



BENELUX UNION

LABORATORY FOR EUROPEAN INTEGRATION

1. The Benelux framework

- i. Historical background
- ii. Institutional set-up
- iii. How do we function?
- iv. The Benelux and regional cooperation
- v. The legal framework of cross-border cooperation

2. A practical example: Benelux Cross-border Labour Market

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

2019

Benelux Union

2008

2012

Schengen Agreement

1985

1985

Benelux Economic Union

1958

1960

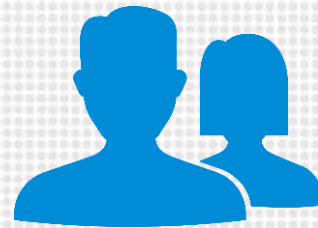
Benelux Custom Union

1944

1948



BENELUX IN FIGURES



Population

28,5 millions

6%

total EU population



Surface

74.654 km²

2%

total EU surface



GDP

36.000 €/inhabitant

8%

total EU GDP

BENELUX UNION TREATY

signed 17.06.2008
entered into force 01.01.2012

Institutional Benelux \neq Political Benelux

Art. 350 TFUE



TRAITE
PORTANT REVISION DU
TRAITE INSTITUANT
L'UNION ECONOMIQUE BENELUX
SIGNE LE 3 FEVRIER 1958

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BENELUX TREATY

3 THEMES



Internal Market and
Economy



Sustainable
Developpement



Justice and Home
Affairs

BENELUX TREATY

2 OBJECTIFS



to reinforce
and improve
cross-border
cooperation



to be a precursor
within the European
Union

BENELUX TREATY

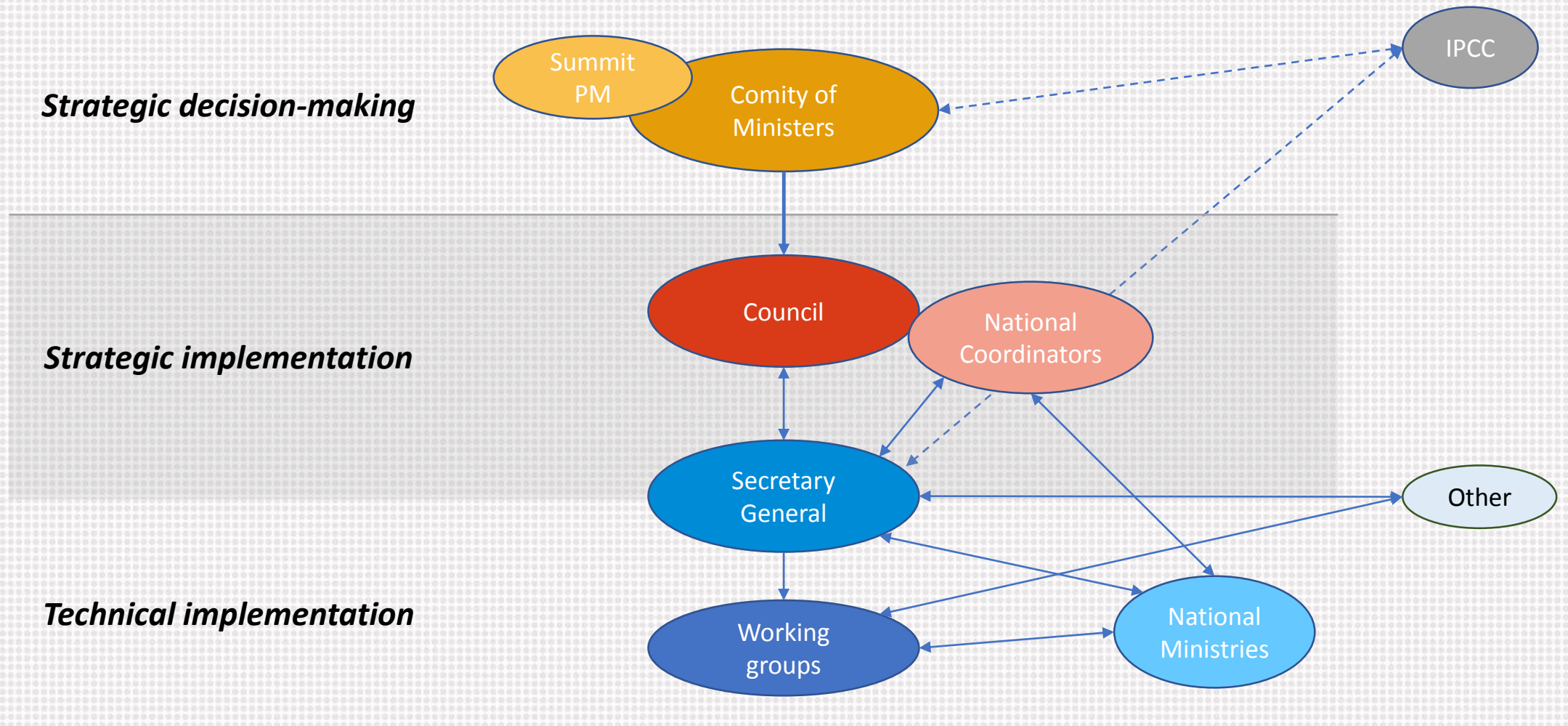
5 INSTITUTIONS

Legislative	Executive			Judiciary
Inter-parliamentary Consultative Council (<i>IPCC</i>) (Parliament)	Comity of Ministers	Council	Secretary general	Court of Justice

4 LEGAL INSTRUMENTS

CONVENTION Treaty	DECISION Legally binding	RECOMMENDATION Moral obligation	DIRECTIVES Internal instructions
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GOVERNANCE ARCHITECTURE



COMMON WORK PROGRAM

Duration = 4 years
3rd CWP 2017-2020

Determines, in an updated manner, the
major objectives, within the 3 themes



Digital
Sustainable

Economy &
Internal Market

Security &
Society

4th CWP
2021-2024

ANNUAL PLAN

Concrete projects for the running year

2019: 53 Projects
subdivided in 117 concrete actions



Digital
Sustainable

Economy &
Internal Market

- Energy
- Transport and Logistics
- Retail and digitalisation
- Circular Economy

Security &
Society

- **Senningen Mechanism**
(Police, Crisis Management, Asylum & Migration, thematic)
- **Other aspects of security**
(climate change, food security)
- **Fraud prevention**
- **A sustainable society**
- **Working within Benelux**
- **Cross-border Health Care**

2019 PRIORITIES



**Transition énergétique et lutte contre
le changement climatique**

**Energy transition and fight
against climate change**



Renforcement du marché intérieur

Strengthening of the Internal Market



Promotion de la numérisation

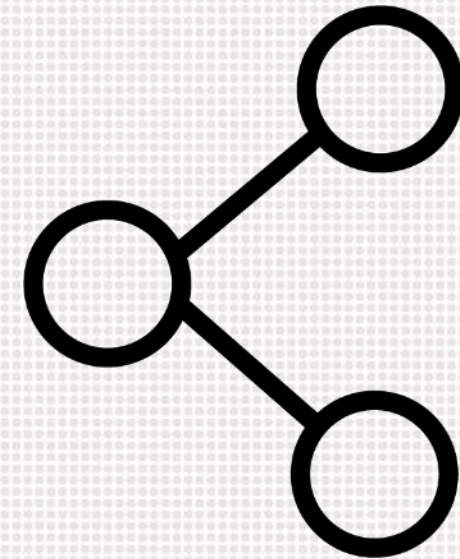
Promotion of digitalization



“A Benelux open to the world”

Art. 24 - 27
Benelux Treaty

- **Geographic**
 - North Rhein-Westphalia (2009 / 2019)
 - France (2019)
 - (Baltic States, Nordic Council, Visegrád, ...)
- **Thematic**
 - UE, Council of Europe, OECD, “Grande Région”, ...



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The legal Framework for Trans-border Cooperation

BENELUX UNION has a set of instruments

- ✓ Base: the BENELUX treaty (ex: *540 decisions adopted at ministerial level since 1958*)
- ✓ Complementarity to EU instruments
- ✓ In most cases framework agreements
- ✓ Relying (if necessary) on the Benelux institutional framework
- ✓ Supported by the expertise of the Benelux Secretariat general (+working groups)
- ✓ Allowing for legally binding decisions (without parliamentary ratification)
- ✓ With little bureaucratic red tape to formalise
- ✓ ... of various nature :
 - (1) based on specific Benelux legal instruments
 - (2) based on the Convention on cross-border and interterritorial cooperation

3 possible forms

Administrative agreement
Common organ
Benelux Grouping of territorial
cooperation (BGTC)

A flexible institutional framework

Without prior authorization
Own management of resources
For all public authorities/institutions
Transfer of headquarter without dissolution

Benelux Convention on cross-border and interterritorial cooperation (2019)

A large thematic framework

Economic, Culture,
Crisis Management, Health Care,
Nature, Police and Security, Tourism...

Open geographical framework

Benelux countries
France
Germany
United Kingdom

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THE CROSSBORDER LABOUR MARKET

Facts:

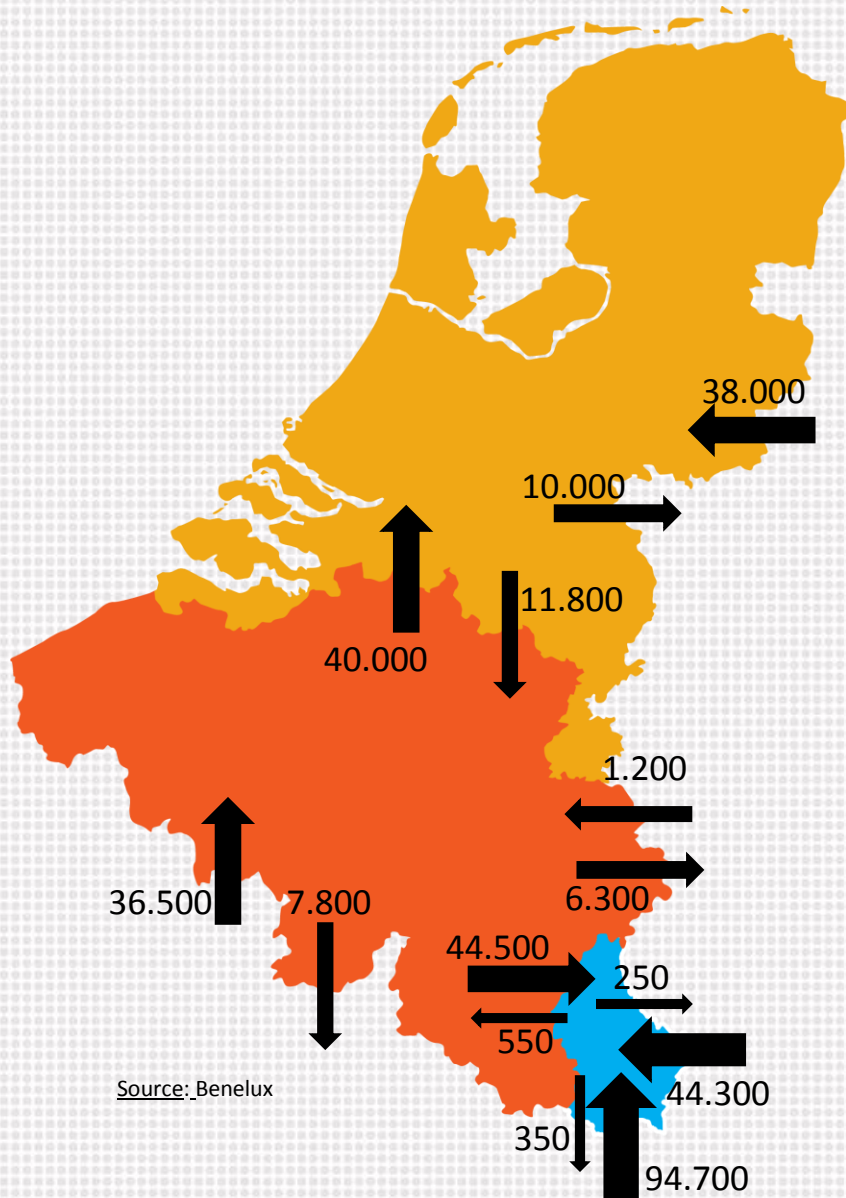
- ✓ 97.500 intra-Benelux commuters
- ✓ 240.000 commuters Benelux ↔ neighbouring countries
- ✓ 337.500 Commuters (of the +/- 1 ½ million in EU)



A priority for BENELUX => need for an integrated approach

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Accessibility



- ❑ Information
 - ✓ Web-Portal
 - ✓ Brochures (printed format)
- ❑ Education & training
 - ✓ Automatic recognition of diplomas
 - ✓ Transferability of professional qualifications
 - ✓ Cross-border internship
- ❑ Exchange of knowledge and data
 - ✓ Common gathering of statistics
 - ✓ Common studies
 - A.I. and impact on labour market

Fight against social fraud and social dumping

- ❑ Legal base
 - ✓ Benelux Social Summit
 - ✓ Recommendation
 - ✓ (future) Benelux Convention
- ❑ Operational cooperation
 - ✓ Working groups
 - *Shell companies*
 - *Fraudulent Interim (temporary) Agencies*
 - *Benefit fraud*
 - ✓ Common inspections
 - ✓ Exchange of data



Other related topics

- ❑ Fiscal fraud
- ❑ Fight against human trafficking
- ❑ Patient mobility
 - ✓ Strategy and action plan
 - ✓ eHealth Digital Service Infrastructure (eHDSI)



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