

## NATIONAL MINORITIES AND CROSS-BORDER COOPERATION BETWEEN DENMARK AND GERMANY

*This article introduces the case of the German-Danish experience on national minorities and cross-border cooperation in their borderlands. Firstly, the region will be characterized. Then the historical background and the present-day situation of the national Danish and German minorities will be described. In the third section, the German-Danish experience will be characterized and summed up in conclusive statements. Then, the development from minority regulations to cross-border cooperation will be characterised. Finally, the impact and relevance of the Schleswig experience to cross-boundary peace-building measures will be pointed out.*

Keywords: Denmark, Germany, cross-border cooperation, minorities

NARODNE MANJŠINE IN ČEZMEJNO SODELOVANJE MED DANSKO IN NEMČIJO

*Članek obravnava nemško danske izkušnje v zvezi z narodnimi manjšinami in čezmejnim sodelovanjem na obmejnih področjih. Najprej predstavi področje na splošno, njegovo zgodovino in današnji položaj danske oziroma nemške manjšine. V nadaljevanju povzame nemško danske izkušnje in naniza ključne probleme, pri čemer je opisan razvoj od manjšinske zakonodaje do čezmejnega sodelovanja, na koncu pa opozori še na vpliv in pomen izkušenj pokrajine Schleswig za vzpostavljanje uspešnega čezmejnega sodelovanja nasploh.*

Ključne besede: Danska, Nemčija, čezmejno sodelovanje, manjšine

### THE DANISH-GERMAN BORDER REGION AND ITS NATIONAL MINORITIES

The Danish-German border region consists of the county (*Amt*) of Sønderjylland in Denmark, and the city of Flensburg, and the districts of Schleswig-Flensburg, Nordfriesland, and Rendsburg-Eckernförde located North of the River Eider in Germany. The German districts are part of the state of Schleswig-Holstein within the Federal Republic of Germany. Up until 1864, most of this cross-border region formed an entity as the historical Danish duchy of Schleswig.<sup>1</sup> Therefore, the Danish-German region in an international context usually is referred to as 'Schleswig'. Today, the Danish part of the region is named Sønderjylland, whereas the German is called 'Landesteil Schleswig' (of Schleswig-Holstein) or South Schleswig to emphasize that Schleswig is divided between Denmark and Germany. The population of this cross-border region numbers some 750,000 inhabitants – one third living in Sønderjylland and two-thirds in South Schleswig.<sup>2</sup> In the latter there is a German majority of some 80-90 per cent. In Sønderjylland, the Danish majority share of the population is about 90-95 per cent. Further a diversity of ethnic and national minorities characterise the region.<sup>3</sup>

The share of the German minority is estimated to be 5-8 per cent of the population in the county of Sønderjylland. In all of Denmark with a total population of 5.383 mio. in 2003,<sup>4</sup> the relative share of the German minority equals 0.2-0.4 per cent. The Danish minority in South Schleswig is estimated to be 8-10 per cent. In all of Schleswig-Holstein with a total population of some 2.81 mio. in 2003, the share of the Danish minority is approximately 1.7-1.8 per cent. Compared to the total population of Germany with some 82.543 mio. inhabitants in 2003,<sup>5</sup> the relative share of the Danish minority is ca. 0.0006 per cent.

In general, the size of both national minorities in the region has to be estimated, because the authorities may conduct no census or registration of national or

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<sup>1</sup> Norman Berdichevsky: The German-Danish Border: A Successful Resolution of an Age Old Conflict or its Redefinition? *Boundary & Territory Briefing*, Volume 2 Number 7, University of Durham: International Boundaries Research Unit 1999; Jørgen Kühl: En grænseoverskridende region med fælles historie – Fra engang til fællesskab / Eine grenzüberschreitende Region mit gemeinsamer Geschichte – Vom Nebeneinander zum Miteinander, in: *Region Sønderjylland/Schleswig*, Oldenburg: Kommunikation und Wirtschaft 2000, pp.12-27.

<sup>2</sup> See Christian L. Hansen/Holger Hinz: *Den socio-økonomiske situation i den dansk-tyske grænseregion 1988-2000 / Die sozio-ökonomische Situation in der deutsch-dänischen Grenzregion 1988-2000*, Aabenraa: Institut for grænseregionsforskning 2000, pp.6-7.

<sup>3</sup> *Kulturen. Sprachen. Minderheiten. Ein Streifzug durch die dänisch-deutsche Grenzregion*, Kiel 2000.

<sup>4</sup> Compare to <http://www.dst.dk>.

<sup>5</sup> Compare to <http://www.destatis.de>.

linguistic affiliation. The recognition of the national minorities in the borderlands is based on the principle of the individual's free and unrestricted affiliation with the groups. This affiliation may neither be challenged nor disputed by the authorities. Although the expert committee of the Council of Europe under the Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities in 2002 urged the German government to compile more reliable statistic information on the national minorities, both Germany's government and the Danish minority refused this recommendation, pointing to the fact that minorities were persecuted during the years 1933-1945 based on registers, and emphasizing the principle of voluntary identification.<sup>6</sup> Therefore, all statistical information concerning the national minorities in the Danish-German border region cannot be verified based on census or other kinds of registration.

Both the Danish and German national minorities are defined in two ways: On the one side, their existence is acknowledged, recognized, and guaranteed by Denmark and Germany under uni-, bi- and multilateral declarations, notifications, and agreements. On the other side, the minorities themselves are defined by self-identification. The affinity to, affiliation with or membership of the minorities and the majorities is an individual choice, which can neither be challenged nor disputed by the authorities. The issue of legal definitions applied to both minorities is discussed in the following chapter.

In the German federal state of Schleswig-Holstein, supposedly some 50,000 persons are affiliated with the Danish national minority. They live in the area between the Danish-German boundary and the River Eider. This region is named Sydslesvig in Danish. The numbers of the minority equals 8-10 per cent of the region's population. The Danish minority lives scattered all over South Schleswig, but with a concentration in and surrounding the main city of Flensburg, and in the towns of Schleswig, Husum, Rendsburg, and Eckernförde. Strongholds of the Danish community can further be found in the area bordering the state frontier. However, it is an absolute numerical minority with a maximum population share of 20-30 per cent in local communities. The estimates are based on membership-figures of the cultural associations of the minorities and the number of pupils in minority schools. The figures might change from time to time depending on conjunctures and cycles with an impact on the minorities as well.<sup>7</sup> Thus, the figures mentioned here represent medium-estimates, which based on available data and calculations seem to be both reliable and stable.<sup>8</sup>

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<sup>6</sup> Jørgen Kühl: Der Europarat, Dänemark, Deutschland und die Minderheiten, in: *Grenzfriedenshefte*, 4, 2002, pp.223-258, p.245.

<sup>7</sup> Jørgen Kühl: *The 'Schleswig Experience'. The National Minorities in the Danish-German Border Area*, Aabenraa: Institut for grænserregionsforskning 1998, pp.35ff.

<sup>8</sup> The size of the national minorities is discussed in Jørgen Kühl: *Den dansk-tyske mindretalsmodel og Europa*, Aabenraa: Institut for grænserregionsforskning 2003, pp.111-114.

Although no exact figures on the actual size of the minorities or on the geographical distribution are available, it is - with reservations - possible to estimate the distribution on the basis of membership-figures and election results.<sup>9</sup> According to such calculations based on the estimate of 12-20,000 Germans in Denmark and 50,000 Danes in Germany, concentrations of the German minority are found in the municipalities of Tinglev, where the Germans make up 24-41 per cent of the local population, Højer (12-20 per cent), Løgumkloster (12-20 per cent), and Tønder 10-16 per cent. The Danish minority is found in concentrations of ca. 21 per cent in the city of Flensburg and 9.7 per cent in the county of Schleswig-Flensburg. In some municipalities surrounding Flensburg, and close to the border, the share of the Danish minority might be up to 30 per cent of the local population.

The Danish minority has its own cultural and educational facilities in a functional cultural autonomy, financed and maintained by Danish state funding and with substantial funding from German authorities.<sup>10</sup> The Danish (and National Frisian) minority has its own political party, the SSW - *South Schleswig Voters Association* (est. 1948). The party is represented in local and county councils, and in the state parliament of Schleswig-Holstein in Kiel. In the local elections in 1998, the SSW with some 38,700 votes gained 161 seats in local and county assemblies. In the last local elections in March 2003, the party's share of votes fell to 30,500, almost 8,000 less than in the previous local elections. However, due to a low voters turnout, the actual number of seats was almost regained, only down 6 seats from the previous local and regional elections. In the last state elections in February 2000, the SSW was able to gain one seat, so that its group in the state legislature Landtag now has three members, up from two representatives in the period 1996-2000. In the period 1962-1996, the SSW only held one seat in the Landtag.<sup>11</sup> In the 2000 state elections, the minority party received some 60,300 votes in all of Schleswig-Holstein: 35,500 in the traditional minority area of South Schleswig, and 24,800 votes in Holstein.<sup>12</sup> In the previous state elections in 1996, the SSW only had some 38,000 votes.

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<sup>9</sup> Jørgen Kühl (ed.): *En europæisk model? Nationale mindretal i det dansk-tyske grænseland 1945-2000*, Aabenraa: Institut for grænserregionsforskning 2002, pp.38-43.

<sup>10</sup> Information on and links concerning the Danish minority in Germany can be found under <http://www.syd-slesvig.de>. The organization structure of the Danish minority is described in Jørgen Kühl: *Det danske mindretals organisationer*, in: Kühl (ed.) 2002, pp.469-503.

<sup>11</sup> Martin Klatt/Jørgen Kühl: *SSW - Minderheiten- und Regionalpartei in Schleswig-Holstein*, Flensburg: Studiefachabteilung ved Dansk Centralbibliotek for Sydslesvig 1999.

<sup>12</sup> Because of a new election law, the voters in Schleswig-Holstein from 2000 have two votes, one for a candidate, and one for a party. The latter or 'second vote' determines the proportional representation in the Landtag, whereas the first one is a person votes and determines the winner of the district. Hitherto, Schleswig-Holstein voters only had one vote. In the February 2000 elections, the SSW received 60,367 second votes in total. At the same time, however, its candidates received 37,100 personal votes. For the results see <http://www.statistik-sh.de>

In 2003, the main cultural organization SSF - *South Schleswig Association* (established 1920 as *Schleswigian Association*, renamed in 1946) had some 14,211 enlisted members, including 615 National Frisians. Its affiliated organizations had a total of 13,164 members, including 6,832 members of the Danish minority church congregations. In 2003, the *Danish School Association for South Schleswig* (est. 1920) ran 49 schools, with 5,730 pupils, 57 pre-schools/ kindergartens with 1,881 children, and 1 folk high school.<sup>13</sup> The Danish organizations, among others, also include *South Schleswig's Danish Youth Associations* (est. 1920, some 12,200 activity members in 2001, of these some 4,900 were older than 25 years of age),<sup>14</sup> a central library,<sup>15</sup> and a daily newspaper *Flensborg Avis* (est. 1869) with an average daily circulation of 5,300 copies in 2003.

The *German minority* in Denmark numbers 12-20,000 people, which equals to 5-8 per cent of Sønderjylland's total population. In recent years, the numbers seem to be declining. The Germans are living scattered all over Sønderjylland Amt, but with population concentrations around the cities of Haderslev, Tønder, Aabenraa, and Sønderborg, and especially in the countryside surrounding the village of Tinglev. Whereas the German community did constitute local majorities in a number of municipalities in the Southern part of the region in the inter-war period, it has after 1945 become an absolute numerical minority in all municipalities.

The German minority possesses its own cultural and educational facilities enabling a functional cultural autonomy, funded by both Denmark and Germany.<sup>16</sup> It also has a separate political party, the *SP - Schleswigian Party*.<sup>17</sup> Contrary to the Danish minority's independent party SSW, however, the SP is a political branch of the cultural organization *Bund deutscher Nordschleswiger*, without separate members, although it has its own board.<sup>18</sup> The party held a seat in the Danish parliament, the *Folketing*, 1920-1945, 1953-1964, and finally together with the Danish party *CentrumDemokraterne* 1973-1979. At the local level, the SP has run in the ballot for local elections as well. The party has participated in all regional elections, since the county of Sønderjylland was established in 1970. After the most recent elections of November 2001, the SP has one member of the county assembly (*Sønderjyllands amtsråd*) and seven members in five local

councils: one in Aabenraa, Højer, Løgumkloster, and Tønder, three in Tinglev. In the previous local elections in 1997, the SP received a total of 4,155 votes, up from 3,990 in the elections in 1993. In local and regional elections held in November 2001, the SP received 4,037 votes in the municipalities, reducing the number of members of local councils from 8 to 7. In the regional elections, the SP lost some 100 votes compared to 1997. In 2001, the total number of SP regional votes was 4,417, which was considerable less than the 5,000 aimed for in its campaign.<sup>19</sup>

The main cultural organization is the *BdN - Association of German North Schleswigian* - founded in November 1945. In 2000, the BdN had some 3,900 enlisted members.<sup>20</sup> As of August 2000, the *German School and Language Association for North Schleswig* (est. August 1945) ran 15 schools with 1,253 students, one high school with 114 students, and 24 pre-schools/kindergartens with 661 children.<sup>21</sup> Besides the *German Youth Association for North Schleswig* (est. 1947) and several other organizations, the German minority also has its own daily newspaper *Der Nordschleswiger* (est. 1946 as a weekly paper, daily paper from December 1951).<sup>22</sup>

There is also a *North Frisian ethnic group* in the German part of the region. This Frisian group is not one distinct minority, but essentially contains two different kinds of ethnicity, although the cultural and linguistic features are identical. They live in South Schleswig, on the North Sea shore and islands in an area where parts of the Danish minority are also found.<sup>23</sup> The Frisians count for a total of 50-60,000 people, but only 10,000 are actually native speakers. These native speakers again have to be subdivided into the smaller group of National Frisians identifying themselves as a national minority and possessing their own ethnicity/national identity (approx. 10-15 per cent), and the larger group of regionalist Frisians with a German national identity (approx. 85-90 per cent). Both groups cooperate within the *Friesenrat* or Frisian Council, which also cooperates with the Saterland Frisian community in the German state of Niedersachsen, and the Frisians of the Netherlands. They are, like both the Danish and German national

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<sup>13</sup> See <http://www.dsfs.dk>

<sup>14</sup> See <http://www.sdu.de>

<sup>15</sup> See <http://www.dcbib.dk>

<sup>16</sup> Information on the German minority is available on the website <http://www.nordschleswig.dk>

<sup>17</sup> Gösta Toft: The German minority's participation in Danish politics: Years of conflict and fifty years of peace, in: Horn, Frank (ed.): *Minorities and their right of political participation*, Rovaniemi: Lapland's University Press 1996 (Juridica Lapponica 16), pp.79-89; Gösta Toft: Slesvigsk Parti 1945-2000, in: Kühl (ed.) 2002, pp.157-174.

<sup>18</sup> Compare to the website of SP <http://www.slesvigsk-parti.dk>.

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<sup>19</sup> *Geschäftsbericht für die ordentliche Delegiertenversammlung des Bundes Deutscher Nordschleswiger am Montag, den 7. Mai 2001 in Tingleff*, Deutsches Generalsekretariat, Aabenraa 2001, p.8.

<sup>20</sup> *Geschäftsbericht für die ordentliche Delegiertenversammlung des Bundes Deutscher Nordschleswiger am Montag, den 7. Mai 2001 in Tingleff*, Deutsches Generalsekretariat, Aabenraa 2001, p.4.

<sup>21</sup> *Grenzland '2000'. Informationen und Hinweise zu aktuellen Fragen des Grenzlandes aus der Sicht der deutschen Volksgruppe*, Apenrade 2000, p.3.

<sup>22</sup> See for an account of the German minority organizations in Denmark Frank Lubowitz: *Det tyske mindretals organisationer*, in: Kühl (ed.) 2002, pp.455-468.

<sup>23</sup> Thomas Steensen: Die Friesen als autochthone Minderheit in Schleswig-Holstein, in: *Aspekte der Minderheiten- und Volksgruppenpolitik*, Kiel: Rektorat der Universität Kiel und Schleswig-Holsteinischer Landtag 1994, pp.75-94.

minorities, also active members of the *Federal Union of European Nationalities*.<sup>24</sup> The National Frisians cooperate with the Danish minority within the fields of education, culture, and politics. In 2003, the organization of the national Frisians, the *Forining for nationale Friiske*, changed its name into *Friisk Forining*. The Frisians have only had a small impact on the minority conflict in the Danish-German borderlands, although the relationship between the two main sub-communities within the Frisian group for long periods has been strained due to the national tension and conflict between Danishness and Germanness.<sup>25</sup>

Finally, a Gypsy/Roma community of the *German Sinti and Roma* are recognized as a distinct ethnic group by Germany and described as a national minority by the state of Schleswig-Holstein. In all of Germany, the Sinti and Roma community numbers some 70,000 people. In Schleswig-Holstein, they number some 5,000 people, mostly living in Kiel, Lübeck and the area surrounding Hamburg.<sup>26</sup> During the years 1933-1945, the Sinti and Roma were persecuted, and some 400 Schleswig-Holstein Gypsies were killed in the course of the German genocide committed against the Gypsies, annihilating a total of 500,000 individuals.<sup>27</sup> The Schleswig-Holstein Gypsies were able to organise themselves only in the 1980s, and eventually in 1990 the *Landesverband of the Verband Deutscher Sinti and Roma [State of Schleswig-Holstein Association of German Sinti and Roma]* was founded. The Danish, Frisian, and Sinti/Roma communities cooperate with the Sorbian and Saterland Frisian minority in Germany within the informal framework of 'The Four Traditional Minorities'.<sup>28</sup> However, the Sinti and Roma have no numerical significance in the Danish-German border region, and they have had no impact on the Danish-German minority conflict at all. Neither the issue of the Gypsy community nor the Frisian ethnic group will be addressed in this analysis.

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<sup>24</sup> Jørgen Kühl: *The Federal Union of European Nationalities. An Outline History 1949-1999*, Border Region Studies # 1, Danish Institute of Border Region Studies, Aabenraa: Institut for grænseregionsforskning 2000.

<sup>25</sup> Thomas Steensen: *Friserne i det dansk-tyske grænseland 1945-2001: En tredje faktor?*, in: Kühl (ed.) 2002, pp.281-297.

<sup>26</sup> *Bericht zur Arbeit der dänischen Minderheit, der deutschen Minderheit in Nordschleswig, der friesischen Volksgruppe und der deutschen Sinti und Roma für die 14. Legislaturperiode 1996-2000*, Kiel: Der Präsident des Schleswig-Holsteinischen Landtages 1999, pp.54ff.

<sup>27</sup> Sinti und Roma: Unbekannte Schleswig-Holsteiner, in: *Kulturen. Sprachen. Minderheiten. Ein Streifzug durch die dänisch-deutsche Grenzregion 2000*, pp.29-32; Sylvia Träbing-Butzmann: *Als eine Minderheit zur verfeimten 'Rasse' wurde: Der nationalsozialistische Völkermord an den Sinti und Roma*, in: *Minderheiten in der NS-Zeit. Vom getrennten Gestern zum verbindenden Heute*, Ladelund: KZ-Gedenk- und Begegnungsstätte Ladelund 2000, pp.49-66.

<sup>28</sup> Jørgen Kühl: *Kernen i den slesvigske model? Institutionaliseret dialog mellem flertal og mindretal med det dansk-tyske grænseland som eksempel, Fortid & Nutid*, 4, 2000, pp.299-306, p.303f. Germany acknowledges the existence of four minority groups: The community of ca. 50,000 Danes in Schleswig-Holstein, ca. 60,000 Sorbs in Saxony and Brandenburg, 50-60,000 Frisians in Schleswig-Holstein and 2,000 Frisian in Saterland in Niedersachsen, and some 70,000 Gypsies (Sinti-Roma). Compare to Erklärung der Bundesrepublik Deutschland 1997, p.1448. Most recently these four recognized minorities presented a small information booklet *Die vier anerkannten nationalen Minderheiten der Bundesrepublik Deutschland*, Flensburg: Dansk Generalsekretariat 2003.

The Danish-German Border Region 2001

Administrative unit	State	Population	Area (km <sup>2</sup> )	Estimated share of German/Danish minorities
Sønderjyllands Amt (county)	Denmark	253,166	3,939.12	5 - 8%
Stadt Flensburg (city)	Germany	84,281	56.56	21%
Kreis Schleswig-Flensburg (district/county)	Germany	270,110	2,071.59	9.7%
Kreis Nordfriesland (district/county)	Germany	164,280	2,046.98	5.6%
Kreis Rendsburg-Eckernförde (district/county)	Germany	197,754	2,185.48	1.5%

Only those parts of Rendsburg-Eckernförde north of the river Eider are part of the borderlands.

The Danish and German National Minorities 2003

Group	State	Region	Figures	Percentage of regional population
Danish minority	Germany	South Schleswig [Schleswig-Holstein]	50,000	8 - 10% [1.7-1.8%]
German minority	Denmark	Sønderjyllands Amt	12 - 20,000	5 - 8%

## DEFINITIONS

There can be found more and other ethnic groups in the Danish-German border region than these mentioned above, adding more dimensions to the ethnic diversity in this region. However, none of these immigrant groups are recognized as national minorities or ethnic groups according to the definitions included in minority-related legislation or under international law. Therefore, the German-Danish experience on solving minority problems is in this context only and entirely referring to the national minorities.

The minorities concerned are defined in two ways: *On the one side, their very existence is acknowledged and recognized by Denmark and Germany*. Denmark as a state acknowledges the existence of the German minority, and it recognizes Germany as the kin-state of the German national minority. Germany also acknowledges the Germans in Denmark as a national minority and acts as their kin-state. Germany recognizes the Danish group as a national minority and the

Frisians as an ethnic group. Germany also recognizes Denmark as the kin-state of the Danish minority. Thus, the very existence of the minorities concerned is based on mutual recognition, acknowledgement, and consent.

The acknowledgement and recognition of the Danish and German national minorities is guaranteed under uni-, bi- and multilateral declarations, notifications, and agreements. Under international law, the Danish government has acknowledged the existence and obligations of protection towards the German minority with the signature and ratification of the Council of Europe's Framework Convention on National Minorities and other international legal instruments.

*On the other side*, the minorities themselves are defined by self-identification. Besides the official acknowledgement, no other registration or identification of the members of the minority groups is taking place. No census data concern the ethnic affiliation. No registration of language or national affiliation is taking place. The affinity to, affiliation with or membership of the minorities is an individual choice, which might not be neither challenged nor disputed by the authorities. This principle of the recognition of the individual's free and undisputed national affiliation and choice of identity is the fundament of the solution of national conflict following the plebiscites in 1920, but especially after World War II. This principle was also guaranteed with the unilateral governmental declarations of 1955, the so-called Copenhagen and Bonn Declarations notifying the rights of the Danes in Germany and the Germans in Denmark.

#### HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

Up to 1864, the duchy of Schleswig was a part of the Danish monarchy.<sup>29</sup> After a short, but intensive Danish-German/Austrian war, the Duchies of Schleswig, Holstein and Lauenburg were occupied and eventually became a Prussian province in 1867. After World War I, two plebiscites were held in the Northern and Central part of Schleswig in February and March 1920. The outcome resulted in the fixing of the present borderline between Denmark and Germany the same year. With the fixing of the border in 1920, the Danish minority in Germany was diminished, and a German national minority in Denmark was created.<sup>30</sup>

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<sup>29</sup> An outline of the history of the minorities in the Danish-German borderlands is offered in *Minderheiten im deutsch-dänischen Grenzgebiet*, Kiel: Landeszentrale für politische Bildung Schleswig-Holstein 1993 (Gegenwartsfragen 69), and in Jørgen Kühl: *The National Minorities in the Danish-German Border Region*, Aabenraa: Danish Institute of Border Region Studies 2003. The history of Danish minority policy is analysed in Uffe Østergård: *Danmark og mindretallene i teori og praksis*, pp.44-105 in: Jørgen Kühl (ed.): *Mindretalspolitik*, Copenhagen: Danish Institute of International Affairs/DUPI 1996.

<sup>30</sup> The history of the Danish-German border is described in Henrik Becker-Christensen (ed.): *Grænsen i 75 år. 1920-1995*, Aabenraa: Institut for grænseregionsforskning 1995.

In the inter-war period, both groups went through a process of institutionalisation and adaptation to their new situation as national minorities. In this period, the German minority was approximately three times as big as the Danish. In the 1930's, the German minority came under Nazi influence and unified itself on Nazi-German terms. It demanded a border revision, but this was ignored by Hitler's Germany. In 1940, all of Denmark was occupied by German troops. During World War II, many young members of the German minority became volunteer soldiers in German armies, and extensive collaboration took place with the German occupants.

In May 1945, a process of reckoning took place towards the German national minority. Large segments of the adult male German minority came under criminal investigation for collaboration with Nazi Germany, and eventually some 3,000 individuals were sentenced and imprisoned. German property was confiscated. The German minority declared its full loyalty towards Denmark immediately after the war, but expected equal and full civic rights in Denmark. This formed the basis, which eventually enabled a reconciliation process between minority and majority in Southern Denmark.

The Danish national minority came under pressure in the period 1933-45, but although some individual members were persecuted and became prisoners in German jails and concentration camps, no general persecution towards the Danish minority took place. Still, the members became soldiers, and due to pressure and harassment by local authorities, the membership shrunk. At the end of the war, the minority only numbered some 6,000 people. Immediately after the war, however, the Danish minority was approached by tens of thousands of individuals hitherto sharing a non-Danish German identity requesting affiliation with the Danish community due to historical or other affinities. Eventually, the Danish community grew rapidly and multiplied its membership up to 120,000 in less than two years. Consequently a separatist Danish movement emerged asking for self-determination and re-unification with Denmark.

After 1945, Denmark stressed that no border revisions would take place. Denmark opposed attempts of irredentism or separatism by members of the Danish minority in Germany and similar demands among many Danes in Denmark as well. It did not want to create a long-term border problem. In the following years, the Danish minority movement was diminished, and finally stabilized at the present-day level of some 50,000 members – turning the dimensions of the inter-war period around. Today, the Danish minority is at least three times larger than the German in Denmark. Thus, the South Schleswig area in spite of strong and manifold appeals and political activism among the Danish minority and among nationalist groups in Denmark did not reunify with Denmark. Instead, Denmark in many ways came to South Schleswig – with nurses and

doctors, schools and kindergartens, ministers and religious congregations. By avoiding and overcoming a border dispute through reaffirmed recognition of the border itself, Denmark was able to further and support the Danish minority. And by granting financial support, Denmark enabled the Danish minority to set-up a tight network of cultural and educational institutions. In September 1949, the state government in Kiel made a declaration guaranteeing the rights of the Danish minority, recognizing the right of the individual to choose his own national affiliation.

Still, the relationship between Danes and Germans was difficult and strained on both sides of the border. Factual and actual discrimination did take place on both sides. Only in Fall of 1954 and Winter of 1955 and initiated due to West Germany's application for membership in the NATO, the two governments negotiated on the issue, and finally found a solution: The Copenhagen-Bonn Declarations. These unilateral, but in their contents parallel and almost identical declarations of March 29<sup>th</sup> 1955 have become a kind of "Bill of Rights" for both minorities with a strong political value for both states as well. Perhaps the most crucial sentence in these declarations is the acceptance of the principle: "Affiliation to Danish/German nationality and Danish/German culture is a free choice and may not be disputed or questioned by the authorities" – thus acknowledging and re-affirming the individuals rights to unrestricted and free identification with its national preference, which was recognized in the Kiel Declaration of 1949.<sup>31</sup> The instrument of unilateral declarations was agreed upon, because Denmark did not want to sign any bilateral agreement with West Germany on minority issues.

The long-term implementation, the moral impetus, and the political obligations of these unilateral governmental declarations eventually resulted in close co-operation in the Danish-German border region.<sup>32</sup> Thus, it was possible to overcome tension and disputes, and to enable both national minorities to establish, maintain and develop a functional cultural autonomy for their distinct national communities with support and funding by both states. This transformation did not take place over night, but was the long-term result of a process of mutual rap-

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<sup>31</sup> In the official English translation the wording is somewhat different: "It shall be possible freely to profess one's loyalty to the German/Danish people and German/Danish culture and such a profession of loyalty shall not be contested or verified by an official authority. Compare to *Forty Years of Cooperation in the Border Region. The Copenhagen-Bonn Declarations concerning the Rights of the Danish and German Minorities in the Border Region*, Copenhagen: Ministry of Foreign Affairs 1995, pp.26ff. The quote above is from the speech by the German foreign minister Klaus Kinkel in Schleswig on 29 March 1995 on the occasion of the 40<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Bonn-Copenhagen Declarations, printed in the same booklet, pp.37-41.

<sup>32</sup> A German account of this development and of the minority policy of Schleswig-Holstein is offered in Karl-Rudolf Fischer/Kurt Schulz: *Vom Kanon der Kulturen. Minderheiten- und Volksgruppenpolitik in Schleswig-Holstein als Architektur des Friedens*, Bredstedt/Bräist: Verlag Nordfriisk Instituut 1998.

prochement and recognition, furthered and supported by the governments on both sides. The declarations made up the basis of this process, and the long-term impact has turned out to be more important than the declarations and notifications themselves. Still, the declarations were extremely important and therefore they can be perceived as the pivotal point in the solution of the minority questions in this area. In spite of later international legislation and documents concerning minority rights signed by both Denmark and Germany, these deliberate unilateral declarations might have been some of the most important documents in the construction of good practise and confidence-building in their bilateral relations.

## Organizations of the Danish and German national minorities 2001

Activity area	Danish minority	German minority
<b>Culture</b>	<i>Sydslavisk Forening</i> [South Schleswigian Association] 14,800 members, 8 regions, 130 districts	<i>Bund deutscher Nordschleswiger</i> [Association of German North Schleswigians] 4,000 members, 13 regions, 21 local associations
<b>Schools &amp; Education</b>	<i>Dansk Skoleforening for Sydslav</i> [Danish School Association for South Schleswig] 49 schools, 5,833 pupils; 57 kindergartens, 1,826 children	<i>Deutscher Schul- und Sprachverein für Nordschleswig</i> [German School and Language Association for North Schleswig] 17 schools, 1,434 pupils; 24 kindergartens, 503 children
<b>Youth &amp; Sports</b>	<i>Sydslavisk danske Ungdomsforeninger</i> [South Schleswig's Danish Youth Organizations] Umbrella organization, 12,000 activity members, 70 associations, 4 regional organizations, 4 districts	<i>Deutscher Jugendverband für Nordschleswig</i> [German Youth Association in North Schleswig] Umbrella organization, ca. 2,500 members, 28 associations  <i>Nordschleswigscher Ruderverband</i> [North Schleswigian Rowing Association] 7 associations and 6 club houses
<b>Library</b>	<i>Dansk Centralbibliotek for Sydslav</i> [Danish Central Library of South Schleswig] Central library in Flensburg, branches in Schleswig and Husum, joint libraries with Danish schools in Bredstedt and Eckernförde, 2 library busses, 15,925 registered loaners, of these 9,638 active in 2000, total number of lending 610,585 in 2000	<i>Deutscher Bücherverband für Nordschleswig</i> [German Library Association of North Schleswig] Central library in Aabenraa, branches in Haderslev, Sønderborg, Tønder and Tinglev, 3 library busses, 15 branches in German schools, 8,200 registered loaners, total number of lending 338,000 in 2000
<b>Media</b>	<i>Flensborg Avis</i> Ltd., published Mondays-Saturdays, circulation ca. 5,300 copies, Thursdays with membership news of the Sydslavisk Forening in 12,000 additional copies	<i>Der Nordschleswiger</i> Published by <i>Bund deutscher Nordschleswiger/Deutscher Presseverein</i> , Mondays-Saturdays, circulation ca. 2,400 copies
<b>Health &amp; Social Issues</b>	<i>Dansk Sundhedstjeneste for Sydslav</i> [Danish Health Service in South Schleswig] 1 central, 3 nursing centres, 21 home nurses, 52 retirement flats, Danish Home of the Elderly in Flensburg	<i>Sozialdienst Nordschleswig</i> [Social Services in North Schleswig] 30 local social services, women's and social associations, kindergartens, recreational centre 'Haus Quickborn' in Kollund

Activity area	Danish minority	German minority
<b>Church &amp; Congregations</b>	<i>Dansk Kirke i Sydslav</i> [Danish Church in South Schleswig] 6 districts, 39 congregations, 6,665 members  <i>Dansk Kirke i Udlandet</i> [Danish Church Abroad] 24 ministers, four of these paid for by the German Nordelbische Kirche, compensating for four German ministers provided by the Danish State Church for the German minority in Denmark	<i>Nordschleswigsche Kirchengemeinde der Nordelbischen Kirche</i> [North Schleswig Church Congregation of the North Elbian Church] German free church outside the towns with 7 congregations & ministers, affiliated with Nordelbische Kirche in Germany  <i>Folkekirken</i> [Danish State Church] 4 German ministers in Aabenraa, Haderslev, Sønderborg and Tønder, provided by the Danish State Church
<b>Politics</b>	<i>Sydslavisk Vælgerforening/Südschleswigscher Wählerverband</i> [South Schleswigian Voter's Association] 105 districts, 5 regions, 4,400 members, 137 elected members of municipal councils, 24 elected members of county assemblies and the Flensburg city council, 3 members of the state Landtag Youth organization <i>SSW-Ungdom</i>	<i>Schleswigsche Partei/Südschleswigsche Partei</i> [Schleswigian Party] Political branch of Bund deutscher Nordschleswiger, no individual party members. 1 member of Sønderjyllands Amtsråd (county assembly), 7 members of 5 municipal councils Youth organization <i>Junge SPitzen</i>
<b>Agriculture/Farming</b>	<i>Fælleslandboforeningen for Sydslav</i> [Common Agricultural Association for South Schleswig]	<i>Landwirtschaftlicher Hauptverein für Nordschleswig</i> [Central Agricultural Association for North Schleswig]
<b>Dialogue with the State</b>	<i>Liaison Committee with the Federal German Government – Ministry of the Interior</i> (est. 1.7.1965)  <i>The Prime Minister of Schleswig-Holstein's Commissioner for Minorities</i> (est. 1988)	<i>Liaison Committee with the Danish Government – Ministry of the Interior</i> (est. 19.5.1965)  <i>German Liaison Office in Copenhagen</i> (est. 1983)

Activity area	Danish minority	German minority
<b>Contact with the Kin-State</b>	<p><i>Femmandsudvalget (Udvalget vedrørende Danske Kulturelle Anliggender i Sydslesvig)</i> [Five Person's Committee, Danish Ministry of Education]</p> <p><i>NGO's such as Grænseforeningen, Slesvig-Ligaen, Sydslesvigsk Udvalg af 5. maj 1945, Slesvigsk Samfund, Det Unge Grænseværn, Danmarks-Samfundet, Foreningen Norden</i></p>	<p><i>Gremium für Fragen der deutschen Minderheit in Nordschleswig beim Schleswig-Holsteinischen Landtag in Kiel</i> [Schleswig-Holstein Landtag Committee on Issues concerning the German Minority in North Schleswig] (est. 1975)</p> <p><i>The Prime Minister of Schleswig-Holstein's Commissioner for Minorities</i> (est. 1988)</p> <p><i>NGO's such as Deutscher Grenzverein, Schleswig-Holsteinischer Heimatbund, Grenzfriedensbund, Arbeitsgemeinschaft Deutsches Schleswig, VDA – Verein für Deutsche Kulturbeziehungen</i></p>
<b>International Minority Organizations</b>	<p><i>Federal Union of European Nationalities</i></p> <p><i>Youth of European Nationalities</i></p> <p><i>European Bureau for Lesser Used Languages - Germany</i></p>	<p><i>Federal Union of European Nationalities</i> [also leading member of the FUEN sub-committee Working Group of German Minorities]</p> <p><i>Youth of European Nationalities</i></p> <p><i>European Bureau for Lesser Used Languages - Denmark</i></p>

## THE DANISH-GERMAN EXPERIENCE

Some of the most crucial elements in Denmark's and Germany's experience as state and kin-state with their national minorities in the Danish-German borderlands might be summed up to the following fifteen points:

1. The framework of the minority policy has been defined with full consent within the Danish and German political life. No serious democratic party in either country disagrees with financial and moral support to the Danish minority in Germany, and no political party has a negative attitude towards the German minority in Denmark. The same applies in the case of the Danes in Germany.
2. After World War II, both West Germany and Denmark agreed upon that the minority issues should no longer become or make up obstacles in their bilateral relationship. This decision was supported and the implementation of policy furthered by the joint values and political and economic interests developing throughout the second part of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century. In some ways, the Cold War promoted this positive and constructive development and process as well.
3. Denmark and Germany acknowledged the existence of national minorities in their borderlands in jointly elaborated, but separately notified government declarations in March 1955. They stressed, that the national minorities should be enabled to foster contacts with their kin-states, and it was accepted as a principle, that the kin-states could provide funding for and maintain cultural ties with their kin-minority. Both states subscribed to the principle of free and unrestricted individual identification with and affiliation to the preferred nationality.
4. Denmark chose to institutionalise a dialogue with the German minority. In 1965, a joint Contact Committee or Liaison Committee between the Danish government and the German minority was created substituting parliamentary representation at the national level. This committee still meets at least once a year discussing topics of particular interest and importance to the German minority. In 1983, Denmark also set-up a liaison office for the German minority attached to the prime ministers office in Copenhagen, compensating the lack of parliamentary representation in Copenhagen. This construction actually has had a larger importance and impact in favour of the German minority than the previous parliamentary representation.
5. West Germany also institutionalised a dialogue with the Danish minority on several levels. In Schleswig-Holstein at the level of state parliament and



in the years 1950-55 within a special bipartisan liaison committee, followed by a committee under the state assembly in the period 1955-58. Following the Danish example, the federal German government created a Liaison Committee with the Danish minority's political party as a substitute for non-representation in the federal parliament. In 2002, the Federal government appointed a special commissioner for national minorities in Germany.

6. Denmark recognizes the special competence and insight of the German minority in the field of minority issues. Thus, Denmark has included a representative of the German minority in several CSCE/OSCE-delegations and to other relevant forum. This emphasizes the full recognition of the German minority.
7. Germany has also included representatives of the Danish minority in some delegations to CSCE/OSCE-meetings, and has on both state and federal level included the Danish minority in hearings ahead of the adoption of international obligation in the field of minority protection.
8. Denmark also chose to institutionalise the contact to the Danish kin-minority. This happened through a government committee appointed by the Ministry of Education, consisting of representatives of the largest four eventually five parties in the national parliament in Copenhagen. The distribution of funding provided by the Danish state budget is agreed upon by the Danish parliament in consent and distributed by this special committee.
9. Germany and especially the state of Schleswig-Holstein institutionalised the contact to the German kin-minority in Denmark. Schleswig-Holstein appoints a special state committee concerning the German minority. The additional funding for culture and education is agreed upon by the state legislation in Schleswig-Holstein based on political consent.
10. Denmark is funding the work of both the German and Danish national minority, as well as the German federal and state governments provide funds for both groups.
11. Denmark's government is maintaining contacts to both the German and Danish minorities through visits to the minorities by ministers, government officials and by regular meetings with representatives of the minorities, thus enabling the government to update its level of information and to further its insight in the development and problems of the minorities.<sup>33</sup> It

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<sup>33</sup> On 27 March 2000, the Danish prime-minister Poul Nyrup Rasmussen visited the German minority. Compare to *Der Nordschleswiger*, 28.3.2000.

regularly stresses the importance of both minorities and the peaceful coexistence in the border region.

12. Germany pays similar high-ranking attention to the German minority and perceives the minority as a crucial element in the good neighbourly relationship with Denmark – and vice versa.
13. Whereas the German state of Schleswig-Holstein once in every term is addressing the issue of all the minorities in the Danish-German borderlands in a government report and debate in the state parliament, Denmark has not chosen to debate its policy on a regular basis. Still there is a consenting political awareness of these issues.
14. Denmark has in the 1990's signed international agreements and documents on minority rights, and ratified the Council of Europe's Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities.<sup>34</sup> In 2000, Denmark ratified the Council of Europe's Charter for Regional or Minority Languages.<sup>35</sup> The ratification of the latter, however, did cause some discussions among Danes especially in Southern Denmark, questioning the relevance of implementing this charter in the light of the long-lasting peaceful co-existence.<sup>36</sup> This had no impact on the ratification-process itself. On 26 May 2000, the Danish parliament unanimously voted upon Denmark's ratification of the charter.<sup>37</sup> Denmark deposited its ratification on September 8, 2000.<sup>38</sup> Germany ratified the charter in 1998, and it also applies to the Danish national minority.<sup>39</sup>

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<sup>34</sup> *Denmark's first report under the Council of Europe's Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities*, Copenhagen: Ministry of The Interior, March 1999.

<sup>35</sup> See *Forslag til folketingsbeslutning om Danmarks ratifikation af den europæiske pagt om regionale sprog eller mindretalsprog af 5. november 1992*, <http://www.folketinget.dk>

<sup>36</sup> Compare to *37 Bestimmungen für Deutsch als Minderheitensprache*, *Der Nordschleswiger*, 25.3.2000; *Poul Nyrup: Ihr werdet nicht vergessen, and Alltag im Grenzland mit Entspannung Toleranz und Respekt*, *Der Nordschleswiger*, 28.3.2000.

<sup>37</sup> *Folketingsbeslutning om Danmarks ratifikation af den europæiske pagt om regionale sprog eller mindretalsprog af 5. november 1992*, <http://www.folketinget.dk>

<sup>38</sup> See <http://conventions.coe.int/treaty/EN/DeclareList>

<sup>39</sup> See Declaration transmitted by a letter from the Deputy Permanent Representative of Germany, dated 23 January 1998, registered at the Secretariat General on 23 January 1998 - Or. Engl./Ger. Declaration from the Federal Republic of Germany for the preparation of the ratification of the European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages: "Minority languages within the meaning of the European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages in the Federal Republic of Germany shall be the Danish, Upper Sorbian, Lower Sorbian, North Frisian and Sater Frisian languages and the Romany language of the German Sinti and Roma; a regional language within the meaning of the Charter in the Federal Republic shall be the Low German language." <http://conventions.coe.int/treaty/EN/DeclareList>

15. Finally, Denmark and Germany are co-operating in the Danish-German borderlands on several levels, including the field of minority policy.<sup>40</sup> Both governments agree on the importance and European perspectives of the solutions found in this region, and they try to disseminate the positive experience in many ways to actors from minorities and majorities in various countries. One of the latest efforts resulted in the joint creation of the European Centre for Minority Issues<sup>41</sup> in the German border city of Flensburg in 1996. Both governments have also presented the positive German-Danish experience in an international context.

#### KEY-ELEMENTS IN THE GERMAN-DANISH EXPERIENCE

The key-elements of these observations might be described in general terms of

- a. *Mutual recognition,*
- b. *Mutual support,*
- c. *Joint funding,*
- d. *Functional autonomy,*
- e. *Co-operation,*
- f. *Permanent institutionalised dialogue,* and
- g. *Inclusion and participation in political principles and practise.*

The implementation of these elements is fundamental to the distinct German-Danish experience with national minorities as state and kin-state. These principles define the framework for the mitigation and solution of the minority questions in the region of Schleswig.

#### FROM MINORITY REGULATIONS TO CROSS-BOUNDARY COOPERATION

Thus, the issue of the national minorities has been of primary interest to the Danish-German bilateral relationship in the 20<sup>th</sup> Century. Both states had to cope with their borderlands ethnic heritage and to find a sustainable solution and

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<sup>40</sup> In 1997, the cross-border cooperation between the counties in the Danish-German borderlands was institutionalised with the creation of the Region Sønderjylland/Slesvig. Information is available under <http://www.region.dk>

<sup>41</sup> <http://www.ecmi.de>

effective minority regulations, before true cross-boundary cooperation could develop. The minority issue dominated the picture for decades after the Bonn-Copenhagen notifications. Cross-boundary cooperation in the 1950's, 60's and even 70's primarily meant contacts between the kin-state and minority. The majorities on both sides of the Danish-German border only slowly and hesitating engaged in a case-to-case-cooperation. Thus, cross-boundary-cooperation was slow partly due to the memory of the conflicts of the past and the present situation of the minorities.

This, however, did not prevent the states from cooperating within an international framework – such as NATO, Council of Europe OECD, later the EEC. Both states shared political values, although the practise of democracy differed. Only in their borderlands, contact was restricted due to the minorities. Therefore, the contact between the regional authorities developed rather slowly. The first contacts, however, already were initiated back in the mid-1950's, when the city of Flensburg invited representatives of the North Schleswig municipalities to attend the so-called “Flensburger Tage”.<sup>42</sup> Later, the contact became more formalized and changed name into the Danish-German Days, taking place every second year on a rotatory principle in the Danish and German part of Schleswig. Still, cooperation was limited. One thing was to show goodwill and attend meetings celebrating understanding. Something else was to actually engage in cooperation. Here, the self-interests of both sides were important. Cooperation concerning the water quality of the Flensburg Fjord led to the cooperation concerning the quality of the waters in the 1950's. In 1972, the Joint Committee on the Flensburg Fjord was created. In 1975, it became a commission.

When Denmark joined the EEC in 1973, the Danish sides showed more interest in a deepened cooperation, but only from case-to-case and without any formal agreement. The German sides pushed for an institutional framework, whereas the Danes did not want any general commitment beyond actual interests. In 1977, the Danish-German Forum was created as a compromise, including representatives from the County of Sønderjylland in North Schleswig and the administrative entities Flensburg, Schleswig-Flensburg and North Frisland on the German side. These entities 20 years later formed the cross-border region Sønderjylland/Schleswig. In 1988 the County of Sønderjylland and the state

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<sup>42</sup> For the development of cross-boundary cooperation in Schleswig see Henrik Becker-Christensen: Die nationale Entwicklung im Grenzland seit 1945, *Grenzfriedenshefte*, 1, 1999, pp.23-29; Jørn Buch: “Hvor går grænsen?”, *Sønderjyske Årbøger* 1997, pp.27-36; *Grænsen i 75 år*, Aabenraa: Institut for grænseregionsforskning og Told- og Skatthistorisk Selskab 1995; Lorenz Rerup/Reimar Hansen: Europa in seinen Regionen. Schleswig – ein Beispiel für die Entstehung, den Verlauf und die Lösung nationaler Konflikte, *Grenzfriedenshefte*, 2, 1993, pp.77-107. *Sønderjyllands Amt 1970-1995*, Aabenraa: Institut for grænseregionsforskning 1995.

government of Schleswig-Holstein joined forces elaborating a joint proposal for financial support to the European Commission in Brussels. In 1992, a conference led to the creation of cross-border working-group with representatives of municipalities. Thus, the joint self-interest became a catalyst for cooperation. This continued within the framework of the EC's and eventually the EU's Interreg-programmes. Later, cross-border cooperation was initiated in the field of higher education, when the Southern Denmark University in Sønderborg and the Flensburg University created a study programme. Museums and other cultural institutions have engaged in constructive cooperation and joint projects since the mid-1990's. Historians have continued their dialogue, which dates back to the 1950's and 60's, and for the last 20 years the Institute of Border Region Studies has published results of joint working groups gathering and editing bilingual collections of documents concerning the history of Schleswig.

In 1995, the first borderland-congress took place in Aabenraa, jointly organised by Danish and German authorities. Here, it was proposed to create a cross-border region based on the so-called Euroregion model. In November 1995, the Danish-German Forum decided, that drafts should be elaborated. When the draft was presented in September 1996, a very emotional dispute took place in Sønderjylland. Committees in defence of the visible border were created, a human chain was formed to mark the border, but failed to reach its own goal: Only some 5,000 showed up. Thus, the activities made invisible borders between Danish and German visible. In spite of good neighbourly relations, some Danes emphasized the distinctions between Danish and German. Anyway, the region – without the prefix Euro – eventually was created in September 1997. The borderland congress in the meantime had become an institution and takes place every second year on a rotatory principle in Denmark and Germany.

In spite of these and a number of other positive examples, the situation in Schleswig is not a pattern for cross-boundary integration. The cooperation has developed over time, but the cross-border region has not emerged as an integrated entity. Peace-building in Schleswig most of all means confidence-building. The distinctions and differences between the two sides are still dominant. Even today, cross-boundary contacts are rather limited. Although border controls will become removed in early 2001, no signs indicate a deeper contact between the two populations. The authorities are cooperating, but the regional cross-border cooperation is moving very slowly. Three years after its creation, the Region Sønderjylland-Schleswig is in danger of a parking ticket rather than a speeding ticket. The German side shows a larger interest by far in cooperation than the Danish. The working groups suffer under disinterest on the Danish side. Language-skills are rapidly deteriorating: Danish youngsters show only limited interest in learning German. It used to be that the media – especially territorial te-

levision and radio – naturally made the Danes in North Schleswig bilingual at least in passive terms. In the age of cable and satellite TV, the situation is changing fundamentally. The 15 or so German TV-channels are not interesting any longer. British, American and Scandinavian satellite channels are watched by the younger generations.

Thus, the paradoxical situation nowadays is, that although the importance of cross-border cooperation and the knowledge of German is stressed and obviously should be an advantage for the young generations, globalisation and internationalisation of the media actually do lead in the opposite direction. This certainly creates new obstacles to cross-boundary contact. On the other hand, the younger generations in the German part of the region do share the same global values and fashions as their Danish counterparts – so maybe the process of internationalisation in the long term actually might further cross-boundary contacts. Maybe, deteriorating language skills actually might lead to equality, because both sides will turn to English as the language of communication.

In many ways, Schleswig might be described as a positive case of cross-boundary peace-building. The national conflict has been mitigated and eventually solved. Minorities and majorities recognize each other and do cooperate. Majorities and majorities cooperate, and even minorities on both sides do have joint interests. Both states have adopted inclusive minority policies, stressing the importance of the very existence of the minority groups. Assimilatory strategies have been abandoned. Dis-assimilation nowadays is a matter of fact – even simultaneously with voluntary assimilation from both sides.

However, this is the result of a long-term process. It took decades to reach the present-day situation. Cross-boundary cooperation is underway, but is still moving with a snail's pace. This is not necessarily negative, because cooperation takes time. In some respects, this evolutionary process actually took longer time than in other regions. In the Polish-German border region with a far more bloody past, cooperation efforts have moved faster, although it might be disputed, if this is supported by the populations or mostly is based on political interests.

Even regarding the remembrance of the battles and victims of the past, only in recent years this has been possible in Schleswig. Only in July 2000, the 150<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Battle of Idstedt in 1850 was commemorated in a joint ceremony. The participating politicians, of course, described this event in terms of a European model-case; but in fact, the Danish-German case is moving behind, for instance, the French-German case. Add to this, that only in the year 2000 the battle and victims from a war 150 years ago could be commemorated, although this war has been placed beyond the memory of contemporaries for most of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century. The deciding war of 1864, eventually leading to the Prussian annexation

of the Duchy of Schleswig, still cannot be commemorated. Maybe this will be possible in 2014 when the 150<sup>th</sup> anniversary will take place. Thus, it is necessary to use characterisations carefully: In some ways Schleswig is ahead, in other respects the region is behind other European cases.

#### HOW TO INITIATE AND DEVELOP CROSS-BORDER COOPERATION

Some general conclusions can be drawn from the case of Schleswig on ways to initiate and develop cross-border cooperation:

1. Cross-boundary cooperation and peace-building takes place under a number of preconditions. Thus, both sides have to cope with the historical, social, ethnic or national heritage. To past should not be suppressed but faced and dealt with in an open way. This might eventually enable a joint remembrance of the conflicts and victims of the past. Democracy and human rights have to form the basis of the societies. Both sides have to agree on the permanent character of the border itself. They have to abstain from any kind of irredenta or other activities, which might undermine the sovereignty of the other part. They have to find sustainable solutions and regulations for minorities in the region. The minority groups have to be included in the political, social, and economic life.

2. The cooperation itself has to be imbedded within a framework of mutual and joint interests. The cooperation initially might take place because of the personal contact between decision-makers. Regular meetings do contribute to confidence-building in borderlands. Then, the cooperation has to choose achievable short-term goals, including wider parts of the communities, for instance, within the framework of 'people-to-people'-projects. If applicable, long-term goals have to be envisioned, but implemented through many small steps. Milestones have to be defined, and achievements have to be emphasized as success-stories. These milestones of cross-boundary cooperation are necessary to initiative and experience cooperation based on trial-and-error, but also to prove towards larger parts of the regional population on both sides, that cross-boundary cooperation is more than an ambition and principle, but has concrete positive results.

3. The populations and communities involved have to experience a benefit of the cooperation: for instance cleaner waters, less pollution, improved infrastructure. In other words: Cross-boundary cooperation has to be relevant to the people in the areas concerned. They have to experience a surplus-value, which is relevant to the individual as well. They have to acknowledge a positive outcome. They have to recognize the purpose and impact of these initiatives. Constructions imposed from above will be counter-productive, as long as the people on loca-

tion are not prepared to engage and commit themselves to cross-boundary cooperation.

4. The commitment is the next decisive step: Although politicians and authorities agree on the importance and relevance of cross-boundary cooperation, this will be limited to rather bureaucratic measures as long as the populations show no interest in involving themselves. Cross-boundary peace-building has to include the individuals and to enable them to take part in a cross-boundary and cross-cultural dialogue. Youth exchange programmes are important tools. Cross-border initiatives within the field of economics, infrastructure and even cultural exchange are other important measures. The mobility of the work-force has to be made possible and secured through devolution of bureaucratic obstacles. Further, both parts involved have to be informed about the culture, mentality, history, politics, but also every-day living conditions of the other. Language-courses should be offered in schools and public authorities. The media ought to devote parts of their focus to the other side of the border as well. The image and perception of the other side has to be rebuilt and reconstructed on the basis of experience and present-day facts.

5. Encouraging external preconditions are helpful to cross-boundary contacts. The national governments have to fully agree with and grant support to the project. A general political consensus is important. Old national tensions should not be used to create new obstacles. If applicable, an international framework might be useful - for instance EU-programmes such as the Community Initiative INTERREG encouraging cross-border cooperation. The fiscal self-interest of each side thus might be turned into joint efforts - and further contacts and cooperation.

These are some of the lessons to be drawn from the case of Schleswig concerning minority regulations and cross-boundary cooperation between the majorities.