavours of the state are implemented as planned and in line with the strategic stipulations set out.

Economic policy is not the least of the areas that are affected. The German economy benefits from international commerce, as does trade and industry in Brandenburg to an increasing extent. In light of the protectionist tendencies which are now emerging in the policy approaches of countries such as the USA (“America first!”), more precise attention needs to be paid to the real opportunities for action which are generated by stronger international networking. The state’s Foreign Trade Concept, which is currently being updated, is of considerable significance to the further internationalisation of Brandenburg’s economy despite not forming an object of this report.

In the context of increasing international tensions and conflicts, even greater importance is being attached to cross-border and inter-regional relations at local government and federal state level. This adds weight to the close and trusting cooperation that exists between the State of Brandenburg and its Polish partner regions, even if the change of government in neighbouring Poland and the country’s conflict with the EU has given rise to a number of issues with regard to the way in which we can work together at both a national and regional level in future. The renewal and intensification of relationships with Russian regions, especially within the context of association between Baltic partners, is also a topic which is generating more attention than in 2014. In addition to this, the Federal State Government will also be devoting greater consideration to the issue of “humanitarian aid” as it seeks to implement several State Parliament resolutions aimed at relieving the situation of minorities in northern Iraq.

The following report adopts the same structure as the 2014 Internationalisation Strategy. It provides a summary of measures instigated thus far in the three action areas stipulated. These are (1) focusing the state’s foreign contacts, (2) strengthening Brandenburg's capacity to act in international working contexts and (3) making Brandenburg more attractive internationally.

The report also highlights the points where subsequent adjustments have taken place in the respective action areas, especially in light of the developments described above.

Action area 1 – focusing the state’s foreign contacts

The objective of action area 1 is to align the foreign contacts of the state towards peace and justice, towards achieving cooperative and neighbourly relations with Poland, towards European integration, and towards maintaining and strengthening fulfilment of the responsibility to create “one world”, even given the more difficult conditions which currently prevail. Given these stipulations and in light of the fact that recent years have seen a toughening of global competition whilst the international political situation in particular has grown worse, the main thrust of the measures taken by the Federal State Government to implement the Internationalisation Strategy has been on the action areas defined as well as on seeking to set new emphases.

1.1 Geographical alignment – partnerships and scope for cooperation

1.1.1 Cooperation with Poland

The 25th anniversary of the signing of the German-Polish Treaty of Good Neighbourship and Friendly Cooperation was celebrated in 2016. Because of the multifarious cooperation that takes place between Brandenburg and Poland, it is beneficial that the Minister-President of Brandenburg is also accorded the task of acting as the Federal Government Coordinator for German-Polish civic and cross-border relations. Together with the Deputy Voivode of Western Pomerania, Brandenburg chairs the German-Polish Governmental Commission for Regional and Cross-Border Cooperation (DPKR) and also heads the Transport Working Group. Partnership arrangements with the voivodeships of Lubusz, Western Pomerania, Greater Poland and Masovia, which includes the Polish capital Warsaw, were already in place in 2014. Brandenburg extended this network in 2016 by entering into a further cooperation agreement with the Lower Silesian Voivodeship. In 2017, Brandenburg hosted an Economic and Innovation Forum in Wrocław and was also the designated partner federal state for the German Consulate General’s Summer Festival. Since 2016, Poland has also formed an integral focus of the business development strategy pursued by the State of Brandenburg, which concentrates on establishing links with parent companies and has already been successful in other European companies (a trip of several days in September 2016 undertaken by the Minister of Economics Affairs in conjunction with a visit to an innovation forum on optics and sensor technology). Extensive use was made of Poland’s partnership at the 2017 HANOVER TRADE FAIR in order to strengthen economic cooperation with the capital city region.

The Oder Partnership is an informal inter-regional network, in which Brandenburg cooperates in a project-based way with the German federal states of Berlin, Mecklenburg-Western Pomerania and Saxony and with the western Polish voivodeships of Western Pomerania, Lubusz, Greater Poland and Lower Silesia.

The main emphasis is on the topics of trade and industry, transport and tourism. The “Transport Working Group”, for example, is chaired by the Berlin-Brandenburg Public Transport Association (VBB) and regularly brings together rail passenger services stakeholders to coordinate provision and harmonise timetables. The most recent summit meeting of the Oder Partnership was held in Dresden in May 2018 and was attended by heads of government, voivodes and voivodeship marshals.

On 22 September 2017, Brandenburg’s state secretaries reached agreement on various aspects of cooperation with Poland.

- Brandenburg’s presence in Poland at a political level should be consolidated and expanded. Experience has shown that there is considerable interest in reinforcing existing contacts on the part of local and regional stakeholders on the Polish side of the border. The aim is to use high-level visits as a vehicle for highlighting the significance of regional cooperation in the voivodeships.
- Endeavours are being undertaken to facilitate an exchange of administrative staff between Brandenburg and Poland at a regional and national level. The intention is to provide an opportunity for the duration of a secondment to vary flexibly in accordance with the tasks involved and the availability of the employee in question.
- Cooperation with organisations in civic society should be enhanced (e.g. meetings between young people, cultural cooperation, history). This strategy could be supported in all partner regions by realigning the role of the partnership coordinator to concentrate on civic society contacts in Greater Poland and by allowing organisations to make use of grants and lottery funding where possible.

As it seeks to implement the Joint Future Concept for the German-Polish interaction area and the cabinet resolution adopted together with Saxony, the Ministry of Justice, European Affairs and Consumer Protection (MdJEV) is endeavouring to continue negotiations for a joint INTERREG-A assisted area extending along the whole of the German-Polish border at the Oder and Neiße rivers. The intention is to maintain the regional policy interests of the Euroregions and of the neighbouring Polish regions in the same way as before. Institutional strengthening of the cross-border Euroregions is viewed as useful and is an idea which is receiving support. The Euroregions are an important building block of the INTERREG A cooperation programmes and should be fostered. The German and Polish parts, which have been

structurally separate until now, should be merged in order to be able to use formal cross-border institutions to assist with the process of uniting the funding area. The police of the State of Brandenburg maintain close working contacts with the police forces of the neighbouring voivodeships of Western Pomerania and Lubusz. These relations also extend to encompass Lower Silesia, Łódź and Masovia. Over the past ten years, criminality in districts bordering Poland has thus been reduced by around 30%. The State Criminal Police and the Polish police's Central Investigations Office have also collaborated within the scope of Joint Investigation Teams, and these have succeeded in breaking up gangs involved in vehicle crime and theft of solar modules. The German-Polish Police Cooperation Agreement came into effect in 2015. This provides general legal conditions for cross-border law enforcement cooperation which are also viewed as being excellent in international comparative terms. Joint patrols and mutual support for the conducting of particular deployments are now part of everyday policing.

Over the past ten years, more than 300 German and Polish police officers have taken part in specialist and language training courses as part of the "Acting in tandem to tackle border criminality" project. These programmes are supported by the Viadrina Euroregion. Every year, a special Border Conference is organised by the Police President of the State of Brandenburg and the Voivodeship Police Commander of Lubusz. This is a highly effective event for German and Polish security services operating in the border area, at which ongoing cooperation is evaluated and new strategic objectives are drawn up.

The Joint Centre for German-Polish Police and Customs Cooperation in Świecko has developed into a major interface for the exchange of cross-border police intelligence. It has handled in excess of 200,000 cases during the last ten years.

In June 2015, representatives of the ministries of the interior and state fire academies of the federal states of Brandenburg, Mecklenburg-Western Pomerania and Saxony acted on a recommendation from the German-Polish Governmental Commission by joining forces with their Polish partners from the voivodeship headquarters of the State Fire Service in Lubusz, Western Pomerania and Lower Silesia to set up a working group. This body has been given the remit of developing a joint paper to improve the implementation of bilateral relief efforts in the event of disasters or serious accidents in the German-Polish border area. The aim is for this document to provide guidance to assistance teams on the ground under such circumstances. The meetings of the working group take place in Germany and Poland alternately. A Joint Commission established on the basis of Article 10 of the German-Polish Framework Agreement on Cross-Border Emergency Medical Services held its first meeting in Berlin on 28 February 2017. One of the tasks of the Joint Commission is to support the implementation of this agreement. Participants

expressed an interest in networking more closely on topics of practical relevance such as dispatch systems involving the use of map data by staff at the control centres and language skills. The plan is that data relating to these areas collected from both Germany and Poland should be presented and debated at the next meeting of the Joint Commission and at an Emergency Medical Services Academy to be set up by the Federal Ministry of Health in 2018 with a view to developing possible measures. At the same time, discussions are ongoing with the Polish side on the drafting of a joint cooperation agreement for cross-border emergency medical services.

In 2017, Tourismus-Marketing Brandenburg GmbH sought to better publicise the State of Brandenburg as a holiday destination by organising outdoor campaigns in Wrocław and Poznań such as “Winter in Brandenburg”. Alongside a Facebook page, it also organised blogger projects and entered into a media cooperation agreement with the newspaper Kurier Szczeciński. Following a call for proposals, the educational institution Schloss Trebnitz e.V. commenced its work as partnership coordinator in Greater Poland in 2016. Following an evaluation, the role of the partnership coordinator has now been more closely aligned to the civic society level. A Brandenburg-Greater Poland Council to oversee the work of the partnership coordinator was founded in November 2016. The parties involved are the Marshal of Greater Poland, the State Secretary for Europe and Consumer Protection, the State Chancellery, the Ministry of Science, Research and Cultural Affairs, the Ministry of Young People, Education and Sport, the State Parliament, and the State Agency for Civic Education. An annual “Civic Society Forum” enables more detailed dialogue to take place between the partners in Brandenburg and Greater Poland. It also facilitates networking and the further development of cooperation projects in the area of civic society and culture. The first such forum was held in December 2016. A local partnership coordinator office opened in Poznań in January 2017.

In the 2014–2020 funding period, Brandenburg took over from Poland as the administrative authority for the INTERREG V A Brandenburg – Poland (Lubusz) cooperation programme and remains federal state coordinator for the Mecklenburg-Western Pomerania – Brandenburg – Poland (Western Pomerania) cooperation programme. The EU Commission approved the INTERREG V A Mecklenburg-Western Pomerania – Brandenburg – Poland (Western Pomerania) cooperation programme and the INTERREG V A Brandenburg – Poland (Lubusz) cooperation programme in the autumn of 2015. Before the end of 2015, a joint secretariat with five members of staff was established in Frankfurt (Oder) within the scope of the INTERREG V A Brandenburg – Poland (Lubusz) cooperation programme. Its task is to support the administrative authority in the proper implementation of the programme.

This monitoring committee for the Lubusz cooperation programme has met ten times since its constitution

in December 2015. It began by approving around €16 million as funding of the umbrella projects for the Small Project Fund, total funding of around €17.2 million (ERDF funding) for six road construction projects (priority axis II), total funding of approximately €8 million for 15 further projects relating to the main focus of integration of the population and cooperation with administrative bodies (priority axis IV), a funding volume of €22.5 million for nine nature and cultural projects, and overall funding of more than €8.5 million for eight educational projects (priority axis III).

Brandenburg is the federal state coordinator for the 2014–2020 INTERREG V A Mecklenburg-Western Pomerania – Brandenburg – Poland cooperation programme. The investment priorities funded are the same as those in the 2014–2020 INTERREG V A Brandenburg – Poland cooperation programme. Following the most recent meeting of the monitoring committee in Kołobrzeg on 16 and 17 May 2018, approximately two thirds of the total funding budget for the cooperation programme has been allocated up until now. Brandenburg was thus able to secure around €11.5 million of the total available funding of €63.46 million for project providers within the state.

The capital city region of Berlin-Brandenburg forms a central part of the German-Polish interaction area together with the federal states of Mecklenburg-Western Pomerania and Saxony and the voivodeships of Western Pomerania, Lubusz, Greater Poland and Lower Silesia. The degree of mutual influence exerted in this region is growing continually. This requires ongoing improvement in day-to-day cooperation and concepts to harmonise long-term spatial development. To this end, the federal states and voivodeships have joined forces with the relevant national ministries responsible for spatial planning and the Regional Development Commission of the DPRK to develop a “2030 Common Future Vision for the German-Polish Interaction Area”. This concept sets out structural visions and guidelines and shows how areas of spatial potential are distributed across the whole of the German-Polish interaction area. Particular topics include housing development, transport links, cross-border economic relations, access to the labour market, intercultural competence, cooperation between institutes of higher education, energy security, and maintenance of a high quality of life in this common area.

Passenger railway links to neighbouring metropolises and regional centres have been strengthened. The timetable plan for 2016 provides direct services between the capital city region and Szczecin, Gorzów, Zielona Góra, Żary, Żagań and Wrocław. German-Polish railway summits have been taking place at the invitation of the Minister-President and Poland Coordinator and his Polish equivalent since 2015. These have been held both in Germany (2015 and 2018 in Potsdam) and in Poland (2016 in Szczecin). They are attended by representatives of the ministries responsible for rail transport in both countries and by high level delegates from the railway companies. These summits have already brought about specific

improvements such as continuation of the successful “cultural train” between Berlin and Wrocław. At the same time, initiatives have also been undertaken to provide an efficient railway structure and attractive offers for long-distance train services. Brandenburg has pushed for improvement of the rail link between Angermünde and Szczecin to be included as a pressing requirement in the Federal Transport Infrastructure Plan. It has also helped to drive forward plans for the extension and electrification of the line between Lübbenau, Cottbus and Görlitz. The “cultural train” has proved that the strong demand for transport between the metropolitan areas of Berlin and Wrocław could make it possible to offer further railway services.

The German-Polish Research Foundation (DPWS) is based in Frankfurt (Oder). Its board of trustees comprises the Minister-President of Brandenburg in his capacity as Federal Government Coordinator (KoPOL), the Minister of Science, Research and Culture and the State Secretary for Europe and Consumer Protection.

The State Office for Mining, Geology and Raw Materials (LBGR) works with the Polish Geological Institute (PGI), which operates regional offices in Szczecin and Wrocław, on cross-border mapping of the geological sub-surface. There are also points of contact with tasks performed by the headquarters of the PGI in Warsaw. These particularly relate to aspects such as comparisons of sub-surface data in the border area for purposes including the 3D depiction of deeper geological horizons. The LBGR has already cooperated with Poland on the preparation of several 1:50,000 scale geological maps. These have been published with an explanatory text in both German and Polish.

The Federal Ministry for Economic Affairs and Energy also supports an annual German-Polish conference on cross-border energy issues. This has been taking place for 14 years and is hosted at the State University of Applied Sciences (Państwowa Wyższa Szkoła Zawodowa) in Sulechów.

Alongside the cooperation that takes place in the German-Polish Governmental Commission (DPRK, cf. above), mention should also be made of the technical co-involvement of the Brandenburg Environment Minister in the “German-Polish Environmental Council” and of the specialist contributions made in the committees and working groups of the “International Commission for the Protection of the Odra River against Pollution” (IKSO), the “International Commission for the Protection of the Elbe River” (EKSE) and the “German-Polish Commission on Border Rivers”. Each of these German-Polish commissions is managed by the national ministries. Issues addressed at the last meeting of the German-Polish Environmental Council held in Warsaw in October 2016 included the signing of a resolution for recommencement of the activities of the “German-Polish Programme Council for the cross-border region in the Lower Oder Valley”.

The Ministry of Rural Development, Environment and Agriculture (MLUL) also decided to join forces with environmental and agricultural administrative bodies from the voivodeships of Western Pomerania, Lubusz and Greater Poland to support the specialist cross-border work described above by introducing a supplementary regional work programme for the years 2015 to 2019. This will be bolstered on an annual basis by specific measures relating to the topics of technical environmental protection, nature and species conservation, environmental education and agriculture. The MLUL has also included the Marshal's Office of Lower Silesia in these long-standing regional cooperation arrangements on a project-related basis since 2017.

The planned measures for 2015, 2016 and 2017 were successfully implemented. Alongside administrative schemes, these also encompassed projects conducted in the State of Brandenburg and in the Polish regions by non-governmental organisations (NGOs).

The Permanent German-Polish Border Commission was established on the basis of Article 5 of a treaty concluded between the Federal Republic of Germany and the Republic of Poland in Warsaw on 16 September 2004. It is responsible for the marking and maintenance of the border across its land sections and river boundaries. Five joint meetings have been held thus far, during which procedures for checking and documenting the border have been agreed in a new demarcation protocol. Surveying works are currently being carried out, and the old border indicators and pillars are being replaced. The German Federal Foreign Office and the Federal Ministry of the Interior are in overall charge of the process. Requirements under surveying law and technical procedures are the responsibility of the federal states of Brandenburg, Mecklenburg-Western Pomerania, and Saxony. Brandenburg is represented by experts from the Ministry of the Interior and Local Government (MIK) and the State Surveying and Geo-Information Agency (LGB). The 6th meeting of the Permanent German-Polish Border Commission will take place in Brandenburg in the autumn of 2019.

The Ministry of Justice, European Affairs and Consumer Protection (MdJEV) cooperates with Polish and Latvian authorities in the fields of consumer protection, food monitoring and veterinary services. The Brandenburg Consumer Advice Centre is currently working with the Federacja Konsumentów in Poland and the European Consumer Centre to realise a project funded by the EU Commission (DG Justice) for the enforcement of judgements within the scope of cross-border consumer disputes. The aim behind the project is for consumer protection organisations, academics and practitioners (judges, law enforcement officers, lawyers) to collaborate closely on carrying out a (comparative) legal analysis that will enable the identification of barriers to enforcement and the development of practical guidance for consumers and the

creation of possible solutions for judges, law enforcement officers, consumer advisors and lawyers. The project is based at the German-Polish Centre of Consumer Information Centre in Frankfurt (Oder) and runs from 1 December 2016 to 30 November 2018. The intended outcome is a handbook for practitioners that will be produced in three languages.

The Brandenburg Trade and Industry Working Group for Cooperation with Poland has also been reconstituted. This body has involvement from the chambers, the regional business development companies, Brandenburg Invest (WFBB, formerly the ZAB or “Future Agency Brandenburg”) and Tourismus Marketing Brandenburg GmbH (TMB). The State Secretary of the Ministry for Economic Affairs and Energy travelled to Poland in June 2018. Over the course of a two-day trip to the Lower Silesian Voivodeship (13 and 14 June 2018), he stopped off in Wrocław, Bielany Wrocławskie and Lubsko. The highlight of this year’s visit was the “Innovation Forum Media – Lower Silesia meets Babelsberg”. This forum was an event organised by the Brandenburg Ministry for Economic Affairs and Energy in conjunction with and under the patronage of the Marshal’s Office of the Voivodeship of Lower Silesia and with the support of the Audiovisual Technology Center CeTA.

There is regular participation by various federal state institutions (e.g. the Ministry of Education, Young People and Sport, MBSJ and the Ministry of Finance, MdF) in the educational trade fair in Poznań. The aim here is to inform young workers about the training opportunities that are available in the State of Brandenburg. Existing contacts established by the Brandenburg partners (ministries/institutes of higher education) will be continued.

The Tax Authority of the State of Brandenburg exerts a number of central functions nationally. These include responsibility for VAT due from Polish companies and for income tax payable by Polish construction firms and Polish employees. This means that the Tax Authority of the State of Brandenburg acts as a central point of contact for Polish companies. It is already making extensive use of existing opportunities for cross-border cooperation, particularly in the area of information exchange with regard to aspects such as the conducting of joint audits. As early as 2015, endeavours were undertaken to simplify information sharing in the field of income tax by cooperating directly with Polish authorities at a local level (without the interposition of federal bodies in Germany or the Polish Finance Ministry).

As well as pursuing an official joint approach in specific individual cases, the Brandenburg Tax Authority

is also seeking to establish informal ties with its Polish counterpart and with Polish tax advisors and companies where appropriate. The objective of this collaboration is to communicate specialist knowledge on tax law and information on organisation and ways of working. To this end, initial contacts have been instigated with the European University of Viadrina/Institute for Central and East European Taxation, I CEE TAX¹ as a partner for the provision of relevant professional training events.

A cooperation agreement has been in place between the School of Finance, which comes under the governance of the MdF, and the Panstwowa Wyższa Szkoła Zawodowa w Tarnowie (State University of Applied Sciences in Tarnów, Poland) since as long ago as 2003. The main focus here is on the delivery of annual tax law seminars, which are attended by students and lecturers from both countries. These arrangements were extended in 2015, when the School of Finance was brought on board to support the University of Applied Sciences in Tarnów in developing curricula for a Master's programme of study focusing on public finance, German tax law and German as a foreign language. Students were also afforded the opportunity to complete their mandatory practical placement at a German tax office.

In the field of health and safety at work, the relevant occupational safety authorities in Brandenburg and the Central Work Inspectorate in Warsaw regularly operate together to organise networking events to discuss monitoring strategies, the application of enforcement instruments and thematically specific activities (such as the transport of hazardous goods and construction site safety). German-Polish occupational safety dialogues have been taking place every two years since 2012. One particular object of debate is the avoidance of injury to health when handling or removing asbestos.

In the field of healthcare, partners from Brandenburg and Poland maintain numerous points of contact, cooperation agreements and local self-administration projects on various topics and activities. Examples include the "Telemedizin" project in the Euroregion of Pomerania, which has been running since 2001, cooperation in the clinical registration of cancer between the clinic in Bad Saarow and the Voivodeship Hospital in Zielona Góra and the ongoing INTERREG Project being undertaken by the Märkisch-Oderland Hospital and the hospital in Gorzów Wielkopolski to improve the quality of gynaecological care by means of knowledge exchange and networking. The Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs, Health, Family and Women the State of Brandenburg (MASGF) provides support where necessary.

¹ https://www.europa-uni.de/de/forschung/institut/institut_ceetax/Ueber_uns/index.html

The goal of the Genshagen Foundation is to foster civic dialogue in Europe. Although efforts in this regard were initially directed at France, activities are becoming increasingly trilateral and Poland is now more closely involved. The focus is on reviving the idea of the “Weimar Triangle” to promote institutional networking and cooperation at government level between Germany, France and Poland, an aim which was initiated at a meeting of the foreign ministers of the three countries in 1991. The State of Brandenburg is represented on the foundation’s Board of Trustees by the Minister-President and the State Secretary of the MdJEV.

Brandenburg occupies a leading position amongst all federal states as a destination for German-Polish exchanges between school pupils and young people. One of the reasons for this is the close degree of cooperation which exists with the German-Polish Youth Office (DPJW). Brandenburg has been operating a central DPJW agency for extra-school exchanges for many years. In 2017, a new DPJW office for school-based exchanges was opened. This is centred on the Spree-Neiße-Bóbr Euroregion. Brandenburg has shown its support for the German-Polish Youth Office on many occasions and has submitted a resolution proposal to the Federal Council that the DPJW’s funding should be boosted so that it can act as a central pillar of German-Polish understanding². In 2016, Germany increased its contribution from five to six million euro.

The School for Lower Sorbian Language and Culture/Šula za dolnoserbsku rěc a kulturu, which is co-financed via federal state funding provided by the Foundation for the Sorbian People, regularly organises cross-border Sorbian/Wendish-Polish-German projects and Polish language courses. It also explicitly includes minorities in Germany (Sorbs/Wends) and Poland (Kashubs, Lemkos). In thematic terms, it thus provides a particular contribution to cross-border cooperation in Lower Lusatia.

1.1.2 Developing closer relations with the Baltic region

The Federal State Government is adopting a robust approach towards pursuing its avowed aim of establishing closer relations with the Baltic region. Brandenburg’s interest in the Baltic area is directed towards specialist topics such as innovation, scientific cooperation, development corridors and demographic change. It is, however, also driven by dialogue that centres on political values (social cohesion, modernity and innovation) in the European context and within the scope of (inter)cultural networking. Additional factors include similar cultural, political and historical roots and the function of the

² Federal Council Printed Paper 313/16 (Resolution), http://www.bundesrat.de/SharedDocs/drucksachen/2016/0301-0400/313-16%28B%29.pdf?__blob=publicationFile&v=2

Baltic Sea as an important link between East and West, in particular between the European Union and the Russian Federation. Brandenburg enters into close and trusting discussions with the northern German federal states involved in the EU Strategy for the Baltic Sea Region, with the Federal Foreign Office and with other Federal Government departments.

It is now involved in detailed cooperation with the most important relevant committees. These include the various working groups forming part of the EU Strategy for the Baltic Sea Region (EUSBSR) and the Secretariat and Council of the Baltic Sea States (CBSS). At the request of the Federal Foreign Office, Brandenburg has assumed the function of focal point for the “Neighbours” area of the EU Strategy for the Baltic Sea Region, which is coordinated by the CBSS and the Finnish city of Turku. Brandenburg regularly takes part in the EUSBSR’s annual forums. It involved itself particularly extensively with the topics of TEN-V, Belarus and innovation at the 2017 EUSBSR Annual Forum, which the Federal Foreign Office hosted in Berlin with the theme of “Connectivity”. Several transnational Interreg-BSR Projects in which stakeholders from Brandenburg are taking part have been accorded flagship status by policy coordinators in various areas of the Baltic Sea Region Strategy. This means that they make a particular contribution to the implementation of the strategy.

In 2017, Brandenburg formally took over the seat on the Board of the Baltic Sea States Sub-Regional Co-operation (BSSSC) which was previously occupied by Hamburg. It is working on a project-related basis with the Baltic Sea Commission (BSC), which represents a sub-committee of the Conference of Peripheral and Maritime Regions (CPMR). Brandenburg also hosted the Annual Conference of the BSSSC, which was attended by almost 200 participants from all countries bordering the Baltic Sea. This event took place in Potsdam from 20 to 22 September 2017. The conference, the slogan of which was “Cohesion = Togetherness”, mainly focused on emphasising the aspect of affiliation and the importance of re-establishing trust within our society and between peoples and regions. Although cohesion policy in general and European Territorial Cooperation (ETC) in particular are important instruments in this process, culture and collaboration between young people are also significant elements. The topic of cohesion was also a thread that ran through the specialist workshops held on the topics of culture, innovation, transport and sustainability. It became very clear that encounters for civic society and young people and in the area of culture help greatly in achieving cohesion and that more use should be made of these. Within the scope of the conference, the young people taking part in the BSSSC Youth Meeting at Trebnitz Palace were also integrated into the discussion in a well-founded and active way. Topics addressed included sustainability, co-determination and better opportunities for cooperation. The young people also proposed the idea of

establishing a Youth Office for the Baltic region³³.

Brandenburg uses Baltic cooperation as a means of exerting influence on EU policy. The federal state took on the chairmanship of an ad hoc working group on cohesion policy formed by the BSSSC. This group drew up a position paper addressing important demands made by the German federal states which will now help to inform the European decision-making process.

This institutional cooperation is supported by a network of bilateral and multilateral projects. Cooperation on the creation of a development corridor leading from the Baltic to the Adriatic (Scandria@-Korridor) has been ongoing since 2006. This constitutes one of the oldest and most sustainable cooperation projects involving the Baltic region. In 2016, the Berlin-Brandenburg Joint State Planning Department (Joint Planning, GL, Ministry of Infrastructure and State Planning, MIL) as lead management body joined forces with 18 further partners from Germany, Sweden, Finland, Denmark and Norway to launch the Scandria@2Act project with the joint objectives of increasing connectivity and competitiveness in the regions and reducing environmental impacts by pursuing ongoing development of multimodal transportation. In its capacity as a “flagship project”, Scandria@2Act is contributing towards the implementation of the Strategy for the Baltic Sea Region by strengthening the rail-based and multimodal transportation of goods and people, by making greater use of renewable energies and technologies, by mobilising TEN-V project applications by third parties and by creating a transnational alliance in the Scandria@-Korridor for cross-border cooperation in the transport sector and in the field of spatial development.

Activities undertaken in connection with the EER Network which arose following designation as a European Entrepreneurial Region (EER) in 2011 have been one vehicle via which Brandenburg has been able to establish itself as an interesting partner state in the Scandinavian region. Closer relations have been created with the Finnish capital region of Helsinki-Uusimaa (EER 2012) in particular. This has, for example, resulted in close collaboration between the Helsinki-Uusimaa region and Brandenburg in the EU-initiated project “Boosting innovative entrepreneurial ecosystems in regions for young entrepreneurs (iEER)”⁴, in which the Brandenburg University of Applied Sciences and other designated European Entrepreneurial Regions are involved (term 2016–2020).

³ The conference resolution, the results of the Youth Meeting and further conference documentation (such as presentations) may all be accessed via the BSSSC website (www.bsssc.com).

www.bsssc.com

⁴ <http://www.interregeurope.eu/ieer/>

These contacts were also exploited to draw up a comparative analysis of potential between the Potsdam-Golm Science Park and Scandinavian innovation locations, and the aim now is for them to be consolidated and expanded within the scope of a transnational EU project (INTERREG Baltic Sea Region). The project “Improving smart specialisation implementation of the Baltic Sea Region through orchestrating innovation hubs” (Smart-up BSR) was approved in June 2017. Partners from regional and national organisations and from academic research institutions in Denmark, Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, Russia and Sweden (Skåne) are all involved alongside the Finnish lead partner South-Eastern Finland University of Applied Sciences – Xamk).

On the basis of a concept for further development of the instrument of the partnership coordinator for 2016 and the following years, a partnership coordinator was also installed in the Baltic region at the end of October 2017 (BearingPoint GmbH).

Cooperation in the Baltic region furthermore opens up additional opportunities for the establishment and nurturing of contacts with partners in Russia. It thus contributes to the implementation of a further objective defined in the strategy. Further development of cooperation with the Russian Federation at a regional level which takes account of general and specialist policy interests is more significant today than at the time when the Internationalisation Strategy was adopted, and this is *because of* rather than despite the continuing tension of the political situation. In April 2016, Brandenburg took part in the German Week in St. Petersburg in its capacity as a partner state. It provided information to the local population at more than 20 events primarily addressing science and culture, but also covering a wide range of other topics and policy areas and took the opportunity to engage in direct talks and networking. As a consequence, the State Parliament’s Committee for Economic Affairs and Energy and a delegation of entrepreneurs travelled to St. Petersburg in June 2017. The delegation of entrepreneurs journeyed on to the Kursk region. Contacts with the Kaliningrad Oblast were re-established within the scope of the 2017 “Green Week”, at the Annual EUSBSR Forum in Berlin in June 2017 and during the BSSSC’s Annual Conference in Potsdam. Plans are in place for the Minister of Justice, Europe and Consumer Protection to visit Kaliningrad in the summer of 2018.

1.2 Specialist networks, cooperation agreements and contacts

The aim of placing foreign contacts into the context of specialist policy or cross-departmental priorities in a more systematic way than before and of using such links as a springboard for development is also being pursued outside the two priority cooperation areas of Poland and the Baltic region.

Attention in this regard should be drawn to the accession of the MIL to the PURPLE Network (Peri-Urban Regions Platform Europe) and a presentation made for the City and Surrounding Area competition in Brussels as a member of this network. Against the background of the recently adopted UN Sustainable Development Goals, global developments and challenges in the area of climate and energy, the targets of the EU and the federal state policy stipulations contained in the coalition agreement, projects are being developed under the lead management of the MIL to address and interlink the objectives stated above and possibly to deliver a measurable degree of success within a reasonable time frame.

The MLUL is continuing its international specialist activities (including participation of the Brandenburg biosphere reserves as part of the German delegation to the 4th World Congress of UNESCO Biosphere Reserves in Lima in April 2016 and cooperation in the UNESCO Natural World Heritage Site “Primeval Beech Forests”). The international networks of Brandenburg’s natural landscapes are being maintained, including within the framework of the EUROPARC Federation. In 2017, the Lower Oder Valley National Park was able to expand its cooperation agreement with the Banhine National Park in Mozambique, which has existed since 2015, thanks to financial support from the Federal Government/Federal State Programme for Development Cooperation.

In addition to this, a cooperation agreement between the Indawgyi Lake Bioreserve in Myanmar and the Brandenburg biosphere reserves was signed in October 2017.

MIL/GL has consolidated its involvement in the TEN-V Corridor forums of the Scandinavian-Mediterranean Corridor (Scan-Med) and in the Orient-East Med (OEM) and North Sea-Baltic (NSB) trans-European transport corridors.

Recent years have seen an intensification of contacts to western and northern European states (in particular France, the Netherlands, Austria, the Czech Republic and Switzerland), to Israel, to the USA, Canada and South Africa and especially to Saitama, Brandenburg’s partner province in Japan. These links have been developed in the areas of the economy, scientific research, culture, environmental policy as well as within other specialist contexts. Within this framework, new department-related starting points are also emerging for a reactivation of Brandenburg’s partnership with the French capital region of Île-de-

France.

Cooperation with other regions of the Russian Federation and with further states and regions in central and eastern Europe is being continued and expanded both at a federal state and local government level. One example in this regard is the cooperation that is taking place between the Oder-Spree District and the Kursk Oblast. In November 2017, the Deputy Minister-President travelled to Moscow to take part in a geo-science conference at the German Embassy and to conduct further discussions with government representatives of the Russian Federation and the Moscow region. The Minister-President journeyed to Moscow at the end of January 2018 to conduct political and economic meetings. One particular focus was reactivation of cooperation with the Moscow Oblast.

In addition to this, there are also numerous examples of cooperation in the field of higher education. The Ministry of Education, Young People and Sport (MBSJ) maintains a cooperation arrangement with the Instituto Cervantes, via which pupils studying Spanish at Brandenburg's schools are able to take part in examinations leading to the acquisition of DELE language certificates⁵⁵. Several visits from delegations from Eskilstuna and the Province of Södermanlands Län combined with a return trip made by Brandenburg in the autumn of 2017 has resulted in ongoing networking between Brandenburg and central Sweden on issues relating to the labour market integration of immigrants and the long-term unemployed in particular. The next round of talks is scheduled to be held in Brandenburg in the late summer of 2018.

On the basis of the concept drawn up for the further development of the instrument of partnership coordinator, the company ManCom GmbH has once again been commissioned to act as partnership coordinator for the region of Centru in Romania for the period from 2016 to 2016. The work carried out by the partnership coordinator mainly focuses on nurturing contacts in the partner region, on further training, on the formation and maintenance of a network, and on initiation of and support for bilateral cooperation projects. Within the scope of this partnership, the Ministry of Science, Research and Culture (MWFK) took part in the Proetnica Festival in Sighișoara for the first time in 2017.

Alongside the cooperation that takes place with Poland, there are also future plans for an exchange with the Greek tax authority.

To this end, a delegation from the Greek Finance Ministry visited the MdF in April 2017, where it was

⁵⁵ Diplomas de Español como Lengua Extranjera (DELE) are official certificates attesting knowledge of the Spanish language issued by the Instituto Cervantes on behalf of the Spanish Ministry of Education. They facilitate access to study programmes at institutes of higher education in Spain or Latin America and can be helpful for the securing of scholarships and placements.

represented by the State Secretary for Finance. Specialist discussions were held on finance and tax policy issues. Our expert colleagues from the Greek Finance Ministry were particularly interested in a tax specialist training exchange and in the possibility of receiving support for the establishment of a Tax Academy in Greece.

In November of the same year and under the leadership of the State Secretary for Finance, staff from the MdF undertook a fact-finding mission to Athens to learn about the prevailing financial and tax policy circumstances. The status of the development of a Tax Academy in Greece and planned training cooperation arrangements with the School of Finance in Königs Wusterhausen played a large role in the discussions.

Networking on current financial and tax policy circumstances is set to continue this year and into the future. There will be a particular emphasis on cooperation and support for the training of tax specialists. The objective is the conclusion of a cooperation agreement for conceptual and content support for Greece's future Tax Academy.

China has emerged as a new focus. Particular attention in this regard should be drawn to contacts with the government of the Chinese capital city region of Hebei. A declaration of partnership with the Hebei region was concluded during a visit made by the Minister-President in 2015. Since this time, various delegations have travelled from Brandenburg to Hebei and from Hebei to Brandenburg within the scope of this agreement. The deepening nature of relations has already been reflected in specific business deals. Links in the areas of the economy, culture, academic and scientific research and administration have been consolidated via a series of protocols and agreements, including in the field of local government. The Ministry of Economics and European Affairs (MWE) undertook a trip to Hebei together with a delegation of entrepreneurs at the start of July 2017. Discussion with the partner Province of Hebei also took place during this visit. There are plans for the Minister-President to journey to China again in September 2018. A delegation of entrepreneurs led by the State Secretary of the Ministry for Economic Affairs and Energy will also visit China in September 2018.

Action area 2 – strengthening Brandenburg's capacity to act in international working contexts

In action area 2, the State Government has set itself the goal of concentrating its foreign contacts and using organisational measures to align these more closely to specialist policy objectives. This involves both provision of the necessary state administration resources and the (further) development of strategies

and sets of measures for policy areas and organisational units which are increasingly and particularly affected by a European and/or international dimension. In order to support these endeavours, it will be necessary to bring about improvements in knowledge of foreign languages, intercultural competences and international mobility.

2.1 Improving the organisation and capacities of state administration

Within the field of organisational measures, the introduction of appropriate and timely information on official trips undertaken by ministers and state secretaries and on visits from foreign delegations have enabled a significant improvement to be achieved with regard to the flow of information on foreign affairs. The newly instigated system of written travel reporting for the Chiefs of Staff Conference and the distribution of trip reports to all departments has become an established form of practice which has produced transparency.

Regular networking between departments has also been significantly improved by the instigation of foreign contacts working groups which meet approximately quarterly to consult on all international contacts maintained by the State of Brandenburg (Poland, other foreign contacts and foreign trade). The Euroregions also participate in meetings affecting Poland.

At the Ministry of Justice, European Affairs and Consumer Protection (MdJEV), activities regarding Poland, the Baltic region and other foreign and internationalisation contacts were previously located in various departments. These have now been pooled into a single department.

Partial success has been achieved in terms of achieving a better presence in international committees. Establishment of the function of a Commissioner for International Relations and creation of the role of a separate State Secretary for European Affairs and Consumer Protection have led to an improved international presence and enhanced visibility for the State of Brandenburg. This particularly applies in the case of the European Committee of the Regions (CoR), in which Brandenburg is currently represented by two members – the State Secretary for European Affairs and a member of the State Parliament.

Existing language courses have been continued in order to improve the foreign language knowledge and intercultural competence of staff at state authorities and institutions. New programmes have also been developed in English and Polish in particular. In 2017, the Brandenburg State Academy of Public Administration (LAKöV) offered a B1 intermediate course in Polish for the first time.

This will run alongside courses in “Administrative English/Polish” and “Acquisition of English/Polish”. Highly-qualified language courses are also provided by the Federal Office of Languages, and some of these are available to state officials and civil servants. LAKöv courses and general and more detailed seminars and workshops on the topic of “intercultural competence and creating a welcoming culture” will be on offer for the first time from 2017. Some of this provision will focus on areas such as eastern Europe and Islam/the Arab world. The Justice Academy of the State of Brandenburg offers interstate seminars in the non-judicial field on the topic of “intercultural training”. These are primarily aimed at justice officials who have multifarious professional contact with persons from a migrant background and with legal persons and legal entities from abroad.

Behaviour-oriented training courses take place at the Brandenburg University of Applied Police Sciences (FHPol) in order to impart intercultural competence. These accord due consideration to learning psychology findings and are aligned towards facilitating the acquisition of intercultural and interpersonal skills. Trainee police officers learn how to deal with people from different cultural spheres and are taught techniques that enable them to reflect on their own prejudices and stereotypes vis-à-vis other groups of persons. Students at the FHPol also gain professional communication competences in a second official European language. This is primarily English, although Polish is also included. Language competences undergo specific further development on the basis of prior school learning. Administrative trainees preparing to enter the higher civil service grades in the State of Brandenburg also acquire a more detailed knowledge of English during their studies in order to allow them to communicate effectively with members of other cultural groups.

In 2016, the Ministry of Rural Development, Environment and Agriculture (MLUL) conducted an in-house training programme focusing on cooperation with Poland. Project funding provided by the MLUL led to the production of a handbook on German-Polish administrative communication, and this may be downloaded via the MLUL homepage⁶.

Meetings take place at the level of central departmental heads in order to explore opportunities for the further consolidation of the topics of internationalisation and European capability within the human resources management structures of bodies and institutions. A further aim is to achieve a stronger presence for ministries at the state representation office in Brussels by seconding appropriate officials.

Examples of good practice by departments are as follows.

⁶ <http://erikmalchow.de/verwaltung>

- The MdF has stipulated that detailed knowledge of English and/or Polish is a desirable prerequisite for candidates seeking to embark upon the two-year training programme leading to qualification as a financial clerk.
- A group of younger employees interested in international working contexts has been established at the MIL. A concept for special advanced training for this cohort has been drawn up and is now being gradually implemented (including language courses and brief work placements in international surroundings, such as at the state representation office in Brussels).
- A survey on existing foreign language competences and on in-house English training has been conducted at the MWE.
- The State Academy for Public Administration is offering a special summer English familiarisation programme to civil servants and employees of all grades with no or only a low level of knowledge of the language.
- In the autumn of 2017, one staff member each from the MBSJ and the MLUL took part for the first time in a “practical placement programme” offered by the Marshal’s Office of Greater Poland in Poznań. Brandenburg is investigating whether something similar can be implemented here.
- The MLUL has been providing weekly in-house English courses to its staff since January 2018.

Within the scope of the administrative exchange that Brandenburg is seeking to establish with foreign partners at both a regional and national level, the plan is to issue a return invitation to staff from the Marshal’s Office of Greater Poland in 2018 (cf. 1.1.1 above).

Action area 2 also encompasses the objective of making greater use than previously of the European Structural and Investment Funds and of other EU programmes for internationalisation activities. Operational programmes for cooperation with other European project partners have been opened up with a view to implementing this goal. In addition to this, due consideration has been accorded to the aspect of internationalisation in the development, agreement, implementation or amendment of various funding guidelines.

The ERDF is also involved in a network of ERDF administrative bodies set up in 2016, the aim of which is to use regional and national ERDF-funded operational programmes to finance transnational projects. Suitable transnational projects from the field of innovation are being developed initially.

Institutions from Brandenburg (institutes of higher education, extra-university research institutions, companies and public bodies) secured total funding of around €134 million in the 7th EU Framework Programme for Research and Technological Development. As of September 2017, i.e. after just over half of the term of the current 8th Framework Programme for Research and Technological Development (Horizon 2020), institutes in Brandenburg have already raised approximately €85 million. This is significantly more than the corresponding figure at the halfway stage of the 7th FRP (October 2010 €46 million). The expectation is that these figures will continue to develop well and will virtually double by the end of the term of “Horizon 2020”.

INTERREG projects could have an important role to play in terms of supporting internationalisation. This particularly applies in respect of funding for cross-border cooperation with Poland (INTERREG A, cf. 1.1.1 above). In 2016, in order to assist with participation in multilateral projects within the scope of the EU INTERREG B 2014–2020 programmes for the area of the Baltic region and Central Europe and for INTERREG EUROPE 2014–2020, the Ministry of Justice, European Affairs and Consumer Protection (MdJEV) issued guidelines for the financing of preparation costs incurred in submitting the EU application and to support national co-financing of Brandenburg (co-)applicants and project partners. A summary of INTERREG B and INTERREG Europe projects in which Brandenburg is participating is attached as an annex.

The Inter-ministerial Working Group for the Coordination of EU Funding, which was constituted at the beginning of 2017, is drawing up an overview of other centrally-managed EU programmes, of the use of such schemes by institutions in Brandenburg and of opportunities for improving take-up (for use of EU programmes in the school sector cf. below).

Taking advantage of EU programmes to cooperate with other European countries at EU institution level, to engage at a national, regional and local level and to work together with NGOs enables Brandenburg to make a contribution towards the maintenance and imparting of European values and towards the achieving of cohesion within Europe, including within the state itself. EU programmes and macro-regional strategies open up an opportunity to strengthen the competitiveness of the state by fostering cooperation arrangements in the field of trade and industry. Such an approach provides market access, supports collaboration in the area of research, development and innovation and assists start-up companies in the internationalisation process. This gives rise to networks and partnerships which offer a framework for exchanging views on common issues and for the development of possible solutions for state-specific and interstate problems. Cooperation in such networks may in turn be used to exercise influence on EU

practice, an approach which is currently being effectively deployed within the scope of the debate on the future of cohesion policy.

2.2 Thematic internationalisation strategies

As it seeks to implement recommendations within the area of thematic internationalisation strategies, the Ministry for Economics and European Affairs (MWE) is currently working to update the Foreign Trade Concept of the State of Brandenburg. The internationalisation of clusters, encouragement for foreign companies looking to locate to the state, international acquisition of skilled workers, and international alignment of funding for business start-ups are all being integrated into this process. The Foreign Trade Concept is accompanied by several strategies and action concepts. These include a company set-up and succession strategy drawn up by the MWE, which was adopted by the Cabinet in 2017.

Brandenburg's SMEs continue to receive support in tapping into markets and in establishing international networks via existing market development policy, the M2 Guidelines and the Enterprise Europe Network. These have proved their value as instruments to assist small and medium-sized companies in initiating cross-border business (cf. for example the list from the joint 2018 trade fair programme of the states of Berlin and Brandenburg, foreign trade fairs section). Over the coming years, it will also be important to familiarise Brandenburg-based companies with Federal Government and federal state support opportunities for involvement on foreign markets.

In addition, the topic of cluster internationalisation forms part of the cluster management projects run by Brandenburg Invest (WFBB) and its Berlin partners. Internationalisation aspects for the areas of research, development and innovation have been included in the master plans for eight clusters thus far. WFBB also advises potential applicants on funding conditions and application prerequisites in centrally-managed EU programmes which are of relevance to labour market policy such as ERASMUS+, Interreg B, Interreg Europe and EaSI (Programme for Employment and Social Innovation).

The newly created Brandenburg EU Competence Network, the aim of which is to strengthen EU guidance expertise in Brandenburg's higher education system, commenced its work in 2016. The EU Competence Network is seeking to bring about a sustained increase in success rates for the securing of EU third-party funding, particularly within the Horizon 2020 Framework Programme for Research and Innovation.

Academic and scientific research in Brandenburg enjoys good international networking. All institutes of higher education have their own internationalisation strategies in place and currently maintain 180 strategic or particularly important partnerships with institutions of higher education in 50 other states. In addition to this, there are numerous Erasmus partnerships and 61 international programmes of study which institutes of higher education in Brandenburg offer in conjunction with institutes abroad. Extra-university institutions have also entered into hundreds of cooperation agreements across the world and in some cases have branches in all continents and major countries which are operated via their parent companies.

The MWFK has successfully joined forces with all institutes of higher education in the state to establish an international post-doctorate scholarship programme entitled BRAIN (Brandenburg Research Academy and International Network), which is run in the form of an EU COFUND project. The aim is to integrate the experiences and main elements which have emerged from this into a state-wide career development network for post-doctorate students which is currently being established (under the working title of the “State Postdoc Academy”), where it will form a component part of future top-end support for outstanding up-and-coming academic research talent. The plan is for implementation to take place from 2018 by the institutes of higher education on the basis of a cooperation agreement that is yet to be concluded.

The Ministry of Science, Research and Cultural Affairs is fostering and expanding international contacts in the field of minority policy. This applies in the case of ongoing cooperation with the umbrella organisation of national minorities of the Federal Union of European Nationalities (FUEN), exchange arrangements with the Federal State of Carinthia (Austria) and participation in information visits to destinations such as Wales organised by Sorbian/Wendish bodies. The objectives here are to foster exchange and to pursue the further development of Brandenburg’s minority policy (cf. also measure 3.1.2 of the State Plan to promote the Lower Sorbian language adopted by the State Parliament in 2016). Contacts to regions with non-kin state minorities and to German-speaking regions with Slavic minorities, such as the Sorbs/Wends in Brandenburg, are of particular interest in this regard.

Development and European policy communication is being accorded an ever greater degree of significance, particularly against the background of populist promulgation of seemingly simple recipes to deal with a world which is becoming more and more complex. Ideas and projects are debated within the scope of the annual “Round Table for Development Policy Brandenburg” and at the “EuropaBrandenburg Forum” in conjunction with civic society associations (VENROB e.V. and others). The aims are to encourage interest in international issues and contexts on the part of the inhabitants of Brandenburg and

to implement the development policy guidelines that were adopted in 2012. So-called development policy “promoter programmes” represent one specific example of the joint initiatives being undertaken by stakeholders in Brandenburg. These are funded by the Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ) and the State of Brandenburg, and have been taking place since 2015. Promoters provide guidance, networking opportunities and training to various target groups (including in the fields of school-based and extra-school education and adult education etc.). A consortium from the Germany-based One World State Networks Working Group and the North-South Bridges Foundation is acting as one of the providers. In addition to this, there is a project entitled “Strengthening development policy educational and internal work in Brandenburg via a church-based one world initiative”.

In order to take account of current developments, five citizens’ dialogues and one specialist event were organised in 2016 on the topic of “Refugees and the reasons for their flight – what is the EU doing and what does it have to do with us?” These took place within the scope of the so-called “Strategic Partnership” of the federal states and were instigated by the MdJEV working in conjunction with the European Commission in Berlin and with cooperation from the “Alliance for Brandenburg”. Events took place in Eberswalde, Frankfurt (Oder), Senftenberg, Neuruppin and Potsdam. The integration of a large number of stakeholders from the Berlin-Brandenburg region and beyond was a particularly important aspect. This cooperation and the commitment of various stakeholders with differing experiences of a specific thematic area thus linked in with the successful interdisciplinary cooperation that initially took place in communication work within the scope of the 2015 EU Development Year. In 2017, the same format was successfully continued in seven citizens’ dialogues on the topics of “What future do we want for the European Union?” and “Migration and flight – how should the EU act?” These took place in Wittstock, Rathenow, Luckenwalde, Perleberg, Eisenhüttenstadt, Lübben and Brandenburg. Further decentralised citizens’ dialogues are planned to be held in Brandenburg in 2018. These will be jointly conducted with the Representation of the European Commission in Germany.

Acting in their respective capacities as Deputy Chair of the Board of Trustees and board member, the Minister-President and the State Secretary of the MdJEV are continuing their work with the Development and Peace Foundation (sef)⁷, which is funded by the four federal states of North Rhine-Westphalia, Brandenburg, Berlin und Saxony.

Every year, Brandenburg hosts the spring discussions of the sef in Potsdam. The main focus here is on relations with African partners.

⁷ <http://www.sef-bonn.org/sef>

2.3 Knowledge of foreign languages, intercultural competence and international mobility – including outside state administration

The educational sector is of major significance for the implementation of recommendations promulgated in the action areas of knowledge of foreign languages, intercultural competence and international mobility. Numerous measures aimed at developing intercultural competence in the fields of child day care, schools and teaching and in the areas of international cooperation and EU funding programmes have been implemented, in part because of the refugee situation and the current action requirements that have emerged as a result.

a) Child day care

The Child Day Care Ordinance⁸ provides for the deployment and refinancing of staff at child day care centres who are able to offer relevant skill sets. This enables the specialist profile of institutions to be supplemented, including via the recruitment of employees with knowledge of foreign languages (e.g. German and Polish or German and English). The state-funded Berlin-Brandenburg Socio-Pedagogical Advanced Training Institute (SFBB) regularly offers continuing training provision on issues such as dealing with diversity and multilingualism, intercultural competence and non-prejudicial education and teaching (some of which is delivered in conjunction with the Brandenburg Regional Office for Education, Integration and Democracy, RAA⁹).

b) School

Since the 2016/2017 school year, Brandenburg has been participating in the German Language Diploma Level One (DSD I) offered by the Conference of the Ministers of Education and Cultural Affairs. As well as acting as a quality assurance measure in language teaching, the DSD I Diploma also provides pupils with the added incentive of being able to obtain an internationally recognised language certificate¹⁰.

With support from the British Council, the State Institute for Schools and Media in Berlin-Brandenburg (LISUM) is continuing its “Englisch konkret” project in an enhanced format (blended learning) as of the 2017/18 school year. Contents are also being specially aligned to the new outline curriculum and to the pedagogical elements this contains with regard to the aspect of inclusion (State “Joint Learning” Concept).

⁸ § 10 Kita-PersVG

⁹ <http://www.raa-brandenburg.de/>

¹⁰ Since the 2016/2017 school year, this provision has also been available to pupils in further education and at vocational schools who are speakers of foreign languages.

Pupils in Brandenburg will also be able to obtain certification for their knowledge of foreign languages¹¹. Spanish will be offered as a modern language in the new outline curriculum for Years 1–10 at schools in Berlin and Brandenburg¹².

Native language teaching, which serves to promote and foster linguistic competence previously acquired in a child's mother tongue or in the official language of the country of origin, and the further development of intercultural skills offers a further opportunity for intercultural education.

Use of digital media and personal meetings within the scope of school trips and exchange programmes give children a chance to establish and maintain manifold contacts with people in other countries.

The imparting of intercultural competence is also currently taking place via an advanced series of courses on "Intercultural and inter-religious learning in the subject area of Life Skills, Ethics and Religious Studies". This has been developed by the MBSJ in conjunction with the University of Potsdam and WiB e.V. and is being implemented by the latter. Plans are in place to continue this advanced training programme over the coming school years.

The University of Potsdam has also been offering a training project entitled "Refugee Teachers Program"¹³ for more than a year. This is supported and financed by the MWFK with further involvement from the MBSJ. The project enables refugees who have completed teacher training to acquire knowledge of the German language at a suitable level with a view to integrating them into the local labour market.

The Youth for Development Cooperation project (JfEz) delivered by the North-South Bridges Foundation and the advanced training programme for mobility providers, which was offered in conjunction with the SFBB in 2015/2016, will both be continued. The aim is for the "JfEz" programme and the "Trainees for Development Cooperation" to be promoted more widely. The 13th Brandenburg Development Policy Education and Information Conference (BREBIT) was hosted as scheduled.

c) Teachers

The Eduserver of the states of Berlin and Brandenburg¹⁴ supports teaching staff by providing various materials (e.g. documentation from the KMK conference on "Intercultural education and teaching at schools") and

¹¹ The DELF and DELE certificates provide official evidence of knowledge of French for persons enrolling at an institute of higher education or applying for a job in France, Belgium, Canada and Switzerland

¹² See also remarks in 1.2.

¹³ <http://www.uni-potsdam.de/unterrichtsinterventionsforsch/refugee.html>

¹⁴ <http://bildungsserver.berlin-brandenburg.de/themen/interkulturelle-bildung/>

advice as to how they can assist their pupils to acquire intercultural competences.

Intercultural education and teaching is also an overarching topic in the new skeleton curriculum for the states of Berlin and Brandenburg¹⁵. Part B of this curriculum covers interdisciplinary competence development. Alongside basic language lessons, it encompasses further elements such as education for the acceptance of diversity, European education at school, intercultural education and teaching and sustainable development/learning in global contexts.

Advanced training programmes and special conferences provide head teachers, school advisors, teachers and other educational staff with an opportunity to pursue their own continuing training and to network with others. Various modules aimed at supporting the acquisition of intercultural competence are integrated into training for teachers of German as a second language. Up until the summer of 2017, a total of 185 teachers had taken part in this training programme, which is provided by LISUM. WiB e.V. will continue to offer a certified training programme until April 2018. This will offer continuing training on an in-service basis to a further 300 teachers. Use can also be made of a pool of materials, which includes documents such as guidance for working on an internal school curriculum. Until the new skeleton curriculum entered into force, schools were involved in drawing up their own internal curricula and have integrated a range of relevant overarching topics.

Since the 2015/16 school year, approximately 500 teachers specialising in the subject of English have been appointed within the scope of the recruitment process for teaching staff at publicly-funded schools.

d) Integration, networks and civic education

The Alliance for Brandenburg, which was founded in November 2015 to assist with the integration of refugees, is making a considerable contribution to intercultural education and teaching. Alongside the acquisition of language skills, integration into training and work is one of the most important areas. The Alliance has also helped to create new networks at state level, in towns and cities and at local government level in order to improve knowledge sharing and explore opportunities for cooperation. The State Government has funded 160 highly varied projects, including language courses, the teaching of values and exchange platforms. Dialogue forums organised within the scope of the Alliance for Brandenburg provide networking and professionalisation opportunities for both teachers and other stakeholders.

In its capacity as an independent support agency for education and societal integration which operates

¹⁵ See <http://bildungsserver.berlin-brandenburg.de/>

right across the state, the RAA Brandenburg¹⁶ is developing a series of advanced training programmes for teachers aimed at achieving democratic integration. The task spectrum of the RAA Brandenburg includes promoting democracy as a form of life and society, encouraging involvement by citizens and tackling right-wing extremism, racism, anti-Semitism and other inhuman ideologies. Provision is supplemented by state-wide projects in areas such as intercultural school development and global learning. There is also an Agency for Islam. The RAA coordinates a programme entitled “Schools without racism – schools with courage in the State of Brandenburg”. 70 schools have thus far been designated as Schools without racism – schools with courage”. Within the scope of the project, they commit to social and peaceful co-existence in a spirit of solidarity with the aim of achieving a society which is free of racism and discrimination.

Foreign language certification is offered in French and Spanish at schools in the general further education system. Vocational schools provide an additional vocational qualification in Polish as part of training in the occupation of “freight forwarding and logistics services clerk”. Provision also exists for certification in foreign languages by the Conference of the Ministers of Education and Cultural Affairs (KMK)¹⁷. This is available for English in a variety of VET programmes and for Polish and Sorbian/Wendish in the field of social work.

As the lead institution in the area, the Brandenburg State Agency for Civic Education makes a vital contribution to intercultural education and teaching via activities such as book readings, podium debates, presentations and round table discussions with experts, journalists, artists and politicians. School classes also take part in these events on a regular basis.

e) International cooperation and EU funding programmes

Existing international cooperation arrangements in place at schools are being expanded in order to increase the mobility of school pupils and young people in particular. Participating schools receive relevant guidance and support provision.

One example of good practice with regard to the use of existing EU funding programmes is the work being

¹⁶ See footnote 9.

¹⁷ The KMK foreign languages certificate is a nationally standardised and regulated qualification which provides evidence of the acquisition of occupationally related knowledge of foreign languages. Pupils at vocational schools are able to obtain the certificate following successful completion of a special examination. They are then in possession of an additional qualification which is of considerable value for their future career.

undertaken at the Max Steenbeck Upper Secondary School in Frankfurt (Oder). In April 2016, the title of “Project of the Month” was conferred on the school by the Pedagogical Exchange Service (PAD), the Conference of the Ministers of Education and Cultural Affairs and the Federal Ministry of Education for its Erasmus+ partnerships with schools from six European countries. One of the reasons for the award was the development of materials for vocational and higher education orientation in Europe in conjunction with Denmark, Poland, France, Latvia, Northern Ireland and Spain. Bernhardinum Catholic School in Fürstenwalde also received the 2017 eTwinning Seal of Quality for exemplary Internet projects for a school project on diversity in Europe entitled “Discovering Europe through play”.

An “international media education” network focusing on e-twinning projects was also set up in the autumn of 2017 as part of the “medienfit@ primary school” project, which is coordinated by the MBS.

The use of EU programmes continues to be promoted by the Berlin-Brandenburg Eduserver and via the vehicle of information and guidance conferences on the topic of international youth exchange. Pupils also receive guidance and support provision within the scope of funding made available for local government mobility strategies. State funding has been put in place for links between school pupils, and meetings between young people are being continued on an ongoing basis.

Action area 3 – making Brandenburg more attractive internationally

3.1 Increasing attractiveness, fostering integration, creating a welcoming culture

In light of demographic developments, the Internationalisation Strategy assumes that Brandenburg will need to compete for immigrants with other federal states and countries which are often in a better economic situation. The focuses are on improving the actual prevailing general conditions in Brandenburg and on the way in which the state is portrayed externally. The areas in which the Internationalisation Strategy has identified that action is required include the integration of immigrants living here, the significance of the immigration authorities as a first port of call, improvement of services for new arrivals in Brandenburg with insufficient knowledge of language and culture, support for companies and trade unions in the integration of foreign skilled workers into company processes, and the integration of people into local life outside the work environment.

As part of the Integration through Training (IQ) network, the bbw East Brandenburg Education Centre

offers information events and training courses to SMEs, chambers and municipal companies in Brandenburg. These address the specific circumstances which apply with regard to recruiting, employing and securing the loyalty of foreign workers and support the establishment of a genuine welcoming culture that invites people to stay. A further IQ sub-project run by the RAA Brandenburg supports the employment agencies, job centres and other public administration stakeholders (providing labour market-related services) in dealing with migrants in everyday working life and in opening up these regulatory institutions to an intercultural approach.

Large numbers of refugees arrived in Brandenburg in the years 2015/16 in particular. The state and the local government authorities faced up to the challenges this situation created, initially by ensuring that accommodation was made available and then by increasingly introducing integration services. These range from federal state programmes to supplement integration courses (the MASGF “German for Refugees” programme) to the establishment of welcome classes at general schools and also extend to include specific vocational school provision (the MBS “BFS-G-Plus” scheme) and special support provided at institutes of higher education (MWFK). In addition to this, many citizens of Brandenburg are performing voluntary work which makes a valuable contribution towards supporting refugees on and after their arrival in Brandenburg.

According to an IAB-BAMF-SOEP survey¹⁸, the qualifications of persons coming to our state as refugees differ significantly from those of the resident German population in that the proportion of intermediate school leaving qualifications is distinctly lower whilst the incidence of lower level qualifications is very much higher. Because no training system comparable to the German VET system exists in most countries of origin, many refugees are not in possession of a formal vocational qualification. Even if they have gained occupational experience in their home countries, this does not provide a sufficient prerequisite for labour market integration in Germany. On the basis of findings that have been gathered in the wake of earlier refugee migration, the IAB expects that labour market integration will require a considerable period of time. Refugees do not achieve the same employment level of other migrant groups (70%) for 15 years. Firms which are prepared to offer training or employment to refugees are able to receive guidance and assistance from the Company Support Agency (bea). The agency establishes contact with the labour administration authorities, supports firms which are willing to take on refugees by arranging for a coach and helps with the acquisition of company-based mentors. The bea is jointly financed by the MASGF and the MWE.

¹⁸ Institute for Employment Research (IAB), Federal Office for Migration and Refugees (BAMF), German Socio-Economic Panel (SOEP)

To this extent, the need originally identified to make Brandenburg attractive to qualified migrants (not from countries of asylum seeker origin) still stands. The topic of internationalisation has thus been established as a cross-cutting issue and in this regard forms one of the benchmarks of the state's skilled worker strategy. To this end, the MASGF has instigated a concentrated process of specialist networking in which the Central Foreign and Specialist Placement Agency of the Federal Employment Agency is also involved. This shows that the acquisition of skilled workers with international experience, including from abroad, is becoming increasingly important in the State of Brandenburg. "Matching" is a further topic that needs to be addressed alongside acquisition. According to the Institute for Employment Research (IAB) Establishment Panel, foreign workers are likely to be employed below their qualification level. Company measures and activities aimed at (social) integration are crucial to successful recruitment. Constraints exist in the form of legal and institutional hurdles (e.g. recognition, prospects of being able to remain in Germany), insufficient language knowledge or complete lack thereof, and insufficient or non-recognised qualifications which cannot therefore be utilised on the German labour market.

Further investigations will need to take place in future as to how and which target groups of (potential) immigrants can be addressed on the basis of the different requirements within various sectors (executives with academic qualifications as opposed to skilled workers/craft trade workers), how the constraints stated can be overcome, and which measures may help with integration in the companies.

Since February 2017, the Brandenburg Consumer Centre has been conducting a project on guidance given to refugees. The most important objective of this project is to enable refugees to develop an understanding of the German legal system, especially within the context of everyday needs such as conclusion of mobile telephone contracts, food labelling and financial services (e.g. bank transfers). It also aims to illustrate particular circumstances which arise, for example, when refugees do not live in urban areas and are distributed across rural regions, and to develop and implement possible solutions in conjunction with multipliers (mainly the major welfare associations).

3.2 Public image of the state/improving state marketing

In order to enhance the attractiveness of the state, it will be crucial to increase awareness of Brandenburg both domestically and abroad. To this end, the State Chancellery has produced an image brochure which is also available in English and Polish.

There are various stakeholders in Brandenburg who have taken on the task of promoting the state as a

location. In order to raise Brandenburg's profile as an economic location in an effective way in international terms, the actions undertaken by the individual stakeholders will need to be networked and harmonised. This form of promotion (which does not include tourism) should concentrate on portraying the state as a location for investment and innovation and as an attractive place for skilled workers and their families to live and work. Targeted marketing measures should also be deployed as a vehicle to raise awareness of Brandenburg's economic goods and workplace opportunities amongst potentially interested parties from abroad (e.g. via the state's own trade and industry portal the "Brandenburg Business Guide" or by means of the dedicated skilled worker portal. Greater use should be made of the opportunities afforded by ERDF-OP 2014–2020 in order to raise Brandenburg's visibility on the international stage. This can also exert a knock-on effect on SMEs in Brandenburg and help them to improve their international competitiveness. International events in Brandenburg and abroad should also be particularly exploited in order to enhance the way in which the state is perceived.

The MdF is endeavouring to establish an International Tax Centre (IStZ). As well as providing an internal administrative platform, this should also offer a service and knowledge centre and a point of contact for domestic and foreign authorities and for international organisations, companies and scientific research institutions.

Summary and forecast

Especially against the background of the global changes highlighted in the opening remarks to the present report, experiences gleaned since the adoption of the Internationalisation Strategy in 2014 show that implementation of recommendations has certainly not been possible to the desired extent and that new state policy focuses need to be set out. The refugee situation in particular has tied up resources to a degree that could not have been foreseen at the time when the strategy was approved.

Nevertheless, the fundamental long-term alignment of the Internationalisation Strategy has proved its worth. The strategy is also increasingly being revealed as an important reference framework for many issues which arise. As sections 1–3 show, considerable progress has been achieved with regard to implementation.

(1) This applies in particular with regard to the intensification of foreign relations within the scope of

action area 1.

- a. As well as continuing its close collaboration with Poland, Brandenburg has also expanded relationships in the Baltic Sea region. This was made clear by the large number of participants from all countries bordering the Baltic attending the BSSSC Annual Conference in Potsdam in September 2017. In overall terms, the aim is to achieve further concentration of contacts to the Baltic region both within the scope of specific (EU) project work and via political links and stronger ties with civic society. The plan is that the new partnership coordinator for the Baltic Sea region will support this process.
- b. Brandenburg's participation in the 2016 German Week at the Consulate General in St. Petersburg in its capacity as a partner state enabled contacts with regions in the Russian Federation, which had been declining even prior to the current tensions, to be reactivated. This makes it possible to contribute to the easing of these tensions at a regional level, to continue to expand relations with the St. Petersburg Oblast in particular and to investigate whether Brandenburg's partnership with the Kaliningrad Oblast and the Moscow Oblast can be reinvigorated.

(2) Significant progress has also been made in actions areas 2 and 3. Improved information networking within the State Government has ensued, and the topic of internationalisation has achieved a considerably higher level of significance within a whole range of specialist policy contexts. Examples which should be mentioned in this regard are the company set-up and succession strategy and the skilled worker strategy of the State Government. Nevertheless, action still needs to be taken across all areas. The capabilities of officials and civil servants working in European and international contexts must undergo significant improvement. The same applies with regard to international mobility (administrative exchange). The public image of the state also needs to be portrayed in a more effective way.

(3) Despite the improvement in the way in which information is exchanged, it is constantly revealed that existing instruments permit only a restricted view of the international activities and connections of the various institutions and stakeholders in the state. For this reason, knowledge (and accessibility of knowledge) must be further improved via the existing international contacts that institutions have in place, including outside state administration.

- (4) In light of the tendencies to withdraw which can be observed in many places, there is a necessity to sharpen public awareness of the integration of the state into international contexts. Brandenburg's opportunity to act within such contexts need to be highlighted, and stronger involvement in such processes must be promoted. The aim is that this be achieved via several decentralised events organised in the state under the lead management of the MdJEV.

- (5) With regard to Brexit, the observation should be made that Germany's membership of the European Union essentially determines the statehood of Brandenburg whilst also constituting the foundation for the vast majority of international activities it undertakes. It sets out the legal and political framework for large areas of state policy and for the everyday lives of the inhabitants of Brandenburg. Within the scope of its European policy, the State Government acts in a timely manner to ensure that Brandenburg's interests help inform the opinion-forming and decision-making process of the European Union. For this reason, maintenance and strengthening of the European Union and co-involvement in all its affairs is a central objective of the work of the State Government, and this is something which must be accorded due consideration within the scope of the Internationalisation Strategy.

From the very outset, the Internationalisation Strategy for the State of Brandenburg was never designed to be a rigid action matrix. It constitutes the framework for a process which continues to develop over the course of time and which adjusts to current facts and circumstances. With this in mind, the aim is to continue to implement the strategy whilst undertaking any subsequent adjustments and new focus which may be required.