

The North West

A REGION
OF THE



European Union



Merseyside Maritime Museum. Photo COI Picture Library

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The term “European Union” stemming from Maastricht is preferred in this text. However, whenever funding programmes or policies/laws stemming from the original EEC or ECSC treaties are referred to the term “European Community” is used.

The dynamic diversity of the European Union is embodied in its regions. The Union, a Community of 12 Member States where decisions are taken by Ministers responsible to national parliaments, is committed to preserving this diversity as it advances towards ever closer integration.

Each of the regions of the European Union has its own particularities. Each is affected by Community policies. The increasing recognition of this fact underlies the vast growth in cooperation between the regions, from the humblest twinning links to large cross-frontier spending programmes such as INTERREG, providing European Union support for the problems of national problem areas. Cross European links in transport, energy and telecommunications are being initiated from the smallest to the greatest. These links are the nerves of the European Union as a Community with a common purpose based on national and regional self-interest with a blossoming regional diversity.

Development of the Regions

The removal of frontiers has brought regions in direct contact with each other. There are increasing trans-frontier exchanges and cooperation on projects. Many policies of the Union will be of special benefit to the regions. Just to mention a few, competition policy has helped create a level playing field where firms from all regions can compete on fair terms in EU markets; the deregulation of transport policy has cut the cost of moving goods between the regions. Small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) have been among the prime beneficiaries of EU action. Measures include helping them make contacts with partners in other countries and providing them with business start-up aid.

The harmonious development of the regions can only be achieved by reducing the disparities between the economically strong and the less advanced among them. This is why the European Union is committed to re-allocate more of its resources (25% of its budget) to the regions which are lagging behind. The Structural Funds consist of the European Regional Development Fund, the guidance section of the Agricultural Fund and the European Social Fund. Nearly two-

thirds of the money goes to disadvantaged priority regions. The aims of the Funds include helping regions seriously affected by industrial decline and to promote the development of rural areas.

The European Union must also promote the balanced social development of its regions. The citizens benefit from education, training and mobility programmes. These include help for technology training, vocational training for young people, as well as student exchanges under the ERASMUS programme.

The Single Market

Community spending programmes do not by any means represent the whole picture. Much of this spending has a wider impact by the very fact that the Community is addressing common problems, such as the difficulties of frontier areas, coal and steel closures or the telecommunication needs of the outer regions. Similarly, the scientific and education programmes have a far wider impact than the amount of money involved might suggest, through the large number of cooperation networks that these programmes have helped to establish.

At the heart of the European Union lies the Single Market. Its economic impact is of a different order of magnitude. Here lie the freedoms leading to Europe's competitive edge in the rest of the world: free movement of goods, people, services and capital. Its counterpart is the Community external trade policy. Here the economic benefits of the Union acting together, for example, in the recent Uruguay round of the GATT negotiations, dwarfed any impact of the funds in the regions. The regions and the Union itself are indivisible.

1. The North West: a region of the European Union

The North West consists of Cheshire, Greater Manchester, Lancashire and Merseyside.

The region's dominant socio-geographical feature is the estuary of the River Mersey. Physically, the North West is the smallest region of the UK with a total area of 7,343 square kilometres.

It is also the UK's most densely populated region, with an average 835 people per square kilometre. Two of the country's largest urban conurbations (Greater Manchester and Greater Liverpool) occupy a large proportion of the area.

Total population is over 6 million, the largest outside the south east. Population density is high, four times the national average; Lancashire's and Cheshire's population density is lower but it is still over 400 people per square kilometre.

Traditional areas of economic activity in the region, namely textiles, coal mining, and port activities, have been in decline for some years. Despite this, the region still provides for 10.5% of UK GDP and 13% of manufacturing output. Prominent sectors of economic activity today are motor vehicles, chemicals, toiletries and food processing. Despite the largely rural nature of Northern Lancashire, agriculture has a limited role. Manchester is principally a commercial centre surrounded by industrial satellite towns: Liverpool is home to many large insurance companies and Littlewoods, the UK's largest privately-owned company.

Past links with Europe are extensive. Ribchester in central Lancashire, for example, was the site for one of Roman Britain's northern garrison towns. For its part, the Duchy of Lancaster has historic links with Northern Portugal, and there were extensive trading relationships with Northern European and Scandinavian ports. In the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, Liverpool rose to preeminence as a port, surviving the decline of the West India trade with the rapid development of links with the USA. Subsequently the Ship Canal created ports in Manchester and Salford. Merseyside as a whole has maintained close ties with Ireland, building on historic links deriving in part from Liverpool's role as port of departure for many emigrants from Ireland and northern Europe, to North America, but also to Australia and southern Africa.

The decline of Liverpool and Manchester as ports of arrival has been paralleled by the growth of modern internal and international communications. Manchester airport is the major jumping off point for sun-seeking tourist from the North of England; an extensive railway network and intensive motorway development connects the region efficiently with other parts of the UK and, with the opening of the Channel Tunnel, with the rest of the European Union. Twinning with other European towns and regions is widespread with most local government areas in the region twinned with at least two European counterparts.

Regional economic indicators vary. GDP is relatively high but so is unemployment, as much as 16% in Merseyside. Liverpool has responded, adjusting through initiatives such as the Albert Dock redevelopment which has attracted 5 million visitors to the old port area. This level of tourism is second only in national terms to the 6.5 million visitors to Blackpool. Manchester continues its redevelopment building on the success achieved by the development of the G-Mex Exhibition Centre which has brought new commercial life to the city. Other regional tourist attractions which have benefited from assistance from the European Union include the East Lancashire steam railway, the Manchester Ship Canal, the Leeds and Liverpool canal, the Wigan Pier development, the Greater Boat museum area of Ellesmere Port, and the western and northern extensions of Castlefield.

In the context of the European Union as a whole, the North West has a GDP per capita of 90% of the average. This, however, hides differences in the region:

Cheshire	104%
Greater Manchester	92%
Lancashire	91%
Merseyside	77%

The North West: a statistical profile:

Area	7,343 km ²
Population:	
Total (1990)	6,389,000
of which:	
Men	48.6%
Women	51.4%
Population Change (1981 - 1991)	-272,500
Percentage of total population	11
Population Density per square km	835
Sub-regional population: (1992)	
Greater Manchester	2,573,500
Merseyside	1,445,700
Lancashire	1,413,500
Cheshire	966,900
Major Towns:	
Liverpool	479,000
Manchester	434,600
Blackpool	152,100
Bolton	263,800
Stockport	288,800
Birkenhead	335,300
St Helens	180,900
Salford	230,300
Oldham	220,200
Rochdale	205,700

All European Union citizens participate directly in the Union's life, electing representatives to the European Parliament. The North West region contains nine European Parliament constituencies: Lancashire Central, Lancashire South, Merseyside East and Wigan, Merseyside West, Cheshire East, Cheshire West and three Greater Manchester seats - East, West and Central. In addition, the Westminster seats of Lancaster and Morecambe and Lonsdale are included in the European constituency of Cumbria and Lancashire North.

The regions also have a direct voice. A new Committee of the Regions was established under the Maastricht Treaty and is consulted on important items of new draft European Union legislation. Three elected representatives from local government in the region have been appointed to the Committee of the Regions by the Government: two (from Lancashire County Council and Trafford Metropolitan Borough Council) are members; the third (from Oldham Metropolitan Borough Council) is an alternate member.

2. Regeneration and growth

The European Community's main policies and programmes relate to the creation of a single market, a common trade policy and a range of other initiatives which include, for example, environmental policy and moves towards Economic and Monetary Union. Indeed, the Single Market is the context in which the North West must consolidate the continuing process of adjustment and restructuring it has undergone for some time. The policies whereby the European Community spends its own budget must be seen in proportion to the overall range of its policies taken as a whole. The Common Agricultural Policy was the earliest spending policy to develop and still accounts for over 50% of the Community's budget. The next major area of EC spending is its Structural Funds:

- The European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) helps the less advantaged regions of the European Union compete on equal terms.
- The European Social Fund (ESF) provides for vocational training and job creation projects.
- The Guidance section of the European Agricultural Guidance and Guarantee Fund (EAGGF) helps to improve the structures in the agricultural sector and rural areas that are lagging behind the EU average.

These funds are spent in accordance with certain objectives. Merseyside has been given Objective 1 status which goes to those areas of the Union most lagging behind economically and concentrates resources upon them. Objective 2 status, which goes to areas of industrial decline, has been granted to the Travel-to-Work areas of Bolton and Bury, Manchester, Oldham, Rochdale, Wigan and St Helens within Greater Manchester. In addition, Objective 5b status, which helps rural areas lagging behind, has been given to parts of Lancaster, Pendle, Ribble Valley and Wyre Districts within Lancashire.

In addition, the European Community has funds for coal and steel areas, support for large investments from the European Investment Bank together with programmes in the fields of education, scientific research and development, energy and the environment. Amongst a variety of smaller programmes there is support for certain kinds of cross-European links and for certain cultural projects.

Examples of the use of almost all these funds can be found in the different parts of the North West. In the decade 1982-92, European Community programmes' spending in Lancashire exceeded £20 million. The county's largest development agency, Lancashire Enterprises Ltd, was set up by the county council in co-operation with the private sector in 1982. Since then it has invested £14 million, much of which originated in European regional programmes, in the county which has experienced the decline of traditional areas of economic activity (cotton and coal) and is now suffering the effects of defence cutbacks. This investment has helped establish over 200 small and medium enterprises and 22,000 jobs have been created. Most of these are high technology firms and jobs.

Indeed, Lancashire has benefited substantially from its links with the European Union. Between 1990 and 1992, grants worth over 1.7 million Ecu were received to help with the reconversion of the run-down of coal mining areas. Amongst the urban regeneration projects which have been successfully completed in the country are the award-winning White Cross development in Lancaster, Blackburn's Daisyfield Business Centre and Altham's Venture Court.

Since 1982 the European Union has invested over £20 million on Lancashire's future. Building on existing skills and potential amongst the labour force, European Community assistance over the decade to 1992 has enabled the county to overcome declining traditional industries (coal and textiles), and, most recently, the sharp contraction of defence industry based employment.

Despite the difficulties facing Lancashire's manufacturing industry, the county escaped the worst effects of the country's second recession. Unemployment increases were not as steep as elsewhere in the region and the country as a whole, nor did the housing market either boom or bust as it did in the more prosperous south-east. Interestingly, the county's successful limiting of the nationwide recession was based upon a successful partnership between the county council, individual firms and the European Union.

Much of the training in Lancashire is provided by Lancashire Enterprises Ltd under contracts with the County Council. The training programme is supported by a £800,000 grant from the European Social Fund. The comprehensive programme of courses which are provided targets the needs of both the unemployed and those of business and industry. Amongst the courses offered are training in:

- Starting a business;
- Computer-aided engineering;
- Helping women return to the workplace;
- Skills training for the unemployed; and
- Programmes for the disabled.

On behalf of the County Council, Lancashire Enterprises assists over 500 businesses a year. It provides support services to Lancashire companies who take advantage of the Business and Europe Advice desk.

Other regional projects which have benefited from European financial support in the recent past include the Lancashire and Merseyside Investment Fund, Bolton Business Ventures Ltd., Lancashire Industrial Science and Technology Ltd, the Bolton Centre (a one stop advice, information and signpost service for small and medium enterprises), the Acorn Centre and the Vocational Assessment Centre in Oldham, Tameside's Business Training Centre and HeadStart projects for under-25s starting their own businesses.

European assistance to Greater Merseyside to 1985 totalled over £101 million for 370 infrastructure projects. Projects include: the Brunswick Business Park, the Merseyside Maritime Museum and the Wavertree Technology Park. Annual support to this sub-region from the European Social Fund exceeded £27.5 million over the period.

Cheshire also received substantial assistance. Amongst this support was a European Social Fund grant to Cheshire County Council totalling £750,000 for seven training schemes. These included an information technology scheme targeting youth in Widnes and Ellesmere Port, and a craft design technology course for women at Chester College of Further Education. Regional redevelopment efforts continue to be supported with financial assistance from the European Union.

The North West has seen substantial improvements to its environment with support from the European Union. In addition to major redevelopments such as the transformation of Manchester city centre and the redevelopment of the Albert docks, European Union financial support has assisted the clean up of the Mersey estuary, the Widnes Sewage Treatment works, stages 1 and 2(a) of Widnes' southern industrial sewer, and Wallasey's interceptor sewer and the Shore Road sewage screening works. European Regional Development Fund support to help the North West Water Authority meet environmental standards for water was over £70 million in the period to end 1993. European Regional Development Fund support to the Manchester Ship Canal Company has also brought substantial improvements to the canal through the regeneration of the canal's upper reaches. Support has also been given to the regeneration of industrial land, the Leeds and Liverpool Canal project, the Liverpool South Docks and the Greater Boat museum area of Ellesmere Port.

THERMIE is the name for the European Community's programme of demonstration projects in the fields of energy saving and alternative energy sources. In the period 1991-93 it supported five projects in the North West with a total value of approximately 8.5 million Ecus. Project holders included Salford University, ICI, Merseytravel, and Chloride RWE.

European Investment Bank development loans to the region totalled over 700 million Ecus in the 1989-92 period. Among the projects recently funded, securing at risk jobs, were the extension and moderation of the St Helen's float glass plant and the environmentally sensitive aluminium can recycling facility near Manchester.

Communication improvements

Although some way from the heartland of the European Union, the region is well connected with the European mainland by air. The Eurorail freight terminal in Liverpool will bring the region even closer to the rest of Europe. European support for transport infrastructure improvements include regeneration of the Greater Manchester motorway network, European Regional Development Fund financing of the Runcorn East rail station, European Regional Development Fund and European Investment Bank financing of improvements to the Liverpool Inner Ring Road (totalling over

£13.5 million), Queensway (Liverpool - Birkenhead) Tunnel improvements, the recently completed Ellesmere Port town centre traffic management schemes, the Wigan inner ring road, the Upon by-pass and Borough Road improvement on the Wirral, and improved access to dockland in Liverpool and the Wirral, as well as to Liverpool Lime Street station. Garston, one of the region's two major passenger and goods links with Ireland, the other being Liverpool itself, benefited from a European Regional Development Fund grant exceeding £800,000 for loading appliances and additional storage, including container parking at the port.

The terminal and the Channel tunnel link Liverpool and Paris within 18 hours. Amongst the many benefits will be the strengthening of the city's position as the transshipment point for Europe-bound freight from Ireland and North America, rekindling the city's historic role. Following a steady decline over a long period, the amount of freight handled by the port has begun to rise once again. The volume handled by Liverpool rose 40% between 1987-92.

A £5 million grant from the European Regional Development Fund makes a substantial contribution to the development of the Eurorail terminal and the expansion of Liverpool's free port facilities.

Overcoming changed defence needs

With a significant number of jobs threatened by defence spending cut backs, the North West will also receive approximately £2.4 million from the KONVER programme. This programme specifically provides financial compensation to help with the redevelopment of European regions badly affected by the run down of defence related industries. This investment will help the formation of business groups and information networks, as well as supporting the creation of small and medium enterprises.

Recent announcements, however, of job losses have underlined the fragility of the region's manufacturing industry. Cut backs and the collapse of Ferranti, one of the region's largest defence companies, continue to bring job losses with recent announcements of cuts in British Aerospace's Manchester and Bolton sites, Royal Ordnance's Chorley plant, and Fison's Holmes Chapel plant in Chester.

Approximately 45,000 jobs in Lancashire alone depend on the defence industry. With support from the European Community, Lancashire Enterprises works at a regional and European level to ensure the county retains the high technology skills of those working at the leading edge of technology. Technical training provided includes the provision of advanced manufacturing, computer-aided design and business systems to both the public and private sectors. KONVER funding has also recently been made available.

The country is part of the DEMILITARISED network, working with Bremen in Germany and Zaanstad in the Netherlands to develop the European Union strategy on regions with a high dependency on defence for employment. Redundancy counselling and retraining is provided for 3,000 British Aerospace workers whose jobs are being phased out with the closure of the Preston Strand Road complex through the firm's NewStart programme. Other North West companies who have benefited from this European Community supported programme are British Nuclear Fuels, British Aerospace's Royal Ordnance and the Atomic Energy Authority. The site itself is the focus of the development of new technology businesses in the region. This £3.5 million project, a partnership between the County Council, British Aerospace and Preston Borough Council, has been partly financed by the European Community's former PERIFRA programme. Further PERIFRA funding has been channelled through Lancashire Enterprises for the development of a business and technology centre in Chorley. This will apply high technology process to decontaminate land polluted by explosive materials.

3. European Links

Firms in the North West have demonstrated their keenness to develop business opportunities with new partners in other parts of the European Union. Amongst the many which have done this successfully is BCM Ltd, based at Farmworth, Bolton.

BCM is part of a network set up under the European Union's SPRINT programme for innovation and technology transfer. The firm has concluded an agreement with the French company Metherso SA of Bigorre in the area of pipes and fittings for oil and chemical industries and desalination units. Under the agreement, BCM distributes its products through Metherso in return for training and technical assistance from BCM.

Lancashire Enterprises Ltd is the lead coordinator of a pan-European study into the problems facing the clothing and textile industry. Under the RETEX initiative, extensive consultations are taking place in 11 member states with employers, trades unions and other interested groups to help develop a community response to support the industry in the difficult times it faces. Earlier, in cooperation with the Irish agency *Udaras na Gaeltachta* and a German consortium *Internationale Bauausstellung Emscher Park/Kommunalverband Rhurgebiet*, Lancashire Enterprises prepared a report for the European Commission on approaches to regional economic development.

With support from the RECITE programme, designed to promote co-operation between the regions and cities of the European Union, Lancashire Enterprises is co-ordinating the 3.3 million Ecu COAST initiative. This is designed to help coastal resorts to diversify away from an over-dependence on tourism. A network of resorts from the UK, France, Italy, Greece and Spain of the COAST network have benefited from significant funding to help create new employment opportunities in their areas.

Firms, universities and research institutes from the region have participated in more than 250 cross-border Research and Development projects co-funded by the European Union in the period 1987-92. These created numerous working relationships with partners throughout the European Union; of these, 147 were with German counterparts, 141 with French, 84 with Dutch, and 83 with Italians. Amongst these are a 598,738 Ecu COBALT project between Lancashire and Lombardy (Italy) and a 794,000 COMPASS project between Lancashire and Rhone-Alpes (France). These are projects supported by the European Commission's

Directorate-General for Telecommunications, Information Market and Exploitation of Research. COBALT concerns the intelligent filtering of faxes and electronic mail. COMPASS concerns adapting bi-lingual dictionaries for assistance in reading electronic texts in a foreign language.

Libraries in Lancashire and Lorraine (France) are participating in the EDIL project for electronic document interchange between libraries. The project, which received a grant exceeding 1 million Ecu from the European Union, aims to eliminate organisational bottlenecks in document supply by automating their transfer and delivery between major library centres in France, Germany, the Netherlands, Portugal and the UK.

Lancashire Enterprises also works for the European Union's PHARE programme, designed to assist Eastern and Central European Countries with the transition to democracy and a market economy. It helps to provide a range of services to support regional and local economic development policies. These include regional economic planning, support structures for small to medium sized enterprises, and management training. Work has been carried out in Saxony and with local authorities in Auerbach to establish a regional development agency. Along with a series of practical workshops to assist the development of small and medium sized enterprises, a programme within the framework of OUVERTURE, which is designed to promote regional co-operation with Central and Eastern Europe, is run in partnership with Chumotov in the Czech republic and County Down in Northern Ireland. It concerns training in venture capital techniques. Other programmes supported by PHARE are carried out in Albania and Bulgaria.

This experience has fed into European Union's CREDO programme, a joint venture of Lancashire Enterprises and the Irish agency *Udaras na Gaeltachta*. The programme targets the development of European Regions, particularly in Southern and Eastern Europe.

Trade Unions

The North West Regional Council of the TUC has sought to respond to the increasing awareness of the region's work force of the growing importance of the European Union in their daily working life. Particular effort has been made to anticipate the changes resulting from participation in the Single European Market, offering briefings to representatives on the structures and

operations of the European Union and integrating the European dimension into trade union education course provision.

A number of specific cross-European (including Central and Eastern European) courses have been run either in conjunction with the *Association pour la formation européenne des travailleurs aux technologies (AFETT)* (Association for the European training of technology workers) which operates under the auspices of the European Trades Union Confederation. Most of these courses, attended by partners from Czechoslovakia, Denmark, France, Germany, Italy, Ireland, and Sweden, have focused on particular sectors. They have included an examination of changes in the food, banking, audio-visual and vehicle construction industries. The European Community's COMETT programme, designed to improve technology training, has helped in this respect.

Some Trade Union Education Units have forged their own practical links with trade unions in Europe under the TUC's auspices. Wigan's Trade Union Education Unit has contacts with the CFDT in Angers, the French town with which Wigan is twinned. As part of this ongoing relationship, three local trade union representatives attended a conference examining working conditions in Angers. Blackpool trades unionists have initiated steps to forge links with the German TUC in the German town of Bottrop, with which Blackpool is twinned.

4. Education Cooperation

With support from the UK Department of Employment's training and enterprise directorate, the North West has established a Euro Unit to help the region's 70 Further Education Colleges, Sixth Form Colleges, Training and Enterprise Councils and their clients to benefit from the opportunities presented by the European Union. It also provides a focus for European educational projects which take place in the region. While the services provided are principally available to the colleges, advice and support on European issues are also provided to the whole range of education and training organisations, including schools, the youth and community service, Higher Education institutions, TEC's training agencies, the careers service and local authorities. The FE Euro Unit North West, established in 1991, is part of a national network of Further Education Euro Units (Tel: 0257 241428).

Coordinating a regional network of college European Officers, the unit offers four main areas of service: (i) Information and advice (ii) Links and contacts, (iii) Staff development, and (iv) curriculum development. Specific areas of assistance include:-

- (i) Information and Advice: information on European Union programmes for education and training; advice on the preparation of bids for European Union funding, and help in promoting the work of Further Education colleges in Europe.
- (ii) Links and Contacts: help in identifying European partners for joint projects; advice on staff and student visits and exchanges, and help with developing work placements in Europe.
- (iii) Staff development: information to raise awareness of the educational and training systems of other European countries, and workshops and seminars on identified staff development needs.
- (iv) Curriculum Development: support for regional curriculum development groups in European Studies; assistance in devising flexible language learning provision, and development of a regional specialist in the use of communications technology for raising European awareness.

A survey conducted by the Euro Unit identified the information which its clients found most useful. In order of priority, these were:

- (i) Setting up European exchanges, work placements, and study visits;
- (ii) Brussels Update - an introduction to the new EC Funding Programmes;
- (iii) European Social Fund - the new arrangements;
- (iv) General National Vocational Qualifications - designing the 'Business in Europe' module;
- (v) Languages - an open learning approach;
- (vi) Vocational Education and Training in Europe (with workshops focusing on Denmark, France, Germany and Spain:)
- (vii) European Qualifications - issues of comparability; and
- (viii) Special Needs and Social Care in Europe.

In a continuing attempt to keep North West colleges active in education and training initiatives on the European Union, the Euro Unit provides free briefings to management teams of the region's Further Education and Sixth Form Colleges. These briefings are designed to help college principals incorporate new guidelines from the Commission into their college's strategic plan for Europe and encourage more college managers to think "European" in curriculum development. Nineteen briefings were conducted during 1993 alone.

The Euro Unit has a comprehensive resource centre which provides information on the whole range of education and training programmes from the European Union. It also provides links and contacts for projects with European colleges in partner states. As a result, many colleges in the region have developed a range of staff and student exchanges within the framework of programmes such as LINGUA (improved language training), PETRA (vocational training of young people and their preparation for working life), FORCE (the development of continuing vocational training) and TEMPUS (higher education co-operation with Central and Eastern Europe). Typical projects include:

- Colleges linked electronically for the exchange of curriculum materials;
- Training the trainers programmes on the theme of Open learning;
- Students across Europe being trained in Motor Vehicle Engineering using advanced telematics techniques;
- Colleges developing multi-media projects in areas such as Colleges developing dual accreditation systems with a range of institutions in Europe.

The education and training programmes initiated by the European Union have attracted a large number of participants from the North West. EUROTECNET relates initial vocational and continual training to technological change. Five EUROTECNET projects are currently underway in the region, three of which involve training institute-enterprise partnerships. Four FORCE projects in the region are currently in place. These cover training needs and qualifications in the chemical sector and the food industry, and equal opportunities in the workplace.

Within the framework of PETRA, there are in the North West six participants in the European Network of Training Partnerships. In addition, with the 1992 launch of the second phase of PETRA, 118 young workers and young people in initial vocational training took part in short placements in other Member States.

Thirteen of the 44 eligible higher education institutions from the region now participate in the European Union's ERASMUS programme of student mobility. Business management is the most favoured area of study. Most ERASMUS exchanges are with France.

Identified North West Higher Education Institutions participating in ERASMUS Programmes

Institution	No. of Projects	Countries	No. of Students	No. of Staff
Crewe & Alsager HE College	1	2	12	-
Liverpool HE Institute	1	2	12	-
Manchester Metropolitan University	5	9	223	-
Salford College of Technology	1	3	75	-
University of Lancaster	14	14	850	62
University of Liverpool	4	15	158	7
University of Manchester	12	35	328	30
UMIST	6	16	128	6
University of Salford	2	1	23	-

During the 1992 - 93 academic year, all exchanges organised enabled 1,577 students from the region to spend part of their academic year at a university outside the United Kingdom. In the same period, North West institutions hosted 1,732 European students. The most active North West institutional participants were at the University of Central Lancashire (formerly Lancashire Polytechnic) and Manchester Metropolitan University (formerly Manchester Polytechnic).

Further Education

Educational exchanges are not limited to the university sector. Students and lecturers at West Cheshire College and IES Joseph Lladonosa, an institute in the Catalonian town of Lleida (Lerida) participated in a work experience exchange. The students lived in their exchange partners' homes. West Cheshire students gained work experience in hair dressing and beauty salons, sports centres, swimming pools and hotels in Lleida. Their Spanish counterparts worked in and around Chester at Littlewoods, Chester College, Kemira Fertilisers, and West Cheshire College. West Cheshire College's organiser Heather Roberts says 'Exchanges such as this are a valuable experience giving students an opportunity to experience another culture and sample living and working in another country. It has enabled Spanish students who have studied English for four years to improve their language skills and has been a good introduction for English students to two other languages - Catalan and Spanish. Exchanges of this nature should be encouraged to enable students to broaden their horizons, add to their personal development, take advantage of what Europe has to offer, and to develop a sense of European identity'.

The regional TUC's recent involvement in two LINGUA Programme projects is a significant step. The programmes, with the ETU College and with the Department of Trade Union Education, ManCAT, aim to develop foreign language training for trades unionists. The completed first phase of the project established the methodology for investigating the national and local trades union needs in foreign language training. Six national, regional and local officers were surveyed in each country to establish the level and quality of experience of foreign language learning, and the interests and needs of the participants for foreign language training. Curriculum development is now underway.

The project, led by the Manchester based Department of Trade Union Education, identifies the foreign language needs and experience of over 500 North West regional officers and other

representatives. This is being followed up by in depth small-group audits of trades unionists with particular interest and experience in foreign languages. The project's next stage is the development of course materials, with concentration on beginners' courses in German and French. A number of pilot language courses are already running in the region. It is apparent that trades unionists in the North West show extensive interest in learning a European language if the opportunity to do so is available.

The Youth for Europe programme exists in addition to the provisions for young workers' exchanges under PETRA. It enabled nearly 1,500 young people from the region to take part in short (generally up to three weeks) youth exchange visits to other European Union countries. The Youth for Europe programme has grown from 32 projects in 1989 to 84 in 1992. The total budgeted was 110,700 Ecu.

5. Sources of Information

Information about Europe is widely available throughout the region. The key is to identify which source is most relevant to the information seeker's requirements.

Local libraries provide access to basic information on which Government department it is appropriate to contact and where to contact them. The library service has indicated that it intends to build on this service in the future, providing public accessibility to more information on a 'drop in' basis.

Addresses:

Manchester Central Library,
St Peter's Square, Manchester M2 5PD
Tel: 061 234 1996

John Fagan, Manager, FE Euro Unit North West
Centra, Duxbury Park, Duxbury Hall Road, Chorley, Lancs PR7 4AT
Telephone: 0257 241 428 Facsimile: 0257 260 357

Specialised information on opportunities for the region's businesses is provided through local chambers of commerce, coordinated region-wide by Manchester Chamber of Commerce.

Regional trade union queries on Europe are met by the North West Trades Union Congress. Information on these activities can be obtained from:

Alan Manning
Regional Secretary
North West Regional Council of the TUC
Baird House
41 Merton Road
Bootle L20 7AP
Tel: 051 933 6067
Fax: 051 922 5294

Local authorities have also appointed European officers. Information needs are also met by a wide variety of bodies and organisations, particularly the region's Training and Enterprise Councils. The Manchester-based British Council is the national coordinator of information on TEMPUS.

European Documentation Centres/Depository Libraries

THE NORTH WEST A REGION
OF THE EUROPEAN UNION

Official publications of the EC

Lancaster

The Library
University of Lancaster
Bailrigg
Lancaster LA1 4YH

Tel: 0524 592539
Contact: Heather Clark

Manchester

John Rylands University Library
University of Manchester
Oxford Road
Manchester M13 9PP

Tel: 061 275 3727 ext 3751
Contact: Hector Blackhurst

Salford

The Library
Clifford Whitworth Building
University of Salford
Manchester M5 4WT

Tel: 061 745 5000 ext 5846
Contact: Joanna Wilson

Liverpool - EC Depository Library

Business and Information Library
Central Libraries
William Brown Street
Liverpool L3 8EW

Tel: 051 225 5430
Contact: Edwin Fleming

European Information Centres

Provide up-to-date information on all aspects of Community affairs to small and medium-sized enterprises.

Manchester

Manchester Chamber of
Commerce and Industry
56 Oxford Street
Manchester M60 7HU

Tel: 061 236 3210
Contact: Peter Maher

Liverpool

EIC North West
Liverpool Central Libraries
William Brown Street
Liverpool L3 8EW

Tel: 051 298 1928
Contact: Howard Patterson

¹1 Ecu = £0.7376 (1992)

United Kingdom Regions

THE NORTH WEST A REGION
OF THE EUROPEAN UNION

1 South West

Devon
Cornwall

2 West

Dorset
Wiltshire
Somerset
Avon
Gloucestershire

3 East

Norfolk
Cambridgeshire
Suffolk
Bedfordshire
Essex
Hertfordshire

4 West Midlands

Staffordshire
Shropshire
West Midlands
Warwickshire
Hereford and Worcester

5 North

Durham
Tyne and Wear
Cleveland
Northumberland
Cumbria

6 South East

Kent
West Sussex
East Sussex
Surrey

7 South

Hampshire
Berkshire
Oxfordshire
Isle of Wight
Buckinghamshire

8 East Midlands

Leicestershire
Nottinghamshire
Northamptonshire
Lincolnshire
Derbyshire

9 Yorkshire & Humberside

South Yorkshire
West Yorkshire
North Yorkshire
Humberside

10 North West

Greater Manchester
Merseyside
Lancashire
Cheshire

11 Greater London

12 Scotland

13 Wales

14 Northern Ireland

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The North West Region

- 1** Greater Manchester
- 2** Merseyside
- 3** Lancashire
- 4** Cheshire