

# CROSS-BORDER PROJECTS

How can people come together to help set policy and bring about change in their region? Through its **Common Ground** program, The Robert Bosch Stiftung is funding eight projects that provide examples of how it might be done.

Climate change and health, **GGD ZUID LIMBURG**

Cross-border energy region, **RALINGEN-ROSPORT-MOMPACH**

Saar-Moselle agglomeration concept, **SAARBRÜCKEN**

Connected by the Rhine: **DISTRICT OF EMMENDINGEN and PETR SÉLESTAT-ALSACE CENTRALE**

Upper Rhine planning region, Agglo **BASEL** association

Climate-friendly, integrated city center, **FRANKFURT (ODER)/ŚLUBICE**

Stronger together! Euroregion **SPREE-NEISSE-BOBER**

Transformation project in the border triangle, **CITY OF ZITTAU**

PHOTO: ROBERT BOSCH STIFTUNG

**F**rankfurt an der Oder and Ślubice may be separated by a large river and the German-Polish border, but that hasn't stopped the two cities from growing closer together. Their goal at the moment is to adopt traffic-calming measures and create a climate-friendly city center on both sides of the river. And who, if anyone, is in a better position to align this vision with local needs and conditions in the border region than the people who live there? That's why the two cities are looking to actively engage their citizens in the project. To kick things off, a picnic was held on September 2nd on the waterfront. There, people were able, in small workshop groups, to discuss initial plans by city officials in both countries to develop the promenade along the Oder River.

"If the local population plays an active role in the process, better decisions can be made on a

policy level, leading to an increase in people's trust in democracy," says Claudia Rolf, who heads the Democracy team at the Robert Bosch Stiftung. The Polish and German cities form one of eight border regions that are receiving funding from the Robert Bosch Stiftung through its program Common Ground – Shaping Regions Across Borders, that was launched back in June.

For a period of three years, the Stiftung will be assisting regions that straddle the German border to find new ways of getting people involved in politics. The aim in all eight projects is to develop services that make it easy for anyone to participate, and engage people who had not previously had a strong affinity for politics.

To ensure that feedback from the public flows into policy, the Stiftung only funds projects under its Common Ground program that are jointly supported by the municipalities and civil society. Regions that have strong ties with neighboring countries and offer long-term potential in terms of cross-border collaboration were selected to take part in the program. "Challenges transcend borders, which is why it makes sense to have citizens in both countries share their thoughts and ideas and find common solutions for their regions," explains Rolf.

✎ Claudia Hagen

**Visit project page:**  
[www.bosch-stiftung.de/commonground](http://www.bosch-stiftung.de/commonground)  
**Watch video about kick-off event in Berlin:**  
[www.bosch-stiftung.de/commonground/start](http://www.bosch-stiftung.de/commonground/start)

## Democracy

**falls under the Global Issues category, one of three areas of support at the Robert Bosch Stiftung. The Stiftung's goal is to strengthen democracy in Germany and the rest of Europe. To do this, it fosters and promotes new and original means of civic participation to complement representative democracy, enabling more people to perceive themselves as capable of shaping the political process. The main focus of the Stiftung's work in this area is on regions along Germany's borders with neighboring countries.**

"As a foundation, we look to promote good ideas – and cross-border civic participation is a really great way to strengthen democracy."

**CLAUDIA ROLF,**  
Head of the Democracy team,  
Robert Bosch Stiftung

