Normandy’s European and international policy

Strategic policy document
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It is undeniable that the reunification of Normandy is an opportunity for our region, whose name is known across the globe, to shine. Although the very principle of international efforts by local authorities may have been contested, it is clear that the territorial reform that resulted in larger regions helps to strengthen their legitimacy and credibility when acting at an international level. With increased visibility and stronger powers, regions are increasingly expected to use international levers as the natural extension of their internal responsibilities.

Far from being limited to the sole area of decentralised co-operation, European and international efforts are increasingly being called upon to feed into all regional sector-specific policies. The efforts in these fields cannot be separated from our attractiveness strategy that is designed to promote our talents, our expertise, our products, our identity, and more. On an increasingly competitive global playing field, it is time for Normandy to promote its assets and give meaning to its international activity. Gone are the days when European and international policy was carried out on an ad-hoc basis, without being coupled with a global strategy and managed in accordance with the major regional priorities.

We must now use the merging of Normandy as an opportunity to rethink the ins and outs of the Region’s international activity. The reunified Normandy’s European and international policy cannot simply involve a combination of the activities carried out in the former Haute-Normandie and Basse-Normandie regions. Instead, we must build on the networks that have been developed over time by the two former regions to create a real strategy that is in line with the new tools and approaches put in place by the Region, whether these are the Normandy Attractiveness Mission, support for international mobility for students, or the newly-created Economic Development Agency.

By creating a strategic policy document, Normandy intends to build a proactive European and international policy that is resolutely open to current global opportunities as well as promoting the values on which the Normandy identity is built: peace and freedom.
The proposed strategy is based on a long-term approach and features three priorities:

1. Using our European and international activity to boost Normandy’s attractiveness and the competitiveness of the regional economy

2. Building a strategy for Normandy’s presence and influence in Europe and the world.

3. Conveying a political aim: Normandy for Peace.
1.1. USING EUROPEAN AND INTERNATIONAL ACTIVITY TO BOOST NORMANDY’S ATTRACTIVENESS AND THE COMPETITIVENESS OF THE REGIONAL ECONOMY

Promoting our sectors of excellence, helping to export Normandy’s businesses, boosting our attractiveness to tourists, funding European-scale infrastructure, and balanced regional development – European and international activity will allow a number of drivers to be mobilised to develop our Region and the competitiveness of Normandy’s economy.
1.1. Developing Normandy’s approach to managing European funds

The Normandy region will receive over €1bn of European funding (European structural and investment funds) over the period 2014-2020 through the ERDF (€413m), the EAFRD (€411m), the EMFF (€20m) and the ESF (€101m). Now an ERDF and EAFRD managing authority, this status gives the Region an essential driver for its regional development as well as for promoting Norman excellence through large-scale funding of training, research and innovation.

The mobilisation of European funds is particularly important in achieving the major transitions that are currently under way, including ecological, digital, agricultural, and urban transitions. European funds must be put to good use to finance projects that are of strategic interest for our Region. It is essential that the added value of European funding, to which regional funding is consistently linked, is protected. **Particular attention is therefore paid to the structural element of projects funded by the European Union in order to avoid the temptation of taking a purely accounting-based approach.** We must remember that for every euro of European funding, another euro of matched funding must be identified and raised, which represents a significant leverage effect for a potential investment of €2bn in Normandy by 2020.

Negotiated prior to the merger of the two regions of Normandy, the European funding budgets relate to the former Haute-Normandie and Basse-Normandie regions, and include two distinct operational programmes; the management of these funds has become a complex task within Normandy’s reunification process. Although it is legally impossible to merge European funding assigned to the two former regions of Normandy before 2020, it is nonetheless essential to carry out joint management of the funds allocated to these two former regions.

Consequently, the European fund monitoring committee met for the first time on a reunified Normandy scale on 19 and 20 May 2016 in Caen. The meeting was attended by all the managing partners of the funds – the European Commission, the French government, the Region, the departments, and Normandy’s local authorities which have the status of intermediary European fund management bodies.

This initial monitoring committee provided an opportunity to issue a progress report on the current revision of rural development plans whose goal is to release additional funding for agri-environmental measures. Note was also taken of the Region’s ambition to **use the reunification to simplify the management of European funds as much as possible and to lighten the procedural burden on project leaders.**
As part of the extension of this European fund monitoring committee, it was proposed that the management of European funds allocated to Normandy should be unified based on the following principles:

- **European fund management devolved to Regional Sector Departments** in order to be closer to project leaders and to use European funding for regional priorities.

- **Unified steering by the Region’s Europe and International Department**, with a single Normandy-wide multi-fund planning committee meeting held every month, which will give a coherent and comprehensive overview of how European funds are allocated across Normandy.

- **Convergence of eligibility criteria** for fundable actions wherever this is permitted by the structure of the former Haute-Normandie and Basse-Normandie operational programmes.

- **A single communications policy** relating to the two programmes as part of a multi-fund approach focused on promoting projects that are co-funded by the European Union budget. A network of European project leaders will be put in place to represent and raise awareness of Europe’s work in Normandy.

### 1.2. Promoting Normandy’s excellence internationally

Exports represent 35% of Normandy’s GDP. Our Region’s sectors of excellence are recognised worldwide, including, for example, our agri-food, marine renewable energy, aeronautics, and equine sectors.

Based on our Region’s expertise, we can develop and promote the Normandy ‘brand’, a passport to exporting our businesses. The new Normandy Development Agency (ADN) is at the forefront to provide support to Normandy’s businesses with their international development strategy. The Region could act to support this by identifying areas that represent new opportunities or feature innovative development models.

By initiating and developing international cooperation, the Region creates ideal conditions for Normandy investments abroad as well as foreign investments in Normandy, helping to boost the regional economy and local jobs.
The Region’s international economic activities should not be geographically limited. It should be constantly on the lookout and, above all, be able to identify development potential at the right time.

As a result, the long-standing cooperation with China (Fujian Province) should be continued and intensified, given its potential for Normandy businesses. This is clearly illustrated by the investment made by Biostime, a Chinese importer of infant milk, in a new production unit at the Isigny Sainte-Mère milk cooperative, with production targeting the Chinese market in order to achieve food traceability following the melamine-adulterated milk scandal, which poisoned hundreds of thousands of babies.

In terms of international economic development, and without prejudging opportunities that may arise, priority will be given to emerging areas and/or those that represent innovative development models. The following countries have been identified:

- **Iran**, which is opening up to foreign investment following the lifting of international sanctions and the embargo. At the current time, no French region has formally begun cooperating with this country.

- **French-speaking Africa**, through the Region’s financial support and its participation in the ‘Entrepren dre avec l’Afrique du 21\textsuperscript{e} siècle’ (‘Working with 21\textsuperscript{st} century Africa’) programme, begun in 2015 in the Eure area/department, which involves meetings between business leaders from Normandy and Africa to discuss economic development projects. The 2\textsuperscript{nd} set of meetings will take place from 20 to 22 October 2016 and will focus on cooperation in the agri-food sector and the emergence of new sectors.

- **Russia**, to which a trip is planned in the autumn, which will look at investments in the agri-food sector.

- **The United States**, and California in particular, which is of interest as a means of expanding our economic and cultural links.

- **Vietnam**, a country where the Normandy Management School (EM Normandie) is developing a training programme for the country’s civil servants, and where a cooperative approach to the tourism sector could be developed.

- **Taiwan**, which wants to invest in marine renewable energy.
2.2. BUILDING A STRATEGY FOR NORMANDY’S PRESENCE AND INFLUENCE IN EUROPE AND THE WORLD

For centuries, Normandy’s identity has been the product of European influences from Scandinavia to the Mediterranean. Europe is in our genes, and, stemming from the trauma of the bombings and destruction of the Second World War, Normandy retains an unswerving attachment to the values of peace and freedom.

With France’s post-war reconstruction, the increase in the number of our twinned towns, cities and villages laid the foundations for the reconciliation of France and Germany, an essential element of the European ambition. Embodying this heritage, it is our duty to confirm the reunified Normandy’s place as a major European region which, because it benefits significantly from the European Union, must also make its contribution to the European project.
2.1. Confirming Normandy’s foundations in Europe

Separately initiated by the former Haute-Normandie and Basse-Normandie regions, cooperation with European regions and countries testifies to Normandy’s strong European foundations. We have long collaborated with the Channel Islands, Lower Saxony in Germany, and the County of Hordaland in Norway.

Building on highly active networks, Normandy is involved in Europe through a number of economic, education-based, and cultural programmes. The common thread behind all of our cooperation programmes is our shared belonging to the European continent, to its values, and to its model of society.

Continued cooperation – through school, artistic and professional immersion programmes – is also a way to make our European citizenship and the international openness that follows into a reality.

Consequently, support for European and international mobility for Normandy’s students is a priority, as through this mobility, Normandy’s young people can improve their language, cultural and professional skills. To achieve this goal, a new ambitious aid system has been put in place for students and apprentices on higher education programmes from Bac+1 to Bac+5 level (1 to 5 years of higher education). In addition to personal and human enrichment, the aim is to train highly qualified young people who are ready for the new economy, competitive on the European jobs market, and drivers of our Region. International mobility for apprentices is one of the key areas of the Grenelle de l’apprentissage apprenticeship forum, with the aim of creating a dedicated Erasmus programme for Normandy’s apprentices. Focusing on our young people is an investment in Normandy’s future and growth.

Because European mobility is a key challenge in fostering a spirit of intercultural openness among Normandy’s young people, the Region aims to take a proactive approach by expanding the range of programmes that allow as many people as possible to experience life in another European Union country. Immersion classes in secondary schools, European voluntary service, the Erasmus programme – the European project can only continue if there are Europeans to build it.

To breathe new life into the European spirit, we also need to work to make Europe a key part of Normandy, to embody it through concrete initiatives, to give it a human dimension once more. A range of associations operate within the Region of Normandy (CRIJ1, CREAN2, Maisons de l’Europe, Familles rurales, etc.), working to develop European citizenship actions. The Region will work to give greater visibility to their initiatives and will encourage these organisations to work even more closely together on common projects. The Region is also interested in opening a dialogue with Maisons de l’Europe organisations in its departments to support the creation of a regional structure that can benefit from regional funding as part of a future aims and means contract.

(1) CRIJ: Regional youth information centre
(2) CREAN: Rural European crossroads for Normandy players
2.2. Breathing new life into our cooperation with the South of England

The INTERREG programme between France and England aims to encourage cross-border cooperation between the regions of north-western France and England’s southern counties. The INTERREG IV programme (2007-2013) that is currently being concluded was managed by the former Haute-Normandie region; Norfolk County Council was appointed managing authority for the new INTERREG V programme (2014-2020).

Although ambitious targets have been set for the INTERREG programme, it should be noted that the current results fall well short of the potential impacts that cooperation between our respective regions could have. We must use the geographical, historical, cultural and economic ties between Normandy and the British Isles to strengthen the waning momentum. Normandy could take a political initiative aimed at giving fresh impetus to cross-Channel cooperation by building on the INTERREG programme but also by ensuring that its efforts – including those beyond this programme – result in further cooperation with the South of England. To make this initiative a success, it must use a bottom-up approach, not a top-down approach, to ensure that all citizens can take ownership of the programme.

2.3. Taking a proactive role within European networks

Building a strategy to develop Normandy’s presence and influence means ensuring that our voice – representing our values and our interests – is heard more clearly within European regions. To achieve this, we must play an active role in a range of influential networks and think tanks, key venues for meeting people and sharing ideas. Whether formal or informal, European networks must not be neglected, which requires political investment. Our credibility is at stake.

Playing a proactive role within European networks requires elected representatives to work diligently in the various bodies to which the region belongs: theme-specific committees in the ARF\(^3\) (Europe, International Strategy), the AFFCRE\(^4\), the Conference of Peripheral Maritime Regions (CPMR), etc. But it also requires working with all bodies in which the Region is represented, such as national committees for monitoring European funds, or the national commission on decentralised cooperation.

This policy of presence and influence will be largely based on the expertise and the strategic monitoring carried out by the Normandy Brussels Office, which represents the region before the European Union. The European Union currently includes almost 280 regions, and around 250 of these are represented in Brussels. However, only a few benefit from the same international reputation that the now-reunified Normandy enjoys. But in order to take full advantage of this reputation, nothing is as crucial as ensuring that regional elected representatives maintain a strong and frequent presence.

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\(^3\) ARF: French Regions Association
\(^4\) AFCRRE: French association of European cities and regions
in Brussels. Entire swathes of our regional responsibilities are affected by European law, and regular meetings with European elected officials and civil servants must be held to defend Normandy’s interests while there is still time. To achieve this, elected representatives on the Regional Council’s ‘Europe and international’ commission could play an extremely useful role in identifying subjects of regional interest.

Finally, like other French regions – Brittany and Alsace – that have established regional networks in Brussels, Normandy must undertake a similar process by identifying Normandy citizens who work in European institutions as well as within a range of lobbying firms. But it is also important to make European decision-makers aware of Normandy through work to promote our expertise and our products to opinion makers.

2.4. Bringing together the Normandy diaspora abroad and promoting pride in Normandy

Being proud of being a citizen of Normandy is a major driver in our region’s attractiveness and in promoting the Normandy ‘brand’. The reorganisation of regions has not been without its problems for many French regions, some of which are experiencing difficulties with finding a name, let alone an identity, whereas in Normandy, along with California, we are lucky to be the best-known region in the world. We must make the most of it! We need to promote the Normandy Touch, just as Brittany and Alsace have managed to do.

Due to its history, Normandy can rely on its large diaspora in the four corners of the globe. It is essential that we unite these Normandy citizens abroad by gradually forming a Normandy network with an international scope, working in collaboration with existing networks for Normandy businesses and expatriates.

To boost pride in Normandy, the Region also needs to highlight its talents and trust in its young people. With this in mind, the Region is planning to work with the Normandy Attractiveness Mission to create an annual programme for Normandy’s young leaders who promote our region in Europe and across the world. With recognition and support from their region, they will become Normandy’s best ambassadors.

And it is not only locals who can act as ambassadors for Normandy. We must remember the thousands of foreign students who come to Normandy every year as part of their courses. We must give them the welcome they deserve and give them excellent reasons to love our region! An annual welcome ceremony for foreign students will now be organised at the Abbaye aux Dames, the headquarters of the Regional Council of Normandy. An event that focuses on exchange and interaction should also be held just before their return to their home countries.
3. CONVEYING A POLITICAL AIM: NORMANDY FOR PEACE

The reunification of Normandy should be accompanied by work to ensure that international cooperation efforts are moving in the same direction by determining a shared set of guidelines built on the values of peace and freedom.

3.1. Putting the values of peace and freedom at the heart of the Normandy identity

The Caen Memorial, the Bayeux Award for war correspondents, the International Institute for Human Rights and Peace, the D-Day Landing Beaches’ candidature for inclusion on the UNESCO World Heritage List – these are just some of the ways in which Normandy highlights its international identity based on the values of peace and freedom.
Normandy’s recent history is inseparable from these values that are a part of our shared heritage. The D-Day Landings on 6 June 1944 remain forever engraved in the minds of every Normandy citizen as a symbol of the return to freedom. And as a result, more than any other region, Normandy is especially responsible for working to support peace. Our region is being called upon to develop links with local authorities that are currently working to promote peace, following the example of the city of Hiroshima or the Association des Maires et Territoires pour la Paix (Association of Mayors and Regions for Peace), which lobbies for the non-proliferation and prohibition of nuclear weapons, with the aim of spreading a culture of peace and reconciliation.

This political direction is in keeping with the current application to include the D-Day Landing Beaches on the UNESCO World Heritage List.

Preserving the remembrance heritage and developing remembrance tourism are both key focuses of Normandy’s international strategy, built around experts who are renowned for their knowledge of the subject. The Caen Memorial, EPCC\(^5\) La Fabrique de Patrimoine (“Heritage Factory”) the Regional Tourism Committee, and the region’s universities all play a role. Although the Region has decided to end its cooperation with Macedonia, it nonetheless intends to continue its work to promote the recognition and renewal of the Macedonian area in which the Eastern Front was located in the First World War.

Although it includes an undeniable memorial aspect, promoting the values of peace and freedom must, above all, focus on the future and address young people as a priority. As part of this, secondary school students from Normandy are invited to take part in study trips to Poland to visit the Holocaust Memorial and to understand for themselves the reality of the concentration camps.

In keeping with the spreading of a culture of peace, for a number of years, Normandy has been working to develop recognised expertise in providing human rights training through the International Institute for Human Rights and Peace. Normandy’s secondary school students will continue to follow the ‘Do the Right(s) Thing’ European programme, and cooperation with the province of Manitoba (Canada), home to the world’s only human rights museum, will continue.

**3.2. Building the new political framework for our international cooperation**

The decentralised cooperation actions that Normandy has initiated will help to create the conditions needed for peace and stability in the countries and regions in which they are implemented. Existing cooperation programmes will be focused on these objectives, and new cooperation efforts are planned in the Mediterranean.

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(5) EPCC: Public organisation for cultural cooperation
Supporting Madagascar’s economic, social and regional development

As part of this, cooperation with the Atsinanana region in Madagascar will continue to take place in partnership with the French Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Development. Through concrete measures, including in the field of agriculture, Normandy aims to promote a sustainable development model that respects cultural diversity and protects the environment.

Opening up to the Mediterranean Sea

The Mediterranean Sea— the southern gateway to the European Union, a shared cultural asset, the cradle of Judaeo-Christian civilisation, and a crossroads between the people and cultures of the East and the West – is a forum for complex and sensitive discussions that have a major effect on Europe’s destiny and its ability to live in harmony.

The links between the people of Normandy and of the Mediterranean stretch far back into history. Today, in countries in North Africa and the Middle East, the Arab Spring has upset the balance that has been in place since the end of the Second World War and national independence, calling for more democracy and more justice. The people who have fought for these values are asking for European democracies, their neighbours and natural partners, to support their momentum. They are fighting to prevent their efforts from being annulled through indifference and withdrawal.
Normandy is ready to play its part in this essential long-term effort, which is the only way to ensure peace in Europe. A strong local footing, which could be considered in Tunisia, would guarantee a dynamic local partnership focusing on a transition to democracy, economic development, and support for efforts by civil society to establish long-term peace.

Creating a ‘Normandy for Peace’ label

There are a wide range of Normandy associations that operate in the field of international cooperation. Many of these receive funding from the Region to carry out their projects, particularly as part of the micro-project support programme that existed within the former Haute-Normandie region.

To ensure that the measures the Region supports are consistent, a ‘Normandy for Peace’ label is currently being considered. Organisations within Normandy (charities, local authorities, educational establishments, etc.) who wish to do so will be given the opportunity to acquire this status – and the corresponding funding – if their proposals comply with the specifications set out by the Region.

3.3. Creating a World Peace Forum

With the D-Day Landing Beaches and the Caen Memorial, Normandy is home to iconic locations that regularly host heads of state and of government from around the entire world to commemorate the liberation of Europe and the return to peace.

While Normandy is working to promote peace through its decentralised cooperation efforts, it can also act as the key region for discussing the peace situation around the world in the same way that Davos is the site of debates on economic issues.

It has therefore been suggested that a World Peace Forum should be held every year in Caen in parallel with the D-Day Landing commemorations. The first such event could take place in June 2018, but would first be preceded in March 2017 by an initial conference to make preparations for the Forum.

From 2018, the World Peace Forum could focus on two elements:

• a conference bringing together international leaders
• contributions made by civil society to promoting peace through workshops, debates, exhibitions, publications, etc.

The Forum could also feature a cultural element, including a Concert for Peace.
It is important that the World Peace Forum includes a participatory aspect so that Normandy’s citizens can take ownership of the event. All of the stakeholders who play a direct or indirect part in Normandy’s European and international activities must be given a role. Young people must be widely involved.

Through this strategic policy document, Normandy is highlighting the importance with which it views international efforts to promote its values and its profile in Europe and across the world. Cross-cutting and multidisciplinary, the long-term European and international policy is part of a comprehensive and proactive approach that affects the majority of the Region’s fields of expertise. It is based on the most deep-seated qualities of the Normandy identity: attachment to our past, our resolutely European vocation, and our responsibility to play our part in building a better world.