

MDDL du Calaisis

Introduction to the Calais area / district

WELCOME SPEECH FOR THE DANISH DELEGATION on 31st AND 1st APRIL 2014

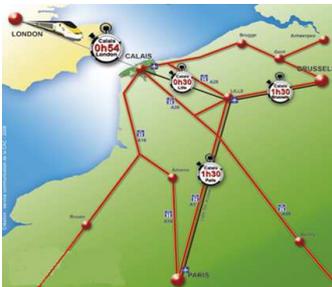
First, on behalf of Pas-de-Calais County Council I warmly welcome to the Pas-de-Calais County Council's center for the local development of Calais area. Last year, we already had the pleasure of welcoming a delegation of Danish elected members and practitioners in the framework of the NOSTRA project (study about the link of Fermenbelt) with the collaboration of our friends "the builders of the Tunnel" who share our premises.

Calais area lies in the North of the Département of Pas-de-Calais with 52 towns and villages encompassing 8 electoral districts.

There are 4 district councils: 1 municipal council and 3 rural borough councils

The total surface area of the territory is five hundred and ninety three square km for just over one hundred and fifty six thousand inhabitants.

Calais, which is the largest town in the Département, and its district area concentrate the main facilities and services. 3 market towns (Guînes, Ardres and Audruicq) also play a part as secondary hubs. The hinterland remains mainly rural.



Calais area lies on the Opal coast between the Flemish maritime plain, the Artois hills, the Channel and the North Sea.

It benefits from a position that is rare, even unique within the European area.

The territory has succeeded in profiting from this location by supporting a dense and efficient infrastructure and transport network.

Important infrastructures

The Port of Calais which is located along the world's busiest strait in terms of international maritime traffic, is the uncontested leader of maritime crossings in the Channel. It is the top port in mainland Europe for car traffic, and also for connections with England, the 4th French fret port and the main French port for passenger traffic with 9.7 million travellers per year on average).

The « Calais Port 2015 » project is an ambitious development plan of the port for the coming 15 years. It principally aims at positioning Calais as a central high volume and communication hub in Europe.

The so called international Calais-Dunkirk airport is located in the town of Marck on the East of Calais. Since 1st January two thousand eight (2008) the municipal council Cap Calaisis Terre d'Opale has been the owner and runs the field. The airport is essentially used by training planes and private business and leisure planes mainly coming from abroad.

The Calais-Dunkirk airport forms an important element of the transport network that makes the whole territory accessible. It represents a major element of attractiveness for the area. It holds a strong economic and touristic stake.

The A16 and A26 motorways : the A26 motorway allows a link to the South between the hinterland and the seaside while the A16 that goes along the whole Opal Coast is an international fret in especially with the ferry terminal and the Channel tunnel.

The Calais area is beyond all the « area » of the Channel tunnel, which has an ideal location on the continent for connections to England.

Since the building of the Channel tunnel (which was opened on 6th May 1994, we will by the way be celebrating the 20th anniversary of the “century’s yard” this year), the Calais area has gone through a metamorphosis in terms of infrastructure, this has enabled it to optimise its geographical location in regard to mainland Europe (in particular thanks to Eurostar that puts Calais one hour by train to London, 1 hour and thirty to Brussels and Paris) and makes it a multimodal territory.

The Channel traffic will not stop growing (Eurotunnel works on train fret, passenger traffic, broadband / optic fiber...)

The Tunnel site has allowed a significant economic development, profiting from large numbers of travelers by building two shopping centres Cité de l’Europe and Usine, and also by putting aside land for business development.

The tourism sector in the Calais area is linked to both retail with the Tunnel and its adjoining areas and also to the coast in particular le Grand Site des Deux Caps and the attractive county side including lakes and woods.

Finally being a member of the public-private union for the Opal Coast (Syndicat Mixte de la Côte d’Opale (SMCO). the Calais area is subject to many influences for exemple commuting between home and work, fret traffic ect.....along with the two other ports in the region (Boulogne and Dunkirk), and also with cross border countries like Belgium and England. In addition, a metropolitan cross border cooperation (the Channel District) has been created to develop the coasts around the Channel in a coherent and concerted way. Also a European association for territorial cooperation (GECT)) was introduced on 3rd April 2009 by French and Flemish representatives, with the objective of implementing common cross border projects.

The Calais territory remains beyond all a very attractive territory, on the one hand thanks to a very rich natural heritage, especially with the national site of the Two Capes (Grand Site de France) that attracts millions of tourists every year, but also thanks to its outstanding history and heritage monuments (Notre-Dame church, Vauban city walls, belfry...).

I welcome you again and hope you will have an interesting and informative stay rich exchanges in Calais. Thanks for your attention

Luc JOSSIEN
Directeur de la MDDL du Calaisis