

A REGION ACTIVELY ADDRESSING TODAY'S GLOBAL ISSUES

**OUR INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION
AND SOLIDARITY STRATEGY**

AT A GLANCE

centre-valdeloire.fr





CONTENTS

p.4

AMBITION 1

DEVELOP MUTUAL DECENTRALISED COOPERATION

Measure 1 – Capitalise on our defining regional features

Measure 2 – Leverage international opportunities to enhance regional policies

Measure 3 – Tailor-made cooperation for ad hoc alliances

p.7

AMBITION 2

COORDINATION AND SCHEMES AT REGIONAL LEVEL TO PROMOTE INTERNATIONAL SOLIDARITY, EXCHANGE AND BENEFITS, LOCALLY AND ABROAD

Measure 4 – Encourage territorial and methodological experiments via the Standing Conference of International Relations

Measure 5 – Consolidate the partnership with the regional multi-stakeholder network Centraider

Measure 6 – Maintain financial assistance to international solidarity using the Support Framework for European and International Projects (CAPEI)

Measure 7 – Emergency humanitarian support for disaster victims

p.10

AMBITION 3

INCREASE AWARENESS OF GLOBAL ISSUES THROUGH EDUCATION FOR CITIZENSHIP AND INTERNATIONAL SOLIDARITY

Measure 8 – Raise the profile of initiatives promoting education for citizenship and international solidarity (ECSI)

Measure 9 – Continue advocating for ECSI through the Support Framework for European and International Projects (CAPEI)

p.11

AMBITION 4

FACILITATE EUROPEAN AND INTERNATIONAL MOBILITY FOR ALL

Measure 10 – Support non-formal European and international mobility

Measure 11 – Give clearer prominence to regional youth mobility schemes

Measure 12 – Encourage mobility among local authority staff to showcase their expertise and foster a culture of European and international cooperation

p.14

AMBITION 5

CONTRIBUTE TO A DIGNIFIED AND UNCONDITIONAL WELCOME FOR FOREIGNERS

Measure 13 – Join forces

Measure 14 – Inform better

Measure 15 – Consider all population groups



FRANÇOIS BONNEAU,
*President of the
Centre-Val de Loire Region*



DELPHINE BENASSY,
*Vice-president for Culture and International
Cooperation of the Centre-Val de Loire Region*

International solidarity and cooperation have long been part of who we are as a Region. We wanted to shine the spotlight on the values that drive us by adopting a new **strategy 2025-2030**.

The Region aims to be an active stakeholder abroad and an inclusive and welcoming place locally. We have demonstrated longstanding efforts in this regard. We have forged reciprocal relationships with our partners, and we are committed to bringing regional policies more closely into line with global issues.

Pressure on natural resources, the habitability of our local areas, respect for human rights, development models, the future of our young people, migration: these are all growing challenges, but we can address them through **cooperation, collective action and education for citizenship and international solidarity**, alongside local stakeholders and the Centraider network. We are continuing to jointly lead the Standing Conference of International Relations and to engage in decentralised cooperation. By sharing our cultures, cultivating friendship between communities, inventing together and embracing our differences, we are building a fairer, sustainable future where diversity is celebrated.

Cooperation, developed through **reciprocal relationships**, encourages tolerance and mutual respect. It helps to combat hatred and rejection of 'outsiders', inward-looking attitudes,

discrimination and racism, shaping and disseminating **a culture of peace** instead. In his way, however modestly, we are doing our bit to champion the cause of democracy and end conflict worldwide.

In these times of societal fragmentation and isolationism, the Region is also invested in improving the situation, locally, of people come from elsewhere, to give them **a humane, dignified and unconditional welcome**.

Today, the Region remains determined to steer our international efforts in accordance with the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) under the United Nations 2030 Agenda – while ensuring they tie in with our regional policies. In that respect, we are particularly relying on the **ecological and social emergency declaration**, which the Region adopted in December 2021 to safeguard the commons, combat climate change and adapt local lifestyles to its effects. We are also focusing on **gender equality and action to combat all forms of discrimination and violence against women and girls worldwide**, since 73% of SDG targets depend directly on this SDG 5.

In demographic terms, **young people** form a minority in Europe and a majority in the Global South, yet they share challenges as regards education, social and occupational integration, civic engagement and involvement. The Region gives them equal, cross-cutting consideration by promoting support for their projects and mobility experiences.

AMBITION 1

DEVELOP MUTUAL DECENTRALISED COOPERATION

Centre-Val de Loire upholds sustainable, dynamic and reciprocal links with foreign local authorities. Relations between citizens are encouraged for mutual benefit, both locally and abroad.

Luang Prabang



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For 20 years, the Region has been leading long-term decentralised cooperation initiatives with several foreign local authorities, called **Priority Cooperation Zones***

These lasting partnerships focus on highly relevant, flagship projects. They bring together various local stakeholders and benefit from dedicated funding, with support from organisations like the French Development Agency (AFD) and the Ministry of Europe and Foreign Affairs.

Centre-Val de Loire has always encouraged young people to participate in international solidarity volunteering (VSI) in partner regions. These missions support institutional relations and closer ties between our respective civil societies.

For our cooperation initiatives, the Region traditionally chose partner territories which are crossed by a large river, just like Centre-Val de Loire. Through these projects, we have supported the decentralisation and development of different regions worldwide, in Africa, Asia or Central Europe. We have forged relationships with Gorgol (Mauritania), Mopti (Mali), Luang Prabang (Laos), Saxony-Anhalt (Germany), Małopolska (Poland) and Pardubice (Czechia). We have since reached out to other regions with new potential for exchange, such as Fez-Meknes in Morocco, Hunan in China, Tamil Nadu and Puducherry in India or, more recently, Tuscany in Italy.

The Region intends to keep these exchanges going, inspired by values of solidarity, respect for human rights, reciprocity and active commitment to cope with today's challenges.

*** ZPC**

Priority Cooperation Zones are foreign territories governed by local authorities with which the Centre-Val de Loire Region has signed long-term partnership agreements. Backed by dedicated funding, this cooperation supports flagship projects in different areas, developing for the benefit of the partner territories' public policies and local populations. Joint committees oversee these agreements to ensure monitoring and adaptation.

Measure 1

CAPITALISE ON OUR DEFINING REGIONAL FEATURES

Following the assessment conducted in 2023-24, the Centre-Val de Loire Region plans to strengthen decentralised cooperation by taking advantage of our defining regional features. We have identified four:

- Water and rivers
- Culture, heritage, lifestyle and tourism (embodied by the 'Nouvelles Renaissance' programme)
- Research and innovation to support transition
- Support for the empowerment of civil society (institutional support, support for youth, for entrepreneurship and local initiatives, etc.).

The aim? To organise cooperation around renewed goals and narratives. These priorities will guide the initiatives in each priority cooperation zone, in connection with partner regions' priorities. They will develop closely in line with the Region's public policies across the board. The Region also aspires to support research and innovation for tackling climate challenges, as part of our regional Conference of the Parties (COP). Support for social entrepreneurship, youth and local initiatives here and abroad remain central pillars of our commitment to 'permanent democracy'. In keeping with the Region's European objectives, these key concerns will guide the initiatives in each Priority Cooperation Zone, with annual adjustments during joint committee meetings.



For 20 years, Centre-Val de Loire has been cooperating with regions around the world (Africa, Asia and Europe).

The aim is to share projects in education, ecology, culture or for economic purposes, grounded in values of solidarity, reciprocity and respect for human rights.

Measure 2

LEVERAGE INTERNATIONAL OPPORTUNITIES TO ENHANCE REGIONAL POLICIES

All regional public policies can gain from an international dimension, which is crucial for navigating economic, ecological, social and democratic transition.

Decentralised cooperation is an effective way to strengthen strategies and schemes supporting youth or gender equality or addressing the climate and social emergency. Examples include Ma RégionOLycée, Erasmus+, economic development and innovation, higher education, tourism or culture with Aux Arts Lycéens et Apprentis-es. The Food strategy, the future Biodiversity strategy and the LEADER programme, meanwhile, take on board environmental and agricultural themes.

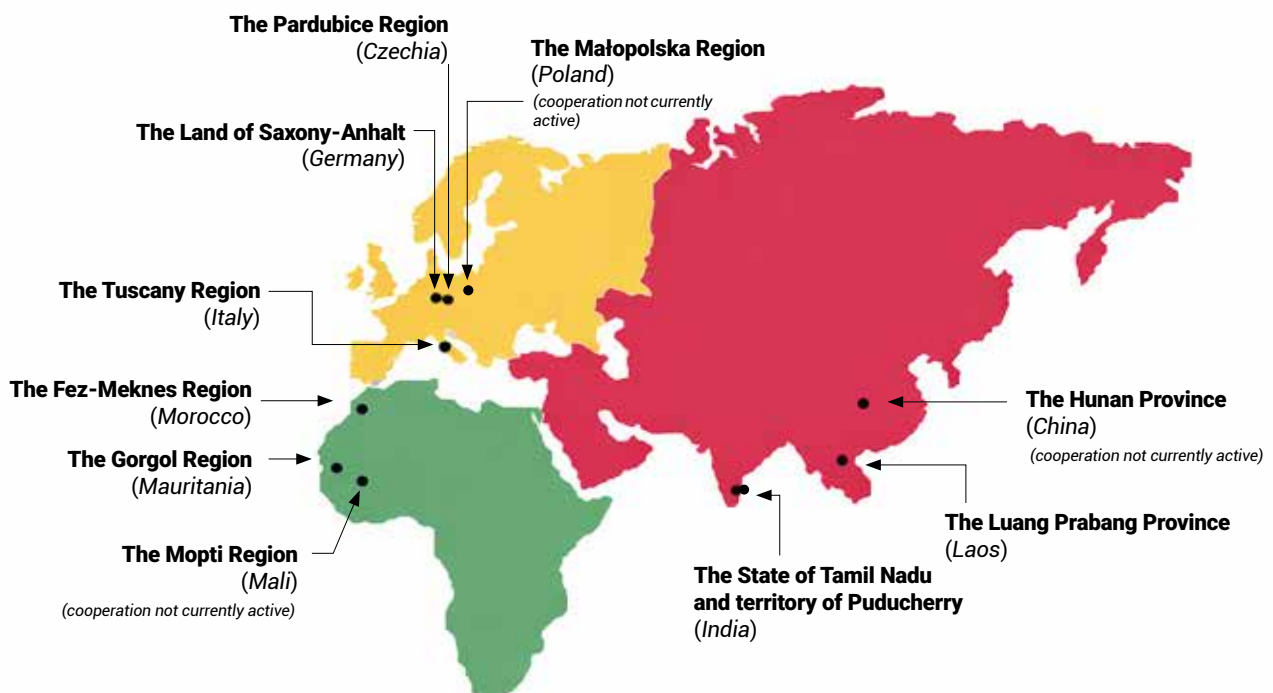
The aim? Aligned with our defining regional features, this cooperation builds on and enhances existing policies, thus bolstering the Region's action beyond our borders.

10

regional departments include a European and international dimension in their strategy or schemes.

Tourism - Economy - Vocational training and employment - Agriculture and forestry - School education, youth and sport - Culture and heritage - Higher education, research and technology transfer - Europe and International - Environment and energy transition - Digital technology

5





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Pardubice

OUR DYNAMIC EXCHANGE ACTIVITY, A FEW EXAMPLES...

Youth and mobility

Centre-Val de Loire has offered young people real-life experiences by organising international civic service pilot programmes, with support from the Centraider network and Ligue de l'Enseignement movement.

Water and environment

We are conducting collaborative projects with Luang Prabang on water access and wetlands management, with Gorgol on sustainable agriculture and with Saxony-Anhalt on flood prevention.



Saxony-Anhalt

Culture

We have set up visual arts exchanges with the Land of Saxony-Anhalt and cooperate regularly with the Pardubice region in the contemporary art and puppetry spheres. In conjunction with the partner regions, artists also have opportunities to be hosted or to travel abroad through the scheme Aux Arts Lycéennes et Apprenties.

Measure 3

TAILOR-MADE COOPERATION FOR AD HOC ALLIANCES

Centre-Val de Loire is **stepping up international partnerships thanks to ad hoc cooperation initiatives with foreign local authorities.**

The aim? To focus efforts on specific projects in keeping with our priorities, such as the climate with Central Denmark Region or biodiversity with the Río Negro Province in Argentina. These time-bound, geographically targeted collaborations on single themes facilitate exchanges of local expertise and the use of sector-specific funding.

Economy and digital technology

The Region has organised exchanges on the social and solidarity economy with Pardubice while, with Fez-Meknes, we cooperate in the craft sphere. In India, we have developed relations around the digital technology theme, through exchanges of practices between digital clusters, and to enhance heritage visit experiences.

Innovation, higher education and research

The Studium (Loire Valley Institute for Advanced Studies) and the Region's universities are collaborating with India to host researchers or academic projects. For the past few years, Tours University has been sending French-as-a-foreign language teaching assistants to universities in Tamil Nadu and Puducherry.

Tourism

Centre-Val de Loire has assisted Fez-Meknes with the development of an equestrian tourism strategy. The Regional Tourism Board is cooperating with Tuscany on bilateral promotion, hospitality and sustainable tourism.



The Gorgol Region

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» AMBITION 2

COORDINATION AND SCHEMES AT REGIONAL LEVEL TO PROMOTE INTERNATIONAL SOLIDARITY, EXCHANGE AND BENEFITS, LOCALLY AND ABROAD



The Region has been leading an ambitious international strategy since 2017. We have established an unprecedented governance structure with the setup of the **Standing Conference of International Relations*** (CPRI). Its aim? To get stakeholders working together, strengthen synergies and highlight existing initiatives, around jointly defined themes. At the same time, the Region relies on Centraider, the State-recognised Regional Multi-Stakeholder Network (RRMA). Operating region-wide, Centraider supports, trains and networks international solidarity project leaders, with invaluable field expertise. Centre-Val de Loire has also developed the

Support Framework for European and International Projects (CAPEI), which is updated at regular intervals for greater clarity and impact. We provide emergency assistance too, by unlocking funds to go towards disaster relief and support for projects on the ground, alongside local authorities and victims. The Red Cross in Türkiye and Libya following the earthquake and flooding, the FACECO fund and Acted in Ukraine, or the CUF Fund in Lebanon following the explosion in Beirut are all recent examples. For each scheme, the Region ensures not only the quality and lasting impact of the international solidarity initiatives financed, but also support for project leaders.

Measure 4

ENCOURAGE TERRITORIAL AND METHODOLOGICAL EXPERIMENTS VIA THE STANDING CONFERENCE OF INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS

The CPRI* is organised around working groups which its members set up as needs and opportunities arise, on themes like governance, research and innovation, youth mobility, Europe and citizenship, or an inclusive and welcoming region.

The aim? To encourage networking, sharing of practices and the development of common projects. Initiatives range from raising young people's awareness of the European Union to support for mobility or discussions about the integration of foreigners. Each group draws up an annual road map, featuring territorial and methodological pilot programmes to boost their regional impact and relevance.

* CPRI

The **Standing Conference of International Relations** is a regional body bringing together local authorities, universities, chambers of commerce, associations and economic stakeholders to coordinate and support international initiatives in Centre-Val de Loire.



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8

Measure 5

CONSOLIDATE THE PARTNERSHIP WITH THE REGIONAL MULTI-STAKEHOLDER NETWORK CENTRAIDER*

The Centre-Val de Loire Region and Centraider are jointly building a robust international solidarity ecosystem.

The aim? To empower local stakeholders to conduct high-impact projects. Based on a common road map, the Region and Centraider jointly coordinate youth mobility initiatives, raising awareness about migration or education for international solidarity. We support Centraider's proposal to lead an **incubator*** which provides solidarity associations with guidance to develop their skills.

*** CENTRAIDER**

Founded in 2000, Centraider supports and brings together the solidarity initiatives of various entities in Centre-Val de Loire. These associations, local authorities and public institutions are committed to helping people discover the world, for fairer, more sustainable cooperation and solidarity.

*** INCUBATOR**

Since 2024, Centraider's incubator, PRISME, has been annually supporting cohorts of six to seven associations from the Centre-Val de Loire Region. They operate in various countries, working on water, sport or local economy themes. They receive tailored guidance for nine months, with training given in the cities of Orléans and Tours to increase the impact of their solidarity projects.



* CAPEI

CAPEI stands for Support Framework for European and International Projects.

It is a financial support instrument for projects grounded in three pillars:

- Pillar 1 - Education for citizenship and international solidarity
- Pillar 2 - Cooperation and solidarity projects in Official Development Assistance beneficiary countries
- Pillar 3 - European and international mobility of youth from the region, in an extracurricular context.

Measure 6

MAINTAIN FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE TO INTERNATIONAL SOLIDARITY USING THE SUPPORT FRAMEWORK FOR EUROPEAN AND INTERNATIONAL PROJECTS

The CAPEI* is counting on active and committed international solidarity to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals. It supports practical projects in connection with education, equality, sustainable agriculture and combatting discrimination and climate change.

The aim? To build the capacity of local stakeholders in the beneficiary countries, outside of the Region's direct partnerships, and help to shape a fairer world.

These projects are also an opportunity for leaders (Centre-Val de Loire public institutions, local authorities and associations) to develop their expertise, outlook and local impact thanks to feedback actions. Ultimately, the goal is to pave the way for meso-level projects, supported by Centraider's incubator, to improve the organisation and effectiveness of initiatives on the ground.

Measure 7

EMERGENCY HUMANITARIAN SUPPORT FOR DISASTER VICTIMS

The Region remains fully engaged alongside crisis-stricken populations – whether in terms of food, health, climate or security – while fine-tuning our operational criteria.

The aim? With conflict- and climate-related crises on the rise, we are underscoring our solidarity and readiness to support victims. While we mainly operate in partner countries or regions (floods in the Gorgol region, earthquake in Morocco), we can lend assistance to any humanitarian emergency worldwide. The funds allocated will support an initiative benefiting local authorities through either national emergency funds (FACECO, CUF) or projects led by humanitarian NGOs. In this case, the Region chooses to support NGOs that have signed the Climate and Environment Charter* to promote responsible and resilient humanitarian action with a minimal ecological footprint.

* THE CLIMATE AND ENVIRONMENT CHARTER

Launched in 2020, this commits humanitarian organisations to actively responding to climate crises.

It promotes responsible, sustainable and environmentally friendly action. It seeks to protect vulnerable populations, reduce disaster-related risks and minimise the ecological footprint of humanitarian operations.



The Centre-Val de Loire Region helps people locally and in other countries.

We support solidarity projects. We provide post-disaster assistance. We encourage youngsters to discover the world. We also advocate for the environment, equality and combatting injustice.

AMBITION 3

INCREASE AWARENESS OF GLOBAL ISSUES THROUGH EDUCATION FOR CITIZENSHIP AND INTERNATIONAL SOLIDARITY

Action supporting greater justice at international level only becomes possible once the global issues are known and understood.



Education for Citizenship and International Solidarity (ECSI) is a teaching approach aimed at better understanding the global issues and how they are inter-connected, and at encouraging inclusive, just action. It embeds international solidarity at local level, informs inhabitants about contemporary challenges and renews generations involved in associations.

The Region supports this approach by assisting local stakeholders, raising awareness and providing information, particularly among young people. Through events, targeted communication, funding (CAPEI* framework) and cooperation, this outreach is essential for a more inclusive and aware society.



Education for Citizenship and International Solidarity helps us to make sense of the world and to take action for greater justice.

The Centre-Val de Loire Region supports information and awareness-raising projects by organising events and funding and by developing partnerships.

Measure 8

RAISE THE PROFILE OF INITIATIVES PROMOTING EDUCATION FOR CITIZENSHIP AND INTERNATIONAL SOLIDARITY (ECSI)

Centre-Val de Loire organises and promotes various events region-wide.

The aim? To teach different groups – including institutions, economic operators, citizens and young people – about migration and integration and why international solidarity matters.

We rely on **Centraider** and its programme **RECITAL-ODD**, the **ODDyssée 2** project and events like **Festisol** and **AlimenTerre**. Working groups and feedback sessions round off these activities, to create a more welcoming region that is mindful of the challenges associated with migration and the ecological and social transitions.

Measure 9

CONTINUE ADVOCATING FOR ECSI THROUGH THE SUPPORT FRAMEWORK FOR EUROPEAN AND INTERNATIONAL PROJECTS (CAPEI*)

European citizenship and international solidarity are key values for taking global action.

The aim? To improve knowledge and understanding of European and international issues at regional level so that our citizens are more attuned to the world around them. The idea is to equip each of us to be a changemaker in championing common European and international solidarity values. ECSI initiatives can take a wide range of creative forms (conferences, cultural measures, exhibitions, hosting youth projects or volunteering missions) to engage with audiences based on their concerns and the local context.

*See page 9

AMBITION 4

FACILITATE EUROPEAN AND INTERNATIONAL MOBILITY FOR ALL

200

Around 200 youngsters from Centre-Val de Loire set off every year to participate in initiatives supported by Pillar 3 of the CAPEI. These might include **international projects, youth encounters in Europe or volunteering** for example.



© Carole Boulmier

For two decades, the Region has been acting as a catalyst for youth mobility by supporting internships, cultural stays and specific initiatives abroad. We would also like to give our staff the chance to take solidarity leave for devoting time to projects in our partner regions or elsewhere. After the disruption of COVID-19, we are resuming international exchanges as these are vital for embracing different peoples and cultures at a time of global tensions. But we combine an open outlook with respect for the environment, by prioritising low-carbon journeys and hybrid solutions. In this way, we help to protect the planet too.

Measure 10

SUPPORT NON-FORMAL EUROPEAN AND INTERNATIONAL MOBILITY

European and international mobility can help young people to develop key skills like independent working, confidence, languages and project management. These experiences, which are often collective and non-formal, also foster a sense of citizenship and an understanding of global issues.

Thanks to educational guidance, the Region supports youngsters in making the most of their achievements. At the same time, by hosting foreign volunteers, local areas can broaden their international outlook. With the CAPEI framework, we support travel abroad and hosting locally alike, while guaranteeing the quality and meaningful purpose of each mobility project.



Measure 11

GIVE CLEARER PROMINENCE TO REGIONAL YOUTH MOBILITY SCHEMES

Sixth-formers, students, apprentices and young people outside the school setting can all benefit from programmes like MobiCentre, EuroMétiers and CAPEI. We also highlight the importance of civic engagement, through volunteering missions abroad carried out with France Volontaires. These initiatives reflect the precedence that we give to youth in regional policies.

The aim? To promote European and international youth mobility, via a wide range of support tools and schemes that cater to all profiles. The CPRI's youth mobility group brings all the stakeholders together, breaking down the barriers between them. The Region is also improving communication, links between schemes and access to information, by supporting the Boussole des Jeunes digital guidance service. This is led by the Info Jeunes network and promoted on the youth support platform, YEPS.

The aim? To help all 15–30-year-olds to access mobility more easily by putting them in touch with the right people and by training local stakeholders in international mobility issues. For while there are a lot of opportunities available, these lack sufficient visibility and clarity.



Measure 12

ENCOURAGE MOBILITY AMONG LOCAL AUTHORITY STAFF TO SHOWCASE THEIR EXPERTISE AND FOSTER A CULTURE OF EUROPEAN AND INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION

Young people are not the only ones who can benefit from mobility: this is also tremendously worthwhile for the Region's workforce. By taking part in skill-sharing schemes, international volunteering schemes or mobility support and training, our staff can gain a broader global outlook, new practices and a clearer understanding of international issues – advantages which also make for better public and human resource policies. Even if these initiatives remain occasional, the Region would like to promote them and tap into the different tools available. We also support the active involvement of staff in international exchanges with partner regions. In short, international cooperation is a team effort too!



SKILL-SHARING SCHEMES

Skill-sharing schemes are aimed at promoting altruistic engagement on the part of employees and their employers.

They are an opportunity for public officials to temporarily share their skills with associations or organisations serving the general interest. These schemes encourage altruistic engagement while harnessing professional expertise for the benefit of projects with a social, cultural or environmental impact.

Mission in Luang Prabang



The Region helps young people to travel in Europe and further afield. They can participate in internships, cultural stays or volunteering missions. Through these experiences, they learn, grow and make better sense of the world. We also encourage our staff to get involved in international projects so that they can share their knowledge and gain insights into other practices.

AMBITION 5

CONTRIBUTE TO A DIGNIFIED AND UNCONDITIONAL WELCOME FOR FOREIGNERS

Centre-Val de Loire is committed to encouraging a dignified and unconditional welcome for foreigners who come to live in our region. In 2023, we initiated a study to analyse the existing ecosystem and identify the stakeholders and schemes already operating in this regard.

The idea? **To craft an inclusive and welcoming regional policy, consistent with our longstanding international commitment.**

Welcome arrangements for newcomers are currently overseen by an array of different stakeholders, often working disjointedly depending on the State schemes and the rights that apply to new arrivals. With due regard for government prerogatives, the Region aspires to be somewhere connections can form easily, guaranteeing each newcomer a dignified and unconditional welcome.

The study thus identified ten key areas for a successful integration (see below).

The Region is by no means inexperienced in this respect. In 2023, we already signed a Regional Reception and Integration Agreement (CTAI) with the Regional Directorate for the Economy, Employment, Labour and Solidarity (DREETS). The aim of this partnership is to give new arrivals easier access to language and vocational training. But the study suggests going further by:

- presenting the types of assistance available in a more understandable format;
- providing more information about existing schemes;
- promoting a positive image of integration;
- bolstering regional support to remove barriers to integration.

We intend to take practical measures (see opposite page) to monitor these recommendations for an ever more inclusive and supportive Centre-Val de Loire Region.

10

The number of components analysed by the regional assessment.
Learning French - Education and training - Employment - Housing - Health - Mobility - Schooling - Support for parenting - Access to digital technology - Social ties.

Ensure that Centre-Val de Loire is an inclusive and welcoming region for foreign nationals from other countries.



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Measure 13

JOIN FORCES

The Region would like to unite all those involved in welcoming exiles (State, associations, local authorities, etc.) by relying on the [CPRI*](#), within a dedicated working group.

The aim? **To coordinate efforts, share resources and offer comprehensive support for exiles.** We would also like to encourage the signature of new Regional Reception and Integration Agreements with the State to get local authorities more involved. This takes us one step closer to becoming a more inclusive and welcoming region.



The Centre-Val de Loire Region is determined to give foreigners a better welcome.

We have studied the existing assistance schemes. We want to ensure a proper welcome for everyone. We plan to provide better explanations of what assistance is available, better information and better support. We are working with other organisations to help newcomers.

Measure 14

INFORM BETTER

To become 'an inclusive and welcoming region', Centre-Val de Loire wants to raise awareness and provide information about the welcome of foreigners. We will particularly rely on tools from the regional assessment, which include interactive mapping of stakeholders as well as infographics on integration and on the experience of a woman arriving here for the first time.

The aim? With the **National Association of Welcoming Cities and Territories** (ANVITA) and the CPRI*, the Region will communicate with public, economic and social stakeholders while promoting the role played by International Solidarity Organizations of Immigrant Origin (OSIMs). Thanks to the **ODDYSSÉE II*** project, led by the Rural Development Research and Projects Group (GRDR), webinars, seminars and testimonials will help to enduringly challenge misperceptions with real facts.

* See page 7

* ODDYSSÉE II



**migration makes
the world go round!**

The NGO Migration, Citizenship & Development GRDR coordinates this Education for Citizenship

and International Solidarity (ECST) project. Through active training sessions, brainstorming and leadership workshops, it seeks to develop the skills of locally elected officials, educational and associational stakeholders. This will enable them to lead events raising awareness about the links between migratory flows and issues shaping the ecological and social transition.

Measure 15

CONSIDER ALL POPULATION GROUPS

Although the regional **CTAI*** signed in 2023 focuses on training for newcomers, the intention is for it to be extended to other regional remits such as guidance, health or transport. Within the CPRI, the Region is talking with all stakeholders who welcome foreigners to fully identify the areas that are not covered by the State.

The aim? On the one hand, to strengthen cooperation between stakeholders involved in welcoming foreigners and helping them to integrate and, on the other, to support innovative initiatives assisting people whose rights are not fully met.

* CTAI

A prefecture and a willing local authority jointly sign the Regional Reception and Integration Agreement (CTAI) to implement practical

measures for beneficiaries of international protection and newly arrived foreigners. The measures, taken either by the local authority itself or by partners from the region it supports, address needs identified within the ten integration components. For the Centre-Val de Loire Region, only the training component was included in the CTAI signed in 2023.

2019

The year in which the Region became a **member of the National Association of Welcoming Cities and Territories (ANVITA)**.

15



TSA working group meeting in Tours

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