

The East Midlands

A REGION
OF THE



European Union



East Midlands International Airport. 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. 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 on 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 provide 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, based on priority objectives. The aim is to help 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 East Midlands

The East Midlands region comprising the counties of Derbyshire, Leicestershire, Lincolnshire, Northamptonshire and Nottinghamshire, is the third largest region in England covering 15,630 km² or 12% of the land area, the population of around 4 million represents only 8.4% of England's population. It is a large and diverse area with no single spatial or economic focus.

A substantial part of the East Midlands is rural in character and much of this area remains highly dependent on agriculture. Nevertheless in the East Midlands employment from agriculture has declined in recent years. The percentage of gross domestic product derived from agriculture in the region is between 2.1 - 2.9. The percentage of full-time holdings shows that cropping (36%) is the largest agricultural activity with dairy farming (31%) coming close behind. The main crop is wheat. There is only a small amount of horticulture (5%). The main farming area in the East Midlands is in Lincolnshire where over 50% of agricultural land is under cereal production compared with 27% in England and Wales. This reflects the fact that the county is a high yield area. Indeed the area under cereals in Lincolnshire accounts for 9.3% of the total area under cereal production in England and Wales - by far the largest proportion for any single county.

The changes to the Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) and the impact of GATT will lead to reductions in financial support for agricultural production and so will reduce surpluses. This reform is affecting the rural communities of the East Midlands, and as a partial result of the "Set-aside" requirements of CAP reform which will take land out of production, employment in agriculture in the East Midlands is forecast to decline over the next twenty years or so.

Many of the areas concerned suffer problems associated with low levels of income/GDP; population sparsity, out-migration and a lack of alternative employment opportunities. The European Community supports areas, which have resolved to help themselves, to overcome their handicaps and to make full use of their human resources and their economic and technical potential.

The East Midlands is a European region and much of its industry depends on the European market. Approximately 60% of UK trade is with the other members of the European Union and studies indicate that the East Midlands trade conforms with this figure. Economic success depends upon creating jobs, improving the infrastructure, providing vocational training, supporting businesses, developing tourism and improving the environment.

The East Midlands has had links with mainland Europe going back many years. In the ninth century the Danes controlled this part of England, leaving behind many tangible signs such as place names ending in "by" or "thorpe". The links continue today as the East Midlands works with its neighbours on a wide variety of European Union policies and initiatives. For example, as part of its "Europe

2000” initiative, the European Community launched a Northern Seaboard study to encourage the emergence of trans-national planning strategies. The Northern Seaboard study area covers a substantial area of the UK, including the East Midlands, as well as Denmark, northern Germany and northern Netherlands.

2. Regeneration and Growth

The European Union is committed to reallocate even more of its resources (25% of its budget) through its Regional Policy to the regions that are lagging behind. Its three main instruments are called the Structural Funds: the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF), the Guidance Section of the Agricultural Fund (EAGGF) and the European Social Fund (ESF). These funds are allocated according to specific objectives, such as development and structural adjustment of the regions whose development is below standard, conversion of regions, or parts of regions, seriously affected by industrial decline, and the development and structural adjustment of rural areas. Although the cost for these remains affordable - 0.3% of GDP in 1993 - the allocations from the funds to the beneficiaries represent a significant contribution to their economies: up to 3 and 4% of GDP.

The East Midlands has had to cope with a difficult period of industrial restructuring. Its efforts have been supported on specific projects by the European Union, although the level of financial backing received is much lower than that of neighbouring regions to the north and west. Perhaps the biggest success story has been the transformation of Corby from a town dependent upon the steel industry to one which has a diverse and more stable economy. Corby received some £130 million from a variety of European Union sources including the Coal & Steel Funds, European Investment Bank (EIB) and ERDF.

These funds are focused on the regions and groups in the Community which are considered most in need of assistance. They are periodically reviewed so that areas can be added or omitted from particular objectives depending on their current circumstances. Corby received substantial benefits from being included in Objective 2 but was removed from the list when its economic infrastructure was considered to have been strengthened and priority was given to other areas.

Areas seriously affected by industrial decline are given Objective 2 status. Small parts of Lincolnshire and Derbyshire and a rather larger part of Nottinghamshire have recently benefited under this Objective. Although Lincolnshire has now too lost its eligibility under this Objective, it has been included in Objective 5b, which promotes rural development by facilitating the development and structural adjustment of rural areas. This means that large areas of East and West Lindsey, Boston and South Holland Districts can bid for potentially millions of pounds for job creation, infrastructure, business support, tourist projects, training and environmental improvements. Lincolnshire is working on a better infrastructure, including the east coast route. This vital highway will connect Lincolnshire to the Humber and continental ports and will indeed prove a real boost to the county's economy in all forms of trade and tourism.

Objectives 3 and 4 of the Structural Funds are concerned with vocational training and job creation. They are more general and provide assistance anywhere in the Community. Objective 3 includes the long-term unemployed and facilitates the integration into working life of young people. Objective 4 provides for the adaptation of workers of either sex to industrial changes and to changes in production systems.

The ERDF is designed to stimulate economic development in the least prosperous parts of the European Community. The Fund can support infrastructure, business development, tourism and other projects. Eligible infrastructure can include roads, other transport and communications, equipment for training centres, conversion of industrial units, tourism projects and industrial research activities. Projects must be at least part-financed by public authorities. Partnerships need to be established locally and regionally with public and private bodies to ensure the maximum take-up of European funding.

All in all, funds from all Structural Funds since 1990 in the whole of the East Midlands have amounted to some £140 million, which has supported projects to the value of some £300 million.

The ERDF is applied through local operation programmes, such as East Midlands Regional Operation Programme 2 (EMROP2) as well as European Union-wide programmes addressing common problems such as the effects of decline in the coal, textile and defence industries.

EMROP2 is the mainstream regional development programme which allocated £31m to the East Midland Objective 2 areas up until the end of 1993 for projects to promote economic development and employment. Projects must be at least part-financed by public authorities. Private sector contributions to public projects may be eligible to attract matching funding.

RECHAR assists the conversion of coal closure areas in the European Union. £21.14m was allocated to the East Midlands RECHAR programme until the end of 1993, after which a new scheme will be introduced. The scheme affects Nottinghamshire and Derbyshire and provides for projects to promote the economy of declining mining areas. The programme has provision for social and cultural infrastructure.

RETEX is aimed at promoting diversification of activities in regions which are over-dependent on the textile industry. This Community initiative targeted at Small and Medium Sized Enterprises (SMEs) is aimed at promoting economic strength and diversification in these areas. The leather industry, including footwear, is considered part of the textile industry. £3.2m was allocated to Great Britain in 1993 for Objective 2 and 5b areas which are diversifying economic activity away from a dependence on textiles. Although strong cases have been made by both Leicestershire (textiles) and Northamptonshire (leather), as they do not have Objective 2 status they are not eligible to take part in this initiative. However, the European Commission is discussing a more flexible use of RETEX outside Objective 2 areas. Nottinghamshire is eligible and has received grants under this programme to the value of £274,000. Decisions on a successor programme are yet to be made.

KONVER is aimed at helping areas affected by the run-down of defence-related industries and military installations. Lincolnshire submitted proposals under this scheme and 7 projects received offers of grant totalling nearly £750,000.

Some Examples of ERDF support:

One of the major infrastructure projects has included the Robin Hood railway line, stage one of which from Nottingham to Newstead opened in May 1993. This will eventually put the largest town in Britain without a railway link (Mansfield) back on the rail network. In addition there is the "Ivanhoe line" which is the Leicestershire/Derbyshire light rail project.

The Nottingham Tennis Centre was transformed with a grant of £1,237,950 into a unique tennis competition venue capable of hosting the most prestigious national and international events such as the Federation Cup, thus attracting large numbers of visitors to the city and boosting tourism.

With the assistance of Nottingham City Council, Nottingham Health Authority obtained grants totalling £869,500 for the major programme of environmental improvements to the former General Hospital site in the city centre. As part of the project a public square will be created with potential to accommodate tourism events linked to the adjacent Nottingham Castle.

Under EMROP1 the Nottingham Fashion Centre was set up providing workshop space for a variety of SMEs. EMROP 2 developed the project by providing the Fashion Centre Resource Unit which supports fashion and textile SMEs needed to create and sustain growth. It aims to assist 40 firms, creating 30-50 jobs a year.

Recent changes to the Structural Funds mean that the only parts of the region with Objective 2 status are in the Nottinghamshire: travel-to-work areas of Mansfield, Workshop and Nottingham. However, parts of Derbyshire and Lincolnshire have Objective 5b status that is designed for the development needs of rural areas with low gross domestic product per head and dependence on agriculture.

LIFE is a "Community" programme created to contribute to the development and implementation of Community environmental policy by the financing of demonstration projects. Four million ECU has been allocated by the Commission for the whole Union until the end of 1995. The City of Leicester was selected in 1990 to become the first Environmental City and received a grant of £1.2 million under the LIFE programme. With this grant Leicester set up a number of projects to show environmentally-friendly alternatives to the current lifestyles in cities of the Union.

This is not an exhaustive list of grants or funds available for EU initiatives. Special projects designed by the EU to meet specific policy goals usually provide financial support. For example in the wake of the opening of the Channel Tunnel and the development of a Trans-national European Transport policy, funds have been made available for capital projects. The Daventry International Rail Freight Terminal (DIRFT), a development fully supported in the East Midlands Regional Plan, has applied for support from Brussels.

LOANS

The East Midlands has been able to borrow from the European Investment Bank (EIB) which makes available loans at interest rates close to what it costs the bank to borrow on capital markets. Loans are made to public or private companies located in EC assisted areas for economic development, environmental protection or urban renewal projects. A recent example in the East Midlands is the construction of Fisons pharmaceutical research laboratory in Loughborough (£15m) and a combined heat and electricity power station at Derwent. In all, borrowers in the East Midlands obtained more than 200 million ECUs from the EIB between 1989 and 1992.

The European Coal and Steel Community (ECSC) loans are available for businesses to expand activities and create employment in areas hit by coal and steel closures. Corby has benefitted in the past as north Nottinghamshire is benefiting now.

Although not all the East Midlands has the Objective status it would like, those areas in the region which do attract funding and subsequent investment do have an impact on inward investment that has a beneficial effect on the region as a whole. For example there is Park Air Electronics based in Market Deeping, Lincolnshire, which forms a key part of the newly established European operations for Westinghouse Electronics Systems International. It looks forward to attracting new firms and investment to the region. There is also the Toyota plant at Burnston in Derbyshire.

3. Employment

The European Social Fund (ESF) is an employment and training fund designed to finance schemes to improve the employment prospects of the long-term unemployed and of young people by providing them with training opportunities and by stimulating the job market to help them find work. Attention is also focused on workers with special employment difficulties, notably women returners and the disabled. Following the recent revision of the Structural Funds, Objective 4 is devoted to helping the workforce adapt to educational and technological change.

Application must be from organisations which are supported by public funds, eg central government, TECs, local authorities,

further and higher education and the voluntary sector. Grants, which can amount to 45% of the total cost of each project, encourage collaboration and joint sponsorship. For example the Quality Systems Management Training Project introducing BS5750, is partly funded by the ESF together with the Nottinghamshire TEC and the Greater Nottingham TEC.

The following are some examples of ESF assistance:

North Nottinghamshire TEC developed the Woodland Training Scheme under the ESF programme. It is the first such scheme of its kind in the area and has so far trained six people in the practical and theoretical aspects of Woodlands Management, four of whom gained full-time employment within two weeks of the course ending.

Loughborough University of Technology (LUT) has received funding for a number of years to help postgraduate courses aimed at vocational training for the young unemployed and women returning to work under Objectives 3 and 4 of the Fund. Nene College has also received funding for its European MBA programme as well as the retraining of unemployed graduates for the information technology sector.

Leicestershire ESF 1994 - New Opportunities Workshop based in Coalville is run by a voluntary management committee of people from the Coalville area with an interest in people with a learning disability. Up to fifteen long-term unemployed young adults with severe learning difficulties at a time can gain the skills to enable them to secure paid employment. The training itself is divided between theory, practical training and work experience.

The Anglo-German Engineering Training Initiative (AGETI) followed extensive negotiations involving the County Council, Engineering Employers' Associations, Amalgamated Engineers and Electricians Union, FE colleges in Leicestershire and their counterparts in Mainz, Germany. The AGETI scheme provides dual training for 20 engineering trainees from Leicestershire and Mainz. Despite the current economic climate in the engineering sector all the eight trainees who have completed their training have secured employment. As the technical training is tailored to the individual needs of the trainee and the needs of local engineering companies, the skill shortage in key sectors of industry is being eased.

Leicester General Hospital NHS Trust ESF project trains young unemployed people under the age of 24 to become dispensing

Pharmacy Technicians. There is an identified need for qualified dispensing technicians, but small pharmacies are reluctant to offer this training because of its high costs.

PATHWAYS, run by Leicester Adult Education College, is a learning programme for one-year unwaged, self-motivated over 25-year-olds seeking career change or development. Thirty-five adults, including nineteen who had been unemployed for over three years, have been helped by this programme. They include a builder's labourer with no formal qualifications who gained access to a degree course and an individual who after six years unemployment gained a responsible post in community work.

In 1992 Lincolnshire TEC attracted support for projects totalling half a million pounds. Projects included a Countryside Job Bus which takes training and job search facilities into the most rural areas of the county. There was also a multi-partnership project involving the County Council and BT with the TEC to set up Binbrook Telecottage, which contains the latest fax and word processing equipment, and offers training and business opportunities.

In addition to the European Social Fund, the European Community also has programmes to tackle aspects of economic and social regeneration through a series of smaller scale "Community Initiatives" aimed at more specific target groups and activities. The ERGO 2 and HELIOS II Programmes are examples of these initiatives. These two schemes focus on tackling issues relating to the increase in long term unemployment throughout the community.

The HELIOS II programme (Handicapped People in the EC Living Independently in an Open Society) aims to promote equality of opportunity, and the economic and social integration of disabled people through the exchange of information and ideas reacting to good and best practice. Although the programme does not resource individual projects, it does provide up to 100% funding for seminars, working party activities and training courses across Member States. Lincolnshire TEC has received £3,000 per annum for this work.

WorkPlace of Leicester, who operate an innovative system to place individuals into paid employment and then carry out specific on-the-job training, have made an application under Helios II. If successful they aim to produce a document outlining the advantages of their successful concept (Training in Systematic Instruction) and translate it into other European languages.

ERGO 2 is the second phase of a Community programme for action research and communication on long-term unemployment. The programme forms part of a set of activities under the title "Employment in Europe". In the initial stage of ERGO 2, Leicestershire proposes to participate in the networking organisation set up to disseminate examples of good practice and case studies from across the Community.

4. Educational and Research

The education and training programmes initiated by the European Union have attracted numerous participants from the East Midlands. Nine institutions of higher education take part in the ERASMUS programme of student exchanges. The most important areas of study are business management and engineering. In 1992/93, 1,042 students from the region were able to spend part of the academic year at a university outside the UK while East Midlands' institutions hosted 1,147 European students.

The East Midlands, in common with all UK regions, has more "incoming" students under Erasmus than "outgoing" ones. The most popular partner countries are France and Germany. The most active local partners were the De Montfort University, Nottingham University and Nottingham Trent University. The Department of Mechanical Engineering at Loughborough University of Technology is part of the Inner Circle of the European Credit Transfer Scheme, which allows accreditation for overseas study to home students. The new university college of Lincolnshire on the Brayford Pool near the Cathedral will open in the autumn of 1996 with 2,000 students. One of the important themes of the new university will be European integration.

In the framework of the COMETT programme for university-business cooperation, a total of 17 East Midlands students were able to gain practical work experience with firms in other European Union countries during 1992. North Nottinghamshire TEC under the PETRA young worker exchange programme offer the opportunity to acquire valuable work experience and language training in another European Community country. Up to 95% of the costs of the exchange are paid for the individual. Exchanges to France for the hotel and catering sector and Spain for the IT sector have taken place. Lincolnshire TEC has also received funds for a

programme aimed at encouraging young people to care for the elderly and physically disabled in the community.

East Midlands Further Education Council, supported by the East Midlands TECs, has developed an East Midlands - Alsace Project which links the two regions to embed European concepts into the educational and training institutions of the two regions. This unique project, developed against the background of the Single Market, is designed to meet the challenges of growing labour mobility within the European Union and of intense and external trading competitions. It has led to around 250 work/college placements for English and French students (aged 16+) in the FE sector. In addition, there have been approximately 150 staff visits to each others' establishments and local industry, plus 18 formal teacher placements of UK staff in French industry. As a result, there has been joint development of eight language/cultural briefing packs, three Anglo-French developments for joint curriculum activities in business studies, beauty therapy and agriculture.

As part of the Youth for Europe programme, more than 360 youngsters from the region were able to take part in short-term youth exchange visits to other parts of the European Union (generally of up to three weeks).

Initiatives of the European Union are not restricted solely to the twelve Member States. The urgent training needs of Eastern Europe have been targeted by the TEMPUS programme. All the institutions of higher education within the East Midlands are involved in a variety of projects to help to meet the needs of such countries as Poland, Hungary and the old Soviet Republics. Nottingham Trent University and Nene College Northampton both have strong links with Poland. The European Union has two programmes Ouverture and ECOS (European Cities Co-operation Systems) to help certain regions and cities within the union establish regional and city links with central and eastern Europe. Nottinghamshire County Council has assembled bids under the programme in the food processing sector in which their expertise is recognised.

5. Research

The European Community has a Framework Programme for Scientific Research. The fourth such programme is due to come into operation this year (1994). This is designed to encourage collaborative research between partners in different member states to achieve certain specified scientific goals, most of which are related to Europe's industrial competitiveness. These include Information Technology, Telecommunications, Telematics, Industrial Technologies, Food Technologies, Biotechnology and Energy. Separate programmes have also grown up with related aims including THERMIE for demonstration projects in energy saving and alternative energy sources, and SPRINT which is designed to help build a European Infrastructure for innovation and technology transfer.

Nottingham Metal Recyclers Ltd were given 1.2 million ECUs to develop an energy efficient non-polluting way of recycling aluminium scrap. Smaller projects have also been supported, such as that into production separator development undertaken by Paladon Engineering in Northamptonshire. The main advantage of all these R&D projects is that everyone taking part in the programme has access to the totality of the results of the projects and the creation of R&D networks.

- The East Midlands Regional Technology Network are members of the EC Association for Technical Transfer (TII) which deals with technology, innovation and interaction. As well as taking part in TII group visits and attending meetings, this allows for the opportunity of contacting the equivalent organisations in other Member States.
- Under the Science Park Consultancy Scheme, Leicestershire County Council is the contracting partner with the European Commission for a consultancy study of the proposed Loughborough Science and Business Park. The study, which also involves British Gas plc, Charnwood Borough Council, and Loughborough University of Technology, will assess the Park's development, management and potential.
- Loughborough University of Technology (LUT) has a long standing involvement in EC research programmes including both Framework 2 and 3. This collaborative research activity involves almost every department of the university and almost every Member State of the Union as well as countries from

Central and Eastern Europe and the European Economic Area. In recent years the funding from the European Community for LUT's research activities has amounted to some £2 million per annum, which makes approximately 15% of the total research income.

- Eurocad, based at Leicester University, is a trans-national network aimed at generating an improved transfer of computer-aided design related technology. It has the key objective of assisting European companies, particularly SMEs, to compete more successfully in the international market place. The East Midlands is now the first region in the UK to benefit from a comprehensive directory covering training and support services. The directory and associated database have been developed through the support of the TECs in Leicestershire, Nottinghamshire, Derbyshire and Nene College, Northampton.

Firms, universities and research organisations from the region have taken part with considerable enthusiasm in cross-border R&D projects co-funded by the European Union. They have also been keen to develop business opportunities with new partners in other parts of Europe.

In specific area of R&D, participants from the East Midlands have been involved in more than 150 projects with counterparts throughout the European Union during the period 1987 to 1992. These have led to the creation of an estimated 520 working relationships with similar bodies in mainland Europe. Of these 1,117 were with French partners, 80 with Germans and 56 with Dutch ones.

The European Community's demonstration project programme for energy technology (THERMIE) has funded a number of projects run by East Midlands firms. Vacu-Lug Traction Tyres of Grantham received a grant of just over one million ECUs for a project to demonstrate an environmentally-friendly way of recovering energy and usable material from scrap tyres.

6. Single Market

The operation of the European Funds is an important manifestation of the European Union at the regional level. Nevertheless, it is important to set these Funds in the context of the policies of the

European Union as a whole, that is to say an area for the free movement of goods, people and capital and freedom to provide services. The economic impact of this is of enormous importance. Part of the purpose of the Funds is to enable all regions and groups in the Union to compete within this single market on equal terms. In establishing Community policies over recent years, special care has been taken to make sure that SMEs are able to exploit the new opportunities that the market provides which now even stretch beyond the Union itself to Norway, Sweden, Finland, Iceland and Austria in the European Economic Area.

The main sources of employment in the East Midlands are to be found in production industries, distribution and services. The region generally is heavily dependent on sectors identified as sensitive to the effects of the Single European Market. However, the strong SME base and the generally competitive cost and availability of land and labour give the area a competitive advantage. Whilst gross domestic product remains below the UK average, the region accounts for a larger proportion of total UK output now than in 1980. Many of the SMEs were preparing for the new conditions of the Single European Market before it became a reality. The most significant recent development in the European Union has been the programme for completing the Single Market; the major impact has been the possible reduction in costs due to the reduction in delay and "red tape" when exporting goods and services and the harmonisation of technical standards. There is also the potential positive effect of the opening up of public procurement. On the other hand some SMEs have had to cope with new demands on them as some formalities have shifted from customs offices into the firms themselves. In the longer term the Single European Market will bring to the East Midlands larger markets, more competition, more trade between Member States and a fuller exploitation of economies of scale.

7. Regional Activities and European Links

Most European activities are concentrated on economic issues, but attempts have been made to extend it into other areas such as social welfare and the cultural environmental fields. Twinning arrangements are now very common in the East Midlands, covering not only the big cities but also the smallest villages. The establishment of these arrangements can lead the way to more serious and significant benefits for both parties. Many schemes established by the European Union require collaboration or joint proposals from at least two Member States. Therefore there is a need for partnerships to be nurtured and developed.

The East Midlands can boast a large number of inter-regional activities including civic visits, Friendship Societies, school and sporting exchanges and staff exchange schemes for councils and other public bodies. Councils are seeking the benefits from obtaining and using the experience in technical matters from their fellow Europeans on matters of public health, transport, racial issues and the environment. However, the traffic is not all one way. Delegations visit the East Midlands to gain from the experience there. Businesses and universities are also working together.

As an experience of twinning relationships, Nottingham City Council has been a member of a four cities partnership since 1991, comprising Karlsruhe, Halle, Nancy and Nottingham. The four took a joint stand at the Hanover Trade Fair in 1992 and plan future co-operation between themselves and as part of the Eurocities network.

The local Employment Development Action (LEDA) Programme is a Commission-financed initiative which brings together local and regional authorities from all over Europe to develop best practice on economic development activities. Nottingham is the only English city taking part in the initiative, although other authorities in the East Midlands have applied to join.

The European Commission operates enterprise policy programmes to encourage business co-operation throughout the Union. The Business Co-operation Network (BC-NET) is a programme which provides a computerised data base which enables searches for co-operation between companies to take place. A large number of companies within the East Midlands have taken advantage of this service to develop business partnerships in other Member States.

Northamptonshire County Council's Planning & Transportation Department has taken part in the activities of the region in Europartenariat, a bi-annual meeting of enterprises which focuses on less-developed regions of the Union. At one meeting in eastern Germany a group of British companies obtained £49 million worth of business from three projects. The harmonious development of the regions can only be achieved by reducing the disparities between the economically strong and less advanced amongst them.

Keeping up-to-date with developments in the European Union is a challenge for many of the citizens and SMEs of the twelve Member States. Two initiatives which help to alleviate this problem are European Documentation Centres (EDCs) and European Information Centres (EICs). There are three EDCs in the East Midlands in addition to the general information available in public libraries. The EDCs receive, free of charge, a wide range of Union documents and publications. EICs provide a customised information and advice service of direct use to business managers. There is an EIC in Nottingham and one in Leicester with satellite offices in Northampton and Lincoln.

The network of European Information Centres, set up by the European Commission, has been able to help firms, particularly SMEs, find partners in other European Union regions. In one instance, the information centre at the Nottingham Chamber of Commerce was able to put an SME from Mansfield in touch with a German builder in Osnabruck who needed subcontracting work carried out on a local kindergarten. Initial contacts were made between the two sides at a trade fair in Germany. The Mansfield firm fulfilled the contract and was invited to set up an office in Germany.

The EC operates in a relatively open fashion. Officials are normally available to meet organisations who have an interest in their current programmes or forthcoming proposals. The East Midlands has been very successful in obtaining the grants that it has, and in influencing the European Community by the quality of their proposals and the professionalism of their lobbying. The problems for Leicestershire and Northamptonshire are focused on the fact that they are not within the favoured Objective areas.

The establishment of the East Midlands' Brussels office has enhanced the effectiveness of the interest groups in the East Midlands. The social partnership of the CBI and the TUC operates through their respective East Midland offices to make an input into the European dimension of the region. The chambers of commerce

within the region also play varying roles in European matters usually providing a signpost service to their members. The DTI plays a mainly secretarial and advisory role on business-related grants. It was in order to make submissions to the Commission that the region produced a strategy document and is now in the process of producing a human resource strategy.

The East Midland TEC European Forum was established in 1992 in order to bring together and add value to the European activities of all seven East Midlands TECs. Supported by a full-time coordinator, the Forum provides an efficient mechanism for the regional management of TEC applications to the European Social Fund, and enables applications for European programmes and European activities to be enhanced by joint participation and a regional perspective where appropriate.

The Federation of East Midlands Local Authorities (FEMLA) was established to deal with the European Social Fund applications. It prepares reports for the chief executives of the five county councils and the elected representatives. The European and Economic Development Officers based in the region network very effectively on the EU matters. Individual officers prepare reports and recommendations for the elected members of the East Midlands Regional Planning Forum. One of the roles of the Forum is to "promote European connections and safeguarding and promoting the Regions interests within a European context". There is also a vehicle for the exchange of information at district level (EMLANE).

The organisation of Europe Weeks or special activities in the region has grown since the late 1980s. As interest has developed, the numbers taking part have increased to include the full spectrum of social, education and business organisations. For example, the number of events organised in Northamptonshire more than doubled between 1990 and 1993. This is mirrored all over the region as groups have met to deal with particular issues or investigate themes associated with such initiatives as the Year of the Elderly.

The citizens in all its regions participate directly in the life of the European Union by sending their representatives to the European Parliament. Under the Maastricht Treaty the new Committee of the Regions was established, with 24 representatives from the UK. This means that the regions themselves now have a new direct voice in European affairs. Councillor Dennis Pettitt, the leader of Nottinghamshire County Council, is one of these. The Committee

of the Regions plays an advisory role on draft legislation before it is enacted by the European Parliament and the Council of Ministers. Under the principle of subsidiarity, the Union limits its policy action to issues where it is clearly in a better position to act than the individual countries. This will be the guiding principle for a European Union blending diversity with common action for the interests of all its citizens.

Sources of Information in the East Midlands

Your local library will provide you with general information about the European Union and local organisations. The following can provide more detailed information:

European Information Centres

Euro Info Centre Leicester

The Business Centre
10 York Road
Leicester LE1 5TS

Tel: 0533 559944
Fax: 0533 553470

Euro Info Centre Nottingham

Nottinghamshire Chamber of Commerce
The Business Advice Centre
309 Haydn Road
Nottingham NG5 1DG

Tel: 0602 624624
Fax: 0602 856612

Northamptonshire Business & European Information Centre

Central Library
Abington Street
Northampton

Tel: 0604 26771
Fax: 0604 230790

Lincolnshire European Centre

Lincolnshire County Council
Economic Development Unit
Wigford House
Brayford Wharf East
Lincoln LN5 7AY

Tel: 0522 553168
Fax: 0522 560376

Department of Trade & Industry

Severns House
20 Middle Pavement
Nottingham
NG1 7DW

Tel: 0602 506181

Fax: 0602 587074

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European Documentation Centres

Leicester University Library

The Library
University Road
Leicester LE1 8QD

Tel: 0533 522044

Fax: 0533 522066

Loughborough University of Technology

Pilkington Library
Loughborough LE11 3TU

Tel: 0509 222344

Fax: 0509 234806

University of Nottingham

Hallward Library
Nottingham NG7 2RD

Tel: 0602 514555

Fax: 0602 415558

Chambers of Commerce

Derby & Derbyshire Chamber of Commerce & Industry

New Enterprise House
St Helens Street
Derby DE1 3GY

Tel: 0332 347031

Fax: 0332 382028

Leicestershire Chamber of Commerce & Industry

4-6 New Street
Leicester LE1 5NT

Tel: 0533 512300

Fax: 0533 517799

Northamptonshire Chamber of Commerce & Industry

The Royal Pavilion
Summerhouse Road
Moulton Park
Northampton NN3 1WD

Tel: 0604 790792

Fax: 0604 790660

North Derbyshire Chamber of Commerce & Industry

Commerce Centre
Canal Wharf
Chesterfield
Derbyshire S41 7NA

Tel: 0246 211277

Fax: 0246 203173

Nottinghamshire Chamber of Commerce & Industry

309 Haydn Road
Nottingham NG5 1DG

Tel: 0602 624624

Fax: 0602 856612

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Suite 2.7
Gateway House
Gateway Street
Leicester LE2 7DP

Tel: 0533 854445

Fax: 0533 855565

United Kingdom Regions

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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

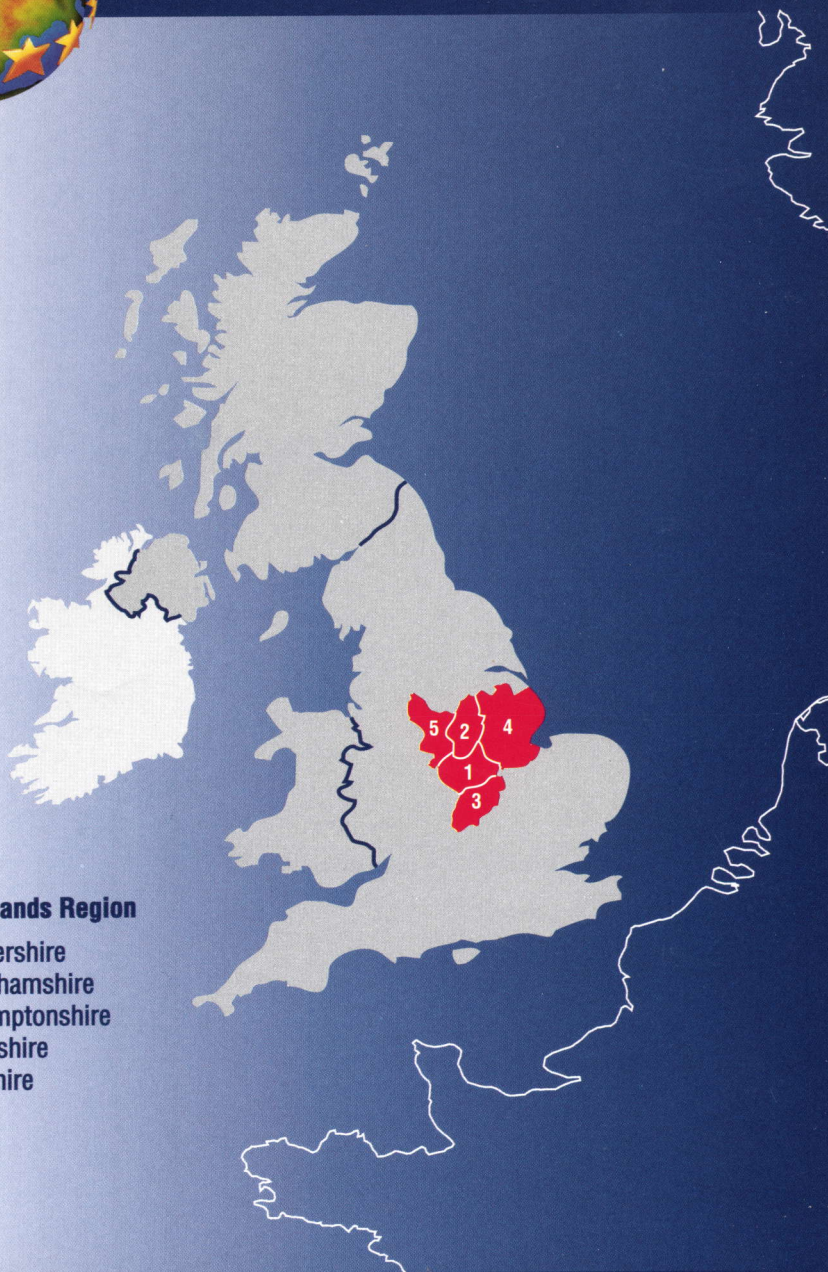
13 Wales

14 Northern Ireland

Author: Mike Cuthbert

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East Midlands Region

- 1** Leicestershire
- 2** Nottinghamshire
- 3** Northamptonshire
- 4** Lincolnshire
- 5** Derbyshire