



**LIVING EAST BELGIUM – 2025**  
REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT CONCEPT  
FOR THE GERMAN-SPEAKING COMMUNITY

**VOLUME 3 – BRIEF SUMMARY**



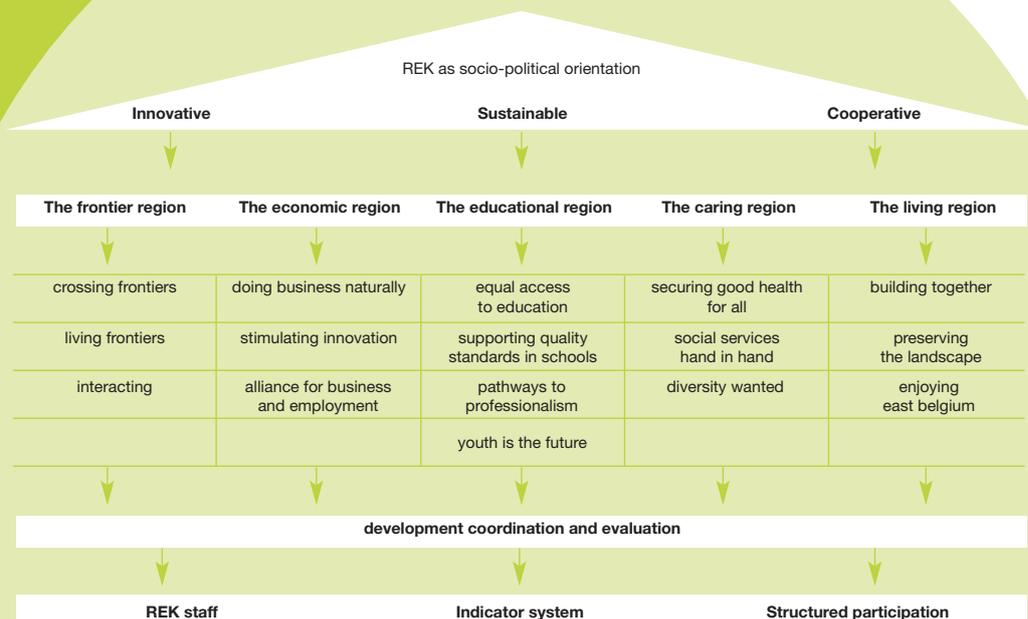
# perspective 2025

## Regional Development Concept for the German-Speaking Community (DG): Living East Belgium – 2025

What makes life special in the DG? What makes it such a great business location? What can we do to protect and develop these qualities? What are our long-term development goals for the region and how do we envisage our Community in 2025?

These and other related questions were on the notepad when the Regional Development Concept (REK: Regionales Entwicklungskonzept) was being created. The process was initiated in May 2008 with a comprehensive stock-taking and regional analysis, whereby the strengths and weaknesses, chances and challenges of the DG were closely examined. On the basis of this study, strategic approaches and concrete recommendations were then identified in a wide-ranging round of talks with the key stakeholders. The results of this participatory dialogue were crystallized into a mission statement which characterized the DG as a Frontier Region, an Economic Region, a Learning Region, a Caring Region and a Living Region. The mission statement was published as REK volumes 1 and 2. In April 2011, with the addition of a third volume, the initial implementation phase of the REK with its 16 main projects and 48 sub-projects was described in detail. This present brochure summarizes the projects and their different approaches.

### REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY



# DG – THE FRONTIER REGION

## A BRIDGE BETWEEN CULTURES, IDENTITIES AND BUSINESS LOCATIONS

It is our goal to use the unique cultural identity of the DG to further extend our role as a communications bridge for Wallonia and Flanders as well as the Netherlands, Germany and Luxemburg. For the development of networks and synergies in a spirit of transparency and openness, citizen volunteers also play a structurally vital part.



### CROSSING FRONTIERS

Cooperation with our inland and foreign partners is a significant strength, one that we intend to systematically extend and expand, to feature the DG more strongly in its frontier neighbourhood and its European regional context. This involves active and sustainable participation in the development of the Meuse-Rhine Euregio, as well as with our Francophone neighbours and European partners. The bridge function of the DG, as a portal between linguistic and cultural homelands plays an important role here. Beyond such initiatives as „The World in East Belgium“, or „East Belgians Abroad“, we intend to increasingly involve our citizens in inter-frontier cooperation, while systematically refining an understanding of our own history.



### LIVING FRONTIERS

Promoting an active and conscious frontier culture is vital for us, as our language and cultural identity justify our very existence as the DG. Our strategic goal is thus the conscious perception and advancement of this culture as a significant basis for the DG as a political community. This policy should rest on three pillars: the development of an innovative concept for cultural development, the advancement of youth culture as well as the preservation of the DG's cultural identity through a systematic approach to the recording of its immaterial heritage.



### INTERACTING

We see a lively associative climate and the concomitant strengthening of voluntarism as further important contributions to maintaining and developing our identity. Both of these help to integrate our young people and to foster intergenerational dialogue in rural and urban districts. „Interacting“ will be developed in close collaboration with local authorities and will deal with inter-district issues, such as the creation of an Office of Voluntary Service to inform and consult with voluntary helpers, societies and clubs, organize specific training and promote an associative, opt-in culture of participation and voluntarism.

# DG – THE ECONOMIC REGION

## INNOVATION, COOPERATION AND RESPONSIBILITY

By 2025 we intend to significantly raise the profile of the DG as a region for skilled workers, trades and service industries, by advancing the scope of small to medium-sized firms through the effective implementation of professional support networks. Subjects such as sustainability, regionally based economic cycles, and openness for creative innovation will be high on the agenda.



### DOING BUSINESS NATURALLY

Our intention is to consciously promote quality of life and a healthy natural environment as trump cards when choosing a business location, and to augment the value of these natural assets by concentrating on sustainable economic development. Developing a market strategy for regional production and pitching the DG as a model for energy efficiency and the use of renewables in Belgium will considerably enhance this incentive. Clear examples of how this future orientation can be implemented are the training of human-resource capacity for an energy-efficient and ecological construction industry, as well as the development of reference projects.



### STIMULATING INNOVATION

Encouraging innovation in East Belgian companies leads naturally to an increase in competitiveness and easier access to research institutes, innovation clusters and business associations. Our aim is to encourage the various actors from „Creative Industries“ to interact more and network with other firms beyond our borders. Thanks to a variety of instruments available and the cooperation of local and foreign partners, this “innovation consulting“ can now accompany a firm from the inception of an idea to its full implementation. The creation of a network of partners from fields such as R&D, financial services, patents and intellectual property etc. can play an important part in stimulating innovation.



### ALLIANCE FOR BUSINESS AND EMPLOYMENT

Our goal is to ensure that the DG, as a business location, enjoys long-term economic prospects that develop in sync with the growth and expertise of its local workforce. This means that we must enable our young people to make a seamless and meaningful transition from school to the workplace. In turn this also calls for employment policies that can ensure a suitable job for everyone who is experiencing short or long-term unemployment. Exemplary for this future-oriented project are our current initiatives for more mature unemployed people, who frequently possess valuable experience. In the field of „lifetime learning“, we aim to provide a high quality, client-oriented, simply and clearly-structured further education model.

# DG – THE EDUCATIONAL REGION

## OUR CAPITAL FOR THE FUTURE

Fairness and justice in education, a high quality standard for education and training, as well as comprehensive measures to ensure participation of all our young people: these are the strategic goals in this area.



### EQUAL ACCESS TO EDUCATION

Success at school should not depend on your social background. This is why we make a strong mark for educational justice, creating a common primary section that takes every child up to eighth grade, while affording a maximum of individual attention. This spirit of innovation also extends to the way we encourage the less advantaged, as testified by our „advancement decree“, which has launched such new projects as the homework school, integration modules for immigrant children and the „Time-Out-Project“. In addition this project features a newly structured Psycho-Medical Monitoring Service for schools (PMS) and health centres for school pupils, as well as other social services tailored to the needs of children and youth.



### SUPPORTING QUALITY STANDARDS IN SCHOOLS

In order to ensure good educational results, not only good methodology, but also appropriate practise-oriented standards are required. When implementing educational standards that are rooted in competence acquirement, multi-lingual skills play a central role. Another strategic goal lies in the area of ongoing educational training. We intend to launch a broadly based information and further education offensive, featuring a programme of modular training elements designed for school directors and teaching staff, with the aim of developing a middle management level in our schools.



### PATHWAYS TO PROFESSIONALISM

Taking into account the European Qualification Framework, we shall continue to develop a practically-rooted, professional and efficient vocational education sector. For young people, increased job aptitude improves employment chances, while also ensuring an up-to-date skills pool for regional companies to draw on. To this end, the barrier between school and vocational education needs to become more porous, and co-operation between educational systems needs our encouragement. We intend to ease the transition from school to vocational training for youth from disadvantaged backgrounds. At the same time, professional and technical education needs to become more attractive, offering a coherent path from apprenticeship through to a Bachelor's degree.



### YOUTH IS THE FUTURE

The range of opportunities available for youth, the intensive promotion of youth federations and open youth work, as well as the available structures to better integrate youth into the public dialogue are all designed to keep the DG attractive for its young people. Examples of this are the broad funding of open youth work and the assistance given for the vocational training of youth workers and voluntary youth leaders. New to this is the pan-disciplinary approach, which places young people in the centre, taking into account their attitudes and the kind of world they live in.

# DG – THE CARING REGION

## MAINTAINING SUSTAINABLE SOCIAL SERVICES

By 2025 we intend to have further extended the DG's citizen-centred, basic health service and the efficiency of its attendant care structures, thereby also ensuring high quality. Taking into account the demographic shift, disadvantaged citizens – whether in health, social or economic terms – and the strategic goal of increased caring and solidarity in the population will be given particular attention.



## SECURING GOOD HEALTH FOR ALL

Our goal is to provide and further develop a health care model that is contemporary and appropriate. Important factors are the definitive anchoring and consolidation of the twin hospital locations Eupen and Saint Vith, as well as the promotion of a comprehensive network of family doctors. Raising the profile of caring professions is a further significant element of this project.



## SOCIAL SERVICES HAND IN HAND

Our concern is to gather the existing social services together into a collegial network throughout the DG, a web of caring that can ensure high quality services for all strata and age-groups. This will require new synergies and optimized organizational models, so that the number of steps a person has to take before receiving a particular service can be kept to a minimum. Since the restructuring of the PMS and child care health centres have already been allotted to one of the region's educational projects, „Social Services Hand in Hand“ will be primarily concerned with services to adults and senior citizens.



## DIVERSITY WANTED

Everyone who lives here should have the chance to take part in the life of the DG to the fullest degree of their capacities. The four sub-projects of this initiative are there to strengthen solidarity and caring within the community as a whole, thereby advancing the cause of social justice and equity. The leitmotif of this project is mirrored in each of these objectives: fighting poverty and exclusion of minorities, the inclusion of the disabled or challenged, and the socio-professional integration of those who find it most difficult to gain work.

# DG – THE LIVING REGION

## QUALITY OF LIFE IS IN OUR NATURE

We would like the DG to go on developing into a living space that offers high quality of life, with a wide diversity of culture, landscape, flora and fauna. This living space must guarantee the continuing harmony and development of rural areas, villages and towns, for the benefit of all who live here and all who would like to visit us: turning tourists into friends.



## BUILDING TOGETHER

Acquiring the government competences of regional planning, urban development and housing represents both an opportunity and a responsibility for the DG. The transfer of these control authorities enables us to set the agenda for maintaining the DG as a living space and economic region, as much for the more densely populated areas as for the rural heartland. The assumption of these fields of responsibility will be prepared in two working groups. These have already begun to refine the initial guiding principles that will underlay those programmes and planning instances, which will form the framework for the ongoing development of living, agricultural, economic and natural spaces.



## PRESERVING THE LANDSCAPE

Natural and cultural diversity are important quality of life indicators in the DG. They are therefore decisive factors in maintaining the attractiveness of the region for future investment as well as for tourism. Agriculture and forestry need to be fully integrated into any future-oriented development plan for the preservation of this diversity. One example of this is the greater involvement of the High Fen-Eifel Nature Park (Naturpark Hohes Venn-Eifel) in the work of the Community, as well as the introduction of a Geographical Information System (GIS) for the nine local authorities of the DG.



## ENJOYING EAST BELGIUM

We aim to shift the focus on East Belgium as a tourist destination by realigning the structures of tourism. This project concentrates on shaping the external marketing aspects of „East Belgium – the tourism region“ in cooperation with neighbouring local authorities in the North and South of the DG, as well as within the larger context of European Trade Federations. To better meet current and future demand, we shall help tourism service providers train their staff as well as to take advantage of the Quality Management System envisaged. In addition, a mission statement will be drawn up to serve as the basis of all planning for future-oriented tourism facilities in the DG.

## HAS THIS MADE YOU CURIOUS?

If this summary of our view of the future has wetted your curiosity, you will find further information about the REK and our projects at: [www.dglive.be/rek](http://www.dglive.be/rek).

All three volumes of the REK “manifesto” can be obtained from the Ministry of the DG, the Government offices at Klötzerbahn 32 and Gospert Street 42 in Eupen, as well as from the DG Service Centre (Dienstleistungszentrum der DG) in Saint Vith. For direct information or other assistance, please contact Inga Klawitter at the Ministry of the DG, who will be happy to help you (Tel. +32 (0)87 789 651; E-Mail [inga.klawitter@dgov.be](mailto:inga.klawitter@dgov.be)).

By subscribing to the new monthly DG Newsletter, you can stay informed on developments: REK-related subjects are frequently and extensively covered in its articles.

Diverse events are also planned to keep up the dialogue with our citizens and encourage the dynamic development of the REK, with the full participation, and reflecting all the interests, of its various stakeholders ... right through to our target year of 2025.



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